

# INTERNATIONAL INFORMATION BULLETIN

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PREPARATORY TEXT FOR THE 1971 CONFERENCE OF  
THE LEADERSHIPS OF THE EUROPEAN SECTIONS

by Vergeat and Delphin

At the time of the Ninth World Congress of the Fourth International, a very important turn was made concerning our tactics in the construction of the revolutionary party. In abandoning entryism, we realized that a change had occurred in the relationship of international forces between the working class and the bourgeoisie; and between the workers' movement and its reformist organizations. At that time the phenomenon of the youth radicalization, out-flanking the old bureaucratic apparatuses, was for revolutionary Marxists key evidence of the possibility of becoming the pole of attraction in a direct way for this new potential vanguard. In July 1969, E. Mandel thus summarized the turn carried out by the Fourth International: ". . . the Ninth World Congress is the congress that begins the transformation of the Trotskyist movement from a propaganda group to an able combat organization, already capable of effectively leading vanguard revolutionary actions."

Since then, the European sections of the Fourth International have made efforts to carry out this line under varied conditions. But it should be recognized that up to now empiricism and a sense of smell have guided our work, without any synthesis or balance sheet being drawn up. Several European conferences and meetings have especially helped us become acquainted with the problems and activities carried out in each European section. Today, after the cadre school in Luxembourg, it seems to us to be indispensable to go back over the past period and determine in a consistent way where we stand in relation to the evolution of the political situation and the experiences we have gone through. In Europe the International will then be able to undertake one of its tasks that is becoming more and more urgent—through a collective effort to analyze current developments as deeply as possible and rectify our aim if necessary.

The objective of this document is to raise with the leaderships of the sections a certain number of problems that should be debated in particular at the forthcoming European conference. This document is the first result of work aiming at collective preparation of a document for the next world congress. It is a basis for discussion that begins to define the problems and to take up points for a document to be prepared for the European sections.

A. *The Turn of the Ninth World Congress*

1. On the eve of this congress the majority of the sections were winding up some years of experience of entryism in Social-Democratic or Stalinist formations. Without going back in detail over the conditions that motivated this tactic or strategy, it is worth recalling the general context of its application:

— Belief in the imminence of world war.

— Awareness that a new situation was ripening within the workers movement with the outbreak of the crisis in the Soviet bureaucracy.

— Deepened determination to break out of the isolation the Trotskyist movement had suffered, to link up directly with the mass movement in hope of intervening in the

crisis and gaining leadership of the left currents whose appearance within the reformist parties had been forecast. The tactic was carried out by sections weak in number, without a base in the working class, but with cadres that were often well educated.

2. The organizational results of this work were uneven, but generally they did not lead to the crystallization of genuine revolutionary tendencies in these parties or originating from them. To take some examples, in Belgium we saw a left current that was created around the newspaper *La Gauche*, the consolidation of several well-rooted nuclei of workers and a breakthrough in the teachers' union. The JGS [Jeunes Gardes Socialistes—Young Socialist Guard] groups broke with the PSB [Parti Socialiste Belge—Belgian Socialist Party] on a left centrist base. As a whole, the JGS stayed on this base, its political and organizational development being governed by work in the PSB by an internal Trotskyist transformation of its Social-Democratic character. The renovation of the JGS in the past few years is not the result of entryism. In the area of becoming engaged in struggles of the working class, the worker nuclei gained during that period provide a substantial basis for the new Belgian section, although they remain imbued with syndicalism and find it rather difficult to grasp the role of a revolutionary party.

In Germany, the split of the SDS [Socialistischer Deutscher Studentenbund—German Socialist Student Union] from the SP [Socialistische Partei—Socialist Party] occurred in the absence of any intervention whatsoever from us. The SDS militants who had been won to the German section then had to leave the SDS and become involved in entryist work within the SP. The worker elements won inside the SP through entryism represent only a numerically very weak part of the new German section.

In Italy, where the deepest kind of entryist work in the CP [Communist Party] and the JC [Communist Youth] was carried out for a very long time, the section had the objective of constructing rather important leftist regroupments, that is *La Sinistra* and *Falce Martello*. These attempts blew up at the very moment they came to a culmination, the militants involved in them either returning to the CP or going over to ultraleftism or Maoism. The new Italian section had to start again with very little after its disintegration, relying on small groups of workers who had been won in the past.

Finally, in France, entryism into the CP only affected intellectual circles, the oppositionist currents formed at the periphery of the CP in the UEC [Union des Etudiants Communistes—Federation of Communist Students] and, to a lesser extent, in the JC [Jeunesse Communiste—Communist Youth]. The success of the JCR [Jeunesse Communiste Revolutionnaire—Revolutionary Communist Youth] operation was merely the result of entryist work of a very particular character at the fringes of the CP where the bureaucracy of that party had lost complete control of the situation.

3. From this experience it clearly follows that entryism

nowhere led in reality to the formation of a left centrist current of appreciable size functioning as a revolutionary current within the workers' parties. This work did not give rise to a significant split; however, it made it possible to win groups of experienced cadres with a real knowledge of the organized workers movement. In a different context and with different methods of work these cadres became the origin of the new sections of the International in Europe.

4. The practice of entryism had various consequences for the militants of the Fourth International. By plunging into mass organizations, they received organizational experience, learned the history of the workers movement, and largely prevented the development of sectarianism. These militants learned to understand the existing relationships between the sector of the working class organized in these parties and the bureaucracy of these parties.

But in certain cases, far from being limited in their activities, the militants immersed in this work and not burdened with open work on the outside adapted to the milieu, its tempo, its customs, and its routine. The necessity to remain under cover, to confine their political intervention to small doses ended with their giving up the program bit by bit. Some of these comrades were lost in this way, being drawn in by the Stalinist or Social-Democratic structures. The fractional work, although politically very valuable, did not educate our militants in mass work or in how to assume responsibility or take the initiative, except in isolated cases. A minority fraction within a mass party does not at all learn how to build an organization and it does not provide the militants with the leadership responsibilities to be found in an independent revolutionary organization; especially in working out programmatic questions.

5. From this past flowed the difficulty experienced by militants of the European section in breaking with entryism and in throwing themselves into the activity of constructing Communist organizations on the basis of a revolutionary program. The Italian section did not dare or had not decided to make the decisive choice at the opportune moment; they wanted to carry out the two tactics at the same time and thus they let an opportunity like the one in France slip by. The German section found itself torn between a sectarian current and a routinist current deeply enmeshed in the routine life of the local Social Democracy. The French section has the enormous good fortune of living through the revolutionary crisis in May 1968. This compelled it to give up entryism and to act like free lancers so far as the other sections were concerned. But this exit took place empirically, leading as a result to instances of opportunism or sectarianism (for example, the attempt to create the Revolutionary Movement in June 1968, and sectarianism after the presidential campaign). The Belgian section hung on too long to the centrist perspective, so that the organizational base they had worked out with the PWT [Parti Wallon des Travailleurs—Walloon Workers Party] and the UGS [Union de la Gauche Socialiste—Union of the Socialist Left] in 1965, eroded away. Only their virtual disappearance obliged the construction of a new section, the LRT [Ligue Revolutionnaire des Travailleurs—Revolutionary Workers League]. The organizational and political carelessness of the JGS only served to maintain the traditions unavoidably inherited from the Social Democracy. In England, the absence of a structured Trotskyist pole led in the final analysis to our mass

work in the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign (VSC) reinforcing other already structured organizations like the IS (International Socialists).

6. Such was the price of a correct tactic often tried but poorly mastered. Without making hypotheses as to other possible tactics that could have been applied in the past, let us note the cases of the SLL [Socialist Labor League] in Great Britain and the OCI [Organisation Communiste Internationaliste—Internationalist Communist Organization] in France and the sectarian degeneration they underwent, the one through entryism and the other through open work.

7. The Ninth World Congress understood the new possibilities of independent work, especially with the youth. In calling for the construction of Trotskyist youth organizations, it likewise understood that in view of the lack of influence that old sections had on the new ones, it was necessary as a first step to set up new organizations linked to (or formed out of) political struggles in the youth sectors and to adopt the program of the Fourth International. The process of organizational fusion of these organizations with the old sections in order to build new ones occurred in an urgent way in every case, without any previous general conception of this process ever orienting or guiding the operation. It is important now to draw up a summary of this transformation "in practice" for the International in Europe. It is required by the political needs of the sections of the International.

#### *B. The Conditions for the Radicalization of the Youth. The Stages. Positions of the Fourth International.*

1. The aging of the central apparatuses of the big bureaucratic organizations has rendered work among the youth of the Stalinist parties or Social-Democratic formations almost totally sterile. In the words of Trotsky, "Every revolutionary party finds its chief support in the young generation of the rising class. Political decay expresses itself in a loss of ability to attract the youth under one's banner." (*The Revolution Betrayed*) This aging becomes manifest in the ossification of political thought, the adoption of paternalistic and suspicious attitudes toward the new generation, and especially in the complete lack of understanding of the cultural and political motivations of the youth. The crisis of bourgeois ideology in the post-war period and its extension in the crisis in education occurred in an international context disturbed almost daily since the end of World War II by revolutionary pressures located mainly in the colonial world. This crisis of bourgeois ideology is a direct consequence of the series of defeats dealt to the European centers in their big colonial empires. For the new generation it was necessary to see the contrast between the democratic ideals, advanced in the name of the struggle against Nazism, and the odious criminal intervention of these same protagonists of the ideals of the rising eighteenth-century bourgeoisie in the colonized societies. Vietnam and, to a lesser degree, Algeria were the main factors in this crisis. They constituted the objective basis for the phenomenon of radicalization from the start.

2. The spectacular breakup of the Stalinist monolith covers the period from 1956, beginning with Khrushchev's report to the Twentieth Congress of the CP USSR, to the repression of the political revolution in Hungary and the split between Moscow and Peking three years

later. Another part of the background to this radicalization is that the new generation, from its first autonomous political demonstrations, saw Stalinism with its counter-revolutionary traits all the more noticeable in the context of an international situation marked continually by the appearance of intermittent revolutionary hotbeds.

This rejection of the Stalinist model by the new generation was not accompanied by a political and world historical criticism of Stalinism. The rejection is the product of a radicalization that goes against Stalinism and picks its political models of reference in the context of what exists and is acting at the moment. The new generation lacks a historic memory. From this flows its anarchist-like attitudes on the one hand, and its spontaneist and imitative assimilation of the Chinese and Cuban models (the two main ones) on the other hand. In the absence of a memory, the new generation is unable to overcome the confusion arising from the crisis of Stalinism which restrains and runs counter to its political development. Because the new generation in the raw process of radicalization does not think in terms of history but only in what is immediate, it cannot define a strategic view of the anticapitalist or anti-imperialist struggle from its own experience or from the Chinese or Cuban models which are products of particular moments of history and quite specific socio-historic realities.

The decomposition of Stalinism gives rise to all kinds of ultraleft phenomena. In sense Stalinism has served to liquidate the revolutionary theoretical tradition in the workers movement. The autonomous nature of the youth radicalization is a consequence of the crisis of Stalinism and the absence of a revolutionary organization capable of guiding this new revolutionary force on the spot.

3. This radicalization has likewise developed by stages in Europe. The particular nature of British and French imperialism and the penetration of Italian and German capitalism in the different neocolonial countries strongly influenced the radicalization in the beginning. In Great Britain the phenomenon almost did not develop owing to the government's policy of disengagement in the face of possible military confrontations. In France, the opposite occurred; that is, the policy of military engagement gave a militant and violent character to the first manifestations of the radicalization. The motor power came from the Algerian war. The repercussions in the rest of Europe were very limited. It was the Vietnamese revolution that gave the radicalization sharp impulsion and great political depth, beginning in the mid-sixties. The Vietnamese revolution served to bring the rates of militancy and politicalization in the radicalization into convergence. The Vietnamese model had the effect, through its power and considerable organization, of qualitatively influencing the forms taken by the mobilization of the youth. Because it represented a revolutionary struggle carried to its highest level, its international impact was decisive. The union of this radicalization with the Vietnamese revolution finally established the political character of the youth radicalization. It transformed it into a distinctly anticapitalist agent within the imperialist centers, because the radicalization itself is a socialist revolution.

The historical turning point represented by the year 1968 opened a third stage of the radicalization.

The three fundamental sectors of the world revolution underwent revolutionary crises simultaneously. Opened by the January 1968 Tet offensive in Vietnam, these crises

took place in France for the imperialist sector, Mexico and Pakistan for the colonial sector, and Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia for the bureaucratized workers states. Trotskyist concepts were in action although the revolutionary organizations of the Fourth International were not at the bottom of these simultaneous revolutionary crises. But in each of these instances the most advanced political inspiration was supplied by Trotskyist militants, whether they were or were not formally members of the Fourth International. As a result of this experience, the youth radicalization took a new political course, becoming an element directly integrated into the anticapitalist struggle, thus overcoming its former limits as a mainly anti-imperialist movement.

4. The response of the Fourth International to this mass movement was empirical, without theory and politics being genuinely combined in advance. The reason for this was that the Fourth International's understanding of this historical phenomenon dragged far behind the rapid development of the youth radicalization. The entryist placement of the sections left them outside of this movement, their attention being centered solely on a working class caught up in the reformist net of Stalinism or the Social Democracy. Consequently, inasmuch as the theoretical evaluation was tardy, the practical organizational response to the radicalization came about in a sporadic way, being implemented by those European sections that were compelled to find ways and means of winning the vanguard.

Regional empiricism characterized the reaction of the International to this phenomenon. Not one conception flowing from a central analysis guided the work of the European sections in their immensely important work of renewing themselves in a historically new field. The Belgian JGS, the Falce Martello formation in Italy, the JCR in France and the SUF [Socialistisk Ungdoms Forum—Socialist Youth Forum] in Denmark were products of this period. The Trotskyist militants who won over SUF and JGS or created these movements from scratch [JCR and Falce Martello] did so solely on a national level whereas the radicalization they fed on was international in scope.

From the day the Trotskyists came into their leaderships, these organizations or regroupments were never youth organizations of the kind run by the Stalinist or Social-Democratic parties. They were—and still are in certain cases where they have not exhausted their function—a transitional step in the construction of new sections. These organizations represent the fusing of the Trotskyist program, embodied in the old sections and sectors of the vanguard of the international radicalization of the new generation.

Before completely carrying out this fusion, these organizations were centrist in character. This was overcome as they took over and became advocates of virtually the entire program of the Fourth International, substituting themselves in successful cases for the "entryist" sections of the Fourth International.

5. The stages of this transformation of the Trotskyist movement in relation to the youth radicalization were accompanied by a constant effort to lay down internationalist conceptions of revolutionary Marxism. This involved concrete mass actions to assist the establishment of a political and organizational relationship of forces favorable to the Trotskyists within the vanguard of the radicalization. Thus the international demonstration at Liege in October 1966, the Brussels conference in Feb-

ruary 1967, and the Berlin demonstration in February 1968 were all marked by the determination of the Fourth International to reaffirm, against Stalinism, the necessity for proletarian internationalism, beginning with the defense of the Vietnamese revolution.

In these stages of development, it was the more advanced forces of the Fourth International in the radicalization (JCR and JGS) that worked to assure the success of these political operations. They had to struggle against organized currents of a centrist type such as the German SDS so as to bring their forces to bear against these political tendencies. At the time of the international demonstration in Berlin in February 1968, the JCR, the sponsor of this project, had to work with the most advanced wing of the SDS (Dutschke in Berlin) against the national leadership that was opposed to it and that tried unsuccessfully to wreck it.

This kind of activity disappeared from the scene after May 1968. The entry of the working class onto the political scene totally transformed the activity of the pre-May organizations on a European scale. A new overall strategic conception was called for, which was reflected in the new forms of mobilization by the vanguard of the new generation. The Brussels rally in November 1970 and the demonstration at the centennial of the Paris Commune in May 1971 introduced an explicitly Trotskyist dimension into the activity of Fourth International militants. Now we are putting forward our whole program, headed up by the conception of building the International, whereas in May 1968 we were only advancing a partial notion of internationalism, of the need for elementary solidarity.

Because of our work the idea of a Communist international is now the order of the day.

### C. *The Problems of the Youth Radicalization Today*

Since these problems have never been discussed in any leading body, we present them in a somewhat sketchy way to provoke not only discussion but inquiry, which is greatly needed.

1. The objective conditions of the youth radicalization, outlined at the Ninth Congress and summarized above, persist and are deepening as international class struggles sharpen (cf. new educational reforms in Europe, higher appropriations for education, stepped-up repression, etc.).

2. While the student *struggles* continue to develop among the youth under certain conditions (cf. point 1), the student *movement* appears less and less as an active political force. For example, in England there has never been a student movement as such. And in Germany and France, the movement no longer operates on a national scale but only here and there and in special situations. In Italy, the movement persists but has lost a lot of its strength.

3. On a national level, the issues around which students can be mobilized are probably still "ideological" and internationalist (anti-imperialism, repression) ones. At the same time, individual sectors may be mobilizable on campus problems.

4. While all the mass organizations in this arena have disappeared or broken up (the German and American SDS, UNEF [Union Nationale des Etudiants de France—National Union of Students of France], Zengakuren, etc. . . .), we are seeing the politicized layers of students amalgamating behind political groups striving to build

their own mass currents in this milieu. (Only when these groups are in accord does the student movement as such reemerge.) This is exemplified in France by the development of a UNEF-CP, UNEF-AJS [Alliance des Jeunes pour le Socialisme—Alliance of Youth for Socialism], and the LC-inspired struggle committees, etc. . . , and by the KFML (Kommunistiska Foerbundet Marxist-Leninisterna—League of Communists Marxist-Leninist), the KFMLR and the RMF in Sweden forming their own currents in the Vietnam movement. The same goes for Japan and Spain.

Furthermore, Mao-spontaneism appears to be losing ground to the benefit of the Peking Stalinists, Trotskyists and reformists.

5. As far as its political expression and initiating role goes, the focus of the youth radicalization has shifted to the high-school students and apprentices. Examples of this are the Guiot affair in France in which university students were not involved; the high-school movements in Brussels and Luxembourg; the apprentices' movement in Germany. (There is discussion on this question now in France.)

6. Today it is in the industrial field that the new workers' vanguard is manifesting itself most powerfully. (France, Italy, England, Belgium, Spain.)

7. The problem consists of knowing what place the radicalized youth will occupy in the present struggles and what organizational forms these struggles will take. Is it possible to talk in terms of long-term stagnation in the student movement?

8. It appears that after having demonstrated all its power, the student movement is now revealing weaknesses inherent in its social character. Mobilized well before the working class, the German student movement exhausted itself at the very moment the workers were beginning to radicalize. No linkup was possible. In France, too, in 1968, in the last analysis, no real linkup took place. The only lesson the workers retained from the student movement was the example of its actions. The absence of a strong revolutionary organization rooted in both sectors prevented a lasting political linkup. Italy still seems to be a very temporary exception in the sense that the students have been able politically and physically to win entry into the factories, while the wave of workers' struggles, although slowing down, is still not over and at the same time the student movement remains active. We have spoken of a "creeping May," that is, of an experience of prolonged social struggles, that, in the absence of a revolutionary party, gave enough time for some rather large revolutionary groupings to develop which despite their confusion were able for a time (for as long, that is, as it took them to break up because of their confusion) to achieve linkups between workers and students. Examples of such groups were *il Manifesto*, *Lotta Continua*, *Potere Operaio*, etc. Perhaps, although with a certain lag, Italy will experience a situation analogous to the rest of Europe.

9. Without a real linkup with the working class, the student movement could at one time play a role of detonator and example for the workers, but it seems that this first stage is over on a European scale, even if all the countries have not gone through it. Workers in struggle today expect answers that are more political and less linked to what the student movement can offer. As a result, it is understandable why the student movement is being drawn toward three poles: the forward flight of

populist terrorism with its adventurist way out; reformism; and Trotskyism. For the broad masses the reaction has been to take a wait-and-see attitude.

10. It is in these conditions of a radicalizing workers' movement that the weight of the Stalinist or Social-Democratic parties is making itself felt once again, as well as the possibilities for intervention by revolutionary Marxists. The latter, alone, on the basis of their full program can provide answers for the vanguard workers and in a narrower arena a solution to the disarray of radicalized students.

#### *D. Toward a Correct Balance Sheet of the Construction of New Sections Since the Ninth World Congress*

The regionalist empiricism that distinguished the development of new sections has given way to a more systematic process on a European scale, although without this involving centralized guidance.

1. It has been shown that those sections that were unable to win the advanced sections of the radicalization were either broken up (Germany) or disintegrated (Italy) under the pressure of a movement equipped with a confused ideology and sometimes carrying a heavy dose of anti-Trotskyism, directly inherited from the ideological conditioning of Stalinism. Today these sections have been reconstituted. In other cases such as Belgium, Denmark, and Great Britain, the political and organizational weakness, due of course to a relative political isolation of these sections, has prevented them from profiting politically and organizationally from the radicalization.

2. It is because of these failures or weaknesses that various types of centrist organizations have been able to maintain themselves or to emerge, on an axis between a right-wing response to the crisis of Stalinism and the Social Democracy and a left-center orientation. In this spectrum we find the Italian PSIUP [Partito Socialista Italiano d'Unita Proletaria — Italian Socialist Party of Proletarian Unity], the French PSU [Parti Socialiste Unifie — United Socialist Party], the IS [International Socialists] in England, the VS [Ventresocialisterne — Left Socialist Party] in Denmark and the German SDS. Such a heterogeneous array was characteristic of a period when the working class was dormant, the Trotskyist movement was almost non-existent, and when it was mainly petty-bourgeois forces that were in motion. Although it was the product of centrist activity by Trotskyists in the Social Democracy, the Belgian CTS [Confederation Socialiste des Travailleurs — Confederation of Socialist Workers] belongs in this category; it experienced an even speedier end than the other sister organizations.

3. Before May and the Ninth World Congress, the International really only existed in a limited number of countries, mainly in Belgium, France, Italy, Germany and Denmark. Now the development of the International has given rise to sections in countries where the Trotskyist tradition was either non-existent or had almost died away—in Switzerland, Spain, Luxembourg and Sweden.

The International is making headway in Austria and in Holland and is on its way to creating new groupings. In Norway and in Finland we still have all, or almost all, our work ahead of us.

4. The pre-May organizations were largely built on the Vietnam question and showed varying degrees of ability to cope with the radicalization (Italy and Germany).

The organizations that took form in the post-May period developed on the basis of the working class moving into action. It became evident to many activists that the Trotskyist program offered an answer to the problems posed by the new situation at a time when the call to action was no longer and could no longer be anti-imperialist solidarity. This is how it was in Switzerland during the split that led to the establishment of the LMR [Ligue Marxiste Revolutionnaire — Revolutionary Marxist League], in Spain when the Fourth International united with the Comunismo group, in Luxembourg when the LCR [Ligue Communiste Revolutionnaire — Revolutionary Communist League] was formed from a split from a centrist grouping (GSR), in Sweden with the regroupment of two formations in the RMF. We can add that the Italian and German sections were reconstituted after May and after the Ninth World Congress on the basis of the class struggle and not anti-imperialist solidarity.

5. Since they have found themselves more and more rooted in the developing class struggle, the sections of the International in Europe should have been able at least two years ago to achieve an organizational maturity in the areas of democratic-centralist operation, finances and publications that in fact they haven't achieved yet. The European sections of the Fourth International have not been able to keep ahead of the capitalists in achieving international integration and in fact have barely kept up with them. The Brussels conference in November 1970 and the Paris demonstration in May 1971 were merely demonstrations of the advance of the Fourth International and fruits of its growing strength. However, these political experiences serve only to show the need for, and point the way toward developing the political and strategic answers that the International must quickly find for the problems of its sections in intervening in a working class that has been undergoing significant changes for a quarter century. Propaganda founded on the 1938 Transitional Program is obviously not enough to serve as a basis for intervening in this area.

6. The unifications that have taken place lately in order to give rise to "new" sections of the International represent a process that we are far from having mastered. On the one hand, the "old" sections of the International, the repositories of our tradition, have been tied to a narrow view of the working class, one limited, moreover, to those sectors controlled by the Stalinist and Social-Democratic parties. They have experienced a certain paralysis in the face of the new theoretical problem of the youth radicalization. On the other hand, the youth organizations based on Trotskyist programs (JCR, JGS, SUF, RKJ, GSR in part, LMR at the outset, SL in Great Britain) are the product of a coming together of the Fourth International's program and the radicalization. And such organizations have shown a very clear tendency to substitute themselves for the official sections, and in the final stage of their evolution, to swallow the old groups outright. This was the case with the JCR and the PCI; the JGS and the Belgian section; the SUF and the RM; and, in special, the RKJ and the GIM. The English case of the IMG-SL merger developed a little differently, but also reflected the necessity of ending an organizational duality that no longer served any purpose. It is interesting to note that the IMG national congress voted to merge with the Spartacus League at almost the same time the GIM voted in its national congress to merge with the RKJ. These two projects were

developed independently of one another, without the leadership of the International intervening, even though it is based in Europe.

7. The problem facing all the sections is being able to take the initiative on the political terrain marked out since May 1968. Where our sections play a dominant political role on the left, as in France, Switzerland, Luxembourg, Spain and even in Belgium, the problem is to overhaul them for revolutionary work. This will be mainly among the youth, who still set the pace of activity by the ups and downs of their mobilizations. But such work will differ from the past period in that these sections have sufficient organizational weight to play the role of recognized mass leaders in mobilizations. The problem that arises for these organizations therefore is how to get back into the youth field after leaving it. (Discussions on this subject are in progress in France, Belgium and Luxembourg.)

Where our sections have not won a dominant position on the left, or are suffering from an accumulated lag (the lead the IS has over the IMG in Great Britain); and where they have had to start from scratch after the anti-imperialist stage of the international youth radicalization, as in Italy and notably in Germany, the problem is to establish a relationship of forces on the left that will allow these organizations to achieve a certain capacity for taking the initiative and to extend their influence at the same time as increasing their organizational strength. For the IMG in Great Britain, the Irish Solidarity Campaign is an example of such an effort, and it represents a crucial

political operation for the British section.

8. Within this uneven and very slightly combined development of the European sections, the activity of the leadership of the International takes on a vital importance. While we have to be prudent about the leadership intervening in building the sections, it is no less true that in order to achieve balanced development we must raise the level of our work aimed at accomplishing real political and organizational integration of our sections.

The strong or stabilized sections in France, Switzerland, Spain and Luxembourg, and, to a certain extent, Denmark, possess an essential feature in that they have leaderships formed over a five-year period. Often these leaderships, built in relative national isolation, have undergone an actually independent development, onto which the fundamental theory of Trotskyism has been grafted. In other cases, such as in Germany, Sweden and Great Britain, the present leaderships do not have a common political background, experience embracing all the stages of the radicalization in very recent years. They are the product of a heterogeneous amalgamation of leadership personnel, and have not yet developed the unity of theory and practice now achieved, to differing degrees, by the other sections. It is in this area that the activity of the International assumes a preeminent and urgent importance. It is for this vital purpose, that we must strive to hold European-wide meetings like the projected one more frequently.



## THE BUILDING OF REVOLUTIONARY PARTIES IN CAPITALIST EUROPE

(Draft Theses submitted to the Tenth World Congress—  
Fourth Since Reunification)

### I. THE CHANGE IN THE OBJECTIVE AND SUBJECTIVE CONDITIONS FOR BUILDING REVOLUTIONARY PARTIES IN CAPITALIST EUROPE SINCE 1967.

Since 1967, the conditions in which revolutionary Marxists go about carrying out their central strategic task—the building of Leninist parties capable of leading the proletariat toward the victorious socialist revolution—have greatly changed in capitalist Europe. These changes, which are in part the product of upheavals in other parts of the world, in the final analysis reflect the deepening of the basic crisis of bourgeois society in Europe. This crisis manifests itself at all levels of the society.

#### *The Deepening Crisis of Capitalism*

The crisis of the international imperialist system underwent a new deepening with the end of the long period of accelerated economic expansion carrying forward the "Korean war boom" that came on the heels of the end of the post-war revolutionary crisis in western Europe. The West German recession in 1966-1967 was quickly followed up by a recession in Italy and Japan (1970-1971), a new, minor recession in West Germany (1971-1972), and a general slowing down of economic growth in all the imperialist countries. For the first time since the second world war, attempts to reduce these crises of overproduction through stepped-up inflation ran into obstacles—inflation went hand in hand with economic stagnation in a whole series of imperialist countries. The stepped-up inflation of the dollar finally precipitated the collapse of the international monetary system created at Bretton-Woods and opened up a profound worldwide monetary crisis that threatens to undermine international credit and, as a result, the expansion of world trade.

The reversal of the general economic climate is the result not only of conjunctural factors but also of profound structural factors. The main stimuli of the rapid expansion of the post-war years are fading away one after the other. The decline of the old industrial branches—such as the coal industry, the textile industry, the copper, shipbuilding, and no doubt also steel—is irreversible. At the same time, the pace-setting industries that "carried" the post-war growth, have one by one been hit by an excess capacity and as a result have been forced to cut back their investment. This is already the case in the electrical appliance industry, the automobile industry, and petrochemicals; it will also soon be the case in the electrical machine industry and in electronics itself. The declining rate of profit is showing up more and more clearly, choking off rapid growth. This effect is reinforced by the market steadily shrinking in proportion to enormously expanding productive capacity.

The still limited buying power of the bureaucratized workers states, including China, on the world market does not enable them to provide any important supplementary outlet absorbing some of the excess capacity of imperialist industry as a whole. In certain branches,

however (steel pipes, equipment for automobile and petrochemical factories), it has been possible to stave off sharp crises by filling orders from these states, orders prompted, moreover, by specific temporary scarcities in the Eastern countries (cereals, for example).

The slowdown of growth in the international capitalist economy necessarily accentuates interimperialist contradictions, including competition in East-West trade (this is one of the reasons that explains Nixon's overture to Peking as well as to Moscow). This declining growth rate comes, in fact, in the wake of a period during which the relationship of forces among the imperialist countries underwent a major shift. American imperialism has progressively lost the absolute superiority it enjoyed within the imperialist camp during the immediate post-war period. Its share of the world market—the capital market as well as the commodity market, even if there is several years' lag between the trends in the two—is continuing to shrink to the advantage of the West German, Japanese imperialists, and other imperialist countries in the EEC. The weakening of British imperialism has been especially pronounced during the last fifteen years.

The result of this reversal of the interimperialist relationship of forces has in particular been a growing penetration of European and Japanese goods into the domestic U.S. market, which is what prompted the (essentially protectionist) countermove announced by Nixon's speech on August 15, 1971. Far from reducing interimperialist competition or the general crisis of the system, these defensive measures on the part of American imperialism can only serve to exacerbate them.

#### *2. The Crisis of Social Relations*

The end of the long period of rapid expansion brought with it a sharpening of social contradictions in capitalist Europe that, since May '68, has taken the form of a *general social crisis* in several European countries (France, Italy, Spain, Great Britain). Any spectacular new upbound of this crisis could drag in all the rest of capitalist Europe. The socialist revolution is once again on the agenda in Europe, not just in a broad historical perspective (in this sense, it has been on the agenda since 1914), but even from a conjunctural point of view.

The most profound source of this social crisis lies in the fact that the basic contradiction of the system—the contradiction between the level of development attained by the productive forces and the maintenance of capitalist productive relations—has been considerably aggravated by the post-war phase of growth of the productive forces. Even more than the phase of stagnation from 1914 to 1939, this growth has objectively undermined capitalist productive relations.

We are increasingly approaching the upper limits of the adaptability of these productive relations, as equally regards the functioning of the market economy, the profit drive of the private trusts, the financing of long-term

productive investments, and the development of the material and intellectual infrastructure of production, and as regards their ability to satisfy—if only in an elementary way—the new needs generated in the working population by the growth of the productive forces themselves. A good part of these new needs, keenly felt especially by the youth, clearly cannot be met within the context of bourgeois society. In this category must be placed requirements of high-quality social consumption, met according to the "satisfaction-of-needs" principle (health, education, culture, news, retirement, etc.), as well as the need for creative activity radically breaking from alienated labor.

This general crisis in social relations had begun to manifest itself even before the turn in the world economic situation; the turn itself has obviously made it worse. The more growth slows, the more interimperialist competition is intensified; the more the crisis of the international monetary system spreads—the less the European bourgeoisie is able to grant new concessions to the working masses and the more it finds itself even forced to call into question a series of gains—considered by the proletariat to be given—that were granted during the course of the preceding phase. The attempt to make the workers pay the cost of inflation and the general reappearance of unemployment (for two years, there have been about five million unemployed in capitalist Europe) are two aspects of the same basic orientation of Big Capital, which is trying to restore the rate of profit by intensifying its exploitation of the working class.

Strikes and other forms of workers' struggles have remained on the rise throughout capitalist Europe since May '68 because of the fierce resistance with which the workers are meeting this attempt to substantially increase the proportion of surplus value extracted. This upsurge has taken its most spectacular forms in Italy, Great Britain, Spain and France. It is only just beginning in countries like the German Federal Republic, the Scandinavian countries, the Netherlands, and Switzerland. As a result of a fifteen-year decline in the industrial reserve army of labor, the European proletariat has confronted this phase with firm ranks, a higher degree of unionization, and an increased confidence in its own strength. *In these conditions, a rapid and crushing defeat of the working class is virtually ruled out. We must therefore prepare ourselves for years of intense social struggles, in which there will be ups and downs, and for enduring possibilities of revolutionary upsurges, depending on advances in raising class consciousness and strengthening the revolutionary vanguard.*

Contributing to this rise of workers' struggles, in addition to mass reactions against the evils of the system (inflation, factory closings, layoffs, attacks on the right to strike and the social security benefits won in previous struggles), are deeper motives disputing in an embryonic way the whole of capitalist productive relations—revolts against the speedup and piece work fundamentally challenging the bosses' authority; attempts to raise the question of workers' control and dispute the whole notion of profit as the ultimate goal of production; attempts to enlarge considerably the scope and quality of public services (right to free, quality health care and education; right to free urban transportation; right to housing; retirement at 60 on 75% of previous pay; longer paid vaca-

tions, etc.). These goals of the workers' struggle are all the more important inasmuch as they run counter to the efforts of the capitalists to increase the rate of surplus-value, above all through an increase in the intensity of exploitation, in order to reduce the tendency of the average rate of profit to fall.

The crisis of capitalist productive relations has become a crisis of bourgeois relations as a whole. In the beginning, it was expressed more and more sharply by the youth attending school (the college and high school revolt), and then became generalized as a crisis of all the social relations (education, family, church, mass media, etc.). Penetrating into the working class, particularly through young workers and apprentices, this crisis of bourgeois social relations has, in its turn, aggravated the crisis in the capitalist relations of production.

### 3. *The Political Crisis of the Bourgeoisie*

Confronted with a worsening of the economic situation and social contradictions, the bourgeois political system has been, and is continuing to be, shaken by a crisis no less deep—crises in the bourgeois leadership teams; crises of political alternatives; crises of the bourgeois political parties; crises of the entire governmental system of the bourgeois state. The most striking signs of this crisis have been the spectacular fall of DeGaulle, the semi-paralysis of the succeeding governments in Italy and Great Britain, and the persistent political tension in West Germany—long the most stable and the most depoliticized country of post-war capitalist Europe. The increasingly pronounced crisis of the Franco regime fits into this same context.

The basic choice with which the bourgeoisie in capitalist Europe have been confronted is between an "integrationist" reformism (which tries to break down the combativity of the workers through concessions strengthening the mechanisms of conciliation and class collaboration) and an intensification of repression (involving a frontal attack on working-class freedoms, especially on the right to strike and on free collective bargaining). Both variants, moreover, accentuate the decadence of classic bourgeois parliamentary democracy, continue shifting the bourgeois state's center of gravity toward an executive that increasingly stands outside of any control, and thus highlight the inherent tendency of monopoly capitalism toward setting up a strong state.

Nonetheless, neither this reinforcement of the executive nor the variant of frontally attacking some working-class rights should be confused with a new rise of fascism. The main characteristics that distinguish fascism from other forms of bourgeois government are on the one hand the total destruction of all workers' organizations (including the reformist organizations), and on the other, a mass mobilization of frenzied and pauperized petty bourgeoisie, greatly magnifying the striking power of the classical repressive apparatus. Today the objective conditions for a new rise of fascism have not yet come about in capitalist Europe. The workers' movement, especially in Germany, has paid too dearly for confusion in evaluating different forms of rule by capital to accept any loose talk about a "creeping fascism" of the regime.

The slowdown in economic growth, and especially the stepping up of interimperialist competition, have under-

mined the preconditions for implementing a "reformist" policy. What the bourgeoisie has in fact been able to offer in the form of "joint worker-boss management," "profit-sharing," "payment in stocks," and other reforms, has been too meager to make a serious dent in the proletariat's fighting ability. The failure of bourgeois "reformism" is clearest in Italy: neocapitalist reforms—which are more urgent than ever, even from the point of view of a more rational functioning of the capitalist economy—could not be implemented during an entire decade under the aegis of the "center-left." In Great Britain, the pronounced decline of imperialist economic strength obliges the bourgeoisie to even call into question some of the main reforms granted during the two preceding decades.

But at the same time, the relationship of forces between the classes remains such that an overall repressive assault has practically no chance of succeeding. The forces of the workers' movement, which for the most part remain intact, would respond to such an overall assault on a scale that the bourgeoisie takes well into account and that it correctly fears. As a result of this fear, for the moment it rejects as provocative any attempt to set up an openly dictatorial regime on the Greek model.

In these circumstances, the most probable political perspective remains a prolonged period of instability, with successive bourgeois teams wearing themselves out in "center-right" or "center-left" forms of government and with spectacular periodic recoveries by the traditional workers' organizations, but without either of the two contending camps being able to firmly impose its will. The proletariat is still being hamstrung by its crisis of leadership, by the paralyzing role of the traditional leaderships. At the same time, the bourgeoisie remains too weak to impose a radical solution. In France and Italy where the rise of workers' struggles reached a peak in 1968 and 1969, the bourgeoisie has been able temporarily to resume the initiative, without, however, being able to impose its fundamental solutions. The fighting potential of the proletariat in these countries remains intact.

To be sure, such an unstable equilibrium cannot go on indefinitely. In the absence of a victorious counter-offensive by the bourgeoisie, the very continuation of the social crisis contributes toward solving the crisis of leadership in the proletariat. On the other hand, the continuation of this crisis of leadership, resulting in successive waves of struggles that fail to change anything in the area of state power, ends up tiring out the working masses and lowering their capacity for mobilization, and thus could create favorable conditions for setting up a bourgeois strong state.

There is therefore no reason to look on the present impasse in the class struggle with complacency: If a decisive revolutionary breakthrough does not occur, the bourgeoisie will finally impose *its* solution. But the fact that we are only at the beginning of the deepening social crisis, that neither the extent of unemployment nor the political level of the workers' struggles yet confronts the bourgeoisie with an immediate question of life or death, allows us to envisage a period spread out in most cases over four or five years before the decisive battles are fought.

A specific manifestation of the crisis of European bourgeois leadership can be seen in the field of politics in this region. The extension and interpenetration of capitalist enterprises throughout the area (a tendency which the entrance of Great Britain, Denmark, Norway, and

Ireland into the EEC can only reinforce), and the need to compete with American and Japanese imperialism, would tend to favor a strengthening of supranational European superstructures—European currency, common industrial policy, common executive, autonomous European nuclear striking force, etc. But since each concrete step in this direction involves sacrifices for this or that "national" bourgeoisie, and since the room for maneuver on an international and national scale is dwindling as a result of intensifying interimperialist contradictions and social contradictions, the hesitations and political divisions within the European bourgeoisie grow as the hour of decision approaches.

The inability of the Spanish bourgeoisie to "liberalize" its political structures, however slightly—its feeling that it must perpetuate Francoism even without Franco—is a sign of the explosive character of social contradictions in the Iberian peninsula. And at the same time it is a reflection of the political crisis within the European bourgeoisie: It deprives the bourgeoisie any means of averting the development of a revolutionary situation in the southwest of the continent—a situation whose subjective repercussions, reinforced by the presence of large numbers of emigre Spanish workers in other countries, could cause it to spread rapidly throughout Europe as a whole.

The resumption of the centuries-old struggle of the Irish people for unity and independence coincides with a sharpened crisis of British imperialism and in turn accentuates this crisis. The tendency has been to move rapidly toward higher forms of struggle as well as mobilizing and organizing the vanguard of the masses, above all in Northern Ireland where dual power existed *de facto* for several months, forcing the imperialists to resort to massive repression.

#### 4. *The Crisis of the Traditional Organizations*

Alongside the political crisis of the bourgeoisie, the traditional workers' movement has also gone through a deep crisis in the course of the past few years. In part, this has the same roots as the crisis of the instruments of capitalist domination—the aggravation of the social contradictions that undermine the credibility of reformist and neoreformist orientations; the new rise in workers' struggles, which are beginning to get out of the control of the traditional leaderships of the workers' movement; and the general crisis of bourgeois social relations (especially capitalist productive relations), which has freed powerful anticapitalist energies in the vanguard, no longer goes along with traditional reformism. There is yet another reason for this crisis in the traditional workers' organizations: the crisis of Stalinism, which—after the ebbs and flows following the 20th congress of the CPSU, the crushing of the Hungarian revolution, the eruption of the Sino-Soviet conflict, and the fall of Khrushchev—has undergone a new, important leap with the Czechoslovak crisis since 1968 and with the rightward turn of the Maoist leadership since 1970.

The new rise of workers' struggles and the radicalization of a sizable vanguard of the working class are coming more clearly into conflict with two phenomena, whose significance must be analysed without underestimating their limitations—the increasing integration of the Social Democracy into the bourgeois state apparatus on the one hand, and a process of Social Democratization of

the official Communist parties on the other.

Within the Social-Democratic parties during the past decade, an important shift in the relative weight respectively of the representatives of the bureaucracy of the workers' organizations as such, and the representatives of the bureaucracy of the bourgeois state has taken place. The latter have gained considerably in strength in relation to the former. We have even witnessed high Social-Democratic state functionaries beginning to slide into leading positions in private capitalist trusts. These processes have unquestionably promoted the eruption of conflicts between Social-Democratic leaders trying to express the "general interest," that is, the interest of the bourgeoisie, and the unions, including the trade-union bureaucrats, who have traditionally been the most solid props of the Social Democracy.

The Khrushchev Communist parties have in general increased their drift to the right, adopting strategies and tactics aligning themselves with the trade-union bureaucracy (or its "left" wing) in countries where the Social Democracy has hegemony, and orienting completely toward an electoralist and neoreformist strategy in the countries where they themselves have hegemony. Whatever the complex and contradictory pressures from the ranks for such a turn, when these CPs "disassociated" themselves from the Kremlin at the time of the occupation of Czechoslovakia by the armies of the Soviet bureaucracy, they did so under compulsion from the Social Democrats, ushering in a new stage in this process of Social Democratization.

Still, the conclusion to be drawn from these two phenomena is not that the Social-Democratic parties have become bourgeois parties or that the Communist parties have become Social-Democratic ones. The Social Democracy remains dependent—in certain countries like West Germany and Belgium, more than ever dependent—upon its working-class electoral base. This is an electoral base that, unlike that of the Democratic Party in the United States, expresses an elementary class reflex through its vote, that is, the determination to vote for a working-class party instead of voting for a bourgeois party. The class nature of these parties is also reflected in their links with the trade-union movement. The counterrevolutionary and pro-capitalist nature of the policy of the leaders of these countries (a policy that dates from neither today nor yesterday, but that has been a constant phenomenon for almost sixty years) changes nothing in this objective fact, any more than the objective neoreformism of the CPs allows them to definitively cut the cord that ties them to Moscow.

The crisis in the traditional organizations of the workers' movement is not developing in a straight line. If it is sometimes marked by not unimportant splits (e.g., the "Manifesto" group in Italy), it can also be expressed through the reappearance of broader centrist tendencies within the traditional parties (the "Jusos" in West Germany). It can be expressed both by a temporary sag in the electoral strength of these parties (Belgium and Great Britain, 1970, for the Social Democracy) and by a new electoral thrust—especially when these parties appear to newly politicized layers to be a "lesser evil" by comparison with the corrupt and bankrupt bourgeois parties. But the main characteristics of this crisis remain no less salient in all the countries where the resumption of workers' struggles and the youth radicalization have been of sufficient scope:

a) The traditional reformist policy is increasingly losing credibility and must be more and more spiced up with promises of "moving toward socialism," as exemplified by The Common Program of the CP and SP in France.

b) The common ground in the orientation of the Social Democrats and the CPs—namely the electoralist and parliamentary road—is being increasingly challenged objectively by broad masses, who are rediscovering direct, extraparliamentary action as the main instrument for defending their interests, even if they continue to vote for the traditional parties.

c) The traditional leaderships are losing their attraction for an important part of the youth—both workers and students—who are becoming open to a political orientation differing fundamentally from the reformism of the Social Democrats and the neoreformism of the CPs.

d) The anti-working-class and anti-union compromises of the traditional political organizations (which they are inclined to make especially when they are in the government, but also when they are in the opposition—note the hardening of the French Communist Party's apparatus against the militant strikes in France), together with the absence of mass revolutionary parties creates a political vacuum to the left of the traditionally dominant working-class political formations (the CP in France, Italy, and Spain; the Social Democracy in other countries of capitalist Europe). A section of the trade-union movement has tended to fill this vacuum, at least temporarily, by offering an alternative channel for the most radicalized sector of the working class. This was especially true with the trade-union "left" in Great Britain in 1970-1971, the Italian unions in 1969-71, part of the left wing of the Belgian unions, of the CFDT in France, and the Dutch unions. Thus, the identification between the unions and the traditional workers' parties is beginning to blur. A certain room for independent maneuver on the part of the unions is reappearing. And we are seeing *the beginning of a regeneration of the organized workers' movement as a whole*. This process can even go so far as to impel a wing of the unions to assume clearly political tasks, as for example in Great Britain with the struggle against the antistrike legislation of Wilson first, and then Heath, or the "struggle for reforms" in Italy in 1970-71.

We must not lose sight of the conjunctural nature of this evolution. We must especially not deduce from it that we are witnessing a full, so to speak spontaneous, confluence of the economic struggles and the political struggles of the proletariat. The unions' room for independent maneuver remains limited by the bureaucratic nature of their leadership, including the left wing of this leadership, which has little inclination to undertake a general struggle against the capitalist regime. The nature of the period not only imparts an objectively political thrust to mass struggles, but also carries with it an urgent need to raise the question of political power—a question that the unions take special care not to raise. Still less now than in the past can unionism, including the syndicalist variety, substitute for building a revolutionary party.

On the other hand, it is clear that the reformist and Stalinist bureaucracies cannot remain passive in the face of this beginning regeneration of the organized workers' movement, which threatens to undermine their hegemony

over the proletariat—the basis for all their maneuvers and all their privileges. Therefore, the possibility remains for abrupt adaptations to the radicalization of important sections of the proletariat in an attempt to regain control where it has been lost and to channel the mass movement toward goals that are compatible with the fundamentally reformist strategy of these parties.

### 5. *The Appearance of a New Vanguard*

All the above changes result in a change in the objective and subjective situation for building revolutionary parties in capitalist Europe that is of decisive and immediate importance for revolutionists. *A new vanguard of mass proportions has appeared*, by and large eluding the control of the traditional workers' organizations. This development marks the beginning of a change in the historical relationship of forces between the bureaucracies of the traditional organizations and the revolutionary vanguard that resulted from the defeats of the world revolution during the twenties and thirties and from the bureaucratic degeneration of the USSR and the Communist International. For the first time since the immediate post-war period of 1918-1923, the revolutionary vanguard has taken a qualitative leap. It arose first of all on the basis of solidarity and identification with the colonial revolution (Cuba, Vietnam), under the influence of the heightened worldwide crisis of imperialism and Stalinism. This is why it developed on an especially broad scale among the radicalized youth (university students, high school students, apprentices). But as the domestic social crisis of the capitalist countries of Europe worsened—beginning especially with the May '68 revolutionary crisis in France—a powerful current of radicalized workers joined the specifically youth current, reorienting it toward workers' struggles.

The new rise of workers' struggles and the scope assumed by the clearly anticapitalist demands these have raised, as well as the growing differentiation within the union movement that is impelling layers of the working class out of the control of the bureaucratic apparatuses (as for instance in the wildcat strikes, and hard-fought local strikes that are taking place despite the excommunications of the bureaucratic leadership) are becoming the decisive factors in determining the orientation of the new vanguard. And, progressively, they are bringing about a change in its composition (although this process is still only on a very modest scale in countries like West Germany, the Scandinavian states, the Netherlands, etc.). What chiefly distinguishes this new vanguard from the one we have known throughout the preceding decades is its ability to intervene in the class struggle in its own right, to take political initiatives, and here and there to take the leadership of mass workers' struggles.

In order to define more clearly the nature and limitations of this new mass vanguard, we must combat two illusions. The first illusion is that this new vanguard, as a whole, is revolutionary. The second is that the appearance of this vanguard means a fundamental change in the relationship of forces in the workers' movement and the working class.

Because of its very origins, the new mass vanguard harbors within it numerous elements with a petty-bourgeois consciousness and ideology who, depending on the

circumstances and the relationship of forces with the revolutionary Marxist organization, can at best play a secondary role in the unfolding of the struggles, or at worst profoundly distort and pervert the forms and the results of these struggles. This vanguard was born out of a movement of spontaneous revolt against capitalist society and against the adaptation of the bureaucratic leaderships of the workers' movement to it. But the road from spontaneous revolt to effective struggle for socialist revolution can be a long one. Some of the participants in this vanguard, who remain prisoners of spontaneism, sectarianism, ultraleftist infantilism, apolitical workerism, or primitive syndicalism, will never travel this distance. Others will go it only on the condition that the revolutionary Marxist organization acquires a decisive political weight within the vanguard, remaining always equal to the tasks confronting it.

While this vanguard has attained a mass character and is for the first time in a long period becoming capable of effective action, it is no less true that it still remains very much a minority within the mass movement, and even more so within the organized workers' movement. The essential task of the vanguard is not to constantly measure its strength against the masses still following the traditional leaderships but to change the relationship of forces in the mass movement through its ability to impel masses much broader than those consistently associated with it into action that overflows the channels of bureaucratic control. Unless it goes through the necessary apprenticeship in learning the tactics for exploiting this capacity, even a vanguard of 50,000 or 1,000,000 individuals can become isolated and disoriented in a mass movement of millions of workers. It can be bypassed by events, be buffeted about by partial and temporary setbacks, and vacillate impressionistically between an opportunistic adaptation to the leaders of the traditional workers' movement and sectarian abstentionism and defeatism.

### 6. *The Central Task*

From these five changes in the objective and subjective conditions for building revolutionary parties in capitalist Europe, we have drawn and continue to draw the conclusion that *the central task for revolutionary Marxists in the stage that opened in 1967-1968 is to win hegemony within the new mass vanguard in order to build qualitatively stronger revolutionary organizations than in the preceding stage*, to make the transition from revolutionary propaganda groups to revolutionary political organizations beginning to sink roots into the proletariat.

It is illusory, in fact, to think that propaganda groups can transform themselves in one leap into revolutionary parties already possessing decisive political influence over a section of the proletariat—at least in countries like those of capitalist Europe, where is a long-established workers' movement with a bureaucratic apparatus exerting tremendous weight among the working masses. The masses do not take their orientation in the first instance from programs, platforms, or ideas. Their orientation is determined by their immediate needs and the tools for waging effective struggles that are available to meet these needs.

Only when the revolutionary organizations have demonstrated not only the lucidity and correctness of their program but also their effectiveness in action, if only on a limited scale, will the defeats brought on by the opposi-

tunism of the traditional leaderships and the antibureaucratic revolts inspired in turn by these setbacks result in a *massive* influx into our organizations. The stage that leads from the essentially propagandistic group to the revolutionary party, in the scientific sense of the term, is therefore one in which a revolutionary organization begins to sink roots in the class, that is, to achieve through its intervention in the class struggle a relationship of forces enabling it to project itself as a credible alternate leadership for the workers' movement, beginning with a vanguard sector of the working class.

Setting our main goal as winning political hegemony within the mass vanguard follows from the overall analysis of the present stage of the class struggle in capitalist Europe:

a) Unless the revolutionary left achieves such hegemony, there is a danger that the strength of the mass vanguard will be dissipated.

b) Unless this mass vanguard is crystallized out into a serious and powerful revolutionary Marxist organization, its potential for influencing broader masses is in danger of being neutralized and lost.

c) Unless this potential of the vanguard to influence greater masses makes itself felt with increasing forcefulness, the upsurge in workers' struggles will arrive at a dead-end, which in the long run will facilitate a decisive counteroffensive by the bourgeoisie.

It is no easy task for revolutionary Marxists to win hegemony within this new mass vanguard. Such an objective can be achieved neither by adapting opportunistically to the lowest common denominator of this politically disparate vanguard, nor by a (in the final analysis, no less opportunistic) attempt to make a "synthesis" out of the various currents running through it. Achieving this goal requires a *constant political struggle* within this vanguard to transform it, making it an adequate instrument for regenerating the organized workers' movement.

The upheavals of 1967-1968 provided an exceptional opportunity for a breakthrough by a new revolutionary leadership of the European proletariat—the biggest opportunity since 1917-1923. But it will not persist indefinitely. Within a finite period of time, we must assemble all the conditions necessary for a qualitative strengthening of the revolutionary Marxist organizations, or else this historic opportunity will be lost.

We reject any spontaneist illusion to the effect that the scope of the present crisis of capitalism and Stalinism—which is, in fact, unprecedented—could, through the pressure of the masses, force the leaders of the trade-union bureaucracy, the leaders of the SPs and the CPs, to lead a socialist revolution in Europe to a successful conclusion. If a new revolutionary leadership is not built in the time remaining to us, after successive waves of mass struggles (some of which will certainly surpass even May '68 in France), the European proletariat will experience new and terrible defeats of historic scope.

## II. CONCRETE FORMS AND CONTENT OF THE REVOLUTIONARY PERSPECTIVES IN CAPITALIST EUROPE

### 7. *Revolutionary Upsurge and Dual Power*

The experiences of more than a quarter century, as well

as our economic, social, and political analysis of contemporary European capitalism make it possible for us to define clearly the revolutionary perspectives of our work. The perspectives can be summed up essentially in two categories of problems: the problems relating to the revolutionary upsurge; and the perspective for the revolutionary struggle for power.

Aside from exceptional cases where bourgeois armies have collapsed as the result of defeat in an imperialist war (e.g., Germany 1918-19), or bourgeois states have completely collapsed owing to defeat and occupation in an imperialist war (Yugoslavia and Greece 1941-44), the upsurges of exceptional mass struggles by the European proletariat during the past half century have exhibited a great number of common features. These characteristics were present equally in the struggles in Germany 1920-23, Italy 1919-21, Great Britain 1925-26, Spain 1931-37, Belgium 1932-35, and France 1934-37 as well as in the more recent examples of Italy 1945-48, Belgium 1960-61, Greece 1963-65, France 1968, Italy 1968-69, and Spain at the present moment. They can be listed as follows:

a) Through mass strikes and general strikes, mass struggles on an exceptional scale can completely paralyze not only the economy but even most of the activities of the bourgeois state apparatus. They thus objectively pose the question of state power even when the masses themselves are not conscious of this and are not in fact setting out to overthrow the bourgeois state. Such struggles are manifestations of the crisis of capitalism's decline and agony, of the workers' instinctive attempt to take the leadership of society and rebuild it along the lines of their socialist program.

b) The ripening of the historical conditions for socialist revolution is also revealed by the fact that during these explosions of mass struggle, numerous intermediary petty-bourgeois layers are instinctively drawn by the proletarian struggle, rally around the struggling proletariat, and participate in varying degrees in its struggle.

c) Although these explosions often occur suddenly and unexpectedly, they always take place as the culmination of a phase of radicalizing struggles, marked by the appearance of more militant forms of combat, by violent skirmishes between part of the working class and its vanguard, on the one hand, and bourgeois society, on the other—that is, as the expression not only of a structural but of a conjunctural crisis of bourgeois society.

d) The immediate detonator of these explosions can vary greatly: economic demands (1919-20, 1925-26); acute economic crisis (1923); abrupt change in the economic situation (1960-61); reaction to a violent move by the far right (Spain 1936, Greece 1963); hope for a fundamental political change (June 1936 in France); student revolt (May '68); monetary crisis; colonial war; defense of rights the workers' movement has won (right to strike, trade-union freedom), etc., etc. It would be futile to attempt to set up a possible timetable in advance. But what should be emphasized is the fact that the detonator, whatever it is, can only play its role after a whole molecular process has taken place in which the proletariat has radicalized, grown in self-confidence, and lost some of its electoralist illusions, while the social and political "fever temperature" has risen. Apart from such a trend affecting a considerable part of the proletariat, no limited explo-

sion, no matter how major, will touch off struggles embracing millions of workers.

e) In the imperialist countries like those of Europe, even a weakened bourgeoisie, even one facing a sharp social and political crisis, normally has many resources it can fall back on to absorb objectively revolutionary explosions as long as the proletariat's level of class consciousness and the breadth (as well as the political ability) of its revolutionary vanguard are not sufficient to prevent it. Such resorts include electoral maneuvers (turning over the government to left coalitions or parties); immediate economic concessions; selective repression, that is, repression concentrated against the vanguard alone or the forces spearheading the mass struggle; or a combination of some or all of these methods. Save for exceptional times of imperialist war and occupation, or in an exceptional economic crisis like the one that struck Germany in 1930-33, we have to rule out any notion that the imperialist bourgeoisie will prove incapable of maneuvering or making immediate concessions to the masses. This is an essential difference between the situation in the imperialist countries and that in the colonial and semicolonial countries.

Furthermore, the vast political experience of the European bourgeoisie has taught it that as long as it retains state power and control over the main means of production and exchange, it can rapidly take back any concession granted during a time of acute revolutionary crisis. The main thing is to preserve these two basic instruments of domination intact, that is, to see that the mass movement recedes and breaks up. The rest will flow automatically from this.

f) For these same reasons, any tumultuous upsurge of the mass movement is always limited in time. If victory is not achieved, if at least a point of no return—a break with the bourgeois state and capitalist relations of production—is not reached (that is, if a situation of dual power does not arise), the mass movement is condemned to go into an ebb, which in such cases is synonymous with a return to the "normal" functioning of capitalism.

What really characterizes a situation of dual power is the fact that it constitutes a state of affairs that cannot be absorbed into the normal functioning of bourgeois institutions. As long as this dual power persists, a "return to normal" is impossible. Even a temporary ebb or a partial defeat of the mass movement has no longer the same significance. An overall test of strength between the classes remains inevitable within a more or less short period of time.

It flows from this that *the main task of revolutionists in case of an explosion of tumultuous mass struggles consists of preparing for and ensuring the appearance of organs of dual power that can prevent the rapid absorption of the upsurge by bourgeois state and economic relations, and, as a result, give the class struggle the form of a series of general confrontations, thereby creating the best conditions for a rapid growth of class consciousness and for a rapid strengthening of the revolutionary party.*

The organs of dual power do not necessarily have to grow out of strike committees and take the form of soviet councils from the very start—although that remains the most probable variant. They can grow out of spreading experience of workers' control, or—as during the Spanish

civil war—an experience of a large-scale arming of the workers. The essential thing is that such bodies be oriented toward forming a centralized structure that would begin to assume real state-type powers.

## 8. Dual Power and Revolutionary Victory

In the industrialized capitalist countries, the main conditions for transforming a revolutionary situation, where organs of dual power have sprung up, into a revolutionary victory are the following:

a) A continuing mobilization—with spontaneous forms and initiatives impossible to specify in advance—of the great majority of the proletariat and working masses around organs of dual power arising to meet the need for solidifying their ranks, for democratically centralized organization, for protecting the masses and defending them politically, economically, and by force of arms against bourgeois repression.

b) The weakening and increasing paralysis of the organs of power belonging to the bourgeoisie, whose economic and financial means are more and more cut off by the successes of the struggle of the masses in the factories, the banks, the means of communication, etc., and whose subordinate and middle-level personnel feels itself more and more attracted by the revolutionary thrust of the proletariat, or at least neutralized in the decisive test of strength that is building up.

c) The receding and rapid disappearance of all the masses' illusions in intermediate solution, which, under the guise of maintaining dual power or putting together hybrid forms of power, prevent the destruction of the centers of bourgeois power, and thus pave the way for the liquidation of the organs of workers' power.

d) The existence of a revolutionary leadership capable of projecting and organizing the most daring initiatives on a wide scale, of meticulously following the progress the proletariat makes on the way to political maturity, of assembling the technical preconditions for the insurrection as soon as the majority of the workers are firmly won to the idea of taking power, and of creating psychological and political conditions such as to reduce to a minimum the adversary's will and capacity for resistance.

Contrary to what occurs in the less developed capitalist countries, the economic striking force of the proletariat in the industrialized countries is so great, and the social base of the bourgeoisie's power so narrow, that in the event of a revolutionary upsurge involving the great majority of the workers, the repressive apparatus can be almost totally paralyzed at the outset. This has been confirmed in all the important revolutionary upsurges in capitalist Europe since 1919. It is only by taking advantage of lack of determination, hesitation, and an absence of clear goals on the part of the proletariat that bourgeois reaction can launch a counterattack once the first storm has passed.

The revolutionary Marxist organization's revolutionary education of its own cadres and activists, its revolutionary propaganda in the vanguard, and its occasional exemplary agitation among broader masses must aim at preventing the onset of any such pause after the mass movement reaches its first peak, taking the adversary by surprise and paralyzing him, that would give the latter time to regroup his forces and prepare his countermove. Form-

ing organs of dual power, which are compelled to arm for the purposes of self-defense, and the taking over by the masses and their representative bodies of as many decisive material "hostages" as possible (means of communication, infrastructure, banks, industrial plants) constitute the most effective means of limiting the cost of the revolutionary victory, in both material and in human terms.

The idea spread by technocrats of the right as well as of the "left" (and sometimes even of the far left) to the effect that the technical complexity of economic and social life makes a proletarian revolution in this epoch if not impossible, at least much more difficult, is theoretically false, and has in practice been contradicted by the initial experience of most of the revolutionary upsurges in our century in the West. The more complex the economic mechanisms are, the more vulnerable they are to a widespread mass movement. The more the intricate machinery of the state apparatus has been technologically modernized, the more easily it can be paralyzed by mass action. The nerve centers of this machinery—power plants, banks and postal checking offices, telecommunication relay stations, radio and television transmitters, telephone and telegraph exchanges—can be taken over by the workers within minutes and used to advance the revolution. For capitalist reaction to substitute parallel centers or oust the workers from the others in order to use them to its own advantage requires political unity and determination on the part of the bourgeoisie, a reserve of fresh forces unaffected by the revolutionary process that it can send in, and a readiness to risk a general confrontation with millions of persons—factors nearly always absent at the outset of a mass revolutionary explosion.

Experience has also shown that the more intellectual labor is reintegrated into the productive process by the third technological revolution currently in progress, the greater the number of highly skilled scholars, engineers, and technicians who will pass over into the camp of the proletariat as soon as the revolution gets under way and make sure that the bourgeois side holds no "monopoly of knowledge" that can prevent the workers from running the productive apparatus and infrastructure in the interest of the popular masses.

Also completely contradicted by recent experience is the idea that the imperialist bourgeoisie and the reformist and Stalinist bureaucratic apparatuses have drawn the main lessons from the revolutionary explosions of the past, thereby making impossible—or at least more and more difficult—any repeat of these kinds of explosions. Underlying this idea is the view that such explosions are attributable to some "error" committed by the rulers and their servants on the eve of the blowup—too much rigidity and harshness, according to some; too much cowardice and a tendency to retreat and grant concessions, according to others.

In reality, the explosion of generalized mass struggles has deep objective roots in the social and political crisis confronting the regime. "Errors" by the rulers can contribute toward touching off such explosions only in the sense of determining the precise moment and occasion, not in the sense of actually causing them or of being able in the long run to avert them. On the contrary, the preceding phase of such explosions has in general been characterized by the successive—or combined—use of every

possible variant in policy on the part of the rulers—the repressive variant as well as the "reformist" variant. One of the factors precisely determining when the explosion will occur is the exhaustion of all these variants and the unconcealable impasse of bourgeois policy that results. The question therefore boils down to this: Is the objective scope of the crisis in capitalist social relations such that *in spite of* all the lessons the bourgeoisie and the reformist apparatuses within the workers' movement have learned from the past, similar blind-alleys *have to periodically* (though obviously not constantly, nor even every two or three years) reappear? Our answer to this question is an unequivocal Yes. It is based on the main lesson of European history since 1914 and arises from the very nature of the epoch—the epoch of the crisis and decline of the capitalist system.

### 9. *The Inadequacies of the Objective Factor*

The failure up to now either to direct the explosions of mass struggles in capitalist Europe into culminating in situations of dual power, or to bring about a revolutionary victory in cases where dual power was achieved (especially Spain 1936-37, and in part Germany 1923 and Italy 1919-20), is not the result, in the final analysis, either of the inherent strength of capitalism or of insufficient combativity on the part of the masses. It is essentially the consequence of *subjective deficiencies*—an insufficient level of class consciousness on the part of the proletariat and its revolutionary leadership. In the perspective in which revolutionary Marxists in capitalist Europe are presently working, *their main task remains to overcome these deficiencies.*

The concrete character of these subjective deficiencies during the present stage can be described precisely. In spite of the fact that the working class is beginning, in action, to go beyond its bureaucratic apparatuses, it is still having a great deal of difficulty developing forms of struggle and bodies for leading struggles that truly unite its forces and function independently (elected strike committees, general strike assemblies, federation and centralization of strike committees, etc.). It is still only beginning to break loose from the grip of an electoralist and parliamentarist conception of governmental and state power (this is both the result of prevailing bourgeois ideology and of three quarters of a century of opportunist practices and miseducation by most of the mass workers' organizations). During its initial phase, the radicalization of the proletariat results in fragmented struggles and an even more pronounced separation between those minority layers that are ready to engage in "tough" action, and the majority who continue to follow the established apparatus. The working masses, and even part of the vanguard, have not yet made a clear distinction between the objectives of reformist struggles (which can be coopted and assimilated within the framework of the capitalist system) and truly transitional and anticapitalist objectives (which lead to the creation of organs of dual power). For the great majority of workers, the question of arming the proletariat and of disarming the official and semiofficial repressive apparatus of the bourgeoisie remains an abstract and theoretical problem. They do not really see it as an indispensable necessity on the road to taking power.

We reject the two parallel illusions that up to now have



derailed or stifled so many revolutionary plans throughout the history of the imperialist countries: the spontaneist, opportunist, and tail-ending illusion, on the one hand; and the sectarian, propagandistic, and ultimatic illusion on the other.

The spontaneists have the illusion that by the very logic of their struggles, the working masses will come to remove these subjective deficiencies that in the past have blocked the victory of every revolutionary upsurge in the industrialized capitalist countries. The broadening and expansion of workers' struggles create the *precondition* for a rapid rise in the class consciousness; but they do not automatically ensure it. There is no reason to suppose that the masses, educated for decades in the spirit of respect for bourgeois parliamentarianism and the "electoral road to socialism," will be transformed, as if by magic, into adepts of the Leninist theory of the state simply because they have unleashed a general strike. It is even more improbable that just by occupying factories masses deprived for decades of all class-oriented political education will gain the capacity to put together a coherent program of transitional demands and to wage a successful fight for this program against the maneuvers of the bourgeoisie and the reformist apparatuses.

On the other hand, there is absolutely no reason to suppose that simply by increasing its numbers and expanding the circulation of its press a revolutionary vanguard organization can succeed through education and propaganda in raising the level of class consciousness among entire layers—let alone the majority—of the proletariat. Only individuals can absorb ideas through reading or study. The masses absorb ideas only through their experience in struggle. Any revolutionary propaganda divorced from the real experiences of proletarian struggle—on the pretext, say, that these experiences were too elementary, reformist, "purely" economic, etc., etc.—is condemned in advance to remain without effect on the course of history.

By defining the obstacle, it is easier to see how to overcome it. What makes the progressive elimination of the subjective deficiencies of the proletariat *objectively possible* is the opening up of a period of struggles taking on broader and broader dimensions, raising more and more social problems of various kinds, able little by little to politicize wider layers of the proletariat and the working masses, and which are unfolding under the conditions of a progressive regeneration of the labor movement (that is, of a shift in the relationship of forces between the vanguard and the traditional leaderships, both within the mass movement and within the traditional organizations themselves). This progressive regeneration need not, by the way, necessarily coincide with a reorganization of the workers' movement, although it will inevitably result in touching off at least a partial restructuring.

What makes a solution to the crisis of the subjective factor *subjectively attainable* is for the revolutionary Marxist organization to have a correct overall orientation (programmatically, strategically, and tactically), for it to increase its strength organizationally and politically (that is, to sink roots increasingly in the class), and for its revolutionary propaganda and agitation to gain increasing credibility by making a general political impact and scoring some initial successes here and there.

There is therefore a dialectical interrelationship between

the radicalization and the politicization of workers' struggles, the growth of the mass vanguard, the strengthening of the influence of revolutionary Marxists in these struggles, their increasing participation in workers' struggles, and the response to their general revolutionary propaganda and to the practical steps they take to multiply experiences of the workers assuming the leadership of their own struggles and to orient them toward transitional demands. It is this dynamic that will smash the barriers on the road to socialism one after the other. This dialectical interrelationship is one of active intervention and programmatic steadfastness, of initiating action and of mass education; it is one in which revolutionary propaganda leads to action.

#### 10. *Our Central Political Tasks*

The main political tasks that the revolutionary Marxist organizations must accomplish during the present stage flow from the whole preceding analysis. The following are the tasks whose achievement will stimulate the dynamic of mass struggles and the growth of class consciousness outlined under point 9:

a) Systematic intervention in all agitation among workers, in all strikes and campaigns around economic demands, striving to link up these actions to the general approach outlined in the transitional program—that is, to propagandize for a series of demands (essentially around the axis of the demand for workers' control) that objectively lead the workers to challenge the authority of the bosses and of the bourgeois state and to create organs of dual power.

b) Supporting the day-to-day struggles of the masses around all economic demands, even the most modest and "reformist" ones, to the extent that these struggles educate the workers to seek solutions through direct action and mass initiative, and push them in the direction of broadening and extending their struggles.

c) Popularizing and spreading so-called "qualitative" demands that arise out of mass struggles themselves and that either undermine the very foundations of capitalist market economy or serve as a powerful stimulus for solidarity and unity among all layers of the proletariat—i.e., equal wage raises for everybody; no speed-up; free quality public services, etc., etc.

d) Pressing for, spurring on, broadening, and—as soon as possible—extending examples of workers organizing struggles on their own (democratically elected strike committees; general strike assemblies, shop stewards democratically elected and recallable at any time, councils of shop stewards, etc.); these are a great school preparing the workers for the soviet-type bodies that will spring up.

e) Conducting a systematic propaganda campaign in the organized workers' movement around transitional demands and helping in the regeneration of this movement by getting these demands—especially the demand for workers' control—adopted by radicalizing factions in the trade-union movement and in the traditional workers' organizations.

f) Organizing a systematic internationalist propaganda campaign around the axis of solidarity with anti-imperialist struggles, solidarity with workers' struggles in other European countries, solidarity with immigrant workers

(in opposition to any form of racism and antiforeignism), and solidarity with the antibureaucratic struggles of the workers, students, and intellectuals in the Stalinized workers states.

g) Educating the workers' vanguard and broader layers of workers systematically in a non-electoralist and non-parliamentarian view of the question of power. Using propaganda for the slogan of a workers' government—including in its concrete form of government by the workers' organizations, as can be appropriate during particular moments of the political conjuncture—to project primarily the idea of a *government resulting from mass struggles and action*. The use of this slogan in a more electoral sense must be strictly limited to specific circumstances depending on particular conjunctures. Otherwise it threatens to run counter to one of the essential goals to be attained—the systematic destruction of electoralist illusions and reformist ideology.

h) Take credible steps to initiate unity: steps toward immediate unity of the entire vanguard in action around goals for which this unity of action is objectively necessary and possible, despite the various political and ideological differences running through it (cf. funeral for Pierre Overney in France); propaganda for a united front with the traditional organizations once a threshold in the relationship of forces within the workers' movement has been crossed; propaganda for a united front of the traditional organizations when the objective necessity presents itself (struggle against the fascist threat or the bonapartist dictatorship; defense of the right to strike and working-class freedoms, defense of important strikes that the bourgeoisie is trying to crush, etc.).

i) Through general propaganda, but also and especially by pointing to actions, incidents, and concrete events that have an obvious pedagogical value, to systematically educate the workers' vanguard and broader working-class layers on the need for armed self-defense against the violence of big capital, both in its extralegal variety (fascist gangs, private armed forces of the capitalists, secret police forces, strike-breakers) and its "legal" variety (police, riot squads, and armies). To undertake a campaign of antimilitarist propaganda, including in the bourgeois army itself.

j) Systematically popularizing our "socialist model"—our conception of socialist democracy, of a state based on workers' councils (councils of the working people), of democratically centralized (planned) self-management, of consciously organizing the withering away of the market categories by both gradual means and abrupt leaps forward. This model can inspire political activity in several ways. It can mobilize people against capitalism, strengthen the vanguard vis-a-vis the reformist and Stalinist apparatuses, and help to preserve the future soviet state against bureaucratic deviations.

*These central political tasks make up a coherent plan. The aim is to make sure that when the next explosion of mass struggle occurs—whether it takes the form of mass political strikes, a general strike, or a general strike involving an occupation of the factories, and no matter what the occasion and whatever sets it off—there will be a sufficient number of revolutionary worker cadres in the factories, and with enough influence and prestige, that the revolutionary Marxist organization will be established in enough places, and that the broadest layers of workers will have acquired enough experience in struggle so that organs of dual power will spring up in the*

*main factories and regions of the country, so that they will quickly federate into a single system of dual power (a system of the soviet type, even though its name and its origins might vary considerably), and so that the logic of a revolutionary situation can thereby fully unfold on all levels. In other words, we are working in the conviction that every success today in sinking revolutionary Marxist roots in the class, in carrying out propaganda for transitional demands, and in regenerating the workers' movement will result a few years from now in a cumulative and qualitative improvement in the preconditions for the spread of a system of organs of dual power.*

### III. THE CENTRAL PROBLEMS IN BUILDING SECTIONS OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL IN EUROPE AT THE PRESENT STAGE

#### 11. *Three Tactics*

The *tactic* of party-building to which the central tasks of the present stage correspond—winning hegemony within the mass vanguard, transforming our sections from propaganda groups into revolutionary political organizations in the process of sinking roots in the proletariat—is peculiar to the present stage. This is neither a tactic of entryism (which was by and large valid during the preceding phase) nor one of massive organic growth by huge influxes of members (which could become valid during a subsequent stage).

These three different tactics in party building—viewed in a non-mechanical way, that is, in combination with various transitional forms, such as fractions inside mass organizations, groups for sympathizers and contacts, etc., etc.—correspond in a fundamental sense to *three objective perspectives on the predominant form of radicalization*. The entryist tactic for building a revolutionary party proceeded from the hypothesis that the process of radicalization—of forming a new mass vanguard—was taking place for the most part within the traditional mass organizations. Such a hypothesis was shown to be correct in capitalist Europe in the period that extended from the early fifties until the beginning of 1969 (e.g., Bevanite left, followed by the Cousins tendency in the British Labor Party; Communist Youth and Ingrao tendency in the Italian CP; opposition tendencies and the UEC within the French CP, and Social-Democratic left within the SFIO, giving rise to the PSA and the PSU; Renard tendency inside the Belgian workers' movement; trade-union left and Communist opposition giving rise in Denmark to the SF; etc.).

The error committed in conceiving this tactic did not, therefore, lie in the objective perspective—which events have by and large confirmed—but in underestimating the numerical relationship between our own forces and those we could impel to break with the mass parties in a social climate where no revolutionary tensions had yet appeared.

The tactic of building the revolutionary party through massive organic growth proceeds from the hypothesis that this party already represents in itself a pole of attraction that can attract radicalized workers and intellectuals directly through its propaganda, its agitation, and its activity (including its united-front initiatives), with whole currents breaking away from the traditional organizations to join it. Such a situation, which is by and

large the kind in which the Western European Communist parties found themselves at the beginning of the twenties, around 1934-35, and again following the second world war, does not yet exist in the case of any revolutionary organizations on this continent today.

The tactic for building the revolutionary party which underlies our present orientation in capitalist Europe is based on the hypothesis that the process of radicalization is already for the most part unfolding outside of the traditional organizations, but that it is not yet taking place around the established pole of a revolutionary Marxist party, and that it also is having important repercussions—which could even become quantitatively decisive during a later stage—inside the traditional organizations. But the initiatives and general activity of the independent revolutionary Marxist organizations are already, at the present stage, decisive for the overall success of the process of radicalization at work both outside and inside the traditional organizations.

This tactic is based on a dialectical analysis of the relationship—at first glance, an intricate and even contradictory one—between the vanguard's need for ideological clarification and a regrouping and strengthening of its forces on the one hand, and the rate of progress of that section of the masses who are still largely following the traditional organizations, on the other. We have already emphasized the fundamental fact that today the former process in the long run determines the outcome of the latter as well. There will not be any extensive and decisive splits in the traditional organizations without the appearance of credible enough and strong enough poles outside of these organizations around which such splits can crystallize.

An important factor must be added here that makes it possible to lessen, and within the not too distant future, to resolve the contradictory nature of the tasks imposed by the present stage—namely the fact that in addition to the gradual change in the relationship of forces between the traditional bureaucratic apparatuses and the vanguard, a change is also taking place in the relationship between the traditional parties and the masses who continue to follow them. Today these relationships are even more ambiguous than they were during the post-war period. The bitter experiences of the past have not been erased from the memory of the workers. After the experience of four Labor governments since the war, those British workers who are still convinced that Wilson & Co. want to introduce socialism by means of parliamentary legislation have dwindled to a very small number. The number of French or Italian workers who see Social-Democratic ministers as forces capable of overthrowing capitalism is even smaller.

For every capitalist country in Europe a more precise analysis is needed of the specific relationship between the proletarian masses and the traditional workers' parties. Such an analysis would, in any case, show that if the gap between the consciousness of the vanguard and the broader masses is still large, it is nonetheless smaller than that indicated by election results reflecting traditional loyalties and lesser-evil reflexes. There is less of a difference between the ability of the vanguard, on the one hand, and of the broader masses on the other to outflank the reformists and the Khrushchevite neoreformists in action, than there is between the levels of consciousness of these two groups.

The tactic for building revolutionary parties suited to the present stage of working-class radicalization must be based on an analysis of these concrete processes.

## 12. *The Uneven Development of the Radicalization*

In the same way as we must attach a prime importance to the dialectical relationship between the "radicalization of the vanguard and of the broader masses," so too the dialectical relationship between the radicalization of different layers of the population ready for revolutionary action takes on a great importance for building our organizations. This dialectical relationship, reflected in the dialectical relationships of areas of activity, comprises the following elements:

a) During the initial phase of the present social crisis, the broadest political radicalization developed within the university and high-school student milieu. Independently of the ups and downs in the student movement proper in the universities and high schools—that is, the movement around the social and material problems specific to this milieu—a broad and highly politicalized vanguard has crystallized among the student youth, oriented toward general political problems, primarily problems of solidarity with the colonial revolution and anti-imperialist movements throughout the world.

After May 1968 and, more generally, after the revival of workers' struggles throughout Europe, an irreversible turn has taken place in this milieu everywhere in the world. This turn is being imposed today primarily by intervening in workers' struggles and by the perspectives of these struggles. In view of the continual renewal of the student population, and in view of the continuing explosion on campuses, it remains both possible and necessary to politicalize younger leaves by means of anti-imperialist propaganda and action, above all in periods of ebb in workers' struggles. Demands peculiar to the university and high-school student milieu continue to provide a ferment of agitation and organization that can radicalize the less politicalized layers. But the capacity of revolutionary Marxists to bring these strata to a general understanding of revolutionary program and to the revolutionary party depends on the overall activity of the revolutionary Marxist organization and its political initiatives, as well as the extent and effectiveness of its intervention in the working class.

In the present conditions of the reconstruction of the workers' movement, of the expansion of the vanguard, and growing politicalization, it is becoming easier and easier to move from supporting the specific demands of university and high-school students to upholding the revolutionary Marxist program in its entirety.

b) The most important phenomenon is the radicalization of the working class. This, however, is developing unevenly. The growing militancy of the class has not been accompanied by a corresponding politicalization. The radicalization is the most extensive among the "natural leaders of the class"—the worker and trade-union activists who are detonating and leading militant and wildcat strikes, who are constituting the nuclei of class-struggle tendencies within the unions, who are the principal bearers of the radicalization within the traditional workers' organizations (first of all, the unions). The increasing number of examples where the bureaucratic apparatuses have been outflanked

as a result of the initiative given by these vanguard worker militants shows how widespread and important this development is. This radicalization is often limited to more advanced conceptions regarding methods of struggle and immediate objectives and divorced from a clear understanding of political problems, notably the question of power.

But in the present stage of recruiting these working-class leaders is creating manifold problems in the revolutionary organization. These arise from the different levels of politicalization of these worker elements and activists coming out of the high-school and university student movements; different life styles and levels of activity; different interests; etc. The older workers remain less ready in the present stage to join a revolutionary Marxist organization even if it has already shown its effectiveness in intervening in the class struggle.

The section of the working class in which the most important gains can be made at the present time, both in recruitment and in creating a revolutionary Marxist political periphery in the proletariat, is thus the layer of young working-class leaders and activists, those who personify the new mass vanguard that is developing within the working class, who have already won their first stripes in working-class struggles, are already respected as trade-union builders, and are already winning influence in the eyes of their older workmates.

c) A phenomenon becoming widespread in all the capitalist countries of Europe is the appearance of rebellious young workers and apprentices who represent a kind of extension of the revolt of the student youth into the working class proper. It is vital for the European sections of the Fourth International to respond to this radicalization and win hegemony in this stratum of the youth. There is no mechanical separation between the radicalization of the student youth on the one hand and the apprentices and young workers on the other. The average level of the politicalization and consciousness of the latter categories has risen considerably in recent years, above all in the big metropolitan centers. In many big plants, the young working class strata represent an element less easily controlled by the bureaucratic apparatuses and more likely to move into action boldly and to express out loud what masses of older workers are thinking, half hopefully, half skeptically. The struggle for revolutionary Marxist hegemony within the new mass vanguard is in large part a struggle for winning the radicalized working-class youth.

d) Besides the main currents of radicalization affecting the working class and the student youth, there is a secondary current of radicalization manifesting itself in the petty-bourgeois milieu—the technical "new middle strata," the scientific and artistic circles, and in some countries, notably France, the young peasants. Without shifting their principal focuses of activity, the revolutionary Marxist organizations must keep a close watch on this current, offering these sectors the perspective of our socialist "model," which answers to their fundamental concerns, and trying to attract their most advanced elements into our own ranks. Forming ad hoc bodies or publishing ad hoc magazines might be useful in reaching this milieu. But the primary thing is to attract them by our full program and our political initiatives.

Within the mass vanguard that has appeared in the countries of capitalist Europe, we must make a distinction between the section of unorganized elements (unorganized, that is, except in mass organizations like trade unions) who are mobilizable for broad struggles and demonstrations essentially but do not take the path of building specifically vanguard organizations, and those elements grouped in vanguard organizations. Little by little, a new organized far left is taking the place of the "political mass movement" of preceding years (which was based primarily on a still united high-school and university student movement).

The organization of this new far left has developed in two stages. The first period was dominated by tendencies that crystallized under the influence of developments in the world revolution (assimilated critically or uncritically, depending on the specific case) and of the first spontaneous reflexes produced by first reawakening of independent working-class activity. In this stage, we can distinguish, in general, three currents: the spontaneist current, the Maoist current, and the Trotskyist current (with a few intermediary phenomena, i.e., Mao-spontaneism). The Maoism that largely predominated in this phase in certain countries (above all, Italy, Sweden and Norway, but also partly in West Germany) was a naive Maoism. It was based largely on the vague formulas of the cultural revolution, which the radicalized student left thought reflected its own concerns and solutions. Orthodox, uncritical Maoism, taking its inspiration from Stalin as well as Mao, has remained marginal, like those currents that have kept their bridges open to the traditional SPs and CPs, which are rejected in toto as "betrayers" and "revisionists." The only exceptions are Holland and Finland, where the CPs continue to influence an appreciable section of the student movement, thanks notably to their role in workers' struggles.

During the second phase, a more political, less naive differentiation has been taking place, helped along by the sudden right turn in the foreign policy of the People's Republic of China (e.g., Bangla Desh, Ceylon, Sudan, Nixon's visit to Peking) and the Lin Piao affair. Naive and vague Maoism, and its extreme form, Mao-spontaneism are experiencing a definite decline. Pure spontaneism which rejects any concept of a vanguard organization, has been reabsorbed into more classical, more marginal anarchist and semi-anarchist formations. Political currents have evolved or are in the process of evolving toward the following main physiognomies.

a) Classical ultraleftist currents (or a third-period Stalinist or Bordigist type), rejecting as "capitalist" not only the USSR but China, rejecting the idea that there is any difference between bourgeois democracy and fascism, and often rejecting the idea that there is any need for working in the unions (e.g., Potere Operaio in Italy).

b) Ultraleft Maoist currents (like Cause du Peuple in France), which combine a general misunderstanding of the organized workers' movement with classical ultraleft positions (of the third period type) with an analogous position regarding the USSR, but which at the same time approve (with some minor criticisms) the course of the Chinese bureaucracy.

c) Originally ultraleft currents evolving toward centrism,

with large openings toward the mass CPs and SPs, which limit working-class agitation to immediate demands and raise the tactic of the united front to the level of a strategic principle. (The KFML in Sweden, the International Socialists in Britain, Bandera Roja in Spain).

d) "Purified" and "orthodox" Maoist currents evolving toward neo-Stalinism and aligning themselves uncritically with all the diplomatic maneuvers of the Chinese bureaucracy. This current is rapidly declining everywhere (the German KPD and the Unione in Italy).

e) Currents that might be called "sophisticated semi-Maoists" or "half Trotskyistic Maoists" of the type of Avanguardia Operaia in Italy, Neues Rotes Forum in Heidelberg, or Revolution in France, which while taking their distance from the Maoist foreign policy the lingering Stalinist odors of the Orthodox Maoist groups, are trying to hold onto an eclectic political orientation from the previous period, based on a sentimental longing for "revolutionary unity" or else a "third current in the international Communist movement." The demand for "theoretical depth" advanced by this current in reality represents an opportunistic refusal to defend a revolutionary Marxist program for fear of being identified with "despised and outmoded Trotskyism." In a general sense, it is the uneven rate of radicalization between the student youth and the rebelling young workers on the one hand, and the organized workers' movement, on the other, that is at the root of all the deviations of these currents. They are characterized fundamentally not by their incomprehension not only of the organized workers' movement as such but also of the forms and dynamic of the differentiation going on within it.

#### 14. *The Decline of Centrism and the Reorganization of the Workers Movement*

This reorganization of the European far left coincides with two phenomena that determine its limits and prefigure its dynamic—the rapid decline of the centrist formations that emerged at the beginning of the 1960s (disappearance of the PSIUP), the breakup of the PSU in France and the VS in Denmark, the decline of the PSP in the Netherlands and the SF in Norway), the revival of the influence of the traditional organizations in a not inconsiderable sector of the vanguard (the CP in Great Britain and Italy, the Social Democracy in West Germany and to some extent in Sweden).

The revolutionary Marxists struggling for political hegemony within the new vanguard cannot reject all of this organized far left as simply "ultraleftists." They continue to advocate unity in action by revolutionists for precise objectives and at precise moments (e.g., the funeral of Pierre Overney in France), when these objectives coincide with the real interest of the working class and its vanguard. The revolutionary Marxists are striving, as the political differentiation develops, to become the principal pole of regroupment for the far left on the basis of their political analyses (China, the USSR, permanent revolution, workers' democracy, their attitude toward the unions, transitional demands, the organization of workers' struggles, workers' democracy, their "model" of socialism, etc.), which have been confirmed by the events, and on the basis of their growing foothold in the working class.

At the same time, the revolutionary Marxists are deliberately trying to bridge the gap that developed in the

preceding period between the far left and the organized workers' movement. In this they have a dual objective: To reduce the risks of the far left finding itself isolated in the face of repression by the bourgeois state—which in these circumstances would be largely successful—and to bring the weight of the far left to bear in order to radicalize the organized workers movement that is in the process of regeneration. In this regard, specific united campaigns involving important sections of the organized workers' movement and the new far left play a vital role. This aim is best served by the campaign in defense of the Vietnamese revolution; the campaign in defense of the victims of repression; the campaign in defense of the unions' right to strike and freedom of collective bargaining, and more generally the campaign in defense of democratic rights that have been undermined or openly attacked by the bourgeoisie.

The role of pivot that the revolutionary Marxists are seeking to play between the new far left and the organized workers' movement by no means represents a centrist scheme of balancing on electoral combinations or interbureaucratic agreements, as the PSU and PSIUP have done. To the contrary, it represents a profound understanding of the dialectical interrelationship that dominates the whole present phase: the interaction through manifold intermediary stages between a mass vanguard forming and going into action, and radicalization in the traditional organizations (a classical example in this regard is what has been happening in Great Britain since the start of the struggle against the Tories' antistrike bill). While we are convinced that the Social Democratic, Stalinist, and trade-union bureaucracies remain an essential roadblock on the path to the socialist revolution, a roadblock that must be shattered, as the workers' struggles broaden and radicalize, by the pressure of rising class consciousness and the strengthening of the revolutionary-Marxist organizations. We are equally convinced that no revolutionary party will see the light of day, that no generalized system of dual power bodies can arise from these struggles, without mass currents breaking off from the traditional leaderships on the basis of their own experience. The precise tactic the revolutionary Marxists adopt toward the organized workers' movement, of whose correctness they try to convince broader sections of the new far-left vanguard, has the objective of stimulating, of facilitating, and of politically orienting this polarization and splitting-off process.

The period we have entered into since 1968—with differences from country to country—is characterized by the fact that the masses are tending periodically to unleash vast struggles overflowing the channels of the traditional organizations and that initiatives by these organizations are no longer indispensable for the spread of such battles. But, on the other hand, the masses are still not capable of projecting general political solutions, and thus of posing the question of *political power*, independently of these traditional organizations. Our orientation of "unity in action plus outflanking the bureaucrats" takes into account these two sides of the reality, thereby avoiding the twin traps of opportunist tail-ending on the Lambertist model and sectarian isolation.

#### 15. *Sectors and Forms of Intervention*

Transforming the sections of the Fourth International

from propaganda groups into revolutionary political organizations which, as a result of winning political hegemony within the new mass vanguard, will be on the way to achieving a foothold in the working class, calls for recruiting hundreds, and in certain countries, thousands of new members. The objective is to create a political and organizational striking force that can serve as the springboard for this transformation.

Gaining a foothold in the working class itself raises the problem of the relationship between the numerically reinforced revolutionary organization and the broader vanguard sectors (in the working class, the student youth, and other radicalizing sectors) that the revolutionary Marxists influence and seek to direct politically but which are not ready to join our sections or, if they did join them en masse, would threaten to undermine the political unity and programmatic foundations of our organizations. There are two sides to the problem—contact and sympathizer organizations and stable alliances.

In the student youth sector and the radicalized petty-bourgeois layers, contact and sympathizer groups are most suitable for broadening the sphere of influence and activity of our sections, at the same time as enabling the youth who have recently come to activity based on the full revolutionary program to demonstrate political seriousness and consistent activism. By nature these organizations would be broad with a large amount of turnover. While heavy turnover is disastrous for a revolutionary-Marxist organization, it does not threaten structures whose precise aim is to select out the serious revolutionary activists from a mass of people who are active only sporadically. The broader the mass involved in this selection process, the more effective the process will be and the more substantial its results. Thus, we must not artificially limit the expansion of these contact and sympathizer organizations (like the *Taupe Rouge*, the *Red Mole Circles*, the local groups of the *JGS*, the shop groups, etc.) nor apply to them in practice the standards demanded of new members.

While in specific circumstances this type of transmission structure may be extended to sections of young workers, it is not suited to creating the basis of confidence and mutual collaboration necessary for continuous activity among workers. Besides our sections forming cells in the plants, which requires a base in the working class, we need to form permanent bodies linking revolutionary-Marxist militants and worker and trade-union activists who agree with the revolutionists on a program for their plant but are not ready to engage in continuous political activity based on the full revolutionary-Marxist program. The most adequate bodies for this purpose are trade-union tendencies or worker groups in factories.

Just as trade-union tendencies have proven historically to be instruments of continuous revolutionary activity, so "struggle committees" are appearing again and again as purely conjunctural instruments. Revolutionary Marxists favor creating such committees for precise objectives, such as preparing for a union campaign or preparing for a strike. But they will try to convince their fellow fighters that transforming such committees into permanent bodies that would continue to exist outside periods of acute struggle is condemned to failure. Such formations shrink rapidly and threaten to cut off the most militant activists from

the broader mass by leading them to act in practice like a small minority union or like a semi- or subpolitical group. The basic orientation of the revolutionary-Marxists toward these "struggle committees" in the factories is to transform the potential for militancy and activism that emerges in every bargaining campaign, militant strike, antibureaucratic struggle in a plant, into a trade-union tendency that will open up a fight for democracy in the union, for the members taking back control of the union—and, as soon as the relationship of forces permits, for class-struggle militants taking the leadership of the union.

Just as it is necessary in periods of struggle to outflank the trade-union organizations without fear of possible sanctions in order to create a working class base, so in periods of ebb or indifference on the part of the rank and file it is advisable to avoid confrontations with the union bureaucracy.

The intervention of revolutionary-Marxists in other radicalized groups (women, artists, scholars, users of public services, tenants, and groups defending the ecology) can give rise to analogous problems. The priority of winning a base in the working class and strengthening the organization and its general political activity has consequences for the involvement of revolutionary Marxists in these sectors. The revolutionary-Marxists will organize themselves into communist factions operating within mass movements or specific existing groups and seek to bring the most advanced elements from these radicalized sectors first into transmission groups of the *Taupe Rouge* type, and then to recruit them to the revolutionary Marxist organization, on the basis of three types of activity—propagandizing for our full program; agitating for immediate and long-term solutions most suited to the needs of these sectors, and at the same time following a firmly revolutionary anticapitalist orientation in harmony with the socialist "model" we support, advocating forms of organizing and mobilizing that stress self-organization, direct action, linking up with the struggles of the working class, and the convergence of these struggles for workers' control and various forms of struggling for control over society.

#### *IV. THE TYPE OF ORGANIZATION MOST SUITED TO THE PRESENT CAPABILITIES OF REVOLUTIONISTS IN CAPITALIST EUROPE*

##### *16. The Renewal of the European Sections of the Fourth International*

In the present stage starting in 1967-68, the Fourth International began a turn toward independent activity aimed at winning political hegemony in the new vanguard. Since its sections had undergone a process of overspecialization in entryist work, they generally went about making this shift in too slow and stiff a way. The turn was carried out in the best conditions everywhere there was a youth organization led by revolutionary Marxists existing independently that could "skirt" the problem of a section identified in the eyes of the vanguard with an entryist orientation.

On the other hand, there was a real danger that youth

organizations lacking a sufficient number of experienced Trotskyist cadres would let themselves be caught up in a sectarian (or spontaneist) tendency to underestimate and misjudge the organized workers movement and transmit these pressures coming from a petty-bourgeois social origin that were typical of a large part of the new far-left vanguard during the first phase into the Fourth International itself. This danger subsists, moreover, in those countries where this evolution has occurred, or is in the process of occurring several years behind countries where the mass vanguard is the most extensive (France, Italy, Great Britain, Spain).

For these two reasons, the Fourth International opted for a rather rapid fusion between the youth organizations that in reality were substituting themselves for the revolutionary-Marxist organizations that did not function within the new far left, and the old sections which had kept a varying—but in most cases appreciable—number of experienced Trotskyist cadres rooted in the organized workers' movement. This pragmatic solution has paid off in all cases where it has been applied. It has permitted a considerable increase in our numerical forces, as well as a broadening of our following in the mass vanguard, without the loss of positions or prestige in the organized workers movement—in fact quite to the contrary. It has enabled us to avoid grave political errors—minor ones of course have been inevitable—as a result of a sudden expansion of our forces and our tasks. The only case where this integration was not carried out in time (Italy) is where we suffered heavy losses, losing the major part of the youth under our influence, along with part of the older Trotskyist cadres.

The position adopted thus opposes building or long maintaining hybrid revolutionary youth organizations which, in certain contexts and in view of the relationship of forces, would continue to function as substitutes for adult revolutionary organizations and bear many of the failings typical of the radical student milieu. But this position is by no means opposed in principle to building genuine *youth* organizations that would confine themselves to the specific tasks of youth work on the basis of the sphere of activity, base, and influence already achieved by adult revolutionary organizations. The possibility for taking a turn to form (or rebuild) such a youth organization thus depends strictly on the relationship of forces, that is, the influence that the adult organization has already acquired in the vanguard, its base in the working class, and the number of cadres that can be put at the disposal of the youth organization. As long as it has not reached the critical threshold in forces and roots in the working class necessary to attempting such a project, the adult revolutionary organization will strive to organize sympathizer groupings specifically adapted to the youth, such as were mentioned above.

A special problem is raised by increasing opportunities for members or sympathizers of revolutionary-Marxist organizations to win positions of leadership in youth organizations that are not specifically revolutionary (trade-union youth groups, high school and university student organizations, etc.) and even to create such organizations under revolutionary-Marxist political hegemony. In each concrete case, it will be necessary to assess these opportunities for investing forces by weighing the gains that could be made (especially in winning a base in the

unions and the plants, achieving mass influence on specific issues, and taking part in reconstructing the organized workers' movement) against the gaps such a deployment threatens to create elsewhere (notably in reducing the number of cadres of leadership ability ready to assume the tasks of leading the organization or directing its open external activities).

### 17. *Three Priorities in Employing our Forces*

Every small revolutionary organization faces a multiplying number of tasks that overstrain its strength and grow as it grows. The essential job of any leadership worthy of the name is to set an order of priorities based on general analyses and perspectives and resist temptations to depart from it in an impressionistic way, under the pressure of new opportunities turning up in this or that sector.

Of course, this order of priorities must be periodically reviewed and revised critically in the light of an assessment of the results achieved and possible changes in the objective situation (conditions in the organized workers' movement also being an element of the objective situation from the *standpoint of the revolutionary-Marxist organizations*). Adhering to these priorities must also be combined with the necessary tactical flexibility so as to take advantage of abrupt turns and major opportunities that suddenly open up. But such flexibility must play the same role as utilizing reserves in military strategy. It cannot substitute for the strategy itself. Otherwise, the basic orientation, the order of priorities, is lost, making way for impressionistic leaps from one "opening" to another.

From all the preceding analysis, there flow three priorities for employing our forces, which, moreover, are closely linked together:

—primitive accumulation of forces, to make it possible to reach the takeoff point of effective political intervention on a national scale, without which winning hegemony within the mass vanguard is absolutely unachievable.

—making a central political breakthrough that would transform our numerically increased forces into a revolutionary political striking force, and at the same time keeping them from being worn away in actions confined to single issues and sectors, which would threaten to result in their being caught up in workerist, tail-ending, spontaneist, and other deviations.

—winning a growing base in the workers' and trade-union movement that would enable us to transform the numerically and politically strengthened revolutionary organizations into a permanent factor in raising the level of consciousness and organization of the most militant layers of the workers, into a driving force in preparing the way for future explosions of mass struggles culminating in a system of dual power.

From these combined priorities—which are not the same as the ones in the preceding period and are not yet those of a struggle to win the control of the broad masses away from the traditional parties—flow the conclusions about the type of organization needed in the present stage, the deployment of our forces, and way of operating and intervening, etc. These questions are eminently concrete and take on a special character for every section, depending on the point reached in the primitive accumulation of

forces, in acquiring the capacity for making a central political breakthrough, in winning a base in the working class. Nonetheless, a certain number of general rules can already be discerned from the experiences of the last four years:

a) In the present stage, in view of the nature of the mass vanguard and the new highly politicalized far left, no serious progress can be accomplished by means of febrile activism and superficial, primitive agitation. What is absolutely essential is to demonstrate the superiority of our analyses, to defend and illustrate our full program, to stand out as the main center of living Marxism in our time. Anything that is not won on this basis, especially in the student and intellectual milieu, will not be definitively won. From this logically flows the importance of cadre training and theoretical and political elaboration on a high level.

b) The vanguard does not recognize, has never recognized, and will never recognize self-proclaimed "new revolutionary leaderships." This status must be won by the overall activity of the organization. In this regard, it is vital not to let ourselves be deceived and to distinguish carefully between the influence and prestige that can be won by revolutionary Marxist militants *in a specific milieu* in the mass movement on the basis of their individual talents and leadership abilities, and the influence of the revolutionary Marxist organization as such on sections of the working class and on the basis of the organization's full program. This second kind of influence is by no means the result of the former, although, among other factors, the respect won by individuals is an essential element in winning general political influence. The most striking example of this distinction is presented by the Communist Party of Great Britain. During the last twenty years, this party has seen thousands of its members win dominant positions in the lower echelons of the trade unions (enabling them to lead major struggles in the last three years), while its political influence on the British working class is doubtlessly at the lowest point since 1940.

Revolutionary Marxist organizations the size of the present sections of the Fourth International cannot hope to win a general political following in the working class as a whole in one fell swoop. But they can, after reaching a certain threshold, win a political following among a layer of young vanguard workers by means of two tactics that must be used as much as possible in the present stage: (1) organizing national political campaigns on carefully chosen issues that correspond to the concerns of the vanguard, do not run against the current of mass struggles, and offer a chance for demonstrating a capacity for effective initiative, even if still modest, by our sections; (2) our sections' ability to centralize their forces on a regional and national level in order to break the wall of silence and indifference surrounding certain exemplary workers' struggles, wildcat actions and to start off solidarity movements.

c) The presence within the working class, in the plants, and the unions of thousands of elements that have an oppositionist attitude toward the traditional organizations and can be drawn into important struggles is confirmed by all the experience of the last years. But these workers are scattered, isolated from one another, often disillusioned by their experiences in new organizations into which they

have let themselves be drawn unthinkingly, almost always under the pressure of the threat of repression from the bosses and the trade-union bureaucracy. It is illusory to think that we can absorb these people into our sections in one stroke. Individual cases aside, they will only become a social base for revolutionary Marxist organizations to the extent that these organizations demonstrate their political and organizational seriousness. And such seriousness involves, in addition to the tasks mentioned above, *regular, persistent, long-term intervention in the plants and unions regardless of the immediate results and regardless of the ups and downs in the class struggle.*

#### 18. Centralized Leadership and Autonomy of Activity

The priorities that flow from the whole preceding analysis imply a certain type of revolutionary organization, not just as regards the hierarchy of tasks but the structure of the organization itself.

More than ever the political and organizational strength, the stability and continuity, of the leadership are decisive in successfully carrying out the tasks of the present stage. Without this type of leadership, neither a choice of priorities, nor a correct analysis of the objective situation and its tendencies of evolution, nor a correct deployment of our forces can be achieved. Without the presence of such a central leadership, a sudden numerical growth, the influx of a large number of young militants, would rapidly lead to the development of regionalist and localist tendencies, which would result in grave political errors arising out of incorrect generalizations from particular situations or tendencies. This would also lead to grave political crises, since the need for high-level centralized political elaboration would be felt by all revolutionary militants in connection with the objective tasks of the present stage themselves.

Creating and strengthening such leaderships, for all our sections, therefore takes a top priority, preceding all others. What needs to be stressed is not a purely administrative centralization but political centralization of the Leninist type, which would make it possible to unify the experience of the entire organization, to test the correctness of its analysis in the light of practical experience nationally and internationally. This in turn would make it possible to concentrate forces at the right time in the most opportune sector, that is, where the effectiveness of a given number of activists would be multiplied. Even the individual effectiveness of these activists, moreover, would be greatly reduced by the absence of a centralized leadership and discipline.

Such a central political leadership needs a minimum national apparatus in order to play its role both within the organization and in the working masses. It must reach out through a series of regional and local relays, through secondary leaderships already formed or in formation. It must have a central press with a minimum readership and material and financial base (a central print shop and regional apparatuses) that would make it possible to intervene rapidly into strikes and various mass movements and support in practice the national campaigns of the organization.

On the other hand, with the growth of the organization, the multiplication of its tasks, and the previously men-



tioned priorities of the leading bodies, we must aim for more and more independent activity on the part of the cells, the local and regional leaderships, working committees, and fractions in specific milieus and in specific struggles that do not have national ramifications. The absence of such autonomy threatens to create continual bottlenecks at the level of leading bodies and would tend to interfere with or even overshadow their main role, which is *general political elaboration and setting priorities*. To the contrary, by encouraging such independent analysis and activity at the lower levels, the revolutionary Marxist organization will be transformed into a permanent school for leaders, which is, moreover, indispensable if it is to become the nucleus of a mass revolutionary party.

The national leadership cannot encourage such a selecting out of secondary cadres by constantly substituting itself for regional and local leaderships, or by intervening constantly in work commissions and trade-union tendencies. In this regard, it must concentrate on the above mentioned tasks of political centralization and conceive of its job with respect to the intermediary cadres as one of *training and selections*, which involves, of course, making critical balance sheets periodically. Expanding the central committees of the sections, getting these bodies to function as collective instruments of high-level political elaboration and education, calling periodic national conferences on special subjects, and organizing leadership schools will help solve the problem of training intermediate cadres.

The problem of the press is similar. For a whole period the priority task may be to create or strengthen national weeklies—the organizations' principal national instrument of political intervention. But at the same time, meeting the organizational priorities mentioned above creates an imperious necessity at certain stages of growth for a network of regularly appearing plant papers, complemented by local organs in regions or localities where a stronger base exists. In the same way, the need for a theoretical journal in some sections, where the milieu the organization is working in and the nature of its ongoing propaganda organ make it essential to present supplementary political and theoretical analysis of a higher level to a broader public. Coherent structuring of this whole press system depends on the strength of the organization and should remain under the control of the leadership, subject to critical examination at regular intervals.

Similar considerations apply also to problems of finances and the material base of the organization. Solving the central financial problems of the organization (assuring adequate functioning of the national leadership, publication of the central political organ of the section, a minimum of full-timers and technical apparatus) takes top priority. But above a certain threshold it becomes an essential precondition for realizing the benefits of the influence that has been won and for continued progress by the organization to leave the regional and local bodies their own financial resources and for there to be a minimum technical apparatus at this level—and in a later stage, regional and local full timers. In this area also the national leadership must follow a flexible system of priorities, subject to periodic review, so as to prevent choices being made in a routine way, under the impact of pressures from the outside, or without taking account of the interests of the organization as a whole.

The perspective unfolding is one of rather rapid progressive growth of the revolutionary Marxist organizations, in a climate favoring radicalization of the working class and the gradual infusion of the revolutionary program into an increasingly broad vanguard. The bourgeoisie is also aware of this perspective, just as it realizes the grave risks involved for the survival of its system and its state. It would, of course, be illusory to think that the bourgeoisie is going to sit by passively and watch the developing and strengthening of the revolutionary Marxist organizations.

The two principal dangers threatening the revolutionary Marxist organizations in this regard are the following: a) A *selective state repression* aimed essentially at the far left, possibly going as far as outlawing it (the way would be paved by a campaign of stigmatising the far left as "criminals," like the one unleashed in France at the time of the vote on the "antiwrecker law," in Italy around the Valpreda and Feltrinelli affairs; and in Germany under the pretext of the Baader-Meinhof affair). This danger arises from a precise conjuncture in which the bourgeoisie considers the relationship of forces still unfavorable for unleashing a massive repression against the entire labor movement but seeks to prepare for this by a repression against the far left alone. The foundations must be laid now for the counterattack by creating a climate of general solidarity against repression, of defending all the democratic rights of the workers' movement, and of de facto recognition that the far left organizations are part of the organized workers' movement. Our fundamental line for blocking this first danger is to prevent the extreme left from becoming isolated from the mass workers' organizations.

b) The danger of *extralegal repression* at the hands of hired gangsters acting as supplementary police, private security forces of employers, and armed semifascists. The weapon, already used extensively by the Brazilian, Uruguayan, Argentine, and Mexican bourgeoisies, has been imported to Europe via Franco Spain and the Greece of the colonels, and its use is spreading today in France and Italy. The danger of this method of terror being introduced into most capitalist European countries cannot be underestimated.

The most effective response to this danger is to revive the reflexes of self-defense and to lay the basis for workers' militias arising out of worker and student strike pickets. But it has already proved indispensable in Spain and France for the revolutionary organizations themselves to take initiatives in self-defense. This may be the case tomorrow in other European countries. Such initiatives must be conceived and executed in such a way that they will be understood and endorsed by the workers, link up with the workers' organizations' tradition of self-defense against the fascists, and serve as exemplary strongpoints to encourage more massive forms of self-defense on the part of the working class.

The existence of these dangers, as well as the logic of an objective situation that can shift rapidly toward prerevolutionary or revolutionary conditions, obliges the sections of the Fourth International to give special attention to the problems of security and to systematically setting up an apparatus that can enable the organization

to continue functioning with the maximum profitability when the imperialist repression seeks to drive it underground. The more effective these responses and preparations are, the more the bourgeoisie will hesitate to go further down the road of repression or of using semi-fascist bands.

The spirit in which our sections will have to educate the entire mass vanguard, moreover, is this: to show the bourgeoisie in practice that the price it will have to pay for any attempt to establish an open dictatorship will be a civil war in which both camps will use arms. History has shown that from any point of view, such an eventuality is preferable to an institutionalized civil war in the form of a bloodthirsty dictatorship where the bourgeois camp murders and tortures at will, while the proletariat and the worker militants, disarmed and disoriented, stand by helplessly and watch the massacre of their own.

## 20. *Build the International Simultaneously with the National Organizations*

Building revolutionary-Marxist organizations in capitalist Europe is inseparably linked to building the Fourth International as an international organization. The two tasks interpenetrate, both from the standpoint of the objective needs of the class struggle and of the specific job of strengthening the Trotskyist current within the mass vanguard.

The internationalization of workers' struggles is an inevitable trend produced by the growing internationalization of capital. The existence of the Common Market, the international interpenetration of capital, the weight of multinational corporations owning factories in many European countries, the trends to more advanced economic and monetary integration in capitalist Europe—all these factors bring international collective bargaining and contracts, international wage actions and Europe-wide strikes more and more onto the agenda.

The revolutionary Marxists who years ago foresaw and predicted this evolution must not limit themselves to supporting or encouraging trade-union initiatives that go in this direction. They must give the indispensable push to move this internationalization of the class struggle beyond the stage of being confined to a purely economic level and specific sections and sectors of workers. The propaganda of the revolutionary Marxists for a socialist United States of Europe—for solidarity not only with economic strikes abroad but with the political struggle of the Spanish, Portuguese, Greek, and Irish proletariat; and with the anti-imperialist fighters of the deformed and degenerated workers' states must lead to organizational results. It must lead on the one hand to broad international fronts of solidarity, and, on the other, to training the first revolutionary-Marxist cadres, forming the first Trotskyist nuclei, and reinforcing the sections of the Fourth International in a series of countries. Likewise the revolutionary Marxists must take concrete initiatives in those sectors where multinational firms have a decisive weight.

A powerful revival of the workers' reflexes of international solidarity, moreover, plays a major role in the development of the class struggle in Europe in the present period in the following ways:

a) To neutralize the negative effects of the internationalization of capital on the efficacy of national strikes, effects

that will become more and more important in the years to come.

b) To accelerate the integration of the immigrant workers into the phalanx of the workers' movement and to block attempts by the bourgeoisie to utilize racism and anti-foreignism aimed at these workers as a weapon for dividing the proletariat, attempts which also are going to increase.

c) To prepare the masses of the European proletariat for any attempt at counterrevolutionary intervention against a socialist revolution winning victory first in a single country of capitalist Europe, preparation that must be undertaken in advance and in a systematic way as the proletariat returns to its internationalist traditions.

In the broad framework of their general tasks of solidarity toward the struggles of all oppressed peoples, the European sections of the Fourth International bear a special responsibility to:

a) Defend the Vietnamese revolution by maintaining a high degree of mobilization of the vanguard in support of the victory of this revolution so as to neutralize to some extent the pressures of the Soviet and Chinese bureaucracies on the Vietnamese leadership to seek a compromise with Washington.

b) To defend the Irish struggle against the attempts of British imperialism to isolate it from the British and European proletariat and crush it militarily.

These internationalist political tasks, moreover, impose specific organizational tasks on the revolutionary Marxists of capitalist Europe: tighter coordination in the day-to-day work of the European sections of the Fourth International (on special problems, such as the immigrant workers and anti-imperialist and antibureaucratic solidarity; through special campaigns on the occasion of strikes with international ramifications, and so forth). Such coordination calls for creating ad hoc bodies under the control of the international leadership.

Closer coordination of the day-to-day work of the European sections of the Fourth International will have the goal notably of transforming the still very uneven development of these sections into combined development. Every success in a given sector, every specific breakthrough by one of its sections can become a reference point, a training experience, and a point of departure for similar successes by other sections. This effort must go hand in hand with a systematic effort to give an international amplification to the most advanced forms of working-class struggle and organization achieved by the advanced strata of the proletariat in one or another European country.

Of all the currents of the new mass vanguard, of all the currents of the organized workers' movement, the Trotskyist current alone proclaims the necessity of building an international organization simultaneously with the construction of national revolutionary organizations, alone rejects as a reactionary utopia in our time the conception calling for building strong national revolutionary organizations first in order to arrive later—by a sudden transformation whose secret has never been revealed—at a politically homogeneous International.

The eminently international character of the economy, of politics, of society, of the class struggle in our time is no "Trotskyist fixation" but a concrete and tangible reality constantly impressed on the vanguard and the conscious workers by the facts. If internationalism—not platonic

and literary but practical and organizational—is the distinguishing mark of the Trotskyists in the mass vanguard, it is an argument that already pleads in favor of our movement and will do so more and more powerfully as a result of the lesson of the events. Every increase in the strength of the Fourth International, every success in transforming any of our sections from a propaganda group into a revolutionary organization capable of taking the initiative politically and beginning to win a base in the working class will have favorable repercussions on the construction and growth of all the other sections. In

this sense also, building the sections and building the International interpenetrate and form a single organic process, not simply the sum total of national successes or failures.

United Secretariat vote on the general line of the resolution:  
For: Delfin, Kurt, Livio, Luc, Petersen, Pierre, Vergeat, Walter.

Against: Adair, Hans, Pedro, Therese, Stateman.

Not present: Ghulam, Juan, Pia, Roca.