

International Internal Discussion Bulletin

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Bulletin Department, 14 Charles Lane, New York, N.Y. 10014

Statement by Alan Jones, United Secretariat Meeting July 2-4, 1979

My political position in regard to the documents submitted by the United Secretariat for a vote at the next world congress is support for a turn into industry as projected in these texts and for analysis of the women's, Europe, and Latin American documents. Concretely I believe it is generally necessary to get a clear majority of our membership into industry. This is certainly the case in the chief countries in Europe including Britain.

I have however strong disagreements with those aspects of the world political resolution relating to the so-called "preponderance" of the struggle in the imperialist countries in this phase of the international class struggle. I consider this thesis false theoretically and rejected practically by the events in Iran, Nicaragua, Africa. The chief struggles of a revolutionary and prerevolutionary type are today occurring not in imperialist countries but in the colonial and semicolonial states. Furthermore, the totally confused arguments on "preponderance" in fact undermine key theoretical and programmatic positions concerning the differences between the revolution in the colonial countries and the imperialist states which were established by the Communist International and reaffirmed by the Fourth International at its reunification in 1963. These issues lead to an underestimation of the role and nature of the party.

Despite strong disagreements with this part of the world political resolution I am however in agreement with the sector on tasks, particularly as concerns the turn into industry. This is however not at all connected to the thesis

of the "preponderance" of the struggle in the imperialist countries in this phase of the class struggle. The fact that major working-class struggles are on the agenda is all that is necessary to see the necessity for a turn into industry and not any thesis of preponderance.

Despite these strong disagreements however, agreement on tasks means that I can vote for the general line of the world political resolution—although it should in my opinion be greatly improved through amendments. From a political point of view, therefore, I could formally participate in the call for a majority caucus.

However, the formation of this caucus is an error. With a massive majority in the leading bodies of the International it is an abnormal step, which will concretely help freeze discussion, to form such a caucus.

Its objective effect, particularly given its founding declaration, will be to tend to prevent discussion on other aspects of the documents submitted on the grounds any criticism represents "opposition to the turn to industry." It will tend to promote artificial and polarized debate in sections even among comrades in agreement with the general line but divided on whether it was correct to form a caucus or not. This will in no way aid the political discussion and clarification leading to the world congress and, particularly in the context of a clear majority on leading bodies, will in fact tend to impose more than mere agreement on general line.

For this reason, I oppose formation of a United Secretariat majority caucus.

Amendment to the Draft Resolution on Latin America

Proposed by C.D. Estrada

Imperialism and the Latin American bourgeoisies have not succeeded in crushing the social conflicts or in eliminating their economic contradictions through military dictatorships. These regimes, based on repression and the sharp reduction of the workers' standard of living, are failures when it comes to satisfying the different interests tied up with the functioning of capitalism. Industrial growth (as in Brazil) is maintained only at the cost of a burdensome foreign debt. The balance of payments (as in Uruguay) brings about a paralysis of industry. Increasing industrial exports (as in Argentina) by lowering salaries leads to a collapse of the national market by a much greater proportion.

In the long run, the reactionary united front of imperialism, the bourgeoisies, and the big landowners is weakened and develops cracks. All the dominant classes were in agreement to strike against the proletariat with the maximum violence in those countries where it had a long tradition of struggle and the greatest political maturity. But the fall of the Banzer dictatorship and the prolonged crisis of the Brazilian military dictatorship prove that

capitalism cannot stabilize itself for a long period of time through repression alone.

But the bourgeoisies of the countries subjected to military dictatorships have no alternative solutions. They are unable to install stable democratic regimes with a certain freedom of maneuver for the political parties.¹ All public discussion, all trade-union freedom—even restricted—leads in a short time to social movements that break out of capitalist control. This is the lesson of the four years of political crisis in Brazil. The entire country—including the most reactionary bourgeois newspapers—has come out against the military dictatorship. But the bourgeoisie is unable to replace it with a state in which political rights are guaranteed in even a moderate way.

Democratic demands soon give way to social movements. Workers' strikes aggravate the political crisis of the bourgeoisie. The resulting pressure divides the army. The inability of bourgeois democracy to control the situation

1. Brief democratic intervals in one or another country are possible and even inevitable. But all political discussion . . .

opens the door not only to social conflicts but also to military ones.² A stage of violent turmoil is being prepared in which the forces of the proletariat will not be the only ones to appear on the scene and will not even be in a position to do so in an organized way around the program of socialism. The proletariat will be obliged to go into combat behind petty-bourgeois opportunist leaderships. Perhaps some will be dependent upon bourgeois groupings.

At the same time, other social sectors, such as the nationalist wing of the army, petty-bourgeois anti-imperialist groups, more or less radical populist, and nationalist parties will be in the forefront of the political stage.

We are not in a position to replace these forces immediately. Our political strategy must take them into account. The Brazilian situation—and in another way, the Bolivian situation—prefigures the crisis of all the military dictatorships and that of a good number of “controlled” democracies in Latin America.

The situation in Central America shows that the need for political changes, meeting with no response from the bourgeoisie, which is powerless (as in Nicaragua), ends up pushing petty-bourgeois popular movements to act from a perspective not of a democratic, legal, electoral process, but a process of civil war.

The present equilibrium can still be prolonged in countries like Mexico, Venezuela, and, to a lesser degree, Colombia. The military dictatorships remain relatively stable in Uruguay and Chile. But capitalism and imperialism have fewer and fewer means to control the overall situation on the continent.

Our policy is determined by two facts: the prospect of a long period punctuated by social and military turmoil, and the inevitable presence of other reformist petty-bourgeois nationalist forces, acting against the status quo, proposing solutions which to different degrees will be opposed to the interests of the proletariat.

From these two ideas it follows, first, that we cannot count on a gradual growth of our own forces in the framework of legality and democracy; second, that we need a strategy to deprive the non-proletarian leaderships of the popular base on which they depend, in the period that has opened up. The case of the Sandinistas, while it is a particular Nicaraguan phenomenon, contains lessons of the greatest importance for our politics.

We need to build solid parties able to act in clandestinity and under repression, but also under conditions of civil war, ready to withstand pressures much greater than those coming from bloody dictatorships: the pressures of popular movements engaged in more or less revolutionary actions and enjoying significant mass support.

The Trotskyist parties will have to adopt a tactic aimed at facilitating our relations with the working-class, petty-bourgeois, and peasant base of these movements for change. This tactic is the united front, on any of the programmatic points that interest the workers: trade-union

2. Agitation by military opposition currents in several countries, or in a single important country, is enough to put the whole continent in an unstable situation and to push political struggles outside the limits of bourgeois democracy.

rights, the right to strike, the workers' right to have their own organs of defense (militias, armed groups); such social gains as the sliding scale of wages, the sliding scale of hours; democratic slogans, such as freedom for political and trade-union prisoners, freedom of assembly, freedom of the press, and others which will go in the direction of breaking up the one-party structures that have a tendency to put petty-bourgeois revolutionary leaderships in power: the constituent assembly, workers' congresses, and workers' councils.

Alongside these classical demands of the labor movement are other programmatic points that interest broad masses of people in Latin America and which should also be part of our united-front policy: agrarian reform; expelling imperialism; breaking links of subordination to the International Monetary Fund; expropriation of the great industrial and financial enterprises—beginning with those belonging to imperialism; annulment of the foreign debt; a state monopoly of foreign trade and of credit; etc.

In the present situation in Latin America, the popular movements which we will be forced to coexist with will tend to develop a nationalist and anti-imperialist form, even if they are pushed as far as breaking all their ties with the bourgeoisie, as in the case of the Sandinistas. Increasingly, the main obstacle to all popular demands is imperialism.

Obviously, the military dictatorships and “controlled” democracies cannot be reduced simply to agencies of imperialism. The national bourgeoisies and the landed oligarchies are often those who implement the murderous repression in Latin America. But the native ruling classes lack cohesion and means to carry on their reactionary action without imperialist support. The Latin American military apparatuses—not only in Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Paraguay, but also in Chile, Argentina, and Brazil—are completely dependent on imperialism. Any progress in the mass struggle inevitably puts them face to face with imperialism.

We ought to help explain this situation, working for anti-imperialist united fronts, whose only conditions should be: an effective struggle against imperialism, as expressed in action, and not limited to verbal declarations; and the respect of all participating forces for the rights of the workers, beginning with the right to organize politically in an independent way.

Without this flexible and combative strategy, our sections will be continually threatened by two dangers: isolation and disintegration. Disintegration is all the more dangerous since any revolutionary organization that is small in numbers, and built on the illusion that it is the only one recognized by the workers as representing their interests, will quickly succumb when it comes up against much stronger forces that take over part of its program and are able to use methods of struggle that bypass this revolutionary organization.

The United Secretariat resolution on Latin America should be amended where there are illusions on stable democratic perspectives. We must profit from those periods when democratic rights are recognized, but we must prepare for perspectives of illegality and violence.

June 1979

Critical Remarks on the United Secretariat's Text on 'Eurocommunism'

Submitted by Leninist Trotskyist Tendency,
and Dani, Arpo (Spain); Strawson (Britain);
Georgiu, Alice, A. Dimitriou (Greece)

Today the document called "Eurocommunism—A New Stage in the Crisis of Stalinism" holds a key position in the political debate in the world Trotskyist movement.

Indeed, it is both the International's first contribution to the debate with the Organizing Committee—a debate which has been postponed far too long—and one of the central orientation documents among those submitted by the leadership of the International to the preparatory discussion for the next world congress.

Moreover this document is the direct outcome of the process called "recomposition" initiated by the leadership of the International after the dissolution of the LTF and of the IMT. Through this document we are therefore able to objectively assess the political basis which provided the groundwork for the solution of past differences. It also allows us to assess whether this process traces a political orientation for the International, and whether it really does correct past errors, as well as comply with the demands of the present phase of the class struggle.

In this text, we will present the reasons for which this does not seem to us to be the case, and therefore the reasons why we cannot politically support this document.

The Method Used is a Questionable One

The general framework of the document is questionable from the standpoint of the theoretical approach to the crisis of Stalinism as well as from that of the debating methods within the International.

1. First of all, a proper analysis of the crisis of Stalinism can only be made on a world scale. Unfortunately as far as the recent period is concerned, the document which says it characterizes "a new stage in the crisis of Stalinism" limits itself to Europe—and, at that, Western Europe. Despite an allusive reference to the so-called "Eurocommunist" characteristics of the Australian, Japanese and Mexican CP's, it is difficult to find a concrete analysis of the policies of these parties and their role in the present crisis. Moreover there are absolutely no characterizations of Stalinist policies in the dominated countries, or of the recent development of the contradictions between the various components of the bureaucracy in the different workers states, or of the relationship between Stalinism and the Cuban leadership, etc. The enumeration of these omissions suffices to show the politically arbitrary and unjustifiable nature of a document which purports to analyze the "crisis of Stalinism" while limiting itself, from the outset, to the so-called "Eurocommunist phenomenon."

2. What is more, the rapid historical survey of Stalinism is accompanied by expressions which—at least because of their imprecision—are often politically and theoretically ambiguous. Thus the birth of the bureaucracy is characterized in the following way:

"Stalinism developed in the USSR as the result of industrial retardation, misery and the isolation of the first workers state. This isolation of the revolution combined with the low material and cultural level of the country, the devastation caused by the imperialist war, the Civil War, which followed it, and the exhaustion of the masses, laid the foundations for the growth of a parasitic bureaucracy, and created the conditions for its development as a new distinct social layer which Trotsky characterized as a bureaucratic caste within the framework of a workers state and whose interests are opposed to those of the working class."

Without actually being wrong this paragraph does not make two decisive questions sufficiently clear:

It only discusses the objective factors which allowed the emergence of the bureaucracy and does not even mention the political errors and all the subjective factors which, combined with the objective conditions, led to the development of a bureaucratic caste. Such a partial approach encourages an objectivist—and in truth fatalist—concept of the bureaucratization of the October Revolution. And, it is insufficient to afterwards add that "the CI was converted from an instrument for world revolution to an agency at the service of the Kremlin's fundamental needs." It is absolutely necessary to underline how, in the decisive phase of the constitution of a bureaucratic caste, the errors in international policy were transformed into factors which worsened bureaucratic pressure. This is what Trotsky points out in *The CI after Lenin*:

"The main source of bureaucratization is the widening of the gap, over the past few years, between the leadership's political line and the historic perspectives of the proletariat. . . . The fundamental cause of the crisis of the October Revolution resides in the delay of world revolution due to a number of weighty defeats suffered by the proletariat. . . . As of 1923, the situation changed radically. It was no longer only a question of defeats of the proletariat, but also defeats of the CI's policy. The errors of this policy are such that it is impossible to find a comparison throughout the history of the Bolshevik party. . . . Those are the immediate and indisputable causes of the defeats. To try and demonstrate that even with correct policy these defeats were inevitable is to be disgustingly fatalist and to abnegate the Bolshevik theory of the role and importance of revolutionary leadership."

Moreover that definition of a bureaucratic caste eludes a clear characterization both of its social nature and its role in the confrontation between the two fundamental classes, the imperialist bourgeoisie and the world proletariat. Even though the document states that the interests of the bureaucracy are opposed to those of the working class, it leaves itself open for interpretation such as the theory whereby the bureaucracy not only has a "dual function" (in the sense used by Trotsky, especially in *Defense of*

Marxism) but a dual "social nature." That is to say it maintains—at least in part—a proletarian character.

This theory was explicitly that of the IMT. The 1973 document called "The Differences of Interpretation of the Cultural Revolution," says: "The soviet bureaucracy is a fraction of the working class which has acquired the aspirations of a petit-bourgeois nature—that is to say a workers' bureaucracy—which must be opposed to semi-feudal or bourgeois bureaucracies attached to private property." That year the French LCR published a pamphlet called "On Bureaucracy" in which comrade Mandel says in the most explicit manner that "The general policy of the bureaucracy may be characterized as it was by Trotsky, using the concept of bureaucratic centrism. Because of its social nature, the bureaucracy tends to swing from one extreme to another. It is impossible to grasp the internal logic of this centrism on the long term, unless the short term oscillations are understood. The long term social content of this bureaucratic centrism is characterized by two contradictory tendencies, the fusion of which Trotsky called the dual nature of the bureaucracy." Explanations like these mistakenly stretch the proletarian nature of the Soviet State and of social relations which prevail within it, to the bureaucratic caste itself. It also mistakes the fact that the bureaucracy is compelled to "maintain the social foundations it exploits for its own interests" (*In Defense of Marxism*) for the working class nature of the caste itself. That means denying that, as such, the bureaucracy is foreign to the working class and to the proletarian nature of the Soviet State—a caste which is petit-bourgeois in its sociological composition and which as a body is bourgeois in nature. It is true that "to state that the bureaucracy of a workers state is of bourgeois nature must seem incomprehensible to journalists minds," however that is still a premise of Trotskyist analysis: "Even the most revolutionary bureaucracy is a bourgeois body within the workers state to a certain degree. Of course what is important is the degree to which it is bourgeois and the way it develops. If a workers state rids itself of its bureaucracy, which is reduced to nothing, a development towards socialism takes place. On the contrary, if the bureaucracy grows and becomes more authoritarian, privileged and conservative, the bourgeois tendencies in the workers state are overriding the socialist tendencies. In other words, to a certain extent the conditions which exist in the workers state from the time of its inception don't diminish, but increase. However, until now, as long as this contradiction only affected distribution and not production nor nationalized property, nor the planned economy, the state remains a workers state" (*In Defense of Marxism*).

After 40 years of Stalinist degeneration the general development has been as clearly defined as the bureaucracy's social nature and political role. The bureaucracy has absolutely no "revolutionary" traits, and has definitely and completely "gone over to bourgeois order." It is in no way a "workers bureaucracy" but truly "a bourgeois bureaucracy in a workers state." And if this bureaucracy—which is not an independent class—continues to "sometimes use the proletariat against imperialism and sometimes imperialism against the proletariat in order to accrue its power" its role in the class struggle on a world scale should be defined without ambiguity: more than ever it is the role of an organ of the bourgeoisie within a workers state."

Despite skillful wording, the document does not clarify this key question of past and present debates in the international.

3. As a matter of fact one of the general characteristics of the document is its systematic elusiveness when dealing with all controversial questions in the International. There have been deepgoing theoretical and practical differences in the International on many questions related to the analysis of Stalinism. We might mention the analysis of the CCP and the VCP, the question of the political revolution in China, the relations between the Cuban leadership and Stalinism, the question of the popular fronts (with its application in France, Chile, etc.), the analysis of the PCP in 1975, the general theory of the "social-democratization" of the Western Communist Parties . . . Until now none of the fundamental differences on these points have been explicitly overcome (and they will only be overcome with a sincere and collective balance sheet of the various positions). More important, the political experience of the recent period shows that these controversial questions have been brought to task in the class struggle. Here are two examples. First of all it is impossible not to admit that there is a link between the old debate about the evolution of Vietnam and the conflict with Cambodia, or the serious errors of analysis and orientation of the French LCR in dealing with the Stalinists' recent policy of division. But the document attempts to solve these contradictions by using vague expressions, open to very different interpretation. . . . [copy illegible—translator]

First of all deliberate confusion and semi-silence takes the place of balance-sheets and precise definitions which are so necessary to the political rearming of the International: China, Vietnam—a question which has been withdrawn from the agenda of the world congress—Portugal, the popular front question, the balance sheet of the French elections, the policy on the SCP, etc. Secondly this gives the document an abstract and formal character. Thus what purports to be an analysis of the crisis of Stalinism concentrates on the subtle variations of the scope of the break between the CPs and the Kremlin or of their rapprochement with Social Democracy. But there is never any real analysis of the social and material basis of this crisis: the great movements of class struggle in Europe, the rise of social and political revolution, national particularities, the counterrevolutionary methods used by the bureaucracy. . . . Thus the document doesn't even mention (and doesn't precisely define, the nature and function of) such elementary political factors as the Union of the Left, the Moncloa Pact, the historic compromise, the Helsinki agreements and Belgrade. . . .

The political imprecision and academic nature of the document invalidate it as a document giving a clear political line, which could supply the International and its sections with a clear analysis and concrete proposals which call for their intervention in the class struggle. But the document is not only vague and confused, it also introduces a so-called definition of "Eurocommunism" and the tasks which it calls for, in such a way as to maintain a serious misleading of the International.

An Erroneous Analysis of the Western Stalinist Parties

Many premises of the analysis put forward by the document on the evolution of the CPs, form the basis of a

wide agreement. They may be considered as the ground-work for a real debate:

It is correct to analyze the current period as "new stage in the crisis of Stalinism," a stage marked by an unprecedented sharpening of "centrifugal national tendencies," the origins of which can be found in the "sources of disintegration from the outset inherent in the reactionary orientation of 'socialism in one country only.'"

It is correct to define the ideological positions of the so-called "Eurocommunist" parties as representative of a "systematic codification of the revision of Marxism" introduced by Stalin himself and to state that they "still maintain the basic ideological dogmas of Stalinism"

It is necessary to emphasize that—at least in the current period—the "ideological, political and material links" with the Soviet bureaucracy still exist. The document says that the "qualitative step" which would stress "the transformation of these parties into Social Democratic parties" has not yet been taken. It also says that "we reject the illusion according to which the CPs might become centrist parties." These elementary statements are useful, considering the confusion spread in the recent past by comrades who spoke of the "centrist nature" of the PCP in 1975, or on the contrary who talked of the "national communist nature" of the various European CPs.

But these general statements are far from sufficient. They do not allow a correct definition of the role played by so-called "Eurocommunism" in the present crisis and dislocation of Stalinism, or a concrete analysis of the counterrevolutionary methods of the Western CPs in the defense of the status quo.

In fact, because there is no such analysis, the document leads to a superficial definition and to an excessive valorization of so-called "Eurocommunism."

1. *An abstract and erroneous analysis of the Stalinists' policy in Europe*

Indeed neither the ideological definition given in the document of the European CPs nor the corroboration of their ties with the Soviet bureaucracy are sufficient for a concrete and correct analysis of the current methods used by their counterrevolutionary policy and their role in the defense of the status quo.

a. In this respect, the expressions used in the document are abstract and superficial. The document says:

"Both dogmatic Marxists and Eurocommunists are for the fundamental strategy of peaceful coexistence, that is to say the 'status quo' in the West. They reject any open confrontation with the bourgeoisie in imperialist countries and think there are no revolutionary perspectives in these countries. Far from putting forward the perspective of the dictatorship of the proletariat they practice class collaboration with bourgeois parties, political demagogues and political fractions of the capitalist class, and they support the bourgeois state." Without actually being wrong, this definition is very insufficient. Although the CPs obviously play a specific role in their own countries, their counterrevolutionary pact is not limited to the defense of the status quo "in the West."

Quite the contrary. Each of them defends the whole disposition of peaceful coexistence. Their national policies are totally and consciously a part of the counterrevolutionary framework of the Helsinki agreements which firmly oppose the new rise of the revolution both in the East and

the West. The European Stalinist parties are not only for the "strategy of peaceful coexistence" ideologically, they do not only support "the bourgeois state" in a general way. In every country they actively put the necessary political methods to work in order to counter mass mobilization and to insure the continuity of the bourgeois state in decomposition. From many points of view, the Stalinists' concrete policy is badly defined by the document: first of all, it spreads confusion to say that "the CP's national policies are profoundly reformist" or to speak of Stalinism in general as a "long term reformist practice." That statement might well be true of some of the ideological or "programmatic" proclamations made by the CPs, but it certainly isn't true of their policy and the concrete role which they play and will play in the course of the present crisis. Whether this policy is called "reformist" or "ultraleftist" it neither does—nor wants to—achieve reforms, which the present situation makes impossible anyway (as the Transitional Program says: "The CI turned towards Social Democracy during the decline of capitalism at a time when systematic social reform is no longer possible"). In fact it is a policy designed to defend bourgeois state property against mass mobilization.

As a *policy* (and not as an ideological or programmatic reference) that is to say from the point of view of the objectives aimed at concretely in the course of the class struggle, it is not a "reformist" policy, but rather an actively "counterrevolutionary" policy. That is why the indifferent use of these two terms is a mistake which spreads confusion and which, in the past, has led to grossly erroneous definitions of the Union of the Left, incorrectly analyzed as a "global reformist alternative" and not as a popular front.

Moreover the analysis made of the "counterrevolutionary implications" of the CP's policy is particularly restrictive since the text limits itself to Italy and Spain where the leadership of the CPs have an anti-worker policy of austerity. The other mass Stalinist parties, the PCP and FCP, for example, play a role no less counterrevolutionary than the ICP or the SCP. And their counterrevolutionary character is not only manifest in their "policies of austerity" but mainly in the way they reinforce and prolong the present forms of the bourgeois state—the decadent parliamentary system of Christian Democracy, dictatorship in the form of a monarchy, or decaying bonapartism in France.

Finally, using slick turns of phrase the document refuses to clearly define the present policies of the Stalinist parties as new implementations of the counterrevolutionary policies of popular fronts. Having referred to the popular front policy in the 30s, or during the postwar period, the document only says:

"Similar betrayals of the working class and its interests, as well as the defense of private property and the bourgeois state by the Stalinists were forerunners of the Eurocommunist programs today."

This way of putting it eludes a social and political definition of the popular front or national unity tactics, currently used by the Stalinist parties in Europe. It is all the more unjustifiable that this question was a very controversial one in the International and has many very important political implications (as the critical balance sheet of the intervention of nearly all the European sections in recent elections show: see the LTF's resolution

on the Italian and Portuguese elections in 1976, the balance sheet of the French elections 1978).

What is more is that to refer to "programs" and to the "betrayals" which they "herald" is to refuse to say that *as of now*, even before participating in government coalitions, the CPs are playing a directly and actively counterrevolutionary role in the support of present regimes, in France, in Italy, in Spain, in Portugal. Only a clear definition of the policy of these parties as a popular front policy enables us to understand how and why they can use class collaboration methods today—with the division of the ranks of the working class which that implies—in order to postpone a decisive political crisis, and to prepare the coming to power of a popular frontist coalition government when this "last political resource of the counterrevolution" becomes inevitable. The document refuses this necessary clarification.

b. The document's omissions and confusion as far as the Stalinist parties current policy is concerned makes possible the reintroduction of analysis—which, although they contradict some of the premises of the document, are in fact direct offshoots of the definition of the CPs as "Eurocommunist" as "Social Democratic" (and not as Stalinist in so much as the principle objective determinations of their counterrevolutionary policy is concerned). A number of factors contribute to this:

Although the document itself says that "Eurocommunism" is a "misnomer," this journalistic term is still the only term used, without quotation marks, for the CPs of Western Europe. In that the CPs are never actually defined as "Stalinist" this semantic question becomes an apolitical one.

This is confirmed by the fact that, in spite of the confirmation of ties with Moscow, the convergence between the policies of the so-called Eurocommunist parties and the interests of the Soviet bureaucracy is still presented as a simple coincidence—and no explicit definition of its objective basis is put forward. Thus the document says that "the national policy of the Eurocommunist parties is the same as the Kremlin's policy, *de facto*," and that the Kremlin's policy (on NATO, the Common Market, etc.) is in harmony with the positions taken by the Eurocommunist parties or the "political line of the eurocommunist parties coincides largely with the interests of the Kremlin." Unless one considers this coincidence fortuitous, it is absolutely necessary to determine its fundamental social objective. The positions of the document remain ambiguous here.

It says that "the growing integration of the CPs into bourgeois institutions" has not yet "attained the same degree of dependence on their own bourgeoisies as the Social Democratic parties" and that it has not yet reached the point of breaking the "ties to Moscow." But this two-part statement leaves the decisive question entirely unanswered: if today—as Trotsky said they would—the Stalinist parties have a dual social base, has this tendency reached a point where there is not necessarily an open break with Moscow but where direct ties with each imperialist state override the ties with the interests of the bureaucratic caste?

The document says that in 1939-41 or 1949-53 loyalty to the Kremlin prevailed over purely chauvinist tendencies. For the present period it leaves itself open to interpretation, and only mentions the general background (the Helsinki agreements . . .), the "coincidence of the policies

followed by the various national fractions of the Stalinist bureaucracy—without analysing or explaining them. This refusal of clarity on an essential matter can only encourage superficial and empirical analysis of the policies of the various Stalinist parties. These analyses most often give preference to the most apparent and immediate determinations—that is to say—the purely national determinations of the CPs.

The document itself affords an example of this type of analytical error when dealing with what has been one of the principal political questions during the recent period: the campaign of division organized by the French Stalinists since mid-1977:

"The mass Communist parties are often in defensive positions in countries where they have Social Democratic competitors. In these circumstances, the Communist parties are forced to maintain, and sometimes to sharpen, the differences between themselves and the Social Democrats, in order to defend their own bureaucratic differences. This sometimes leads them to a sectarian policy of division with the other forces of the workers' movement, such as in France recently."

This paragraph in fact covers up for the mistaken analysis which was the basis of the French section's disorientation during the whole period preparatory to the elections. Thus the FCP's policy was only "sectarianism," brought about by problems of "power struggle" with Social Democracy on the national level. And the French section refuses and has always refused to see the main foundation of this policy—the defense of the international status quo—and especially its immediate objective: to avoid an electoral victory of the workers' parties, and to insure renewal of the fictitious Giscard-Barre "majority."

This blindness was the direct origin of the LCR's incapacity to center its activity around the most urgent task: mobilizing the masses in order to impose the immediate and unconditional achievement of electoral unity of the workers' parties on the CP. It is distressing that, even retrospectively, the international leadership supported such a superficial and politically disarming policy.

2. "Eurocommunism" is shown to advantage

The analytical impression and errors on the European Stalinist parties current policy in fact lead to a minimisation of their immediate and actively counterrevolutionary nature. This is singularly worsened by the virtues which are mistakenly attributed to a number of aspects of the so-called "Eurocommunist" phenomenon.

a. In the very first description of the "Eurocommunist phenomenon" it is shown to advantage as one of the factors of the "Stalinist crisis" analyzed in paragraph IV: "The evergrowing autonomous development of a series of CPs was the result of the rank and file's reaction to the processes described above. With the sharpening of the class struggle in Western Europe, especially after May '68 in France, other factors, such as the CPs' need to present a more attractive image of their socialist model and their growing competition with Social Democracy, and their need to widen their mass base, come into play. All these factors combined so as to lead certain European CPs to outwardly break their ties with the Kremlin. The Eurocommunist phenomenon illustrates this tendency."

It would be difficult to find a more absurd definition than this one. Elsewhere the document defines the social

and political content of the relative estrangement between the Eurocommunist CPs and the Kremlin: it is the result of sharpening chauvinist tendencies and the CPs adaptation to their imperialist bourgeoisie. We might conclude that this type of evolution—which typifies the “Eurocommunist phenomenon” shows a greater degree of submission on the part of the Stalinist parties to the interests of social forces foreign to the proletariat, greater concessions under the pressure of imperialism. But no! In the paragraph quoted above which purports to explain the “evergrowing autonomous development of a series of CPs in capitalist countries . . . the Eurocommunist phenomenon illustrates this tendency.” This tendency is explained only by factors which all express the pressure of the proletarian masses themselves: the “Eurocommunist phenomenon” is the result, according to the document, of the rank and file reactions and the CPs’ concern “to present a more attractive image” and to “widen their mass base.” In other words, the evolution towards “Eurocommunism” is the result of growing concessions to the aspirations of the masses and not the interests of imperialism!

This is a new and disquieting way of looking at the apparatus’s policies. Unless the document wants to introduce the notion of a sort of “dual nature” of “Eurocommunism.” This also shows “Eurocommunism” to advantage because it presents the slackening of ties with the Kremlin and the manifestation of sensitivity to the aspiration of the masses and not as the result of an evermore chauvinist and reactionary evolution.

b. On this basis, it is hardly surprising that this document, which analyzes the contradictions that cross the bureaucracy on the international and national level, explicitly gives a better mark to the “Eurocommunist” fraction, as opposed to the other components of the bureaucracy.

“The Fourth International sees in the development of Eurocommunism an important opportunity to break the monopoly of Stalinism on important sectors of the mass movement and to deepen the world crisis of world Stalinism.”

This political assessment is all the more surprising since the document, elsewhere, explicitly states that the political line of the so-called “Eurocommunist” fractions “reflects a growing integration of these CPs into bourgeois society.” It, however, flows logically from two other mistakes of the document.

The first one is its refusal to clearly state that the “Eurocommunist” parties remain totally Stalinist and must be considered as such, no more and no less than the CPs who “defend the Soviet bureaucracy in the old way.” The second is its inability to analyze the fundamental cause of the unprecedented worsening of the crisis of Stalinism. Indeed, the deepening of this crisis is not caused by the phenomena qualified as “Eurocommunist,” as such. In the same way, it is not “Eurocommunism” as such that “emphasizes the other aspects of the crisis of Stalinism in the Eurocommunist parties themselves” or creates “growing internal conflicts and possibilities of splits” as the document states. All these contradictions as well as the development of “Eurocommunist” factions themselves are demonstrations inside of the bureaucratic apparatus, of a growing tendency towards a general dislocation of Stalinism.

The cause of this tendency is not “Eurocommunism” at

all, but a much more fundamental contradiction: the growing antagonism between the movement and the aspirations of the masses on the one hand, and the needs of the counterrevolutionary apparatus on the other hand. It is this antagonism that deepens all the internal conflicts of the apparatus—including, among others, the fight between the national components—and brings it to the point of bureaucratic breakdown, deepening all the differences that cross it, including those between national components.

It is this contradiction that enables us to produce important crises inside the Stalinist parties and a weakening of the political control exercised by the apparatus on the militant rank and file of their parties (On this aspect, the serious consequences for the French CP of its policy of division last March, are telling).

There lies, for the Fourth International, the real “big opening,” the possibility to deepen this crisis of Stalinism in order to make a decisive step towards building the party of the world revolution. But as regards this contradiction—between the interests of the masses and the policy of the apparatus—“Eurocommunism” is nothing but a bureaucratic by-product of the crisis of Stalinism and in no way deserves to be, as such, credited with any positive virtues.

c. Last of all, the biggest mistakes of the document concern the role of the so-called “Eurocommunism” in the class struggles in the bureaucratic workers states. On this subject, the assessment of “Eurocommunism” is openly and exclusively positive.

First of all, the text denies that the “Eurocommunist” positions can help to reinforce the pressures towards restoring capitalism by imperialism on the workers’ states, it states that those pressures “do not reflect the interests of a wing of the Soviet bureaucracy which would be more for the restoration of capitalism than the bureaucracy as a whole.” Then, the “Eurocommunist” parties are supposed, in their ties with the Kremlin, to express the progressive aspirations of the working class masses, as it is proved by the statement that their “more critical attitude . . . reflects the pressure coming from a large majority of the workers of the imperialist states who have become aware of the bureaucratic degeneration of the USSR.”

Last of all, according to the document “the growth of Eurocommunism encourages the expression of a political opposition which objectively contributes to the preparation of the political revolution.”

The formula is somewhat ambiguous. It does not say that it is the “growth of Eurocommunism” that “contributes to the preparation of the political revolution.” This virtue is attributed correctly to the “political opposition to the reign of the bureaucracy.” This opposition, however, is said to be “encouraged” by the “growth of Eurocommunism” which, at last indirectly, is given a positive role in the development of the political revolution. This characterization is stated, more explicitly, in the draft World Political Resolution which does not hesitate to speak of “more direct ties between the growth of the political opposition in the people’s democracies, as Poland and Czechoslovakia, the phenomenon of Eurocommunism in Western Europe, and workers’ radicalization in the imperialist countries” or of “undeniable stimulus coming from other countries that reinforce the challenge launched on the political level against the domination of the bureaucracy.”

Far from indicating the existence of an antagonism between the class interests defended by the "Eurocommunist" apparatus on the one hand, and by the forces that fight for the political revolution on the other, all these formulations suggest that one has to consider, that in the struggle between the two fundamental classes—as it is expressed in the specific conditions for the political revolution (fight that fundamentally opposes the proletarian masses to the world bourgeoisie, through their fight against the bureaucratic caste as the transmission belt of imperialism in the workers states), the Eurocommunist parties, at least objectively, find themselves on the side of the proletariat.

This strange analysis sketches a theory of a double nature of the "Eurocommunist" apparatus, which would have, at the same time, a "good" and a "bad" side, which, oscillating between growing adaptation to their own imperialism and growing concessions to their bases, would find themselves "objectively" on the side of the bourgeoisie when facing social revolution, and on the side of the proletarian masses when facing the political revolution. This then is openly argued for in an answer to the BF written by the leaders of the International. This text states that "The 'estrangement' from Moscow goes so far that some 'Eurocommunist' leaders today say publicly that Trotsky was right against Stalin in most of the debates that opposed them. For our movement to present this aspect of 'Eurocommunism' as a 'concession to the bourgeoisie and the Social Democracy' would be disastrous. Disastrous and suicidal. We must understand that on these questions, Carillo, Marchais, Berlinguer do not yield before J. Carter but make concessions to the powerful antibureaucratic current which crosses Western Europe's proletariat today."

This analysis, in a logical way, leads to the thesis that the role of "Eurocommunism" in the world class struggle, has two contradictory aspects:

"Carillo, Berlinguer, Marchais are getting ready to save capitalism in their own countries. . . . However the political conflict in Eastern Europe, in which Eurocommunism leaders intervene, does not pose the question of the restoration of capitalism, but concerns the conquest of democratic rights on the basis of the existing social order. The positions of the IMT have enabled our sections to intervene correctly in the drive of Eurocommunism, taking into accounts its two main aspects."

Unfortunately, these positions have not remained those of the single IMT. Under more veiled formulations, they constitute in actual fact the axis of the analysis put forward by the document, which is defended by the whole leadership of the International.

This thesis concentrates many mistakes: in the first place, the important question of the ties between "Eurocommunism" and restorationist tendencies is not dealt with from the right point of view.

The question posed is not an ideological one (the document talks of "revisionist codifications") or a narrowly organizational one (ties with such and such a wing of the bureaucracy) but a political and social one: the real question is the following:

What are the effects of the "Eurocommunist" parties' policy in relation to their place in the struggle between the fundamental classes, on the development of the general trend of restoration of capitalism in the bureaucratized

workers' states?

This trend fundamentally results from the encircling of the workers' states by the imperialist bourgeoisie. But this external pressure is relayed, inside the workers states, but the bureaucracy which, while it must defend nationalized property—the basis of its parasitism—can only do so by "methods that prepare the general collapse of Soviet society."

Thus, more and more, the counterrevolutionary coalition between imperialism and the Soviet bureaucracy is paid for by the latter with a forced submission to all kinds of pressure—military, financial, commercial, etc.—exercised on the workers' states. This leads to growing adaptation of their economic and social structure to the needs and wants of the capitalist market.

While the attacks against the masses which this means are a powerful factor of their antibureaucratic mobilization, the bureaucracy finds itself crossed by growing conflicts on the question of the rhythms and the forms of this adaptation. In the same way, on the world scale, faced with the new rise of the class struggle, it is more and more divided on the concrete conditions of the implementation of its counterrevolutionary policy.

It is within this global framework—the world struggle between social classes, the conflict that crosses the world apparatus of the bureaucracy—we must analyze the role of the "Eurocommunist" parties.

More and more integrated into their own imperialist states, they are at the forefront of the defense of the status quo facing the new rise of the European revolution. This is shown not only by the revisionist character of their ideology or program, but also and much more by an active policy of support to the bourgeois regimes and imperialist order: the direct support in order to prolong the Spanish dictatorship, of the Italian CD, of the Fifth Republic in decay, of the governments of Portugal. Rallying to the defense of the Capital's Europe, of the imperialist military pacts (NATO), or of the "European elections."

Defense in each and every country of the subjugation of oppressed nationalities and colonial peoples; complete support given to the Helsinki agreements, a counterrevolutionary device, which codifies peaceful coexistence on the basis of the division of Europe between imperialism and the bureaucracy, and which widens the gaps opened in the workers states to the penetration of capital.

Such a policy is not limited in its reactionary effects to Western Europe only. By actively supporting imperialist order, it powerfully contributes to the reinforcement of the pressures to liquidate the October conquests.

From this point of view, it is because the Eurocommunist fractions of Stalinism are those that go the furthest in the direction of "integration into the bourgeois economy and state" that they reinforce all the objective and subjective trends that lead to the restoration of capital.

This convergence must be understood, not as a political complicity necessarily conscious between such and such a wing of the bureaucracy and the Eurocommunist fractions, but reflects objective social interests. The *Transitional Program* already stated, after recalling the risk of "more and more resolute attempts to change the social regime in the USSR" that "the prolonging of the domination (of the bureaucracy) loosens more and more the socialist elements of the economy and increases the chances of a capitalist restoration. The Communist International acts in this

same way, as an agent and accomplice of the Stalinist clique in the strangling of the Spanish revolution and the demoralization of the international proletariat."

And it is exactly "in this same way" that it is legitimate to say that the counterrevolutionary policy of the "Eurocommunist" parties contributes powerfully to all the pressures that lead to the destruction of the October conquests.

This allows us to measure the extent to which the assessment made by the document that "Eurocommunism" encourages the "development of the political revolution" is superficial and false.

This statement proves to be totally unjustifiable as soon as one assesses the "criticisms" formulated by the "Eurocommunists" *vis-a-vis* the bureaucratic regime in the workers states at their real political value. In the first place, no matter how spectacular they are, these "criticisms" maintain a purely verbal character; not a single "Eurocommunist" party has in fact engaged in mass mobilizations in defence of democratic rights in Eastern Europe or in important actions of solidarity with the anti-bureaucratic oppositions. Secondly, even in the extreme case of the Spanish CP (which questions the "socialist" character of the USSR) these criticisms limit themselves to what the text calls "the worst repressive aspects of the bureaucratic dictatorship," and do not call into question the overall legitimacy of the bureaucratic caste; for example, as the text itself notes elsewhere, these "criticisms" are placed within an overall framework that rests unchanged: "They reject the perspective of a workers' state based upon the democracy of workers' councils. They consider the 'socialist camp' led by Moscow as the camp which represents the progress of humanity and as the bulwark against imperialist reaction. They accept "peaceful coexistence"—signifying class collaboration—as a world strategy for the present epoch."

This doesn't obviously exclude the fact that oppositionists may sincerely perceive these verbal criticisms of the Western CPs as representing a political support to their struggle for democratic and workers rights. But this, unfortunately, is an *illusion* of the most dangerous kind that must be fought and not reinforced. Apart from their purely formal character, the "criticisms" of the "Eurocommunists" are entirely placed within the field of the combined defense of the imperialist order and of the parasitic bureaucracy, within the field of the implementation of the Helsinki agreements; moreover, their call for "more liberty" in the East comes not from a desire to regenerate the dictatorship of the proletariat but on the contrary that of a so-called "democratic socialism" which is nothing more than camouflage for their abandon of Leninist strategy and their acceptance of the bourgeois state.

Thus the positions taken by the "Eurocommunists" are entirely situated within a counterrevolutionary perspective, which is probureaucratic and probourgeois at one and the same time. That is why they do not "reflect" the progressive aspirations of the masses for the "regeneration of the USSR," any more than popular frontism reflects the aspirations of the masses for the workers united front: they are its very negation. They do not lend any more support for the political revolution (even 'objectively') than do the declarations of Carter on "human rights;" any more than the formal proclamations of the Kremlin on fidelity to "the dictatorship of the proletariat" encourage revolu-

tionary struggle in the West. Hence on this question the theses defended by the document are entirely incorrect.

An Inexact and Insufficient Definition of Our Tasks in the Combat Against Stalinism

The errors of analysis pointed out above are not without consequences for the definition of the tasks of the Fourth International in regard to the so-called "Eurocommunist" parties. The brief section of the document devoted to this subject suffers from two weaknesses which cannot fail to affect clarity and firmness of our struggle against the politics of the Stalinists in Europe.

First of all, a series of confused or ambiguous propositions appear to be of a nature to foster an attentist attitude or an illusionist practice *vis-a-vis* the bureaucracy or of one or another of its fractions;

Second of all, the tasks proposed for "the intervention of revolutionary Marxists" are defined in such an abstract fashion that they do not permit any clarification in the debate around our orientation and which find their roots in a conception of the struggle against Stalinism which is more ideological and propagandist than political.

1. Several of the proposals in the document have a character which leads to fostering illusions in all of or part of the bureaucracy of the Stalinist parties called "Eurocommunist."

2. It is already the case for the general statement, according to which "the existence of this opening calls for a particular attention towards polemical discussions, internal struggles, and regroupments that Eurocommunism gives rise to on a growing scale in both the so-called international communist movement and in the whole of the workers movement," to the extent to which none of the necessary clarifications are introduced.

First of all, there is in fact a development of growing contradictions inside the Stalinist organizations, so-called "Eurocommunism" being but the manifestation and not the "cause." On the contrary this reflects the growing difficulties of putting their counterrevolutionary politics into practice faced with the new world rise of the class struggle. Secondly, the point of departure for a correct analysis of the "internal struggles" within the Stalinist parties should be to clearly distinguish (beyond sometimes confusing appearances) two types of movements: those which express, albeit in a still confused way the progressive way in which layers of militants tend to defend the interests of the masses against the counterrevolutionary politics of the apparatus; and those which on the contrary are nothing more than the bureaucratic expression of the opposition between different fractions of the apparatus, within the same general framework of the politics of "peaceful coexistence" and of popular frontism, over the forms of application of that same counter revolutionary orientation.

This being a basic distinction that the document ignores completely. This cannot but lead to the fostering of a journalistic confusion which (under the nomenclature of "oppositions") sets its sights on little more than the maneuvers of fractions of the apparatus trying to present themselves as the legitimate "spokesmen" of the rank-and-file, the better to stifle and divert them. Such was notable in the role assigned to the "opposition" of the so-called "intellectuals" in France (Pierrat, Ellenstein, Althusser, etc.) who, in spite of their apparent diversity, were all

similarly employed by way of a series of diversionary debates to avoid the concentration of an extremely powerful wave of contestation against the apparatus provoked by the politics of division by which the French CP deliberately organized the electoral defeat of the workers parties. Similarly in Spain, a debate entirely canalized on the purely ideological ground of the reference to "Leninism" allowed (at least during the Spanish CP's Convention) the deep resistance to the support given to the monarchy by way of the Moncloa Pact which exists amongst the mass of militants, to find no expression.

In such situations the role of Trotskyists was not to reinforce the pretensions and prestige of these fake "oppositions" in multiplying a series of purely ideological confrontations with them; it was rather to contribute to the dissipation of the illusions fostered by such maneuvers, and to render more acute (by way of campaigns of explanation and of mobilizations related to the real problems of the class struggle) the progressive aspirations the militants of the CPs raised against their leaderships. In France, for example, a mass campaign waged seriously around the demand that the candidates of the French CP withdraw automatically in those cases where the Socialist party came in first on the first round of the elections, would have done much more to deepen the crisis of Stalinism than all of the debates with Althusser and others of his kind . . . The same thing goes on today, in terms of the development of mass work directed toward militants of the CP and the CGT against the line of so-called "negotiations" with the bosses, a political line covered by all of the official "oppositionists"—after having covered the campaign of division.

Fostering confusion on the analytical level, the text doesn't involve any reorientation vis-à-vis the self-proclaimed "oppositions" inside the CPs.

b. Point f. proposes to engage in a "systematic campaign" to "stress the absence of democracy within workers organizations controlled by the Eurocommunists," particularly the trade unions and their own parties . . . where the elementary right to form tendencies and to engage in a totally free debate is refused." The real implications of this proposal deserve clarification. Trotskyists in their overall struggle against Stalinism expose, as one of the consequences of the degeneration of the first workers state, the total "bureaucratization" of those parties submitted to the tutelage of Stalinism.

On the one hand, inside the mass organizations they fight for a fully democratic debate in opposition to the bureaucratic leadership—be it Stalinist or Social Democrat. But these two things cannot in any way be put on the same level, and even less can they form the subject of the same "campaign." Trotskyists in fact "campaign" permanently for the right of expression for all currents which exist in the trade unions because their role is to organize the largest possible sections of the masses and because our objective in this matter is to turn the trade unions into an organized framework of the united front and of workers' democracy. On the other hand, the fight against Stalinism certainly does *not* imply a campaign on the part of Trotskyists for "the right to form tendencies" inside the Stalinist parties. There is a simple reason for this; whilst we fight for the democratic functioning of trade unions, with the goal of ousting their traitorous leaderships, we do not wage a combat for the "democratization" of the CPs

(neither do we fight to rewin the leadership of these parties) but for the construction of the Fourth International and for the social and political destruction of the Stalinist bureaucracy. To weaken today the hold they maintain on sections of the masses necessitates a struggle against the hopes placed by sincere militants in the possibility of an internal "regeneration" of the Stalinist parties. The document which claims to "reject all illusions of this type" reintroduces them in fact with the proposals for a campaign defined in such ambiguous terms.

c. The last point of the document proposes a "systematic campaign of mobilization of the Eurocommunists in support of the full rehabilitation of Trotsky and his comrades murdered in and outside of the USSR under Stalin's orders as well as that of all the old Bolsheviks." It specifies: "that the campaign should also mobilize the Eurocommunists to demand that Trotskyism be recognized as a legitimate current of the workers movement in Eastern and Western Europe."

This proposal is surprising to say the least. If it is a question of fighting for full rights of expression and organization for Trotskyists in the bureaucratic workers states, such a combat is fully part of the general fight for democratic and workers rights, a struggle which should be organized according to the method of the workers' united front, with all of the organizations of the workers movement, including the Stalinist organizations, in so far as that proves possible. But that is not what the text proposes. It proposes to mobilize the "Eurocommunists" (in an exclusive or at least privileged way) with the aim of gaining the "recognition" of Trotskyism as "a legitimate current of the workers' movement." The "Eurocommunists" in question are the Marchais, Carillo and Berlinguer's who (whatever by the relative slackening of their political and organizational relations with the Kremlin) remain attached to the same reactionary interests as the caste which usurped power in the USSR.

On the contrary Trotskyism's "legitimacy" is that of the Bolsheviks' struggle; it is stated in the very construction of the Fourth International and in the untiring defense of the proletariat's interests at each stage of its struggle. The Fourth International does not plead for its "recognition" on the part of the Stalinist bureaucrats, it has nothing to ask for from the Stalinists—"Eurocommunist" or not—who, far from being *as such* "a current of the workers movement" are, like the Soviet bureaucracy itself, nothing but petit-bourgeois parasites and counterrevolutionaries, feeding off the body of the working class.

On this point the Transitional Program is unequivocal. The Fourth International in fact fights for "the revision of the all political trials staged by the Thermidorian bureaucracy . . . in the light of complete publicity, controversial openness and integrity." But it is here a question of one of the tasks of the proletariat itself in its movement towards the political revolution. The Program itself hastens to specify: "The organizers of these falsifications should be punished as they deserve. It is impossible to realize this program without the overthrow of the bureaucracy which maintains itself by violence and falsification."¹

This is well and truly the opposite of an approach that demands the "rehabilitation" or "recognition" by a fraction of the bureaucracy itself!

1. The French version of the T.P. reveals a number of minor differences to that of the English.

2. The essentially propagandist conception of the struggle against Stalinism appears clearly in the way in which the document formulates the tasks assigned to the Fourth International faced with the "Eurocommunist" parties. Out of the 9 points put forward [from (a) to (i)] only 3 are presented as being the object of "campaigns," that is to say of systematic agitation, mobilization and organization; moreover, these points refer mainly to the fight for democratic rights in the bureaucratized workers states. On the other hand, all of the points which are more directly concerned with the orientation of the Stalinist parties in their immediate national activity, are defined in mainly ideological terms: it is a question of giving "a clear explanation of the revisionist character" of their "theoretical" positions (point a), to "systematically oppose our positions on workers power and socialist democracy" to that of "the ideological capitulations of the Eurocommunists" (point b); to give a "clear explanation of the treacherous and collaborationist character of the overall strategy of Eurocommunism," and to "reply to the arguments and rationalizations" put forwards to justify its line (point c), to "reassert" the actuality of the 1917 revolution against the "theory" of socialism in one country and of "peaceful coexistence" (point e); to criticize their "insufficient" analysis of Stalinism at the same time as trying to "convince" them of the correctness of the Trotskyist analysis."

One cannot help but notice that the allusion to the necessity to mobilize the masses is not accompanied but any precise proposals on the slogans on the order of the day in Europe to concretely contribute to raising the masses against the counterrevolutionary line of the Stalinist parties, and to open the road towards the independence and unity of the working class. Because of this, no means are given that allow the "opposition" between the Fourth International and the self-styled "Eurocommunists" to develop concretely as an opposition between two political practices situated on opposite sides of the class struggle (workers united front does not equal support to the bourgeois order). This opposition finds itself reduced in fact to a "debate of ideas" on "strategy" in which the "correctness of the Trotskyist analysis" is opposed to the "errors" or "insufficiencies" of "Eurocommunist conceptions." This attitude flows logically from an approach which refuses to give either a clear characterization of the social nature of the Soviet bureaucracy or a precise analysis of the nature and function of the political line put into practice in the class struggle by each of the European Stalinist parties (and not just their "concepts," "theories," or "arguments").

This is translated by a triple error in the proposals on the questions of orientation which are today at the heart of the political combat against Stalinism in Europe.

a. This is particularly patent in that which concerns the attitude of Trotskyists in face of the actively and cynically counterrevolutionary line of the mass Stalinist parties in Western Europe.

The document, which is very busy with "opposing" correct analyses to bad "concepts," is in fact incapable of clearly designating what are the concrete political lines which materialize in each country of Europe, "the traitorous character of the overall strategy of Eurocommunism," or more specifically the active political line by which each Stalinist party contributes to assuring the prolonging or the reinforcement of the bourgeois regimes in place. This

explains why the most direct political tasks of Trotskyists are found to be defined in a formulation which is as abstract as it is "synthetic." "Our strategy includes opposing the workers united front to that of the line of alliances with bourgeois parties or sections of the bourgeoisie, and a systematic fight for the unity of the working class at all levels." Agreed! But the debate starts exactly where the document stops; what are in Europe today the forms, the stakes and the concrete means of this struggle? The document is quite silent on two decisive questions: the defense of the independence of the trade unions, and the struggle for the workers government.

In fact, in that which concerns the first point, the reinforcement brought by the Stalinists to the defense of the bourgeois order isn't simply limited to their attempt to associate the trade unions in 'administering the crisis,' it implies in a number of countries a particularly active support to attacks on the organic independence of the workers movement, and to direct intrusions of the State into the free functioning of the workers organizations. In different degrees, this was remarkably the character of the "trade union unity law" in Portugal in 1975, of the "firm committees" legislation in Spain 1977-78, and of the "workshop committees" project (put forward in the first place by the CFDT) in France. One of the elementary tasks of Trotskyists in their "systematic fight for the unity of the working class at all levels" is to struggle against such attempts with the greatest vigor. The document is silent about this.

The same applies to the question of government. More-over the open political crisis which is manifest in several countries of Europe, and the actively counterrevolutionary line which is unfolded under cover of different formulas of popular frontism and national unity by the Stalinist parties, gives its full actuality to the political struggle for the workers government. It is exactly for this reason that one of the main points of debate for all the forces which refer to Trotskyism in France is that of "governmental slogans:" what place does the demand that the workers leaderships form their own government occupy in the struggle for the United Front? Should such a slogan be given an agitational character? How should this find its expression at the time of elections? In what way is it fundamentally opposed to the political formulas of collaboration engaged in by the CP and the SP? How should we defend our own program without making it a precondition to our electoral support to the workers parties or to our call that they form a government which breaks with all bourgeois forces? In what way can this combat be combined with that in favor of all forms of workers unity (trade union unity, strike committees, and at a more advanced stage, organs of the soviet type)?

This debate has crossed or is still crossing most of the European sections of the Fourth International. It was at the heart of the international differences on the Union of the Left in 1973 and on the Portuguese revolution in 1974-75. It is equally decisive for orientation vis-à-vis the centrists: the lack of clarity on this point having led to the enormous adaptationist errors in relation to cartels such as the FUR (Portugal), the FUT (Spain), Democrazia Proletaria (Italy) and the PLS-LSP (France). Finally at the time of the last elections in France, faced with the French CP's campaign of division, this question was at the heart of both the differences which crossed the LCR and of the differences which opposed the LCR and the OCI.

Can one consider such a document, which claims both to define the political tasks of the Fourth International vis-à-vis the so-called "Eurocommunists" and to engage in the debate with the OCI/Organizing Committee, to be serious when it remains totally silent on a problem of such political centrality?

b. The struggle against the national line of the so-called "Eurocommunist" parties as much as an active solidarity with the struggle in defense of democratic rights and the political revolution in the East necessitates the clear restatement of several of the fundamental programmatic gains of our movement, and that their concrete applications be defined for the present context in Europe.

While it is correct to call for "the defense of all of the victims of bureaucratic repression in the USSR and the Popular Democracies" this struggle must be clearly combined by Trotskyists with the restatement of their no less unconditional defense of the Soviet State and the October conquests against all threats of imperialism and against all restorationist tendencies. This task is not clearly defined in either the text or the United Secretariat document on socialist democracy.

The degeneration of the state apparatus of the workers state has not up to this moment liquidated the relationships of production which were created by the 1917 revolution. Far from being the property of the parasitic caste, they constitute the "October gains" of the world proletariat. The pressures exercised by imperialism on the workers state as well as the inherent tendencies towards the restoration of capital which develop inside the bureaucracy render the struggle for the defense of the USSR more present than ever, in that defense Trotskyists do not thereby solidarize in any way with the bureaucratic government in the USSR, on the contrary they maintain complete political independence in relation to the bureaucratic caste.

It is for this reason that the anti bureaucratic struggle is clearly associated by Trotskyists with the exposal of the interventions of Carter for freedom in the USSR and the pious manifestations of solidarity on the part of proimperialist lackeys, in no circumstances can a united front for the reestablishment of "democracy in the USSR" be established with the capitalist class.

The Fourth International must clearly condemn the Kremlin's search for agreements (SALT, Helsinki) with imperialism which are entirely directed against the world proletariat (and at the same time against the conquests of the Russian proletariat). Consequently Trotskyists cannot make as their demand that the Helsinki agreements be

applied, they must on the contrary struggle against it and the illusions which go with it.

In the same way, they are vigorously opposed to the unilateral disarmament of the USSR. The disarmament they recognize is that of the bourgeoisie, and for that the workers themselves must be armed.

The struggle for the freedom of the trade unions and the factory committees, for the right of assembly and freedom of the press will unfold in the struggle for the regeneration and development of Soviet democracy.

The bureaucracy replaced the Soviets as class organs with the fiction of universal electoral rights—in the style of Hitler-Goebbels. It is necessary to return to the Soviets not only their free democratic form but also their class content. As once the bourgeoisie and kulaks were not permitted to enter the soviets, so now it is necessary to drive the bureaucracy . . . out of the soviets . . . which have been reduced to organs of the administration and the police.

The struggle against the bureaucracy must be combined by Trotskyists with the reaffirmation of our unconditional defense of the Soviet state against all interventions, even "democratic" of imperialism.

Only the revolutionary uprising of the masses can chase the bureaucratic caste and regenerate the soviet regime. In any case, the struggle for the political revolution against the bureaucracy is inextricably bound up with the social revolution against capital, the struggle against the carcan of "peaceful coexistence," the struggle for the workers government and the socialist revolution in the West; the struggle against the domination of the bureaucracy in the East, the struggle for the rights of oppressed nations throughout Europe, give the combat for the United Socialist States of Europe its full actuality. This perspective should be the central axis around which we should vertebrate the struggle against Stalinism in Europe. It is not even mentioned in the document. And contrary to the confusion, so often developed in documents of the International and those of the European sections, this slogan, far from being limited to that of an "alternative to the capitalist Common Market," must be understood as that which traces the political perspective which is on the order of the day for the whole of Europe, as that which expresses the combined actuality of the political and social revolution in Europe. It is in this way that it can be opposed in the most offensive manner to the counter revolutionary status quo which is defended by imperialism, the soviet bureaucracy and the national Stalinist parties alike.

October 1978

'European Elections': Against 'Participation,' For An Internationalist Campaign

INTRODUCTION

(Comrade Nemo, an IEC member, submitted a critique at the November 1978 meeting of the European Political Bureaus of the draft statement by the European sections which was supported at that time by the United Secretariat.)

(The text below contains the text of that critique, with a few minor corrections that take into account the final version of the "Manifesto" by the European sections. This text now constitutes part of the platform of the international Leninist Trotskyist Tendency.)

The purpose of this document is to criticize the positions taken by the United Secretariat at the time of the "European elections." It summarizes the positions that have been expressed over the last few months in internal discussions in the LCR (France).

1. The orientation toward the upcoming "European elections" proposed in the current "Manifesto" by the European sections is contradictory.

The document offers an analysis of the function of this electoral operation from whence it follows that the attitude of the Fourth International should be a global condemnation of the operation and of the institution on which it is based. Thus, the document says, quite correctly: "Working people have nothing to hope for and nothing to defend in this capitalist Common Market or its parliament. . . . We are irreconcilable opponents of the institutions of this Europe."

Unfortunately, the political proposals made in the document concerning both the tactical form of the campaign by the Fourth International ("The Fourth International is participating in the electoral campaign" with a "goal [that] should be to run a single slate of candidates in such elections" and by running "national slates"), and a number of the explanations or slogans that are put forward, are such that they weaken or even completely distort this initial "proclamation."

2. Before getting to these points, it would be well to clarify what is genuinely under discussion.

There is agreement on the political importance of this opportunity and on the need for the Fourth International to respond with a vast political campaign that is international (in its form, involving the entire international and its European sections in a coordinated way) and internationalist (in its political content). A clear position along these lines was taken in August 1977 in the document "Revolution on the Agenda in Europe." The discussion, therefore, deals with the tactical forms and concrete political content of such a campaign.

However, the tactical approach to take toward an electoral process cannot flow from a formalistic and abstract assessment of the *nature* of the institution in question (in this case, the very limited powers and particularly undemocratic provisions that characterize this insti-

tution in relation to a national-bourgeois parliament). What must be assessed in the first place is the role and *function* of the election at a given point in the class struggle, and the way that the social forces line up in relation to it.

On the basis of such an assessment, we may be led, and rightly so, to have a *different* tactic under different circumstances toward elections to the *same* institution. Thus, in the case of the Russian Duma, Lenin considered, in view of a retrospective analysis of the various situations in the class struggle, that a boycott was justified in 1905, but wrong in 1906 and especially 1907. Likewise, and closer to home, with regard to the same parliament of the Fifth Republic, it was correct to call for a boycott of the June 1968 elections (which did nothing but organize the restoration of De Gaulle on the basis of a plebiscite, with the complicity of the apparatuses), while in the 1973 and especially the 1978 elections, it was necessary to actively fight to establish a majority of the workers parties, for such a majority would have represented a genuine point of leverage for the development of the revolutionary mass struggle and for the overturning of the Fifth Republic itself.

In the case of the "European parliament," the starting point for any orientation should also be a precise characterization not only of the nature of this institution but also the function assigned to this election in the current phase of the class struggle.

3. On this principal point, the United Secretariat document provides the basis for a correct analysis, but unfortunately, stops there, and does not draw the political consequences that flow from it.

Thus, it is perfectly correct to say that the organization of the "European elections" cannot be reduced either to a "mere diversionary trick" or a "propaganda operation." It is also correct to say that the workers "have nothing to hope for and nothing to defend" in such an operation.

But it is necessary to be more precise. The very organization of this election by the European bourgeoisies constitutes a political offensive aimed directly at the working class (which is not the case in every election, even a "bourgeois" one). Moreover, the main purpose of these elections is not the representative aspect (deciding who will have the "majority" within a body that in any case holds no real power), but the plebiscitary one: the essential thing for the ruling class is to obtain a legitimization through universal suffrage of the reactionary status quo in Europe.

This has a twofold political implication.

In the first place, this means that the so-called "elections" have a triply reactionary character from the standpoint of the interests of the proletariat. They constitute an attempt to divert the working masses from the movement that in each country is leading them to confront more and more directly the regimes in power. Moreover, because of their institutional framework, they tend to give a "demo-

cratic" endorsement to the Europe of big business and the "Common Market," as well as to the division of Europe in the way that the counterrevolutionary collusion between imperialism and the Stalinist bureaucracy (from Yalta to Helsinki) is trying to codify it. Finally, by attempting to bolster the seeming legitimacy of the bourgeois states as they exist in the framework of capitalist Europe, the "European elections" constitute a new denial of the most elementary rights of the oppressed nationalities (Ireland, Euzkadi, Catalonia to begin with) and a new attack on the desire of the German proletariat for reunification.

Second, it means that in such a search for a plebiscite, the European bourgeoisie must appeal directly for support from the parties that have a hearing among the workers. The document rightly condemns "the policy of class collaboration and conciliation with the bourgeoisie" practiced by the Stalinist and Social Democratic leaderships.

Unfortunately, it does not say how this "policy" is carried out in practice on the national and international level. At the national level, it is demonstrated today by the active support given in many countries (France, Spain, Italy) to the continuation of the bourgeois regimes and governments in power, or by directly sharing in governmental responsibilities themselves (West Germany, Britain, Belgium, etc.). At the international level, this policy is reflected in a no less active contribution to defending the political status quo throughout Europe; this becomes concretized, in particular, in terms of the "European elections." But what specific form does the counterrevolutionary contribution of the workers parties take in this instance? How does their "policy of class collaboration" materialize in this case? What political favor are they doing the bourgeoisie? There is the central question.

The Counterrevolutionary Contribution of the Parties

In this case, the counterrevolutionary contribution of the workers parties is not ideological. It is not mainly connected with the profoundly reactionary ideas that the CP and SP are going to disseminate on this occasion, each in their own way (what the United Secretariat document calls the "parallel mystifications of European solidarity and national sovereignty"). No, in reality, the Stalinist and Social Democratic parties are giving a much more material and much more direct boost to the anti-working-class offensive contained in the "European elections." This contribution consists of their very participation in the fake election; whereas this election essentially has the character of a plebiscite, the CP and SP candidacies are trying to convince the workers that they have something to gain in trying to ensure that their parties are strongly represented in this "parliament," and, in fact, serve only to funnel the workers' votes onto the terrain of a pseudodemocratic legitimization of the political status quo.

3. This makes it possible to clarify the objective political significance of the tactic contemplated by the Fourth International in the United Secretariat draft. This tactic is actually in contradiction with the axis of condemning the European elections which is proposed elsewhere in the same document.

One could reply, no doubt, that it is a matter of running candidates in order to use a "platform," the better to "condemn" the character and function of these elections and the role played in them by the workers parties. This is

what the United Secretariat draft may suggest, since the only justification that is given for the proposed tactic is to say that "the Fourth International is participating in the electoral campaign to ensure that an internationalist and anticapitalist voice will be heard."

On the most practical level, this discussion already merits serious discussion, for it is far from evident that the *supplementary* advantages of running candidates (in terms of an intensive political campaign making use of all the means of expression, organization and agitation possessed by the Fourth International and its sections) outweigh the difficulties and exceptionally high cost of such a decision.

However, it is mainly on the political level that this argument falls short. From this standpoint, the artificial character of the "platform" argument can be seen as soon as the question that politically dominates all others is posed: what will our general slogan be in this election? Candidates or not, should we as Trotskyists generally call for a class vote, a vote for the workers party candidates?

The answer to this question, whether yes or no, sheds direct light on the insurmountably contradictory character of the international's current positions.

Suppose the answer is no. (Such, anyway, was the answer proposed by at least one comrade on the LCR Political Bureau, who is also in favor of running Trotskyist candidates.)

The contradiction then becomes flagrant. On the one hand, we run candidates, and naturally, we call for a vote for them. On the other hand, we decline to call for a vote for the CP or SP candidates, for example, in places where we do not have a candidate. Why? Is it because they have bad ideas or a bad program? That would be absurd, since the principle of a "class vote" is never dependent, for us, on a programmatic criterion. So the only reason for rejecting it in this case remains that these elections have the character of a plebiscite; that the masses have nothing to gain by voting for their parties; that we condemn the endorsement given by the CP and SP by agreeing to take part in such an operation.

But how can we say such things if we participate ourselves? How can we call for a "boycott" except in favor of our candidates alone? No, such an answer would be decidedly absurd.

Suppose, then, that the comrades who support running candidates speak in favor of a general call for a working-class vote.

This, to tell the truth, seems to be the underlying position of the "Manifesto" by the international. In it we read: "Socialist and Communist Party militants ought to consider what a scandal it is that each of their parties in the nine member countries of the EEC is going its own way." Here it is clear that the chosen angle of attack with respect to the workers parties is not to criticize them for endorsing the reactionary and plebiscitary operation of the "so-called European elections," but merely for "going their own way," and that, with this logic, we will give electoral support to the existing candidates of the workers parties.

Such a position restores consistency in terms of a vote slogan. But it deepens the political contradiction. The fact is that once we tell the masses "Vote for our candidates, vote for the workers party candidates," this also means that we are telling them "It is *necessary* to vote in these elections." In other words, even though the workers,

despite all the efforts of the bourgeoisie and the misleaders, are spontaneously showing widespread lack of interest in an operation that they perceive as being totally alien to their fight, and which they can in no way take hold of for their own purposes (unlike other electoral opportunities), a tactic of participation inevitably leads us to actively try to convince the masses of the need to vote. This clearly means that the axis of our campaign amounts to explaining to the masses that it is important for their fight that the workers parties be represented in this institution in the most powerful way.

But it is clear that a choice must be made between such an axis and a policy that actually draws the consequences of the statement that "the workers have nothing to hope for and nothing to defend in this capitalist Common Market or its parliament."

The only attitude consistent with such a characterization is to orient toward a vast international political campaign, globally condemning the reactionary and plebiscitary meaning of these so-called elections and the endorsement that the workers parties are lending this operation by agreeing to participate in them. Such an orientation obviously implies campaigning for a boycott by the workers of these so-called elections, and not letting ourselves be diverted in any way from the tasks and real opportunities of the class fight.

4. The central political axis of such a campaign must be to counterpose the immediacy of the fight for the Socialist United States of Europe to the conservative policy of the bourgeoisie and the bureaucracies.

This perspective takes on its full revolutionary significance, in the situation begun in 1968, in the expression of the combined necessity of the political revolution and the revolution in Europe in opposition to the straitjacket of peaceful coexistence and the European status quo, the immediacy of the fight for a workers government in the European capitalist countries and of the antibureaucratic fight in Eastern Europe, as well as the demand for satisfaction of the rights of oppressed peoples and nationalities on the entire continent.

Such an axis has a direct agitational significance in face of the "European elections" maneuver, which are trying to legitimize the reactionary framework of the Common Market, and by the same token, the division of Europe that came out of Yalta. The "Manifesto" does not give this perspective the politically central character that it should have at such a time. It is, in fact, drowned in a "platform" that does not clearly state the *political* battles that are necessary so that all these demands can actually be met. What is more, a struggle around this "platform" may be all the more propagandistic in that the agitational axis that the document actually emphasizes is the proposal for a "Europewide congress of labor" to "work out a concrete plan of struggle and mobilization for the thirty-five-hour week." A proposal that arbitrarily picks out one of the

masses demands, remains stuck in the trade-union framework, and is likely to bury the need for a struggle for a workers government and the Socialist United States of Europe under a cloud of pure propaganda.

Furthermore, each time the document mentions this last slogan it is in opposition to "a Europe of the trusts and of big business."

This presentation in fact reduces its immediate relevance to *capitalist* Europe alone, and robs it of what gives it its essential strength: the affirmation of the *combined immediacy* of the proletarian revolution throughout Europe, in opposition to the collusion of imperialism and the bureaucracy.

In addition, various formulations that try to reduce this error introduce a no less questionable idea, a conception of the European revolution as taking place *by stages* (i.e., first in the West, then in the East). The idea that the revolution in capitalist Europe should "decisively hasten the process of political revolution in the USSR and people's democracies" thus leads to the imprudent statement that it will be up to the "future workers governments in one or more of the nine member countries to *launch* (my emphasis) the process of building the Socialist United States of Europe."

This risky prognosis, based on stages, as to what the concrete dynamic of the revolution on the European continent will be, and the reductionist conception of the slogan for the "Socialist United States of Europe" that derives from it, have political consequences on the whole conception of the campaign, which in fact allows itself to be trapped in the framework established by the "elections" themselves. All approaches and most slogans are thus reduced to the limits of the "Common Market." To begin with, it is the "European sections" (in reality, *capitalist* Europe) which have launched this "Call," whereas it should be issued by the Fourth International as a whole. The "Europewide congress of labor" that is proposed is limited, it appears, to the battle in capitalist Europe, whereas the axes of the immediate fight for the political revolution are only sketchily referred to in a single point of the "program" that aims to "defend the interests of the workers and the socialist revolution in these elections."

This leads, however, to the entire campaign in fact falling within the narrow confines of capitalist Europe alone, thus barring itself from attacking head-on what constitutes one of the most reactionary aspects of these "European elections": their function of legitimizing the status quo based on the division of Europe.

This will further exacerbate the adaptationist consequences deriving from the policy of "participation" in these elections. On these two points, a major reorientation is necessary.

February 1979

Concerning the March 1978 Legislative Elections in France

Submitted by the Leninist Trotskyist Tendency; and Arpo and Dani (Spain);
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The recent legislative elections in France marked an important stage in the development of the political crisis of the past several years in this country. When powerful mobilizations of the working class and its allies showed a strong tendency to translate itself into a parliamentary majority for the workers' parties (the CP and SP), which would have meant the end of the present government, the French CP launched a divisive campaign against the Socialist Party, the result of which was to give a parliamentary majority to the parties of the Fifth Republic and permit Giscard to return a new Barre government to office.

The particular application here of the Stalinists' popular-frontist line—following the developments of the revolutionary crisis in Portugal—must be carefully analyzed in the discussion for the next world congress, especially in the discussion of a new "European document." Indeed the whole international should take part in this discussion: for our French section has followed a completely erroneous course, characterized both by the pursuit of a policy of "unity of revolutionaries" and opportunism toward the popular-frontist Union of the Left.

1. A New "Far Left" Electoral Bloc

This was not the first time the LCR formed an electoral bloc with other political groups claiming to be to the left of the CP and SP: from the 1973 legislative elections to the 1977 municipal elections, in all the elections in France for more than five years, the French section of the international has taken the initiative to form such blocs (in the presidential elections, other groups' refusal forced the LCR to present its own candidate). On an international scale, many sections followed or follow a comparable policy: the FUR in Portugal, Democrazia Proletaria in Italy, Socialist Unity in Britain, the FUT in Spain, etc. . . .

This time, the LCR leadership came to a hybrid agreement: the idea was to divide up the constituencies so as to allow each organization to present its own candidates and its own platform; however, the candidates also had to defend a common platform ("For Socialism, For Power to the Workers"), and about 15% of the candidates ran on "mixed" tickets (candidate and alternate belonging to different organizations). But above all what gave this agreement a political character was that, on the basis of the common platform, the LCR called for a vote for its partners (the OCT, the CCA, local self-management collectives, etc.) in the constituencies where it did not run candidates itself.

This meant not voting for the CP or SP on the first round in constituencies where the LCR wasn't running a candidate, and therefore given preference to the various minor "far left" groups. Only one criterion can justify this "preferential" vote for groups outside the Fourth Interna-

tional. In May 1973, addressing the Ligue Communiste, the Socialist Workers Party Political Committee said what this criterion is: program. "If a candidate or party is putting forward a program that helps advance political consciousness and explains the need for independent action by the working class, a program that calls for an unequivocal break with all forms of class collaboration, then it is within our principles to vote for that candidate." (*International Internal Discussion Bulletin*, No. 14, August 1973.)

Does this characterization apply to the programs of the OCT, CCA, Lutte Ouvrière, or the "For Socialism, For Power to the Workers" platform? "The explicit rejection of popular frontism, and all other forms of class collaborationism, should be the basis of any limited electoral platform in France today," the SWP stated in 1973 (*Ibid.*), characterizing the Union of the Left as an "embryonic or incipient popular front." Five years later, when a policy which was popular frontist from every point of view—division of the workers' ranks and collaboration with the bourgeoisie—clashed with the masses' hopes for an electoral victory and a government of their parties, this criterion took on even more central importance.

Unfortunately, the LCR leadership did not learn from the errors of 1973 or profit from the advice of the SWP. For it, the "relative political agreement" reached with the OCT and CCA implied that ". . . all votes of defiance toward the Union of the Left should go to a single revolutionary candidate in each district." (Resolution of the January 1978 Central Committee, Internal Bulletin No. 75.) "Distrust of the Union of the Left" is a new criterion for Marxists and is not equivalent to a "program that calls for an unequivocal break with all forms of class collaboration"; especially as the "relative political agreement" itself—far from breaking with the policy of popular frontism—adapted to it.

Unlike in 1973 and 1977—a difference that is a positive result of the international and national discussion on this principled question—the LCR's voting instructions for the second round were for a working-class vote (CP-SP), to the exclusion of any bourgeois candidates, whether or not they adhered to the Union of the Left; the CCA's instructions were identical.

On the other hand, the OCT (which incidentally refuses to characterize the Socialist Party as a working-class party) called for a second-round vote for the entire Union of the Left, including the thirty-five bourgeois Radical candidates. Yet this was the policy that set the boundaries of the "For Socialism, For Power to the Workers" agreement; in the second round, the agreement called for a vote "for the reformists," while specifying that the LCR and CCA were only voting for the CP and the SP.

In other words, two positions on how to vote, with two antagonistic class contents—the vote for the CP and SP

and the vote for the Union of the Left (including the bourgeois elements)—were presented as two “tactical” variants of the same voting position, a so-called “vote for the reformists.”

As the SWP stressed in 1973 (*ibid.*), “A call to vote for the Union de la Gauche was qualitatively different from a call to vote for the CP and SP . . .” The LCR, on the other hand, establishes only a small quantitative difference between the two positions: the minimum it demanded for reaching an agreement was a commitment to vote “at least” for the Union of the Left. Moreover, the “unity agreement” called for the “defeat of the right.” This slogan, which opposes right and left rather than bourgeoisie and working class, represents a concession to popular-frontism in the same way as does the slogan “for a government of the left” put forward by Democrazia Proletaria in Italy. The world congress must correct the error made by the LCR when it signed this document.

This error led the French section to make the commitment to vote for the Union of the Left a minimum condition for the acceptance of the PCR(ML) (Mao-Stalinist) as part of the “For Socialism, For Power to the Workers” bloc. The refusal of the Mao-Stalinists to agree to this (they took no position on the second round) prevented their joining the bloc and led the LCR to reject any preferential vote for them on the first round; on the other hand, Lutte Ouvrière’s belated commitment to step down on the second round in favor of the candidates of the popular front was deemed sufficient by the leadership of the French section to call for a preferential vote for its candidates where “For Socialism, For Power to the Workers” did not run (that is, in more than half the constituencies).

Far from being only “a political agreement with two other groups that say they’re to the left of the CP and the SP, to divide up the different districts so that there is only one candidate of this type in each electoral district” (interview with Ollivier in the *Militant*), the “FS, FPW” agreement illustrates the LCR’s desire to pursue the policy of “unity of revolutionaries” in response to the “new vanguard’s” aspirations of unity.

This has led the LCR to justify the fact that despite the disagreement which existed on the question of how to vote on the second round, the “agreement on dividing up constituencies” was accompanied by a call for a “preferential vote” for the candidates of the OCT where they were presented. The Political Bureau balance sheet retrospectively recognized that such an agreement “offered only little interest from the programmatic point of view and did not open up any dynamic toward unity”; the same document, however, reaffirmed that the common statement with the OCT (and the CCA) “was not contradictory with our orientation” despite the principled disagreement which existed at the time between the LCR and the CCA on one hand, and the OCT on the other, on the principled question of a class vote.

The possibility—theoretically left open to the LCR—of carrying out a campaign on both its own program and the bloc’s program—was hardly enough to hide the fact that—because of the content of the agreement, because of its voting instructions and its extension of the preferential vote on the first round to Lutte Ouvrière—the LCR’s activity did not trace an independent course for the working class, but, on the contrary, was closeted in a policy designed to pressure the Popular Front from the left.

As in Italy, “. . . critical support of the centrists’ politics disarmed us in front of both the centrists and the reformists”; FS-FWP, like Democrazia Proletaria, called “for a popular front standing further to the left.” (Statement of the LTF on the Italian elections, August 1976, *IIDB*, No. 2, April 1977.)

2. Bewilderment and Paralysis Before the PCF’s Policy.

In the pursuit of “revolutionary unity” another equally disturbing factor came to light: the French leadership’s bewilderment as to the real objectives of the Stalinists’ policy, and its resulting inability to determine the guidelines of a mobilization of the working class which would trace the course toward class unity and independence. From the opening of the PCF’s divisive campaign (September 1977) until just after the March 1978 elections, the LCR leadership unceasingly analyzed this policy as fundamentally inspired by the Stalinists’ “electoralist” considerations. According to the LCR leadership the Stalinists wanted to decrease the gap in number of votes between the SP and the CP so as to guarantee a large number of portfolios in a Union of the Left government, etc. . . . “The SP wanted to enter the government to manage the crisis; The CP was ready to go along with it—on the condition that it first eliminate the electoral gap between itself and the SP . . .” A. Krivine was still saying after the second round. (*Rouge*, March 21, 1978.) Thus the CP-SP quarrel reflected simply the electoral competition between the two parties, each concerned with winning the elections, each defending its own bureaucratic interests.

This analysis was based on the idea of a “process of social-democratization,” already well underway, which was leading the CP to act like a traditional reformist party, like a strictly national bureaucracy. In reality, while the electoral bouts and the parliamentary stakes are the special terrain on which the social democracy flourishes, and while participation in government affairs and penetration of the state apparatus are its major objectives, because these are the only means by which they can obtain the various privileges and advantages they hanker after, the same is far from being the case for the Stalinist parties. Their growing appetites for electoral success and governmental power on the national level (a result of the advanced stage of the crisis of decomposition of Stalinism) cannot hide the fact that their real vocation lies elsewhere: in the defense of the interests of the Soviet bureaucracy and in the defense of the status quo on a world scale.

In Portugal in 1975, as Comrades Foley, Hansen and Novack noted in “For a Correct Political Course in Portugal,” *Intercontinental Press*, October 13, 1975, the section headed, “The Electoral Victory—an Opening or a Trap?”, the power acquired by the workers’ movement was illustrated by the absolute majority obtained by the workers’ parties. The bourgeoisie, through the Armed Forces Movement, at first tried to organize a boycott of the elections, but, faced with the prospect of an electoral landslide for the workers’ parties, it preferred to subordinate the Constituent Assembly to the military regime, establishing a pact between the MFA and the workers’ parties.

The Portuguese CP became the enthusiastic artisan of the politics of big business; “The PCP and the Kremlin gave total support to the MFA’s ‘People’s Power’ plan.” (Foley, *IP*.) To defend the MFA’s power, the PCP had to direct its campaign against the democratic rights of the

masses, the sovereignty of the Constituent Assembly, and the PCP-PSP majority in this assembly, since these were incompatible with the continuation of the military regime and made the perspective of a PCP and PSP government, independent of the bourgeoisie and the military hierarchy, credible in the eyes of the broadest masses.

Far from seeing in the PCP's policy a desire to compete with the PSP in the electoral field, the LTF correctly characterized the PCP as the "auxiliary of the MFA" defending the current form of bourgeois domination. Whereas the PSP advanced its prospects for growth in the framework of a parliamentary regime, "The Portuguese CP . . . prefers a military government with a populist façade to a parliamentary regime." ("The Key Issues in the Portuguese Revolution," resolution of the LTF, August 1975, *IIDB*, No. 6 in 1975.)

This policy often leads Stalinist parties (even the so-called "Eurocommunist" ones such as the Spanish and Italian CPs) to defend regimes which are seriously threatened, trying to help the bourgeoisie avoid resorting to their participation in the government, so as to avoid any destabilization of the situation. Unlike the PCP, which was confronted with a sudden mass upsurge, the PCF, since May 1968, has had the opportunity to prepare for its counterrevolutionary tasks. In France, ever since the Gaullist regime fell into open political crisis, the policy of popular frontism has had to be used to insure the defense of capitalism by every means—entry into the government being a last resort.

For five years, the Union of the Left was able to prolong the survival of the regime, gradually opening itself up to the bourgeoisie, by "polemics," and the crushing of struggles. But in 1977 a new situation opened up: it was plain in the aftermath of the municipal elections that the masses were preparing to give the workers' parties a clear majority. The result would have been to put the formation of a popular-front government on the agenda, as a political bulwark against the mobilization of the masses.

But it is quite likely that a political victory for the masses, which the defeat of the government coalition would have represented, would have been of such a character as to raise the mass mobilization to a higher level and seriously destabilize the regime, despite the conservative policies of the party leaderships. The CP and SP leaderships at that time disagreed on how to concretely apply the policy of support to the Fifth Republic at this decisive stage. As a parliamentary workers' party, the SP felt forced to try to enter the government to fulfill its role as a defender of bourgeois order. The PCF, on the other hand, like the PCP, which threw all its weight against the formation of a PCP-PSP government, sought to create conditions for an electoral defeat of the workers' parties in order to give the Fifth Republic a new lease on life.

As always occurs in such cases, the Stalinist leadership tried to camouflage the ugly campaign to divide the ranks of the workers behind a storm of ever more "radical" statements: the SP was reformist, it had suddenly "turned to the right," its only aim was to support Giscard, it rejected the number of nationalizations proposed by the PCF, it was necessary to renovate the Common Program by escalating it (without changing its bourgeois character as a program for managing capitalism, to be sure), etc. . . . Finally denying the working-class character of the SP, the PCF leadership showed it had gone through the Third Period school, the school of the struggle against

"social fascism" and the school of the PCP.

Such masquerading should be no surprise to members of the Fourth International, who are aware of the special use of theory and program in the hands of the Stalinists. Unlike social democracy, which tries to make its reformist practice and its program correspond to each other, "The Stalinist bureaucracy . . . is in general foreign to any doctrine or system whatsoever. Its 'ideology' is thoroughly permeated with police subjectivism, its practice is the empiricism of crude violence. . . . Stalin revises Marx and Lenin not with the theoretician's pen but with the heel of the GPU." (Leon Trotsky, "Stalinism and Bolshevism" (August 29, 1937, *Writings of Leon Trotsky 1936-1937*, p. 428.)

But the LCR leadership thought it useful, and even a priority, to "join in the great programmatic debate" with the PCF. Therefore it welcomed the PCF's initiative: "When the Communist Party opened fire with the polemics, it did so on the basis of a necessary discussion on program, against a possible rightward drift by the SP. We replied: A discussion on program? Fine." (D. Bensaïd, *Rouge*, March 20, 1978.) In not seeing the Stalinists' objective of division and electoral defeat and defending the need to debate "program" because of a possible "right turn" by the SP, the leadership of the French section fell into the trap set by Marchais: unable to chart a course of struggle against division, for unity, and for class independence, it chose to center its activities around a wide "programmatic discussion," thus echoing the PCF. Under the circumstances—that is the PCF's campaign of division—this policy had a number of harmful consequences.

First, since, from the outset, the topic of the "discussion" was the updating of the Common Program, the LCR's own position went through some unfortunate changes, leading Comrade Krivine to demand ". . . a minimum threshold of nationalization which would permit a change in the logic of the system . . ." (*Le Monde*, September 27, 1977), or the LCR's approval of the CFDT's bureaucratic and corporatist plan for "shop committees," which was approved by the Stalinists.

Further, having accepted the framework of the so-called "discussion" proposed by the PCF, the LCR could only approve the latter's verbal radicalism and condemn the SP's "moderation." Thus, *Rouge* (March 13, 1978) said that the maintenance of the CP's electoral support ". . . shows both the hardship which is the lot of the whole of the working class and the workers' determination to be done with it . . ." while ". . . the SP's limited progress is the result of the working class's rejection of the 'left' austerity program implicitly proposed by Mitterrand." On this basis, it at least partially legitimized the Stalinist attacks on the SP, while A. Krivine of course criticized Marchais on television for his "use of the threat not to stand down in the second round as a form of blackmail," he simultaneously criticized Mitterrand's refusal to ". . . resume negotiations" on the updating of the Common Program. . . .

Under these circumstances, it is not surprising that the Stalinists are temporarily moderating their traditional sectarianism toward the "far left," and toward the LCR in particular. Like their Portuguese counterparts when the FUR was formed, the Stalinists realized that these minority sectors of the working class were the only forces to see their policy as an opportunity to debate rather than an attempt to divide the ranks of workers.

In the midst of its campaign against the Socialist Party, the PCF made many appeals to women, "leftists," and ecologists, intimating that the defense of their legitimate aspirations required a PCF vote beginning with the first round, while *l'Humanité* reprinted without comment a call for a debate by A. Krivine ("We are ready to meet the CP for a debate"—February 28, 1978, rally in Paris). Far from exposing this as a tactic to attract revolutionary-minded militants into the orbit of the campaign for division, and rejecting it, *Rouge* responded: "I dare you!", while the PB of the LCR asked to meet the PB of the PCF (although it never asked the SP for such an interview) ". . . to debate our respective programs, working-class unity, and the best ways to be done with austerity." (*Rouge*, March 2, 1978)

Thus the LCR considered that the campaign of division had positive aspects and thought it necessary to take part in the debate which served as camouflage. This policy prevented it from effectively fighting for a workers' government, a struggle which should have resulted in making these interrelated slogans central to our agitation: "For a majority of votes and deputies for the CP and SP! Neither Radicals, nor Gaullists, nor generals! (a campaign for a break with the representatives of the bourgeoisie, which the LCR did not wage systematically. For unconditional withdrawal of working-class candidates on the second round in favor of the leading one! For a CP-SP government without ministers from the bourgeois parties!" All these slogans were missing in the "FS, FPW" platform.

Unlike in the past, in this election campaign, the LCR advanced the slogan: "We need a SP and CP government committed to satisfy these demands: a minimum wage of 2400 francs and a thirty-five hour work week! A sliding scale of wages! Nationalization without compensation of all key sectors! Control of working conditions by shop committees!" (the main poster, end of 1977). Leaving aside that certain of these demands are mistaken (for example, the reference to the shop committees) or formulated in such a way as to "insert themselves" into the debate on updating the Common Program, the main defect of this approach was that in emphasizing the "commitment" of the CP and SP to satisfy this or that demand, it prevented any agitation on the slogan of a CP-SP government. This slogan, as such, hardly appeared during the LCR campaign, while the "program" of such a government, the "conditions" to be met, were the central concern in our explanations, at rallies and in our press.

As in Portugal, the majority never really understood the central place of the governmental formula; and a member of the LCR PB wrote in October 1977, "Are we for a CP and SP government? No! We are for the masses of workers fighting for the formation of a SP and CP government that defends their interests" (Puech, contribution to the Central Committee). He even specified, two months before the first round, "The entire organization is well aware that we are not for a fight for a CP-SP government without programmatic conditions" (IB No. 75).

This failure to understand the role of the governmental slogan prevented our French section from grasping how "independent working-class action" against division and class collaboration had to be pursued along the way of a mobilization in favor of a CP-SP majority and the unconditional pledge to stand down on the second round. The SP made this pledge, but the PCF refused to make it until after the first round sometimes even threatening to refuse it altogether. Neither of these two demands—which were

extremely popular among workers, who saw them as a means to force the party apparatuses, particularly that of the PCF—to win an electoral victory—found favor with the LCR leadership.

Whereas the demand for a CP-SP parliamentary majority would have enabled the masses to express their desire to put an end to this regime, and their rejection of the popular-front policy, a member of the Political Bureau wrote, "The OCI carries on a fight for 'unity for a CP-SP majority in the legislative elections.' Unity of the apparatuses for a mere electoral victory! The OCI overtakes the PSU leadership on its right." (A. Artous, *Rouge*, October 7, 1977.) The LCR took up this slogan only after the first round, once an agreement had been signed between the CP and SP—that is, when its impact on mass mobilizations was minimal and its significance strictly electoral.

As for the struggle for withdrawal after the first round it obviously showed up the CP as the initiator of the division, and stripped it of its progressive veneer in its polemic with the SP. Therefore the LCR refused to take it up, and sarcastically criticized the OCI, which made withdrawal after the first round its *central agitational* theme. The LCR accused it of seeking "reconciliation at any price" between the CP and SP and therefore adapting to the "workers most demoralized by the division of the Left." (*Rouge*, November 13, 1977.)

Recognizing late in the day that this demand was correct, the LCR nevertheless refused to make it an agitational theme. While a petition campaign led by the OCI, demanding that the PCF commit itself to stand down, met a very sizable response throughout the country, the LCR rejected this organization's proposal to campaign jointly, explaining: "The PB reaffirms its absolute disagreement with a petition that is concerned solely with withdrawal . . . it is out of the question that this could become our central theme; it would be tantamount to reducing working-class unity to a question of how to vote in elections." (PB circular, February 1978.)

Silent on this question throughout the whole campaign of division, the LCR—in terms that were ambiguous, to say the least—welcomed the agreement signed by the CP, the SP, and the Left Radicals between the two rounds. It did so even though this agreement had been concluded in a cynically bureaucratic way and was entirely within the political framework of the popular front. It issued a call to "use this agreement to organize a general mobilization around withdrawal." (*Rouge*, March 14, 1978.)

After the elections, the LCR PB had to modify its previous analysis, admitting that the PCF had "a special responsibility" in the electoral defeat. But, in the name of the argument that "historically" the CP and the SP are equally counterrevolutionary, it has, to the present, fully upheld the idea that it was necessary even in the specific circumstances of the campaign of division to maintain an attitude of strict "equal rejection" of the CP and SP.

This mistaken idea was what prevented the LCR from effectively waging a mass campaign for *unconditional* withdrawal in favor of the candidates of the working-class parties. As late as December 1978, the leadership of Tendency 4 (which included the members of the former PB), thought it necessary to reaffirm in response to Tendency 1 (I.B. "H" p. 13), that it was correct to place CP and SP on the same footing in France in 1977-78, just as it had done in Portugal in 1975, with the paltry argument

that any other attitude would have bred "illusions about the SP."

3. Confusion and Opportunism as to the Union of the Left

The LCR's confusion as to the popular-front policies was mainly expressed during the six month campaign of division by a tendency to adapt to the line of the PCF. Between the two rounds, that is, after an electoral agreement permitting the Union of the Left alliance to be temporarily reconstituted, had been concluded for the second round, the LCR leadership tended to judge the agreement favorably and even to associate itself with it.

Rouge issued a call to "make use of the agreement," and Comrade Krivine addressed the following criticism to the PCF on television: "Why did you break the dynamic of unity and allow the right to make a comeback?" Thus confusion was created between the unity of the ranks of the workers and the Union of the Left, and between the division of the working class and the breakup of the Union of the Left. This involuntary sliding onto the terrain of the popular front calls to mind the famous "dynamic" of mass mobilizations which the Ligue Communiste in 1973 attributed to a possible victory of the Union of the Left. On the basis of this dynamic, and analyzing this coalition as an "overall reformist alternative," it had called for a vote for the popular-front coalition as such.

Furthermore, in many places (Paris and parts of the suburbs of Paris), joint statements were adopted with the PCF, the SP, and sometimes the Left Radicals, calling for

a vote for the "common candidate of the left," in order to "defeat the right." Contrary to the demand for a working-class vote, these instructions set themselves entirely on the poisonous ground of the popular front.

Finally, while it was correct to take part in Union of the Left rallies in order to defend our program there, and to explain our withdrawal in favor of the best-placed working-class candidate, it was unjustifiable that the LCR jointly organized rallies which were in effect rallies of the Union of the Left and, in dozens of cities (see *Rouge* between the two rounds) stood on the platform shoulder to shoulder with all the components of the Union of the Left.

These errors, which are neither new nor limited to France, flow fundamentally from the application in France, of the line of the "new vanguards," defined in the European document adopted at the last world congress. The development of the class struggle in Europe makes it possible to deepen this discussion; the balance sheet of the policy of the French section in the course of these decisive six months in the class struggle can contribute to this.

The differences which remain in the international on the activity of Trotskyists in Europe were correctly characterized by the LTF in August 1976 when it wrote that it was necessary to correct "the error of orienting to the 'new mass vanguard,' including errors made in election policy, such as adaptation to popular frontism, confusion about the character of Stalinism, and errors in mass work . . ." ("Statement by the Steering Committee of the Leninist Trotskyist Faction," August 1976, *IIDB*, No. 2, April 1977.) One task of the coming world congress is to analyze these errors in order to uproot them.

Clarification

By the Leninist Trotskyist Tendency

1. In [French-language] International Internal Bulletin No. 29, it was not indicated that the document, "Concerning the March 1978 Legislative Elections in France," which is part of the basis of the LTT, also had the individual political support of the following comrades:

Strawson (Political Bureau, IMG, Britain)
Arpo and Dani (LCR, Spain)
Amador, Andrés, and Sara (leadership of the OST, Costa Rica)

Alice, Georgiou, and Dimitriou (Greece)

2. As a *counterresolution* to the draft European document of the United Secretariat, the LTT submits for a vote the general line of the document, "Coming Revolution in Europe," [In English-language *IIDB* Vol. XV, No. 3, May 1978], with the following appendices: the document on "Eurocommunism," the document on the European elections, and the document on the French elections. [Note: appendices are printed elsewhere in this bulletin.]

Dissolve the I.M.T. Strengthen the International

(Report by Comrade Duret adopted by the Steering Committee of the International Majority Tendency (IMT), October 1977. In accordance with a motion passed at that final meeting of the IMT Steering Committee, the report was combined with the resolution that was submitted to the same body.)

* * *

I. Introduction

After several years of bitter tendency and faction struggles which sometimes threatened the unity of our movement, factors which made possible a substantial change in the International's internal situation emerged during the first half of 1977. Our task is now to assess these factors, evaluate their importance, and make the choices corresponding to the needs of our whole movement in the present period.

The IMT bureau proposes to immediately dissolve the tendency and return to the normal functioning of the leadership organs democratically elected by the World Congress.

The comrades of the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction (LTF) have adopted the general line of Barry Sheppard's report proposing the immediate dissolution of the LTF, in August 1977. Comrade Sylvain and myself were present at that LTF Steering Committee, just as comrades of the ex-LTF are attending this meeting. The IMT bureau proposes to further open the meeting to all members of the International leadership (including comrades of the Bolshevik Tendency (BT)), because it believes that our whole movement should be cognizant of such an important discussion, one of whose main goals is to reinstitute the normal functioning of all leading bodies of the International. This is one of the first assurances of the possibility of achieving one of the goals connected with the dissolution of tendencies and factions.

The dissolution of tendencies and factions and the corresponding strengthening of the International's capacity for action (both internally and publicly) must be understood primarily in relation to the real possibilities for the development of our movement. The accumulation of further delays in adjusting the functioning of the International to the urgent tasks before us would entail the serious risk of seeing objectively promising situations go down the drain due to our inability to mobilize the whole strength of the International for intervention.

2. Political context and organizational situation

The above considerations lead us to the first question we must answer: what is the international political context and organizational situation within which we propose to immediately dissolve the IMT? It is necessary to grasp the relationship that exists between the developments of the international class struggle, the opportunities open to Trotskyists, the difficult tasks we face, and the changes

that have taken place in the International since 1969-1972.

a. A favorable political context

In capitalist Europe, the period which opened in 1968-69 is continuing. In a framework providing confirmation of the change in the class relationship of forces to the advantage of labor the combination of the deep crisis of the capitalist system (economic, social, and political) and the crisis of leadership of the workers' movement makes it possible to foresee the continuation of extreme instability over a relatively long period. The bourgeoisie does not have the resources in the short run to successfully carry out a large-scale frontal offensive against the workers' movement.

In Spain, the end of the Franco dictatorship, the high degree of working-class mobilization, the renewal of the crisis of bourgeois leadership; in Italy, the maintenance of strong working-class combativity—particularly in the metals and chemicals industries—and the continuing crisis of bourgeois leadership; in France, the crisis of the regime on the eve of the March 1978 legislative elections, constitute the clearest expressions of the fundamental tendencies operating in several European countries.

Everywhere, the decisive role of the class-collaborationist policy of the SP and CP leaderships in upholding the bourgeois order, comes to the fore. But everywhere there also comes to the fore the change in the relationship of forces within the organized workers movement—political and trade-union—between the bureaucratic apparatuses and layers of advanced workers emerging in the course of struggles and accumulating political experiences. The crisis of strategy that has erupted in the workers movement—against a background of economic crisis—the rising level of consciousness of significant layers of workers, as well as the immediacy of political and social questions in the ranks of the proletariat, give the Fourth International's sections a historic chance to root themselves in the working class, and to build within it an alternative leadership to that of the reformists.

In the long run, the new phase of the crisis of Stalinism can only shake up the monolithism of the Communist Parties (CPs) and intensify the crisis of control by the bureaucratic castes of society in the USSR and Eastern Europe. This process will allow us to gain a wider hearing among the worker cadres influenced by or belonging to the CPs, who play an important role in the activity of the entire class.

A process of differentiation is also beginning in the Social Democratic parties of several European countries. It reflects the politicization slowly but surely developing in the ranks of the proletariat in these countries.

In these circumstances, the immediacy of the overall answers and the method proposed by the Transitional Program to offer the prospect of an effective fight by the working class against the austerity policy of the bosses and their state, is demonstrated.

Some features of the social and political crisis that sharply hit several European countries first and foremost

are also appearing in Japan and North America. They are fostering a molecular and differentiated radicalization in the working class. This enables the Trotskyist organizations in these areas to root themselves in the very heart of the industrial proletariat.

In Latin America, despite several important defeats (Uruguay, Chile, Argentina), the potential for struggle of the working class—whose social weight increased considerably in the main countries during the last two decades—and of the poor peasants is far from exhausted. Sizeable new mobilizations can recur.

The crisis of the nationalist populist currents and of the organizations claiming to be Castroist opens new opportunities for the Trotskyist organizations. The latter can rise on the political scene with new impetus.

Finally, the latest twists of the crisis of Maoism and the liquidation of the "Cultural Revolution" are disorienting and weakening the organizations tied to the CCP line. In various countries these organizations have (or had) a substantial influence on some layers of the working class. The oscillations and political disarray of centrist organizations having a Maoist or semi-Maoist framework will increase. Faced with one political crisis after another, these organizations have revealed their inability to come up with alternative political solutions to those put forward by the class-collaborationist leaderships of the workers movement. Their orientation consists of combining or alternating an ultra-sectarian line (towards the trade unions as well as towards the SPs and CPs) and an adaptation to the line of the reformist leaderships. In many cases they find themselves in a real impasse.

All of this vividly demonstrates both the objective possibilities that are emerging for our sections and the need to take a new step forward in building these sections if they are to be in a position to seize these opportunities.

b. Sections at a new stage

We must add to these observations some considerations on the situation of the sections and sympathizing organizations of the Fourth International.

Since 1969, the International has changed considerably. A large number of sections were organized—formally or in fact—after 1969. The vast majority of members of the International have joined in the last few years. This must be taken into account when we set ourselves the goal of returning to the usual norms of functioning of our international organization.

In capitalist Europe, the sections have achieved, to various degrees, an initial rooting in the the working class; they have carried out important trade union work and won a definite hearing in this area; for several years they have trained themselves for mass work; they have reinforced their ability to intervene in the general political arena; they have a leadership cadre which, although it is often still small in numbers, has the elements of an initial continuity.

Nonetheless, we also note a number of weaknesses:

- the lack of a thought-out conception of how to build sections and their leadership cadre over the long term (which is essentially the result of a lack of long-term continuity of experience in the building of independent organizations, with the resulting lack of systematic thinking);

- the weakness of our implantation in the working

class;

- a delay in education and in making the sections programmatically and politically homogeneous, with the consequences this has on our public propaganda activity.

In Latin America too, organizations which combine participation in the class struggle with general political activity are developing in a number of countries. Two examples illustrate this: The role of the Mexican comrades in the peasant "coordinadora," and the election campaign of the PST-LCR in Colombia.

At the same time the vast majority of these organizations also don't have the advantage of extensive political and organizational continuity. The errors of the Ninth World Congress, the fact that the Tenth World Congress resolution on "Armed Struggle" could not offer any kind of framework for the activity of our sections, led to great disorientation. The self-criticism on Latin America is only a first step in politically rearming the International for the tasks of building our sections on that continent. This rearming is urgent. The openings that may arise as various dictatorships weaken will present our sections with a set of complex problems related to the crisis of populist nationalism and Castroism and to the reorganization of the workers movement, questions for which the international, its sections, and the new generation of cadres are still relatively unprepared.

In North America, the SWP's turn toward the industrial proletariat—whose progress was noted by the United Secretariat (USec) delegation at this year's August convention—has important implications for the whole international. First, the greater capacity of the international as such to grasp developments within the working class in the bastion of imperialism is directly tied to that of the SWP, and thus to the SWP's presence in the very heart of the American proletariat. The IMT bureau has explained repeatedly, on the basis of objective criteria, the role that the SWP plays in this process. Second, this turn, which is based on all of the SWP's historical gains, can enable the Trotskyist movement to be in the forefront of developing anticapitalist mobilizations by the strongest working class in the imperialist world. Third, this turn lays the basis for new discussions and exchanges in the ranks of the International.

c. Two goals

Basing ourselves on these two sets of observations, we can define two goals:

- a. The need to restore full functions to the International leadership bodies so that a discussion and rethinking can take place within them without a preestablished lineup. Only after such a discussion, which should include both the changes in the objective situation and the experiences of the principal sections, can we clarify the actual points of agreement and disagreement, and the procedures for discussing them, the fact being that we are by no means required to debate all questions on which differences arise by organizing tendencies, highly structured tendencies (semi-factions with their own internal discussion), or factions!

In an international political situation such as the one we are presently witnessing, with its sharp turns and sudden explosions, a normal functioning for the international represents a political and organizational guarantee. In this kind of context, it is inevitable that errors will be

made, as it is to be expected that differences will emerge on one or another point. We know this is part and parcel of the very growth of our movement. The responsibility of a leadership consists of setting up mechanisms that can help clarify and, if possible, limit these differences (for example, by avoiding making an extrapolation from the "logic" of a position), while trying first and foremost to examine the concrete implications of the differences for the work of the sections in a given phase. A leadership must also demonstrate its ability to correct errors as rapidly and clearly as possible; effective functioning of the leadership bodies can only enhance that ability.

A permanent tendency and faction fight almost inevitably leads to questioning these two goals which the leadership must pursue if it is to lead the whole organization. As a majority we have a special responsibility in this area. Clearly so long and bitter a debate can lead—and has led—a minority to caricature the majority positions. We have already noted this in our self-criticism on Latin America. It is also obvious that the very structure of international tendencies and factions—which in fact rest by and large on the adherence of the majorities of sections or sympathizing organizations—tends to magnify the tensions inherent in a debate, organizational tensions, and distrust. This was the case, for instance, when the question of relations with the OCRFI came up.

But we must recognize that as the IMT, we have not escaped the traditional logic of faction fights. The delay in correcting certain errors, with the damaging effects this had on the entire international, was sometimes due to "tactical" considerations related to the factional atmosphere. This was not objectively justified for a majority tendency.

Such delays give rise to debates that instead of focusing on the essential questions, polarize around secondary issues, such as questions of formulation, or simply put all differences on the same level in a misleading way. In that situation debates tend to lose (and do lose) their educational character and their function, which is to help clarify positions, make the necessary corrections, and delineate the real agreements and disagreements. These distortions are not limited to the international debate; they have penetrated national sections, or have grown up between organizations claiming adherence to the Fourth International in a given country but belonging to opposing international tendencies and factions.

b. The necessity of building a leadership of the International acting on the basis of collective discussion and including the new generations of section leaders, most of whom have experienced only an international marked by tendency and faction debates. Such a step forward can create the conditions for a more fruitful debate, for politically strengthening all the sections, and for outlining the general priorities of activity for building the sections in the next stage.

Never before in the history of Trotskyism have our membership's composition and growth made this task as urgent and as difficult to concretize in practice. To seriously undertake the project of building an international leadership today makes it imperative to dissolve the existing tendencies.

3. Dissolve the IMT!

On the basis of this assessment of the international

political situation, the opportunities for growth and the tasks before our movement, we propose to dissolve the IMT.

Under the circumstances, dissolution of the IMT is not directly dependent on the conclusion of a political agreement with the LTF that would be formalized, for example, by joint resolutions. It is obvious that political disagreements remain, even if their magnitude and nature must be reassessed by both parties. A dissolution that would give the impression that political agreement on the central political tasks already exists between what constituted the IMT and LTF, before there has been sufficient prior discussion and joint work within the regular leadership bodies of the International, would only lay the basis for a new faction fight when differences broke out on one point or another. It would only contribute to disorienting the ranks of our movement.

While the IMT's dissolution is not directly tied to any prior political agreement with the LTF, a number of facts nevertheless demonstrate that there can be a new framework for the discussion leading up to the Eleventh World Congress.

The acute organizational crisis tied up with the factional polemic was embodied in a number of splits on the level of national sections. On the other hand, the announcement of a series of fusions and statements in favor of fusion at the national level (Canada, Spain, Mexico, Australia, Colombia, Hong Kong) indicate the turn that must take place in the International itself.

The fusion process in Canada and Spain reflects a converging approach to new political situations. In this respect, it is an index of the possibility that a similar process may be beginning at the international level. Dissolution of the tendencies and factions in the international can directly aid in the consolidation of accomplished fusions, in the completion of those in progress, in the development in these sections of political discussions that are not burdened by the weight of past debates, and in the formation of more rounded leaderships.

Convergences have also appeared on a number of important political questions. The resolution on "Dictatorship of the Proletariat and Socialist Democracy" was drafted and adopted by USec members belonging to both the IMT and LTF. In the discussions under way, we note a broad agreement on the tasks of the LCI in Portugal and of the LCR in Spain. Likewise, in Quebec, the United States, and Mexico, the IMT and LTF got together to support the general line or orientation adopted by the sections or sympathizing organizations in those countries.

Furthermore, a real convergence—even though some differences remain—seems to exist in our assessment of the opportunities open to our sections (especially in Europe) to approach the CPs and CP youth groups, take united front initiatives, and participate in the debates that are beginning to spread through the CPs.

We do not conclude from this that new differences will not arise, even in the newly fused organizations. But the convergences do show the possibility of more easily achieving the goals we are setting concerning the functioning of the international, the building of sections, and the conduct of internal debates.

Preparation of the World Congress will provide an opportunity to test the value of these convergences. The formation of tendencies could only be considered after a new stage of discussion in the regular leadership bodies of

the international and its sections, in the event that substantial differences having direct implications for the political work of the sections should appear. These tendencies would not necessarily be organized along the old dividing lines.

4. The battle for the unity of the International

At a time when the dissolution of tendencies and factions is on the agenda, we must emphasize that the debates which crisscrossed the international reflected differences in approach which had a real relationship to concrete problems of the international class struggle, even though the polemic sometimes imposed its own dynamic. It is yet another proof that our movement is not a sect.

Both the IMT's critical reassessment of the line on Latin America, and the debates and crises within the LTF—for example, the breakthrough of the current led by the Argentine PST at the time of the revolutionary upsurge in Portugal and the civil war in Angola, and the break from the LTF by the traditional majority of the leadership of the Spanish LC in June 1977—reflected major political events.

The dissolution of the IMT at this time has been made possible and prepared for by the systematic battle led by the IMT bureau to maintain the unified framework of the international.

That political struggle was based on two fundamental premises. First, to move toward an international capable of integrating its various components existing in the decisive centers of the international class struggle (including in North America), and governed by the norms of democratic centralism on an international scale. Second, the refusal to fall into sectarian distortions which led some to state that "the IMT is the real international," or "the LTF is an obstacle to the building of the international" (which can only lead a majority toward a policy of isolating the minority while closing its eyes to the source of its own weaknesses) or again, to characterize the SWP as "centrist," if not "left reformist" or "Menshevik"!

While pressures of that type were felt within the IMT, they were always fought by the leadership of the tendency, and, above all, they were never crystallized. They did, of course, affect a fairly broad layer of militants to one degree or another. The expulsion from the SWP of members of the Internationalist Tendency—militants who stated that they were in political solidarity with the IMT—in violation of the norms of democratic centralism could only foster such positions. Today it is difficult to deny that what was involved was not a split, but the expulsion of members of the SWP belonging to the IMT.

That positions developed inside the LTF which made a class characterization of the IMT or which said that the IMT tended to break with the Trotskyist program, is also indicative of the perilous logic of a polemic between tendencies and factions over a long period.

For example, the wing of the LTF led by the leadership of the Argentine PST put forward positions, which even today are repeated by the Portuguese PRT in official documents, describing the majority leadership of the international as "POUM-ist" or "Zimmerwaldian." With such a method, it is likely that the Moreno leadership will describe in the same way those who disagree with it in the future after having agreed with it in the past.

This education of militants—young militants—on this model can only lead to stimulating a split dynamic and to

developing a concept of the party and the international that identifies party with faction, and international with international faction.

As early as 1975, in a balance sheet document on the international, the leadership of the Spanish LC, which was part of the LTF leadership—and which led the only substantial force of the LTF in Europe—characterized the IMT as "centrist." The sectarian training which is spread through this type of polemic and characterization is certainly not unrelated to the profound organizational and political crisis which the LC is now going through.

However the common approach adopted by the IMT leadership and by the SWP leaders—who have pursued a parallel struggle within the LTF against ultra-sectarian and potentially split-oriented positions—has greatly contributed to laying the basis for the present turn in the internal situation of our movement.

One last observation on how international tendencies should function.

From the standpoint of method, it now appears that we should have proceeded differently when we adopted the new IMT platform at the beginning of the year. Of course, we were able to rapidly adjust our aim in accordance with the correctness of our entire struggle to preserve the organizational unity of the international.

In fact, we should have taken the initiative, without hesitation, of dissolving the tendencies and factions in early 1977, and refused to base our position on the existence of the LTF. As a majority, we should have based our orientation in this area solely on such considerations as, have we entered a new stage in the internal discussion? What are the most pressing needs of the international, taken as a whole, in the current phase? Etc. . . .

To continue the IMT on the basis of the second platform could only encourage sectarian tendencies within it and intensify the semifactional or factional aspects that a tendency which is maintained for such a long time necessarily acquires.

It was wrong—on the methodological level—for a tendency to "redefine itself" by changing its founding platform and inserting in its new platform a self-critical document on the Ninth and Tenth World Congress lines on Latin America. Such a self-criticism in fact implied a profound change in the international discussion as well as in regard to the initial definition of the tendency. Moreover, to insert an organizational balance sheet in the platform of a *tendency*, and what is more, an "ideological tendency," also constituted an error in method. Moreover, in the final version of the call for a tendency, we put the organizational balance sheet in parentheses.

Thus, in early 1977, we should have clearly raised the question of dissolution, and begun discussion of all the new problems *within the leadership bodies*. Only after such a discussion was it necessary to judge whether or not there was a need to call for the formation of a tendency around issues that would have required this type of organization to lead a political battle.

Pointing out this mistake is not a waste of time. For a more systematic education of members of the international is needed on the method which is necessary to objectively approach the question of tendencies and factions. This is part of the process of politically educating a generation of cadres of our movement and will be useful in the years to come when discussions, sometimes harsh ones, will inevitably arise in our ranks.

5. A political balance sheet

At a time when we are proposing to dissolve the IMT, it is necessary to draw up a general balance sheet of our political positions, of the main contributions of the IMT.

We will briefly review the essential questions which in our opinion marked the discussion in the international, at least since the founding of the IMT in 1972, at the Ghent IEC.

We will not deal with Latin America because the self-criticism document gives our views on the question, at least in terms of the goals that can be set for such a balance sheet. We need only point out our delay in making that self-criticism when the political conditions for making it had been present for a long time, certainly since 1974. There too is a consequence of the tendency and faction fight which we did not sufficiently combat.

a. On the period

One of the issues underlying all debates between the LTT, later the LTF, and the IMT was the assessment of the period opened by May 1968.

To begin with, the IMT correctly understood the objective roots of the economic, social, and political crisis that was hitting the imperialist system (well before the reversal of the economic climate ushered in by the international recession of 1974-75). Grasping the fundamental features of the new period enabled us to avoid falling into impressionism, which consisted of seeing the "detente" between American imperialism and the bureaucratic castes in power in the USSR and China as a factor that could block the development of the basic tendencies that came to the surface in May 1968, in the autumn of 1969 in Italy, in the workers mobilizations of 1975-76 (with regional general strikes and self-organization) which sounded the death knell of Francoism in Spain, in the upsurge of the Portuguese revolution in 1974-75, and in the defeat of American imperialism in Vietnam, a defeat that had been imminent since 1972.

To adopt an agnostic position in the face of this—as the LTT and LTF did—by putting the factors responsible for the crisis on one side, and the countervailing factors on the other—could only lead to a refusal to put forward a general strategic line which would include the prospect of the outbreak of situations which could lead to the threshold of dual power. From the agnostic position adopted by our comrades of the LTF, there also flowed a misunderstanding of the fact that the semispontaneous thrust of the mass movement would go in the direction of establishing potential organs of dual power. This was shown to be true—to differing degrees—in Italy in 1969 (at least in the most important factories in Turin and Milan), in Spain (including in Euzkadi), and especially in Portugal. Likewise this position led to minimizing the role of workers control in the struggle to win working-class demands with its effects on the development of class consciousness, in favor of democratic and immediate demands.

In reality, we had adopted the same method as Trotsky, who in 1934—both in the theses on Europe and in the various writings on the changing situation in Spain, France, and Belgium—began from an assessment of the period to deduce from it the strategic tasks of the party.

The discussion on the pace of events is another matter. Let us note two points. First, with a "neutral" position on the period, one can obviously be satisfied with a statement

of caution on the pace of events: "Watch out! Don't engage in speculation about deadlines!" Such caution was a proof of wisdom in preparing militants for the long-term construction of the revolutionary party, but it cannot substitute for the definition of an overall political strategy. Second, the IMT was mistaken in not drawing all the conclusions from the fact that within the framework of a shift in the class relationship of forces in favor of the proletariat and the combination of a simultaneous economic, social, and political crisis with a deep, long-lasting crisis of leadership of the workers movement (given our situation at the outset), the semispontaneous mass movement would go through downturns, and that therefore, we would be faced with a relatively prolonged crisis with many ups and downs.

That error with regard to the pace of events might have reinforced a weakness in some cases: the lack of systematic education and assimilation of specific questions related to the building of organizations (apparatuses, conscious building of leadership cadre, an ongoing system of Trotskyist education among our membership, etc.). Here is where the European sections—and also in large part those in Latin America—paid a high price for the absence of organizational and political continuity.

Next, in correlation with our analysis of the change in the class relationship of forces in society, we correctly pointed to the transformation of the relationship of forces between the bureaucratic apparatuses and a working-class vanguard in the process of being formed (with the fluidity that that implies) through its experiences in factory, trade-union, and political struggles. That aspect of the period was confirmed on the trade-union level (with the emergence of many opposition currents), on the level of political organizations (for example with the differentiations within the reformist parties, or even with the votes obtained in the elections by our own forces or by centrist organizations), or again, in the course of struggles where we noted workers breaking in practice with the orientation of the bureaucratic leaderships and putting forward demands that came into conflict with those proposed by the trade-union leaderships.

Of course, the absence of an alternative pole enabled the reformist leaderships to maintain strong control over the class, especially in the general political arena. Given that no credible alternative existed, they could logically win the support of vast layers of workers whose class consciousness was growing, and maintain their influence over others.

In some countries, we may have underestimated this control and the obstructing role that the more and more openly class collaborationist policy of the bureaucratic apparatuses could play in this specific context. At the beginning, this may have led us to underestimate the importance of a united-front policy toward the reformist parties (whereas the possibility of at least a partial achievement of such a united front depended on the change in the relationship of forces, which we had understood), with the consequences this had on our putting forward a governmental slogan corresponding to the real influence of the mass workers parties.

Finally, contrary to the caricatural charges made by LTT and LTF supporters, we must repeat that we never placed an equal sign between what we called "the broad vanguard" and the centrist organizations. However, the tendency to consider this "mass vanguard" as a homo-

geneous, stable layer whose politics were partially expressed through centrist organizations, sometimes reinforced a position which did not accord sufficient weight and function to the tactic of the workers united front and to an orientation of struggling for class independence.

Before concluding this point, we must clarify another problem. In his report to the LTF Steering Committee, drawing a balance sheet, Comrade Jack Barnes stated that differences that the SWP (and LTT) had with the French section concerning its attitude toward the Union of the Left in the March 1973 elections were similar to those the SWP had with the PRT of Uruguay concerning the "Frente Amplio" (Broad Front).

It is useful to reexamine this because a false logic was often applied in the discussion, one that made a connection between the error that the LCR comrades made in 1973—an error which they rapidly corrected—and an adaptation to "popular frontism."

The LCR comrades quickly realized it was wrong to call for a vote for the candidates of the Union of the Left as such, and not strictly for the SP and CP candidates as candidates of the two mass parties of the working class. Moreover, Comrade Barnes himself correctly answered Lambert, in a letter dated September 18, 1976:

The LCR leadership has called for a vote for the Union of the Left candidates in specific circumstances. My opinion on the incorrectness of this is a matter of public record. But to say that they supported a popular front is no more correct than the statement that the OCRFI supports reformist workers parties because it calls upon the workers to vote for them in certain countries. The LCR is one of the most vehement critics of the Union of the Left's class-collaborationism. (IIB No. 15 in 1976, December 1976, page 14)

What then was the position of the Uruguayan PRT whose ties to the Argentine PST are also a matter of public record? The PRT *belonged to* the "Broad Front" which included the Christian Democratic Party (which gave legal cover to all the electoral slates running as part of the Broad Front, and hence to that of the PRT), as well as sectors of the traditional bourgeois Colorado and Blanco parties. *At the head of the "Broad Front"* were bourgeois figures such as the former general Liber Seregni, Doctor Jose Crottogini, and Doctor Hugo Villar (the latter was a candidate for mayor of Montevideo). The function of the "Frente Amplio" propelled by the CP was clearly to channel the upsurge of the mass movement into the electoral arena. On the one hand the PRT, so as not to be excluded from the "Frente Amplio", ran *Seregni, Crottogini, and Vilar as candidates on its own "sub-slate"*. This, at least objectively, meant asking the Uruguayan workers to vote for the bourgeois leaders of the "Frente Amplio". On the other hand, the PRT's whole political struggle within the "Frente Amplio"—even though some issues it raised were perfectly correct—implied that this "Broad Front" was anti-imperialist in nature.

A mere comparison between the policy of the LCR—which ran its own slate and carried out a campaign to condemn the Union of the Left's class-collaborationist policy—and that of the PRT, shows a certain lack of perspicacity on the part of Comrade Barnes in his insistence on putting everything on an equal footing, from the height of the correct criticism handed out evenly to the LCR and the PRT by the SWP leadership.

To bring this aspect of the discussion to a close, it should again be stressed that, contrary to what was often put

forward by the comrades of the LTF, the line applied in capitalist Europe was not the logical extension of the one adopted at the Ninth World Congress on Latin America. On the contrary, any serious examination of our political evolution will necessarily show that it was precisely on the basis of our experience in Europe—as well as the lessons we drew from our experiences in Latin America—that we began a critical reassessment of the Latin American line.

b. *The crisis of Stalinism*

Early on, the IMT pointed out that a new stage in the crisis of Stalinism was beginning, with the intensification of the centrifugal processes developing in what was formerly "the international Communist movement" the effects of these processes on the CPs themselves, and the opportunities that this offered for Trotskyists. The IMT was able to avoid two pitfalls:

- That of an ahistorical sectarianism which, in the name of an incomplete break in ties between the Soviet bureaucracy and the bureaucracy of the CPs, denies that the very history of the CPs has changed the relationship of forces between the different national and international factors determining the CP's orientation and their reaction to political events;

- That of impressionism which does not understand the Stalinist origin of the main tenets of the CP's counterrevolutionary line, their permanence, or the place that the international role played by the Kremlin bureaucracy still occupies in their conception and general political orientation, given that they still maintain ties—however strained—with the Kremlin.

c. *Portugal*

One of the most important and bitter debates between the IMT and LTF centered on the strategic tasks that should have been put forward in Portugal during the summer and autumn of 1975. Today some secondary questions are tending to conceal what was at stake in that discussion which partly refers back to the more general debate on the nature of the period. It is significant that a similar polemic took shape at that time within the LTF, between the SWP leadership on the one hand, and that of the Argentine PST on the other hand.

After the failure of the power grab in March 1975, in the context of rising struggles by the working class (since December 1974, in fact), the pace of the Portuguese revolution again quickened. The crisis of bourgeois state institutions and bourgeois political leadership was growing. Workers and agricultural laborers created their own organs of power in the factories, on the big occupied estates of the Alentejo region, and even in sectors like banking and insurance. Moreover, committees belonging to the masses developed in the neighborhoods (CMs), even if these cannot be put on the same level as the CTs.

Beginning in June and July, the drive toward self-organization affected the army, with sectors of the soldiers, including junior officers, tending to escape the MFA's control (in Oporto and in Lisbon). This led to the rise of the SUV, which *Intercontinental Press* attacked at the time, quite inappropriately.

In this situation, a vast bourgeois offensive took shape. The SP of Mario Soares launched it with the open support of the German, Swedish and British Social Democracy. The CDS and PPD, the two dominant bourgeois forma-

tions, as well as the most official sectors of the MFA, also participated in this onslaught which aimed to smash the movement toward self organization of the masses, reduce as much as possible the sphere of intervention of the CTs and soldiers' committees, reestablish the authority of the military hierarchy, and, in general, install a government having real power to command.

The offensive led by the SP was greatly aided by the PCP's whole orientation. The PCP carried out multiple power grabs in the CTs and CMs against currents in the workers movement which did not share its views and plans (including SP members). As well as it could, it opposed a democratic coordination and the actual development of organizations belonging to the workers. It tried to subordinate the mass movement to the needs of its diplomatic maneuvers within the MFA and its policy of taking posts in the bourgeois state apparatus.

The function and magnitude of this offensive carried out by the SP of Soares was not understood at that time by the LTF leadership, at least by the current led by the SWP, which saw the policy of the PCP and MFA as the main danger to the democratic rights of the masses. Thus in August 1975, Jack Barnes stated:

... It's that the SP decided to fight back in a new way against the CP's privileged role as chief MFA collaborator and in doing so were obliged to mobilize tens of thousands of workers in defense of the SP's democratic rights ...

But then they [the social democratic misleaders] were forced to defend themselves against the CP and MFA in a way that is not normal for Social Democracy. And this turn of the CP, with the MFA as a whole complicit, accelerated the process of breeding reaction, encouraging the rise and attacks of the right-wing mobs. [IIDB, Vol. XII, Number 6, October 1975, p. 33]

By contrast, the Portuguese PRT (whose leadership belonged to the LTF and where the influence of the Argentine PST was dominant) wrote in its internal discussion bulletin No. 2, at the beginning of the summer of 1975: "In fact the SP threw itself into a big offensive supported by the European Social Democracy as the agent of powerful bourgeois interests, aimed at a rapid stabilization of the situation through agreements with the Council of the Revolution, to limit the nationalizations, give guarantees to "private initiative" and foreign investments, and put a brake on mass action in several areas (struggles in the factories, anti-imperialist demonstrations, occupations of dwellings, democratic organization of soldiers)." [Fundamental Points of the Political Situation in Portugal, PRT discussion bulletin No. 2, p. 28].

In such a situation, the central strategic task that Trotskyists should have adopted was precisely the extension, generalization and coordination of the masses' own organizations including those of soldiers, and the battle for the democratic functioning of these organizations. This was the way to oppose their liquidation, a liquidation that was carried out in favor of reestablishing the functioning of the bourgeois state institutions. This was also the way to struggle more concretely against divisions in the workers' ranks. A priority was not placed on the safeguarding of democratic rights against a Fifth Government that, moreover was incapable of enforcing its own orders, whatever its intentions.

After the November 1975 coup, things were clear: CTs, CMs, soldiers commissions, land occupations, and nationalizations came under attack; the Constituent Assembly remained in place and the April 1976 elections were

organized! The bourgeoisie, with the help of the SP, had launched an offensive against the possible emergence of a situation of dual power. The CP's policy had aided that offensive.

This was the core of the debate. It is clear that, with the setback, to put forward the slogan of an SP-CP government—placing it in the indicated strategic framework—would have enabled the Trotskyists to pursue a more effective united front campaign toward SP and CP members, at least during the main part of the upsurge. It would also have facilitated, in the period that followed, our policy towards the two parties having a majority in the class, which obtained a parliamentary majority in April 1976.

The discussion that unfolded in the LTF indicates without any possible ambiguity where the real center of the debate was. On July 4, 1975, in an exchange of letters concerning the LTF resolution on Portugal (adopted by the LTF on August 30, 1975), Joseph Hansen wrote to Hugo Moreno: "*The outstanding issue following the downfall of Salazarism has been the defense and extension of democratic rights*". [Emphasis added.] On August 9, in another letter, he again stated: "*It appears to me that the main axis of the Trotskyist political course must be defense of the democratic conquests The case of the Constituent Assembly may already have become moot in the fast-moving situation. In other words, the leaders of both the class-collaborationist mass workers parties may have succeeded in their efforts to help the MFA liquidate the Constituent Assembly where they held a mandate to form a workers and peasants government.*" [Emphasis added.]

To which Moreno replied on July 16, 1979: "We don't agree with the way point 7 is formulated. It is one of the "outstanding issues," but not the only one. The other has to do with soviets. This is where we think the only fundamental difference between us lies. In our opinion, there is no soviet process in Portugal, but there certainly are massive factory occupations and an important development of workers commissions. All reports agree on this. THIS IS FOR US THE MOST IMPORTANT FACT ABOUT THE ONGOING PORTUGUESE REVOLUTION. THIS SIGNIFIES A KIND OF DUAL POWER—NOT THE SOVIET TYPE, ANOTHER LESS RIPE TYPE, BUT STILL DUAL POWER." On July 17, in another letter, Moreno stated: "OUR BASIC SLOGAN FOR THE STAGE THAT OPENED ON MARCH 11 MUST BE: DEVELOPMENT AND CENTRALIZATION OF THE WORKERS COMMISSIONS AND SOLDIERS COMMITTEES SO THEY CAN TAKE POWER IN A GREAT NATIONAL CONGRESS AND GUARANTEE A FREE AND SOVEREIGN CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY." (The emphasis in the original—the quotations are from IIDB, Vol. XIII, Number 1, January 1976, pp. 11, 18, 12 and 16.)

Thus the debate that crisscrossed the international was also going on in the middle of the LTF. The very developments of the Portuguese revolution—on this *central question* which contained the essence of the process of revolution and counterrevolution—clarified matters.

Three additional indications:

1. The statements to the effect that the IMT supported the FUR are still repeated by some members of the international, which is at variance with reality. Not only do the resolutions published by *Inprecor* prove the contrary, but the current leadership of the LCI was trained in a political battle (supported by members of the USec, as

the Portuguese comrades can testify) against the line on the FUR defended at that time by a tendency in the LCI (which had a majority on the Political Bureau and was not a member of the IMT). In autumn 1975, voluminous translated documents from the internal discussion in the LCI were sent to the leaderships of the sections and sympathizing organizations of the international.

2. Likewise, the IMT leadership always opposed the call for dissolution of the Constituent Assembly. This slogan cannot be found in any statement or article in *Inprecor*. On both points, the polemic—wrongly, from the standpoint of method—often confused a position that may have been taken in one or another newspaper of a section with the position of the IMT or USec.

3. Finally, in the *Inprecor* articles, the resolutions, and in the document presented in July 1975 to the LCI Congress by the USec delegation, emphasis was placed on the need to develop a workers united front policy toward the SP. This, moreover, was part of the battle against the line of the LCI leadership on the FUR.

To conclude, it may be useful to show what line the PRT proposed on the MFA at a time when any analysis which stated that the MFA could not merely be presented as “the instrument of big finance capital,” was submitted as the proof of “capitulation” to that movement which had sprung from the military hierarchy! Thus, in the same PRT discussion bulletin No. 2, in a background document on the Portuguese revolution, one could read, at the beginning of the summer of 1975: “Trotskyists must counterpose a united front tactic, indicating, in each circumstance of the class struggle, the task or tasks that must begin to be concretized, while at the same time we agitate around and popularize the advanced expression of the united front, that is, the need for a workers and people’s government. The PRT, with the irreplaceable support of the rest of the Trotskyist movement, must strive to concretize these tasks and perspectives in clear slogans, by including in them not only the “traditional” organizations of the workers movement—SP, CP, Intersindical—but also the MFA (our emphasis), while simultaneously being alert to the possible development of real organs of dual power which are sufficiently broad, so that they can take power. (PRT IDB No. 2, p. 30)

There was the united front policy and orientation toward the MFA defended by the organization in place, in Portugal, which supported an international *faction*, the LTF!

d. Angola: A Civil War

While the debate on Angola never assumed the breadth of that on Portugal, the stakes were considerable, nonetheless. It seems difficult to have this discussion after the fact, because the LTF resolution was completed after the end of the crucial events in the Angolan civil war, while the report given at the IEC in Antwerp, in February 1976, which took a position on Angola was not published. Thus members of the international must turn either to *Intercontinental Press* (particularly the articles by Ernest Harsch, in July 1975), or to the passages of the Novack-Hansen-Foley polemic (in October 1975) to become cognizant of the main issues in the discussion, as it was taking place.

Again, we should note that the LTF had an internal debate similar to the one it had with the IMT. The wing represented by the Argentine PST, having declared itself in agreement with the general line defended by the IMT at

the Antwerp IEC (February 1976), openly broke with the LTF at that time.

What were the issues in dispute?

Should we have deplored the “fratricidal clashes” between three nationalist movements—the MPLA, FNLA, and UNITA—which were put strictly on the same plane because all three were nationalist? Should we have been sorry to see the FNLA driven out of Luanda? Should we have adopted an ambivalent neutrality toward the clashes between these three nationalist movements? Should we have deemphasized (not to say simply ignored) the presence of Zaïrian and South African troops which played a role of logistical support to the FNLA of Holden Roberto and the UNITA of Jonas Savimbi—as in the Hansen-Novack-Foley answer published in the October 13 issue of *Intercontinental Press* in which they discussed Angola?

This was a genuine *civil war* in which the imperialist forces lined up behind the FNLA and UNITA, South Africa intervened against the MPLA-led camp, Zaïrian troops supported the FNLA, and the mass mobilizations of Luanda were directed against the FNLA and UNITA. The IMT immediately pointed out the need to take the side of those who were fighting under the MPLA banner, and the side of the “popular committees” of Luanda.

As *Inprecor* articles and the IEC resolution repeatedly stated, that position implied neither support for the MPLA leadership’s political orientation, nor an unwillingness to make criticisms of this petty-bourgeois nationalist leadership, or to allow the slightest room for doubt about the incapacity of this leadership to bring to fruition the process of permanent revolution that was emerging in Angola.

The line adopted by the IMT—in the civil war was, to say the least, confirmed by the very course of events. We did not determine our position on the basis of a criterion such as: where do the weapons come from that are used by the FNLA and UNITA? For it is obvious that this is absolutely not sufficient to grasp what a nationalist movement actually represents. By the same token, we refused to equate the three movements because the aid given by the Cubans, on the side of the MPLA was to some extent counterbalanced by the aid provided by the Chinese, on the side of the FNLA.

Our orientation was based on two sets of considerations. First, we understood that the contending forces involved in the shooting war in Angola, especially after April 25, 1974, could not be reduced to Portuguese imperialism on one side, and the FNLA, UNITA, and MPLA on the other. American, Belgian, French, German, and South African imperialist investments constituted a major part of the Angolan economy. In most cases, the large Portuguese financial groups were only partners in imperialist projects in key sectors for the future (mines, oil, infrastructure). Therefore, these various imperialist powers intervened directly in Angola with the prospect of neocolonial projects (at the very time when the Lusitanian empire was in crisis), to support the FNLA and UNITA, which, if victorious, could guarantee them concessions of prime importance in the regions that were economically decisive for the imperialists and controlled by those two movements.

A mere analysis of the history of the FNLA and UNITA in the last few years could leave no doubt on this matter. The training given to the FNLA troops by the U.S., Kinshasa’s aid to Holden Roberto, and the support by the

big coffee plantation owners to the FNLA were among the revealing facts. The relations between French, German, and Belgian imperialism and UNITA, led by Savimbi, were no mystery, especially to the imperialists who paid close attention to their interests in the South (Cunene Bassin, Cassinga mines, Benguela railroad—in which the Belgian Société Générale holds a majority of shares).

All these factors, and their concrete political implications, could not be taken into account and understood if the whole analysis centered on the neocolonial projects supported by the MFA, as the *IP* articles did during that period of the summer and autumn of 1975.

Second, the three movements had different relationships to the masses. The weight of the *tribal chieftainry* in the FNLA (Bakongo) and UNITA (Ovimbundu, Savimbi being, moreover, a direct member of this chieftainry) was decisive, even if—through this institution—the two movements had “popular support” in “their” region. Thus it was no accident that Savimbi collaborated (as he did with the PIDE against the MPLA before April 1974) after April 1974 with the Angolan United Front, an ultrarightist organization led by Falcão, representing the colonial settlers of Nova Lisboa. The weight of the Bakongo chieftainry and its ties with Zaïre, also explain the *role occupied by the FNLA in imperialist projects in Angola*. Nor was it by chance that the South African intervention against the MPLA took place after a trip by Chipenda, one of the FNLA leaders, to Namibia, and even, according to some journalists, to South Africa. Once again, we did not deduce to the contrary from these observations that the MPLA itself could never be a vehicle for neocolonial projects. Today, the clashes between the different wings of the MPLA show that this factor existed, but that there also existed a relationship to the mass movement by way of the intermediate cadre (especially in Luanda) that was different from the FNLA and UNITA.

Prior to July 1975, the FNLA militarily attacked the neighborhood committees of Luanda. The UNITA did likewise, violently repressing the strike in Lobito in 1974. Both had become the spokesmen for anticommunist campaigns and denounced all attempts by the masses at self-organization. There can be no doubt that the MPLA leadership talked about “people’s power” the better to try to control the emerging committees and use them as instruments. Likewise, given its orientation, it was incapable of winning over the poor peasants who were under the influence of the likes of Holden Roberto and Jonas Savimbi. But it is also certain that the actual relations between the mass mobilizations (especially in the cities) and layers of middle MPLA cadres were factors that explained the *objective role of this movement in the military struggle against imperialism* (moreover, it is also an explanation of the tensions that broke out after its victory).

Thus the dynamic of the clashes between social forces was reflected, albeit in a distorted way, in the struggle between the MPLA supported by the Cubans on one side, and the FNLA and UNITA supported by the imperialist forces on the other. The victory of the camp led by the MPLA represented a sizeable defeat for imperialism in that region.

Choosing one’s camp was primary, for one thing, in order to build a militant force in Angola, even a small one. There was the issue in the partly aborted discussion in 1975. On all of this, the *IMT* has nothing to rectify.

e. Argentina: Multisectorals and “Institutionalization”

The debate on the way that the Argentine PST presented its participation in the “multi-sectoral” meetings in Argentina in 1974, and on the slogan of “institutionalization” (which it adopted) played an important role. It centered on how to approach the question of the struggle to defend democratic rights.

Before taking up this question, we would do well to clarify a few points that still serve at times to obscure the essence of the debate. First of all, as the *IMT* did in its self-criticism, it is necessary to repeat that the fact that the PST was not recognized as the Argentine section of the Fourth International at the Tenth World Congress represented a major political and organizational mistake. It reflected an incomprehension of what the real experience of this current’s cadres in the Latin American workers movement represented for our whole movement. This position could only provide an excuse for sectarian reactions on the part of the PST leadership. Moreover, it could only increase the weaknesses of this current, weaknesses that partly stemmed from its isolation from the functioning of the leading bodies of the international.

Next, the judgement that we had at the time of the importance that an election campaign (like the one carried out by the PST) could have in building a Trotskyist organization in Argentina was partly wrong. Another thing was the opinion we expressed on different aspects of the political content of the election campaign.

Finally, the disagreements on the “multisectoral” meetings and “institutionalization” never implied that *at that time* we underestimated the need for a large-scale battle to defend democratic rights. What then was the discussion about?

1. The PST leadership presented the reasons for its participation in the “multi-sectoral meetings” in such a way that the fundamental gap between a working-class program in defense of democratic rights and the real motivations of bourgeois liberal sectors was not apparent. The statement of the PST at the time of the October 8 “multi-sectoral meeting” emphasized that:

“the fundamental purpose of such democratic rights is to ensure respect for the right of the masses to decide what government they want—which in this case is the Peronist government—and the fundamental respect for the right of all political forces to present their ideas to the masses.” (What Course for Argentine Trotskyists, Education for Socialists, June 1975, p. 57.)

At a time when the Argentine toiling masses faced the danger of a fundamental challenge to the rights they had won through their struggles since the Cordobazo, to present the fundamental goal of the defense of democratic rights in these terms was not a matter of indifference. Such a presentation is no different from a classic ideological explanation by bourgeois liberals trying to mask the fundamental contradiction between the exploitation and oppression caused by capitalist private ownership and their pledge of allegiance to democracy in general! It tends to give the impression that the government which actually organizes the power of the exploiters is the government “freely” chosen by the masses through bourgeois elections. Thus it tends to legitimize that government, which was shielding a massive attack on the rights of the masses. Furthermore, the election results reflected the past (and with all the distortions common to bourgeois elections, at

that) more than the dynamic of the class struggle in Argentina at that time.

In face of a threat of a semifascist military coup revolutionary Marxists are, of course, ready to fight alongside all individuals and parties who want to defeat such an attempt. We state this again here to avoid further false debates. But we don't do this in the name of support to a bourgeois government "freely" elected by the majority of the population, but in the name of the defense of all the rights won by the working class and toiling masses, rights that represent a decisive element in the capacity of the proletariat and its allies to fight against the capitalist system and against its governmental representatives.

The fundamental function of the struggle for democratic rights consists of defending all the democratic openings won by the masses, one of which is the right to defend their ideas in the elections. This struggle can help the working class to understand that the fundamental limitation of bourgeois democracy consists of private ownership of the means of production, and it can therefore have a transitional dynamic, especially in semicolonial countries where a "democratic constitution" covers the institution of the coup.

2. The PST, by adopting the slogan of "institutionalization" while pointing out that it defended this slogan "in the way it was understood by the masses" did not prepare the workers in the best possible way to defend themselves against the attack that was going to be launched against them by the army, some sectors of which also advocated "institutionalization."

The bourgeoisie put forward the concept of "institutionalization" to try to contain the mass movement, in a deceitful attempt to get the masses to abandon their struggles in exchange for promises to respect democratic rights. To be sure, the PST always denounced the attempts as "social peace" and even the goal of "institutionalization."

But then, what was the use of stating:

"Let us commit ourselves to an energetic defense of the 'process of institutionalization' as the masses understand it—not as the bourgeoisie and especially the Peronist government understand it?" [Ibid]

Did adopting this general slogan—which masked a maneuver by the bourgeoisie, as the PST comrades admitted, moreover—help the masses to assert and increase their independent class action? Did it help to strengthen their independence from a government that promised "institutionalization" in exchange for "social peace," to expose the machinations of the bourgeoisie, the government, or sectors of the army, and to intervene effectively to intensify the process of erosion of Peronism?

It is fairly obvious that the PST's approach could not achieve these goals, crucial as they were, in that phase. It could not make it possible to take maximum advantage in the general interest of the masses of the initial phase of Peronism. Finally, it led to going from a class approach to the defense of democratic rights to adaptations to an inter-class position.

We do not think that this polemic was worthless since comrades supporting the Bolshevik Tendency, led by the Argentine PST, now state that in Peru, it is necessary to struggle for "defense of the institutions of the bourgeois state." This opportunist approach springs from the same method that led the PST to proclaim that it would support the Peronist slates "if workers made up 80% of the

candidates," and which today leads the Bolshevik Tendency to adapt to bourgeois nationalist leaders like Torrijos in Panama.

f. The victory of the Vietnamese revolution

As Comrade Barnes emphasized at the last meeting of the LTF Steering Committee, a number of questions having to do with the nature of the Vietnamese CP, Stalinism, the formation of a workers state, and others, require a long-term discussion in the international that can only be educational for all its members. Moreover, even within the IMT differences existed and do exist on one or another point. They too will be clarified in a future debate. Finally, we as the IMT have always indicated the decisive role and fundamentally correct line that the SWP put forward in the antiwar movement in the United States.

To the credit of the IMT, there must be entered a real comprehension of the process of permanent revolution under way in Vietnam and of the line of action of the VCP in that period. This understanding emerges from the 1972 resolution. It enabled us to correctly foresee, even at the time, the ultimate defeat of American imperialism, the emergence of a workers state, and its bureaucratic deformations. This enabled us to avoid false judgments, such as those made by the LTF comrades who, on April 28, 1975, that is two days before the victory of the Vietnamese, headlined *Intercontinental Press*:

"The PRG Signals Readiness to Compromise With Saigon."

An eloquent title, which reflects an intention to reduce the policy of the Vietnamese leadership to that of the Soviet bureaucracy. The comrades of the LTF were thereby led to state that only an uprising in Saigon or the downfall of the Thieu regime could "force" the Vietnamese leadership to enter the capital and sweep away the Thieu regime, the state institutions, and the army. They thereby demonstrated their failure to understand the Vietnamese leadership's policy in this respect. The latter had been preparing for such an offensive for a long time, by, among other things, stockpiling reserves of military equipment over a long period, given the more and more obvious hesitations of the Chinese and Soviet bureaucracies about a military assault of such scope.

6. The LTF: A Seven-Year History . . . Without Tasks

In his balance sheet of the LTF, Comrade Barnes states that the LTF "accomplished what we set out to do, which does not always happen in life."

There is also something else that does not happen very often in life: seven years of tendency and faction struggles without committing an error except for "naïveté"! That was the impression Comrade Sylvain and I had upon hearing Comrade Barnes's report. It is certainly the impression those who read this report in an international bulletin will get.

We don't intend to deny the usefulness of the polemic begun around various points by the comrades of the SWP and LTF—we stated this earlier in the self-criticism on Latin America, for example. Nor do we intend to deny their positive role in keeping the PST comrades in the international.

But, to make use of a paradox, one could say that the principal error of the LTF leadership is precisely its

incapacity to draw a real balance sheet on its activity, a critical reassessment of some questions, which could, however, be of great value in educating all members of the international.

For we cannot hide the fact that the LTF dissolved *after* it had lost a very large part of its forces, and *after* the principal member organization of the LTF in capitalist Europe, the Spanish Communist League (LC), had gone astray on fundamental political questions and had undergone—and is still undergoing—an acute crisis.

Now, the comrades of the LTF were very attentive to the role played by the LC. As early as the SWP plenum in May 1973, Comrade Mary-Alice Waters stressed “the LC leaders’ political maturity” and “the political clarity” that had prevailed in the split that gave rise to the LC and LCR. In January 1976, in her report to the SWP National Committee on the world movement, Comrade Mary-Alice Waters stated:

There is increasing recognition that the upsurge (in Portugal) has tested all the contending Trotskyist currents. Even more important, bigger tests are coming. Everyone is now watching Spain. But if we are going to be responsible about meeting our political obligations in the coming period, we must prepare, and the first step in that preparation is a broad political discussion and clarification. [International Internal Discussion Bulletin, Vol. XIV, No. 2, April 1977, p. 31.]

The SWP and LTF rightly attached the greatest importance to Spain, which was to be a fundamental test for Trotskyists. Moreover, the main leaders of the LC were members of the LTF leadership.

However, the LC comrades, basing themselves on a totally one-sided analysis of the policy of the CP—which, according to them, had the immediate goal of saving the Francoist dictatorship as such—did not understand the transitional process under way in the Spanish state and what the Workers Commissions which they identified with the CNS, a vertical “trade union” and instrument of the Francoist dictatorship, really represented. As a result, they could only be cut off from the real development of a mass workers organization, and more generally, from the real mass movement. The same method led the LC leadership to adopt a position of boycotting the elections (true, a majority of the Central Committee did correct that position after the elections).

However, during the discussions in the USec on the question of the Workers Commissions and the UGT, the comrades of the LTF contended that this was a purely tactical question. In other words, that it could be reduced to the following question: where can Trotskyist activists most effectively deploy their forces in the trade unions? Never, to our knowledge, was a clear political battle carried out against the LC leadership’s positions on the question of the Workers Commissions, a question, however, that concentrated the LC’s major errors. Here we are compelled to believe that factional logic governed the maintenance of this kind of bloc.

From this example alone, as well as the debates within the LTF on Portugal and Angola, we can conclude that the crisis of the LTF and the internal debates that tore it apart are not unrelated to a political orientation that has shown its “inadequacies” in dealing with important problems of the class struggle on a world scale.

This only confirms the following law: an international tendency or faction can never be 100% right on all the complex problems which the international class conflict

presents to our movement. Not even the LTF leadership can escape that law. This, incidentally, is why it is correct to state that the normal functioning of the leadership bodies of the international is a political guarantee against possible errors.

From this standpoint, while it is correct not to try to cover over differences within a faction or tendency, it is wrong to simply state, as Comrade Barnes does: “The splits of the LTF happened because we were not interested in maintaining an unprincipled gang for a power struggle.” The motivation is correct and we share it. But the explanation of the history of the LTF is a bit short!

7. The OCRFI

One of the “disputes” in the leadership bodies of the international focused on what answer to give to the 1973 letter from the OCRFI. Since the October 1976 Usec meeting which unanimously adopted a motion on that question, and since the October 1976 statement signed by the United Secretariat of the Fourth International and the OCRFI, a broad convergence exists on the approach we should take to this problem.

Nonetheless, we should remember that the refusal at that time by the USec majority to respond positively to the OCRFI letter rested on a clear basis. The characterizations made by the OCRFI of the United Secretariat and its majority as “revisionist,” of the LCR as an obstacle in the path of the French working class in its struggle for independence, as the “rearguard of Stalinism,” and so on, justified the United Secretariat’s response. Such characterizations could only constitute the *political foundation* for a plan of splitting the international, for a policy of entryism within sections of the international, which the OCRFI has not failed to do. Obviously, when one characterizes an organization as revisionist, when one considers it an obstacle to building the revolutionary party, one is politically justified in seeking to eliminate that obstacle, and it is politically correct to try to do entry work within it, if that tactic is considered a good means for achieving the set goal. Moreover, as late as July 1976, Lambert stated in a letter to Jack Barnes, that the USec’s refusal to open a discussion was characteristic, for: “in all times and all places revisionism has acted likewise.” (IIB, December 1976, p. 13)

We were thus justified in refusing a discussion that began on such a basis. That is why we attached great importance to the joint statement of October 1976, even if the OCRFI might have considered it as a mere maneuver. Maneuvers of this type never pay off in the medium term!

Having clarified these points, it is true that we have not always been able to deal with this question in an aggressive way by grasping what there might be in it aside from a maneuver in a way that would be most educational for the members of the international. The internal situation of the international was not unrelated to this, even though it cannot be an excuse for our weaknesses.

Finally, it was correct to condemn the violent methods used by the OCI against members of the LCR, not only for reasons of principle, but also because these methods revealed an organizational conception on the part of the OCI. On this point, there were no differences in the international. This could not, however, replace the objective criteria to be used in the approach to the OCRFI.

* * *

Today, after dissolution of the tendencies, the following tasks are placed before us, before the international:

a. Organization of the World Congress, permitting sufficient discussion in the ranks of our movement (according to the provisions set forth in the USec resolution of October 1976) and permitting leaderships of sections to participate in drafting the principal documents, in order to incorporate in them an experience that is quantitatively and qualitatively superior to that which existed on the eve of the Tenth World Congress.

To determine the date of the World Congress, a balance must be found between the needs of elaboration and internal discussion on the one hand, and the necessity to respond as a world movement to the new stage that is imminent, particularly in capitalist Europe, and to the new problems emerging in Latin America.

Dissolution of the tendencies and factions makes even more imperative the need for a general orientation for the whole membership, for the intervention of a world party as well as the need to assimilate the lessons of the whole past period through an in-depth discussion of the current phase of building the international and of its norms of functioning.

The Eleventh World Congress (Fifth Since Reunification) should also make it possible to establish a type of functioning for the international that is adapted to the present internal situation and which, if tendencies should arise, can prevent the centrifugal effects characteristic of the past period as much as possible.

b. Dissolution of the tendencies implies that the documents included in past platforms will not be considered as a basis for the preparation of new resolutions or be submitted for a vote to the leading bodies of the international. The development of documents must be initiated within the leadership bodies, without making any prior judgment as to agreements or disagreements. Only after such a discussion could the existence of disagreements, if any, lead to examining the eventual modalities of the debate, a question that must also be dealt with first and foremost within the leadership bodies.

Within this framework, it is clear that we can only state our disagreement with the method, akin to blackmail, which leads Comrade Barnes—in his report—to list three explosive problems, three timebombs in his report to the LTF Steering Committee. These questions, like the others, should be discussed and resolved within the normal leadership bodies of the international.

The five major points that should be at the center of our thinking in the future are, in our view, the following:

- norms of functioning of the international (democratic centralism);
- building revolutionary parties in capitalist Europe;
- world political resolution
- women's liberation movement
- resolution on building sections in Latin America.

As a result of the critical balance sheet of the IMT on our line in Latin America, the explicit rejection of the Ninth World Congress line on Latin America and of the elements of that line that were preserved in the Tenth World Congress resolutions, should be ratified by the international as such.

This requires that we strive for the definition of a positive line on Latin America, based on an analysis of the

past period and the strategic problems that are now posed.

c. To accomplish these tasks, the strengthening of the international center is an absolute priority, although we cannot prejudge either the various stages leading to that goal, or its precise modes of functioning. This strengthening must adhere to the conception of the international upheld in the current statutes and summarized in this formula: "Only an international organization can be the vehicle for an international ideology. The organizational form flows from the party platform and must correspond to it. Trotsky displayed the firmness of steel as to the necessity and primacy of the international organization." (John G. Wright, *Fourth International*, August 1946). Past experience has taught us the importance of finding a balance between collective thinking, internal discussion, and public debates under the control of the normal leadership bodies. The latter aspect is especially important at the time of dissolution of the LTF and IMT.

The development of capacities for analysis and strategic orientations, as well as debates, should be able to find a public channel of expression which requires, among other things, an official publication that is under the political responsibility of the day-to-day leadership of the international. In the present international situation, such an organ is of extreme importance for the education and homogeneity of the ranks of the international. It should also serve as a vehicle for a part of the political thinking of the section leaderships and should reflect the development of our movement. Such an organ should easily be able to be established on the basis of the resources, readership, and experience of *Inprecor*, *Intercontinental Press*, and, if possible, *Revista de America*.

d. The probability of the maintenance of the Bolshevik Tendency, led by the Argentine PST, after dissolution of the LTF and IMT, will create problems for the functioning of the leading bodies of the international.

The BT has intensified its factional practices within the international (refusal to participate in fusions based on its characterization of the majority as "POUM-ist," splits). To these practices have been added public attacks on some sections of the international and its leadership. The functioning of the BT implies a conception by which the recognition and application of democratic centralism are subject to a prior political agreement, including on tactical questions.

Nonetheless, this can in no way change the attitude of the leadership of the international, which must strive to integrate representatives of the BT into the regular functioning of the leadership bodies, with all the rights and duties that flow therefrom.

In its critical balance sheet on Latin America, the IMT admitted that failing to recognize the PST as the Argentine section was an error. At the next World Congress, on the basis of objective and universal criteria, the PST should be recognized as the official section.

We will have to undertake a political debate within the positions put forth by the BT. In face of the obvious breaches in the norms of functioning of the international, we will have to defend the principles that should govern the functioning of the international; none of this should imply any kind of administrative measure against the BT.

e. The new situation in the international, the fact that it has proved capable of overcoming such a bitter debate over such a long period, will enhance the role of the international and its sections as a pole of attraction for

currents and organizations claiming to be Trotskyist or close to Trotskyism.

In this framework, the discussions and plans for collaboration with Lutte Ouvrière should be pursued. The discussion with the OCRFI will begin in the coming weeks. Its political content should make it possible to clarify the evolution of this current, some of whose components, such as the GSTQ (Quebec), collaborate with our sections seriously and systematically. Similar developments are

under way for the time being in several other countries, Great Britain for example.

In general, this policy of overtures and regroupment is the reflection of our ability to really conceive of the international revolutionary organization as the product of a regroupment of various currents in agreement with the program of revolutionary Marxism, the necessity and functioning of an international governed by democratic centralism, and on the main tasks of the period.

October 1977