

Preliminary Report on the Orientation of Revolutionary Marxists
in Europe for the Construction of Revolutionary Mass Parties

I. Our movement in capitalist Europe made a fundamental turn in codifying under the formula of long term entrism a general orientation for the construction of revolutionary mass parties. This turn the result of all past experience of our movement in Europe and in part of the experience of the CI in its Leninist epoch, was inspired by the primary concern of bringing the revolutionary Marxists into the real mass movement of their countries, into the mass struggles of the workers. It was predicated on several general premises as well as on others that were more conjunctural.

The general premises of the orientation called long term entrism were the following:

a) The historic experience has demonstrated that in imperialist countries where a tradition of political organizations of the proletariat has existed it has not been possible to originate a new mass party outside of the old majority party. The history of the CI notable confirms this, only those CP's born of large mass splits of social democracy have been able to become mass parties.

b) Historic experience and theoretical analysis agree that it is highly improbable to have an eventuality in which large working class masses traditionally integrated in the currents of social democracy or Stalinism will suddenly separate themselves from these currents to orient to the revolutionary Marxists, without first entering into a protracted stage of political combat with the reformist or Stalinist bureaucracy within the traditional parties.

c) In those countries all attempts to appeal to the masses above the head of the traditional organizations and without first passing through a previous political struggle and differentiation in the midst of these organizations is largely doomed to failure. They end in the best of cases (those which avoid the trap of sectarianism, particularly inviting in such orientations) to the constitution of revolutionary Marxist propaganda groups, but not to the construction of parties capable of leading to action at least a fraction of the proletariat, be it even a minority one.

d) If a similar orientation i.e. construction of a propaganda group is perhaps justified in the periods of general passivity of the working class it condemns revolutionary Marxists in phases of active, be it only periodical class struggle, to play the role of commentators, denouncing the treason of the apparatus or in the best of cases operate as marginal fighters seizing by one means or another the occasional leadership of a small section of

the class, but incapable of influencing the course or general direction of the class struggle to say nothing of challenging meaningfully the existing traitorous leadership of the mass movement.

e) The success of the entrism orientation depends on the capacity of the revolutionary Marxists to maintain, reinforce and extend their organization -- in the particularly difficult conditions of members to resist the pressure of the reformist or Stalinist milieu, which would necessarily have disintegrating effect on their level of conscience in the absence of such an organization. The maintenance of a public expression of Trotskyism, supported by an independent core is an indispensable instrument to such organizational reinforcement.

The conjunctural premises of the orientation known as long term entrism were the following

a) The hypothesis of an exacerbation of international relations accompanied by the acute menace of a third world war. This hypothesis has been corrected by a political self-criticism of the movement in 1957.

b) The hypothesis of a growing contradiction between the orientation thoroughly rightest, ultra-reformist for social democracy, neo-reformist for the Stalinist CP's, of the traditional apparatuses and the needs and the combativity, be it even only periodical of the masses, born of the internal contradictions of the capitalist system in Europe.

c) The hypothesis of an inevitable differentiation which leads to the birth of centrist currents, transitory stages for bringing large masses following reformist and Stalinist apparatus toward revolutionary Marxism.

II. It is necessary now to sketch out the conclusions of 15 years experience and to verify in what extent the general and conjunctural premises have been confirmed by history. At the same time it is necessary to measure the results obtained by the application of this tactic and examine objectively the reasons which argue in favor of maintaining, of making more flexible or of an eventual fundamental modification of this tactical orientation. It is not necessary to add for revolutionary Marxists entrism has never been a dogma or fetish but simply a tactical instrument for the construction of a mass revolutionary party. It depends on the contribution it makes to the realization of this objective that it must be judged today, yesterday as well as tomorrow.

As far as the general premises of the entrism orientation, the balance of experience is strongly eloquent; it has been completely confirmed.

Wherever the events have forced the working class to a higher radicalization either toward a major political confrontation or mass struggle, this radicalization has been first expressed on a large scale by the differentiation within the traditional parties of the working class. This was the case in Great Britain in 1951-53, in Belgium 1957-58 and more so in 1961-63, in Italy 1962-63, in Denmark in the beginning of the sixties. Even when the political con-

frontations take place in particular or limited sectors - such as those provoked above all in the intellectual milieu and among students by the 20th congress, the repression of the Hungarian revolution of 1956, the Algerian war and the Vietnam war - these have begun by provoking differentiation in mass organization or youth movements attached to these organizations.

The revolutionary Marxist groups operating inside these traditional parties have been able to play an important role in this process of differentiation and gaining prestige and a political influence more important than the Trotskyist movement had ever known in the past.

All attempts to build revolutionary parties outside of the mass movements with activism and sacrifice however admirable failed. Nowhere was a propaganda group able to transform itself in this way into a party able to influence even a small fraction of the working class.

All those centrist formations having an influence in the working class (SF Denmark, PSIUP Italy) were all created out of splits inside the traditional workers parties.

III. As to the conjunctural hypothesis of the long term entrism orientation, the historic experience, without wholly being denied has not been entirely confirmed.

The entire evolution of relationship of forces on a world scale has been unfavorable for capitalism, but in capitalist Europe, this global evolution has not been reflected in a constant manner or in a straight line. The working class militancy has not evolved everywhere in a constant ascending line. It has experienced successive phases of ups and downs, and these were not similar in all countries. For example, the French working class suffered a serious defeat by the coming to power of DeGaulle in 1958, without resistance on the part of the working class organizations, and the establishment of a strong state. The West German working class went close to 15 years of demilitarization and of dampened combativity between the campaign against remilitarization and the beginning the the recession of 1966-67. The flaring up of important struggle which has been known principally at the end of the 50's by the Belgian proletariat, at the beginning of the sixties by the Italian workers, in 1964-65 by the Greeks and in the course of the last years by the Spanish and which culminated in the opening up of a pre-revolutionary situation in Belgium 1960-61 and in Greece 1965 -remained geographically isolated and limited in its duration.

For the same reason, the differentiations which have been produced in the traditional workers movement, each time that the social contradictions were exacerbated, did not occur in a favorable climate permitting a decisive blow to the apparatus and its bypass by the masses during a whole phase. One in these conditions rather ephemeral differentiations within the apparatus and bypassings which were either fragmentary or very limited in time. For this reason nowhere the centrist current were led to create an organized mass current on a political plane comparable to that which took place at the end or after the first world war. The bankruptcy of Bevanism in Great Britain and of Ingraoism in Italy is particularly instructive in this connection. And even in Belgium where Renardism momentarily crystallized on an organizational level in the Walloon Popular Movement -

deliberately avoiding to create a new political party -- it rapidly dissipated itself as an autonomous current and organizational force.

But as these differentiations in the traditional apparatus reflect a much deeper differentiation among the masses -- or at least of their organized vanguard -- as this differentiation leads to political consciousness concerning the treacherous role of the traditional leadership, the failure of centrism has profoundly influenced the evolution of the left in the workers movement. It has been one of the factors which has accentuated the demobilization of the masses after each high point in their activity. It has been the principal cause of the lack of large mass splits in the traditional parties. In the same way it has provoked instead of large splits a constant marginal unravelling of the CP's and SP's, which expresses itself on one hand by growing depoliticalization of a not unimportant fraction of the working class base and on the other hand by the break of small nuclei to the left of these parties. This process is favored by the rigidity of the bureaucracy in regard to oppositions, and risks even repeating itself inside the centrist formations having a certain mass base like the SF-Denmark and the PSIUP- Italy.

IV. A new and particular structure of the vanguard in a number of countries of Western Europe, which create a rather complex situation characterized specifically:

a) by a clear and prolonged disharmony between the workers militancy on the economic and trade unionist field, and the incapacity of the vanguard which leads these struggles to release a truly overall confrontation with the traditional leadership on a political plane, without even speaking of its capacity of engaging the general struggles against the capitalist regime. The situation of the workers movement in Great Britain is particularly dominated by this disharmony and which also begins to express itself on a much more modest level to be sure in Western Germany.

b) In complete contrast with this relative depoliticalization in the workers vanguard, there appears a new youth vanguard, essentially (but not exclusively) student which is strongly politicalized and reacts more to the problems of the world revolution (Vietnam, Cuba, Latin American guerillas, in part Greece and Spain) than to the immediate problems of the working class of its own country.

The dialectical interaction between these two processes if they are left to themselves, that is to say if they remain at the level of spontaneity and of partial consciousness risk to accentuate the ideological and practical deformations which result inevitably from such incomplete social understanding, on one hand accentuating the tendency of syndicalism and economism in the workers vanguard with an accentuated leaning towards piecemeal activism, on the other hand accentuating the impressionist, anarchist and bourgeois tendencies, with ignorance and growing contempt in regard

to the class struggle in the imperialist countries, mechanical transplantation of the methods of struggle of the colonial revolution toward a milieu where they do not fit, "Third worldism" and "Fanonism", which all could lead rapidly toward fatigue, skepticism and demoralization.

It is the duty of revolutionary Marxists to avoid this clean break between the workers vanguard and the youth vanguard, and to reunite them thanks to a global conception of the world revolution of our epoch and thanks to a correct appreciation of the dynamic of social contradiction in the imperialist countries themselves. It is certain meanwhile that this reunification will not be successfully made in the field of theory and explanation alone even though theoretical explanation of the contemporary world is an indispensable condition for it. This union will only meet with success thanks to effective action of the revolutionary Marxists.

V. This new structure of the vanguard in West Europe corresponds in its turn to a new aspect of the workers movement and the youth movement, product of the interaction between the evolution of the objective social and economic conditions and the role played by the large traditional organizations.

The important transformation that 15 years of relative stability of neo-capitalism -- itself the result of the betrayal of the revolutionary wave 1944-48 by the reformist and Stalinist leadership -- has introduced in the workers movement of Western Europe should not be underestimated. It has already been analysed in the earlier documents of the International. It can be summarized as follows:

a) The total inability of the traditional mass organizations to understand the social economic changes brought about in the new industrial revolution, and therefore, growing adaptation to neo-capitalist ideology and incapacity to elaborate a strategy of transitional demands which corresponds to the needs of the real situation in which the European proletariat finds itself today.

b) Progressive transformation of the social democracy from a movement which in the ideological level still claims to modify the social structure by reforms, into a movement which openly proclaims its desire to conserve the structure of society (in exchange for more and more reduced reforms). This transformation corresponds also in part to a change in social composition of its cadres where the public functionaries and capitalist technocrats replace more and more the trade union functionary and the direct representative of other workers organizations. As a result of this evolution the participation in government of the social democratic leaders led them to apply more and more an economic policy that is directly inspired by the employers. It is this which provokes inevitably a massive opposition between the social democratic apparatus and the trade union apparatus. Belgium 1961-65, Great Britain since the coming to power of Wilson, West Germany since the formation of the "Grand Alliance" have confirmed these tendencies.

They have at the same time confirmed that the trade union bureaucracy, adopting, under the pressure of the ranks and for reasons of self defense the opposition of the proletariat to the social democratic employer inspired measures, are unable and unwilling to constitute a genuine political leadership as an alternative to the social democratic leaders.

c) The crisis of Stalinism accentuated since 1956 (20th congress and crushing of the Hungarian revolution) and recharged by the public difference between China and Soviet Union, by the war in Vietnam and by the independent course of the Cubans, dissipated many illusions held about the evolution of the western European CP's, toward a more revolutionary orientation and a more democratic internal life. Each time that the apparatus has been confronted with a left opposition with a minimum of cohesion, it has passed to brutal repressive measures even to physical violence (the evolution has been very clear on this in France and in Italy since 1966). As to the political evolution of the CP's it has been dominated by growing ideological adaptation to social democracy (peaceful road to socialism, electoralism, abandonment of the Leninist theory of the state, acceptance of the beginning integration of trade unionism into the bourgeois state, etc.).

d) As for the new centralist formations generally originating in the social democracy they could secure or hold on to a mass base within the working class only inasmuch as they have proclaimed a political line to the left of that of the CP.

VI. The tendency to radicalization of a section of the youth and its spread to a mass movement which was first manifested in the periphery of the imperialist world (Zengakuren in 1960, Berkeley 1963) progressively spreads to a number of industrialized capitalist countries. It represents the most important new fact which revolutionary Marxists have been confronted in the course of the last years. Its social economic, social political and social psychological causes merit a profound analysis that we can only sketch out here.

The "university explosion" which corresponds to the objective needs of the capitalist mode of production at the present stage of technological transformation, has profoundly upset the university milieu. Without opening the doors of the university wider to the sons and daughters of the working class they have nevertheless broken the bourgeois monopoly on higher education and brought to the university the children of the petty bourgeois, the functionaries and salaried employees part of whom have more in common with the working class than they have with large capital.

This "university explosion" has taken place in conditions of pronounced imbalance between private consumption and public consumption engendered by the very nature of a regime founded on private property. Neither from the point of view of material infrastructure nor from that of the faculty is the bourgeois university quantitatively or qualitatively prepared to receive this great influx

of students. It has resulted in a permanent crisis of the university with sharpened conflicts between the vanguard student fighting for a material and intellectual status corresponding to his needs and the university and state agents, wishing to defend their class interest, their discipline and their functional conception of the university as an instrument for the reproduction of highly qualified labor power that is necessary for capitalist economy and the bourgeois state.

The revolt of the students at first directed against the university authorities and the bourgeois state rapidly widens to a more general revolt against the capitalist regime and the imperialist world, the students have above all in the so-called schools of "social science" a greater possibility of becoming conscious of the global reality than do the workers of manual or intellectual labor who are the victims of specialization and come under the slavery of the division of labor. The gap between the bourgeois school system and capitalist organization of large university has moreover prolonged and extended the university crisis toward lower forms of education (technical schools, etc.) as much for general ideological reasons as for more direct social economic causes; the appearance and growth of unemployment among the youth sharpens sentiments of social inadaptation; the radical questioning of a society whose values are based on "egoism", and hypocrisy which only generate contempt, etc.

The great contradiction of the contemporary world (contradiction between relative abundance of important levels of the imperialist world and the hunger of the colonial and semi-colonial world; contradiction between the promise of technical progress and the menace that nuclear arms poses for the existence of mankind; contradiction between the developing colonial revolution, the major conflicts that this provokes with imperialism and the criminal passivity and cowardice of the Soviet bureaucracy, etc.) that the young generation upon whom does not weigh the skepticism engendered by the defeats of the past, understands in a more striking manner than the older generations, these are the supplementary motive forces of growing consciousness of the vanguard youth.

It is not astonishing that in these conditions, the traditional apparatus does not exercise an attractive force on this vanguard, and they escape at least partially as has been demonstrated by the examples of the Young Socialists in Great Britain, the JCR and the VO in France, the SDS in West Germany. The new fact offers a chance for our movement to increase its own forces, to refill the ideological void which appears amongst the youth, of renewing its cadres and of finding a new field sufficiently large proportional to its own forces for conquering political hegemony and recruiting new members.

The turning toward this new vanguard of youth is not only necessary finally to assure the increase of our own forces without which the tasks of penetration in the mass movement cannot be resolved adequately. It is also necessary for the avoiding of the

slide of this vanguard towards ultraleft and sectarian positions, cut off from the real class struggle of its own country, this danger which corresponds in part to the spontaneous tendency of this vanguard, as a result of its petty bourgeois origin and of the disappointing context of the workers movement and which threatens to condemn this new vanguard full of promise to deception and eventual failure.

VII. Nothing permits affirming that the orientation of long term entrism was either wrong or that one can substitute for it another orientation. The abandoning of this orientation signifies practically the retreat of the revolutionary Marxists to purely propaganda tasks. Far from expressing an opposition more radical toward the traditional apparatus it facilitates on the contrary the hold of this apparatus upon the mass movement with a tighter control.

With the slackening of the general rhythm of growth signalled by the recession of 1966-67 which has hit the majority of the capitalist countries of Europe, with the appearance of more and clear new contradictions brought into existence with neo-capitalism and the intensifying of the inter-imperialist contradictions, the attacks against the standard of living and the acquired rights of the workers cannot but multiply. The transitional program worked out by our movement in the course of the last years cannot but grow in significance.

The No. 1 task of the revolutionary Marxists remains to assure a fusion of this program with the mass movement. If in a general manner the work inside the trade unions can have more results than the work inside the old sclerotic political parties that claim to be of the working class movement, it does not remain less true that at each important political crisis, the question of an alternative leadership is posed on the political plane and that such an alternative leadership recognized as such by the workers can only appear inside the mass parties at least at the beginning.

If conclusions have to be drawn from the failure of the organization of large centrist currents they tend to increase the importance of our own cadres and of our own core as indispensable forces for stimulating and regrouping the alternative leadership to the traditional apparatus inside the mass movement.

If a principal cause must be cited for which our success in the application of long term entrism has not been qualitatively different from what it is, it resides essentially in the numerical limitation of our own forces and in the insufficiency of their recruitment; certain given proportions between the number of our cadres and the number of those that they could directly influence and guide ideologically cannot be modified.

VIII. This analysis points to the necessity of a tactical turn of our movement in capitalist Europe, a turn already begun by several sections.

This turn consists of the creation in each country having adequate means, of the instruments necessary for first influencing deeply and later conquering the political direction of the new youth vanguard. The instruments could be a revolutionary organization of the youth, a vanguard youth organization or an independent Trotskyist sector employing methods of work and speaking a language capable of attracting the most political youth or a combination of the youth organization and the independent sector. There where the totality of our forces have been engaged in long term entrism an operational division of labor must be made and a detachment of our forces assigned to the youth work.

It is not at all a matter of "sacrifice" to the loss of entrism work. On the contrary to the extent where experience has demonstrated that the formation of larger and better structured left tendencies in the mass movement depends essentially on our own forces, the reinforcement of them by the recruitment of youth elements should be considered as a phase of primitive accumulation indispensable to the success of mass work.

Certainly the youth organization cannot constitute in itself the direct springboard toward the mass revolutionary party. It must be on guard against abusive generalizations based on limited experience in certain sectors, at certain precise times, and above all not theorize the actual tactical turn into rediscovering the illusory virtues of constructing small revolutionary parties on the margin of mass movements.

The essential is to comprehend the objective origin of the combination of 2 sectors of work which are imposed on us at the present stage. It is a matter essentially of one sector of work which continues to be oriented towards the realization of a general task which cannot be accomplished with full success except in certain precise historic conditions that we understand better now, and of a sector of particular work which should give results in the short run and with this improve the conditions in which we seek to realize the task of the long run.

By successfully breaking through in the youth milieu we not only will reinforce our own organization and create a pole of attraction for the most political layers of the youth towards the workers movement. We can also in the particular sector of the youth make a contribution to the renewal of the workers movement and create with this fact one of the factors of the future mass revolutionary party. If these originated in the past from the traditional mass parties, the youth organizations have been often able to furnish an important contribution to its creation.

The possibility of maintaining during a long time the revolutionary positions of successive generations of university students is strongly improbable, they will finish in the majority by becoming integrated in bourgeois society, as a result of their social function. It will not be the same for the young workers,

employees, and technicians who can penetrate into union organizations, into renewing the cadres and combatting with success the SP reformism, the neo-reformism of the CP's and the integration into the bourgeois state. The capacity of revolutionary youth vanguard organizations to formulate a program of specific demands for the young workers will decide in fact their capacity of going beyond the levels of the most political elements. But the conquest of these remains the immediate task in most of the countries, in order to acquire the minimum political and organizational strength without which outside progress becomes illusory.

IX. On the base of this general conception specific orientations will be elaborated from now until the world congress for the revolutionary Marxists of each capitalist country of capitalist Europe in close collaboration with the sections of these countries.