

August 12, 1974

To the Steering Committee of the Leninist Trotskyist Faction

Dear Comrades,

Enclosed are the following items:

1. A letter to the United Secretariat from the Political Committee of the Canadian section concerning the recent tour of Canada made by Comrade Alain Krivine on behalf of the Revolutionary Marxist Group.
2. A letter to the United Secretariat from Darrel Furlotte for the ISA/ISO Central Office, concerning the dues status of the Canadian section.
3. A letter from Comrade John Riddell to Comrade Dick F., enclosing six items related to negotiations between the ISA/ISO and the RMG on mutual support for each others candidates in the recent federal elections in Canada.
4. A reply from Comrade Walter to Comrade Barry Sheppard's letter of June 28, 1974, concerning the resources of the Socialist Workers Party and the finances of the Fourth International.
5. A translation of an article on the French presidential elections written by three comrades of the Leninist Trotskyist Tendency in the GIM, submitted to the internal discussion bulletin of the German section.

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We have received a notice from the United Secretariat Bureau that the next meeting will take place in September as regularly scheduled.

Comradely,

Mary-Alice Waters

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LSA/ISO  
334 Queen St. West,  
Toronto 2b,  
Canada.

July 16th, 1974.

United Secretariat of the Fourth International.

Dear Comrades:

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Comrade Alain Krivine, one of the best-known leaders of the Fourth International, a member of the International Executive Committee and a leader of the International Majority Tendency, toured Canada during the first week of July on behalf of the Revolutionary Marxist Group. The RMG is a sympathizing organization of the Fourth International, most of whose members are in political agreement with the IMT. Comrade Krivine spoke at election rallies of the RMG in Winnipeg and Toronto, as well as at a RMG public meeting in Vancouver.

The plans for this tour were concealed from the Canadian section, the League for Socialist Action/Ligue Socialiste Ouvrière. We learned of the tour with some astonishment, only on June 27, through wall posters announcing the RMG meetings with Krivine.

We then immediately wrote comrade Krivine and the RMG to propose our collaboration in his tour, either through joint sponsorship of his meetings, or some other mutually agreeable form. As we stated in our letter to comrade Krivine "joint sponsorship of your meetings in Canada by the RMG and the LSA/ISO will make your tour a demonstration of unity by Fourth Internationalists in this country. It will prevent any impression that you are taking a public partisan stand on the division among adherents of the Fourth International in Canada.

"Both the RMG and the LSA/ISO have fielded candidates in the July 8 federal elections. Your Toronto meeting is billed as an election rally in support of the candidates of the RMG. Joint sponsorship of your meetings will prevent any impression that your tour gives political support to the candidates of only one of the two organizations of the Fourth International in Canada."

On July 1, comrade Krivine, along with several RMG representatives, met with two of the leaders of the LSA/ISO. Comrade Krivine frankly informed us that the purpose of his visit was to assist the RMG election campaign and to build the RMG. He said that he had discussed his tour with the leadership of the French Trotskyist organization, the Front Communiste Révolutionnaire, and that his decision represented the views of the FCR leadership. They had foreseen that the LSA/ISO, upon learning of the tour, might request joint sponsorship; they had decided in advance to refuse the request.

We wish to underline the significance of this event and

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the implications behind it for our world movement. Krivine's action in accepting the sponsorship of the RMG, a sympathizing organization, while at the same time rejecting the sponsorship of the LSA/LSO will be clearly understood on the left in Canada as an act of public political opposition to the Canadian section, LSA/LSO, by the majority leadership of the Fourth International.

This was all the more serious since the LSA/LSO was also waging an election campaign for its own candidate. (The LSA/LSO also called for a vote for the RMG candidates.) Krivine did not mention the candidacy of the official section even once during his public appearances, let alone indicate his support for its efforts. We expected that Krivine, in addition to his call for support for the RMG's election candidates, would call for a vote for the candidate of the LSA, the official section. The political basis for his failure to support the LSA election candidate was not explained.

The blatant factional manner in which this tour was conceived was brought out even more clearly when, during the course of several interviews he gave on Canadian television, comrade Krivine stated, "I am here (in Canada) to speak at the election rally of the Canadian Trotskyists, the Revolutionary Marxist Group" (CBLT, 11:20 pm, July 7). He thus excluded the concept that there was any Trotskyist campaign other than that of the RMG.

It was in order to reinforce the unity of the world movement in this difficult period that the delegates to the last World Congress adopted the nine-point "Agreement on Measures to Help Maintain the Unity of the Fourth International". Included in that agreement was the ten-point agreement unanimously adopted by the United Secretariat on Sept. 19, 1973. Point 4 of the latter reads as follows:

"That in those countries where two or more groups exist because of splits or other reasons, the united moral authority of the Fourth International be brought to bear for the earliest possible fusion of the groups on a principled basis."

Comrade Krivine's tour did the exact opposite. It set a precedent in the post World Congress period for partisan public intervention by leaders of the International on behalf of contending groups, thus exacerbating existing divisions and promoting splits. The actions of those who organized the Krivine tour violated the decision of the last World Congress. By declaring that they are no longer bound by the nine-point agreement, leaders of the IMT have nullified the agreement.

The manner in which it was organized, and the blatant public display of partisanship involved in the Krivine tour leave the unmistakable impression that a section of the official leadership of the Fourth International has decided to begin a process of de facto recognition of the RMG as the representatives of the "real" International in Canada. This can only have the most serious consequences. It would amount to a decision to adopt a course which will provoke a deepening international split. Once this kind of unprincipled factional

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maneuvering is accepted, democratic discussion and collaboration become impossible. Any group which has disagreements with the inner leaders of the IMT will become the target of a secret wrecking operation.

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We have read the materials relating to the split organized inside the Socialist Workers Party. While the SWP cannot belong to the International because of reactionary U.S. laws, we think there is substantial evidence of the complicity by the International Majority leadership in the preparation of that split by the Internationalist Tendency. We were amazed, for example, to learn of the existence of a "North American Bureau," on which the RMG has representation. When did this secret body come into existence? What is its program? What are its terms of reference? Is there a Latin American bureau, an Asian bureau? Are there other secret regional bodies acting behind the backs of the section leaderships who are not political supporters of the IMT?

What part did the NAB play in the unprincipled split in the Canadian section prior to the last World Congress? What are the real views of the IMT and its components?

Publish the secret resolutions and discussions of the IMT, so that the whole world movement may consider them.

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There is a clear connection between the two events mentioned above. Comrade Krivine's tour was not a personal initiative. While neither the United Secretariat nor the elected leadership of the Canadian section were informed of the plans for the tour, others were surely consulted on so serious a move.

It is not unreasonable to assume that the tour was the product of a decision of one of the secret bodies of the IMT in consultation with the North American Bureau. If this is the case, it only increases the seriousness of the matter, adducing further proof that the IMT leadership has set out on a course of violating the agreements reached by both sides, and endangering the unity of the world movement in the pursuit of their narrow factional ends.

This conduct poses the gravest danger to the International since reunification. It is time to call a halt, to take emergency action to stop the actions of the pro-split wing of the IMT. We urge the United Secretariat to act promptly and affirmatively upon the SWP's call for a special World Congress to resolve this question and ensure the unity of our movement. We urge other sections and groups to take a similar stand.

Comradely,

s/John Riddell,  
for the Political Committee  
of the ISA/ISO.

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LSA/ISO Central Office  
334 Queen Street West  
Toronto, Ontario, Canada  
July 2, 1974

United Secretariat  
Bruxelles

Dear Comrades,

With regard to Jen's letter of May 12, 1974 concerning our dues to the United Secretariat, we last sent an accounting of our international dues to Gisela Mandel on January 25, 1974. Perhaps with the reorganization of the center and the moving of files, this letter may not have come to your attention. In any case, I enclose a copy of this letter.

As you can see, due to the unusually heavy expenses incurred in the latter part of 1973, we are paid up in our international dues through to the end of June 1974.

Comrade Crandall of the LSA/ISO is now on the secretariat, so I assume we will continue the previous arrangement of using our international dues to cover his united secretariat travel expenses. We can begin this procedure for comrade Crandall beginning with July, and I can send you our semi-annual accounting at the end of December, as usual.

Within the framework of assessing our overall financial situation, our Political Committee has discussed what we can pay as international dues in the coming period. In assessing our finances the Political Committee noted the negative effect of the two splits in the past year; the split of the Revolutionary Communist Tendency, and the group around Ross Dowson. It also noted that while the League had made good progress in stabilizing its finances, it still had not totally overcome the problems accumulated over the past five years during which the League had committed itself to expenditures beyond its resources. Those commitments beyond our means included our increasing our international dues to \$250 per month.

In order to bring our expenditures in line with our resources, the Political Committee decided to cut back on expenditures, cutting our central office expenditures by \$1,055. The central office staff was reduced from six to three, and the office and travel expenses were also cut by half. In this framework, we decided to reduce our international dues from \$250 to \$125 per month.

This reduction is only for the immediate period ahead. We hope to be able to revise it upwards as our resources grow.

Comradely,

s/Darrel Furlotte, for the  
LSA/ISO

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LSA/LSO Central Office  
334 Queen Street West  
Toronto, Ontario

July 23, 1974

Dear Dick:

Here is the record of our negotiations with the RMG, in our unsuccessful attempt to agree on a text for a joint statement of support for the four revolutionary candidates in the July 8th elections.

Item no. 1 is our original proposal, a suggested text for a joint statement, which we delivered to the RMG on June 26, some days after we had informed them of our support of their candidates.

Item no. 2 is the RMG Political Committee's explanation of why they were not supporting our candidate. Dated June 18, it was not delivered to us until June 27.

Item no. 3 is the RMG's proposal for a joint statement. They delivered it to us the same day, June 27. They wrote into the statement a paragraph about the "final goal," workers power, a theme omitted from their real election program. But this paragraph is followed by another which implies some kind of division between these "revolutionary objectives", and the "immediate solutions."

What follows presents the kernel of their schema for today's struggles: proposals of an organizational character for the struggles of the labor movement, which in their view have a "revolutionary dynamic."

Item no. 4 is our second proposal. We gave it to the RMG on June 28. As you see, it retains as much of their text as possible.

On June 30, the RMG told us that two of our amendments were unacceptable. These are the underlined portions of item no. 4. In each case, they demanded that we accept their text, and said this was not negotiable.

We then made them a final proposal (Item no. 5), which we gave to them the same day. Before the day had ended, they phoned us up to tell us that they had rejected this as well.

They had made clear at the outset that if no joint statement was agreed on, their position would remain non-support of our candidate. But the next day at the LSA/LSO-RMG debate Smiley declared they had changed their stand and were supporting Kate Alderdice in Eglinton.

They promised us a letter stating their new position. But this letter never arrived. We have now written them, asking what their final position is, (Item no. 6). We have yet to receive a reply.

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The documents of the negotiations indicate many key points of difference. We were struck by their refusal to include the passage from the Transitional Program, which the IMT ostentatiously included in their international tendency declaration. RMG negotiators told us it was "not relevant" to the July 8 elections.

Comradely,

s/John Riddell.

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ITEM NO. 1

TROTSKYISTS UNITE EFFORTS IN FEDERAL ELECTIONS

Statement of the Revolutionary Marxist Group and the League for Socialist Action/Ligue Socialiste Ouvriere.

The RMG and the LSA/LSO are presenting revolutionary candidates in four ridings in these elections: Bret Smiley in Toronto-Greenwood, Kate Alderdice in Toronto-Eglinton, Linda Peevers in Peterborough, and Murray Smith in Winnipeg-North Centre. The RMG and LSA/LSO are presenting separate programs, and are waging separate campaigns.

Nevertheless, the programs advanced by the two organizations express major areas of agreement on the central issues in this election. That is why we have decided to join forces in calling for a vote for the four revolutionary candidates, and to engage in joint activities to promote their common aims. Through this stand, both groups can unite on a platform that advances workers' political consciousness and explains the need for independent class action, while retaining their full right to criticize the other group, in areas where they disagree.

As revolutionary socialists in a common world organization, the Fourth International, we are combining to focus our fire on the ruling class and their parties. We further aim to expose the social-democratic mis-leaders of the working class.

We call on Canadian workers to support the revolutionary candidates of both the RMG and the LSA/LSO, on the basis of the following programmatic points, which we hold in common.

\* \* \*

The capitalist system is bankrupt. Inflation is built into it. Capitalism cannot provide jobs for all or an adequate standard of living for workers. It oppresses women and national minorities. It wastes resources and pollutes the environment. Faced with economic problems and increasing difficulties, capitalism tries to resolve these through attacks on the working class.

Capitalism must be abolished. Working people need to throw the capitalist parties out of office and form their own government, committed to policies that will fundamentally transform society. The entire apparatus of government and state, set up to defend the interests of the bourgeoisie, must be replaced by a workers government and state ruling in the interests of the toiling masses. The capitalist system of private profit must be replaced by a socialized, planned economy.

The major asset of the ruling class in this election is the political weakness of the working class -- its lack of clear perspective. The workers movement has shown its will to struggle and built powerful organizations. But they are headed by a conservative bureaucracy, while the workers need a revolutionary leadership. Overcoming this deficiency is the central respon-



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sibility of revolutionaries.

In the current federal elections a class question is posed. At present the NDP is the only mass political organization of the working class. By virtue of its organizational ties and the class character of its support, if not its program, the NDP remains a component of the labor movement. It is a labor party. In all ridings where the ISA/ISO and RMG are not presenting candidates, therefore, we call for the election of NDP candidates, not as a vote of confidence in the NDP program or leadership, but as a working class vote against the capitalist parties.

But in calling for a vote for the NDP on this basis, we give no support to the strategy and program of the NDP leadership, which has the reformist perspective of making the capitalist system work better. In B.C., Saskatchewan, and Manitoba, NDP governments are the loyal servants of capitalist interests. We oppose the NDP's class collaborationist alliance with the Liberals in the last Parliament. We call for an unequivocal break with all forms of class collaboration. To the reformist and parliamentary strategy of the NDP leadership we counterpose the proletarian method of independent mass action by the working class.

In addition to our common approach on this question, we also agree on a number of other key issues in this election. In particular we call for the following:

1. Support Quebec's right to self-determination, that is, the right to form an independent state if the Quebecois so desire.
2. Fight inflation with a rising scale of wages which go up in direct proportion to a cost-of-living index determined by the trade unions.
3. Fight unemployment with a sliding scale of hours.

June 26, 1974

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ITEM NO. 2

Political Committee, LSA

Dear comrades

As you know, we are not supporting your candidate in the federal election. We wish to explain why, both to you and to the leadership of the Fourth International.

Our position is based on our analysis of the present political conjuncture in Canada. By now you will have seen the latest issue of our press and should be familiar with this analysis. We will summarize the main points.

We believe that Canadian capitalism is going to experience economic, social and political problems in the next immediate period such as it has not faced in the last quarter century. While the worst effects of the deteriorating condition of the world economy have been partially offset by the benefits accruing to Canada from the boom in resource prices, this does not permit a long term economic upswing nor does it compensate for the continuing decline of the manufacturing sector, reflected in the unemployment level (which has been only marginally reduced in the last two years). The inflation rate is already provoking a perceptible increase in workers struggles in both the private and the public sectors. These coincide with resistance in the public sector to state efforts at rationalizing and legal restrictions on the right to organize and strike, as well as widespread unionization and strike campaigns among various layers of "professional" employees. Simultaneously, we see a much more advanced working class offensive in Quebec, ending the lull which followed the defeat of the 1972 upsurge. These various factors are combining to produce a political crisis within the ruling class. The essential division is over whether or not to use the federal state in a much more direct as an instrument of intervention in the economy and in the class struggle, in both Canada and Quebec. This is the significance of the Stanfield program in the present conjuncture. Regardless of the outcome of the election, it is clear that the Tory line is supported by appreciable sectors of the ruling class and that its general approach will become increasingly favoured by the bourgeoisie as the problems of capitalism intensify.

Such an analysis permits us to establish both the positive and negative possibilities in the situation. Positively (from the proletarian point of view) the working class, which has not suffered any major defeats for many years, can take advantage of the political disunity and weakness of the bourgeoisies to strike a number of serious blows at the class enemy. Such a situation would favour both the development of a broader workers vanguard of class struggle militants and the development of new, more advanced perspectives for the labour movement.

Negatively, the political inexperience and backwardness of the working class, the regional and sectoral fragmentation of its struggles, and the absence of any serious opposition to the labour bureaucracy poses the danger of a number of serious

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defeats being inflicted on the workers.

As for the NDP the relationship of various social and political forces completely excludes any possibility of it posing itself as a governmental alternative at the federal level. It is not seen as such by its members or by anyone else. The options for the NDP are essentially twofold: to offer its services (at a modest price) as the guarantor of parliamentary stability in a context where the bourgeoisie is unable to arrive at a unitary political formula, or to maintain a "principled" stance of opposition to both bourgeois parties thereby reverting to its traditional marginality and impotence in federal politics. Either choice is fraught with political problems for Lewis and Co. Hence their present vacillation.

The responsibilities of revolutionaries in this situation may be summarized thus: to clarify the essential elements of the conjuncture to worker militants, to define the objectives and methods of struggle for a working class offensive outside the parliamentary arena, to cut across the isolation of the Quebec class struggle from the English Canadian workers and to popularize a merciless and extremely concrete criticism of both the NDP and the trade union leadership.

This perspective is the fundamental theme of our own election intervention. It also constitutes the basis from which we have derived our position regarding both the NDP and the tendencies to the left of it, including yourselves. Like you we call for an NDP vote in the ridings where we are not presenting candidates. Unlike you, we do not do so as a matter of principle. We do so at the present time because in our estimation, the support given to the NDP by large numbers of workers and small farmers does not primarily signify approval for NDP collusion with the Liberals, but rather a primitive awareness that the NDP is not a party of the capitalists. While such consciousness is laden with reformist ideology, it is none the less progressive in relation to the backwardness of those sectors of the working class which continue to support the bourgeois parties. In the period when the working class in its entirety participates in the electoral process, we stand with those who wish to support a workers party, albeit reformist.

But the axis of our intervention in the elections is not to mobilize support for the NDP. It is to explain to worker militants that their class faces the prospect of serious defeats unless it prepares itself for struggle and that the NDP offers no solution for avoiding such defeats, much less acquiring new gains. We consistently emphasize the treachery of the NDP and advocate a reliance on working class mobilization, unity and self organization, not on the futile parliamentary manoeuvring of the social democrats.

Your approach is precisely the opposite. You lament the bankruptcy and opportunism of the NDP. But the central focus of your campaign is to call for the election of an NDP government (with the rader, new in your progaganda, of "socialist policies") In the Labour Challenge supplement on the federal elections, the only form of action you propose for worker and student militants, with the exception of calling for the re-

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opening of union contracts and the negotiation of escalator clauses, is work in support of NDP candidates and a struggle within the NDP to win it to your "socialist policies".

The contrast between our electoral platforms flow from this central difference. We advocate a program of direct and immediate action: objectives which can broaden the scope of workers struggles and improve the relationship of class forces in favour of the proletariat; methods of struggle which unify the working class and give it experiences in self-organization and proletarian democracy. You advocate the "socialist policies" which the NDP government of your dreams would implement. Your platform of nationalizing this and nationalizing that is very pretty. But it does nothing to clarify the concrete measures which are absolutely essential for the working class at this time. Such a platform would have been adequate for the first militants of Canadian socialism seventy years ago. It is no doubt acceptable to the remnants of left social democracy within the NDP. But it is useless as an instrument for modifying the dynamic of workers struggles in an anti-bureaucratic and anti-capitalist direction under present conditions. And inasmuch as it presents the NDP as the only possible vehicle for the road to socialism, it continues the outrageous deception about social democracy which you have promulgated for over twenty years.

The practical consequence of your orientation is to transform yourselves into a left appendage of the NDP and the union bureaucracy which it represents and to reduce your criticisms of Lewis to those of a loyal opposition which respects the eternal sanctity of the social democratic arena. Thus, you concluded these criticisms with the announcement that you intend to "campaign actively in support of the NDP". The slogan "For an NDP Government" blares from the headlines of your press and the advertisements for the common meetings of your candidate and those of the NDP.

We wish to make it clear that for us, the question of supporting other candidates of the far left is an open one and is not contingent on their full agreement with our program. It's rather a question of evaluating the situation and drawing certain lines of demarcation. Despite the opportunism of your program, we could conceivably support your candidate, if the political situation meant that an LSA vote would constitute a pole of identification for significant anticapitalist forces in opposition to the reformist working class leaderships, regardless of the programmatic deficiencies of your campaign. Such conditions prevailed in France, for example, at the time of the 1973 Legislative elections. In that contest, the support given to Lutte Ouvrier, despite its economism and opportunism, by the Ligue Communiste was in our view correct. But such conditions, most fundamentally the existence of a broad anti-capitalist vanguard, do not obtain in Canada at the present time. The value of revolutionary intervention in this election is almost totally defined in terms of its educational content. It is therefore a question of measuring the comprehensibility and impact of such intervention on the advanced elements of the working class. Thus, the question of the NDP and the necessity

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of posing an orientation of offensive, extra-parliamentary struggles for the labour movement is the primary consideration for us. Our assessment of your campaign is that it will make virtually no contribution to this process. While the electoral platform of the Maoists of CPC(ML) is in some ways closer to a class struggle line than yours is, the purpose of their campaign is completely unintelligible to workers militants and for this reason, we have also refrained from calling for a vote for their candidates.

Finally, we are compelled to express our curiosity at your motivation for supporting our candidates and your proposal for what in effect amounts to a joint campaign. Our electoral platform does not reflect any change in our politics. When we advocated the same demands around self-organizations and workers democracy during the postal strikes, your militants actively collaborated with the union bureaucracy to oppose them. When we advocated the same themes of internationalist solidarity as a platform for the Chile committees, you split from the committees. When we advocated the same approach vis-a-vis the NDP during the tendency struggle in the ISA, you denounced us as anti-Trotskyist. Why do you now consider it acceptable to support exactly the same political positions on the electoral front? There has been no shift in our programmatic orientation. And, despite a more left rhetoric and the new display of token independence from the NDP symbolized by the Eglinton candidacy, there seems to have been no substantial shift in yours. You have made no such overtures to any other forces on the left and you present no reasons why you would distinguish us from them. When we requested your endorsement, we did it on the basis of our platform. (We had not yet seen yours). Comrades, what are your criteria? We remain of course always willing to engage in common activity with you on a principled basis (as we are presently doing in the campaign against the Brazilian trade tour.)

Communist Greetings

The Political Committee,  
Revolutionary Marxist  
Group

ITEM NO. 3

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ITEM NO. 4

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REVOLUTIONARY SOCIALISTS UNITE EFFORTS IN FEDERAL ELECTIONS

STATEMENT OF THE REVOLUTIONARY MARXIST GROUP AND THE LEAGUE FOR SOCIALIST ACTION/LIGUE SOCIALISTE OUVRIERE

The RMG is presenting revolutionary candidates in three ridings in these elections: Bret Smiley in Toronto-Greenwood, Linda Peevers in Peterborough, and Murray Smith in Winnipeg-North Centre. The LSA/LSO is presenting a revolutionary candidate in Toronto-Eglinton, Kate Alderdice. The RMG and LSA/LSO are presenting separate programs, and waging separate campaigns.

Nevertheless, the programs advanced by the two organizations express major areas of agreement on the central issues in this election. That is why we have decided to join forces in calling for a vote for the four revolutionary candidates. Through this stand, both groups can unite on a platform that advances workers' political consciousness and explains the need for independent class action while retaining their full right to criticize the other group, in areas where they disagree.

As revolutionary socialists in a common world organization, the Fourth International, we are combining to focus our fire on the ruling class and their parties. We also aim to criticize the bankruptcy of the policies of the NDP and the trade union leadership and to explain why these policies are purely diversionary with respect to the pressing tasks which confront the working class movement.

We call on Canadian workers and socialists to support the revolutionary candidates of both the RMG and the LSA/LSO,

The RMG is presenting revolutionary candidates in three ridings in these elections: Bret Smiley in Toronto-Greenwood, Linda Peevers in Peterborough and Murray Smith in Winnipeg-North Centre. The LSA/LSO is presenting a revolutionary candidate in Toronto-Eglinton, Kate Alderdice. The RMG and LSA/LSO are presenting separate programs, and waging separate campaigns.

Nevertheless, the programs advanced by the two organizations express major areas of agreement on the central issues in this election. That is why we have decided to join forces in calling for a vote for the four revolutionary candidates. Through this stand both groups can unite on a platform that advances workers' political consciousness and explains the need for independent class action while retaining their full right to criticize the other group in areas where they disagree.

As revolutionary socialists in a common world organization, the Fourth International we are combining to focus our fire on the ruling class and their parties. We also aim to criticize the bankruptcy of the program of the NDP and the trade union leadership and to explain why this program cannot resolve the pressing tasks which confront the working class movement.

We call on Canadian workers and socialists to support the revolutionary candidates of both the RMG and the LSA/LSO,

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Item no. 3 - RMG Draft

on the basis of the following programmatic points which we hold in common.

The capitalist system is rapidly exhausting its capacity for reforms and concessions. The historic crisis of international capitalism is expressed in the high unemployment levels and soaring rise of prices which have become generalized throughout the capitalist countries. It is expressed in the inability of capitalism to ameliorate the oppression of women and of national minorities. It is expressed in the instability of the parties and governments of the ruling class. Faced with this crisis, capitalism attempts to preserve itself through intensifying its attacks on the mass organizations and standard of living of the workers.

As revolutionaries, our goal is the seizure of political power by the working class and the use of that political power to abolish capitalist social and economic relations. The capitalist governments and the entire apparatus of the existing state must be replaced by a government based on mass representative bodies of the workers and small farmers, bodies which can arise only out of mass mobilizations and struggles. The factories, mines, banks and other large economic enterprises must be expropriated by such a government to begin the transition to a socialized, planned economy.

Such revolutionary objectives in no way contradict the need to struggle for im-

Item no. 4 - LSA/LSO Second Draft

on the basis of the following programmatic points which we hold in common.

The capitalist system is rapidly exhausting its capacity for reforms and concessions. The historic crisis of international capitalism is expressed in the high unemployment levels and soaring rise of prices which have become generalized throughout the capitalist countries. It is expressed in the inability of capitalism to eliminate the oppression of women and of national minorities. It is expressed in the instability of the parties and governments of the ruling class. Faced with economic problems and increasing difficulties capitalism attempts to preserve itself through intensifying its attacks on the mass organizations and standard of living of the workers.

As revolutionaries, our goal is the seizure of political power by the working class and the use of that political power to abolish capitalist social and economic relations. The capitalist government and the entire apparatus of the existing state must be replaced by a government based on mass representative bodies of the workers and small farmers, bodies which can arise only out of mass mobilizations and struggles. The factories, mines, banks and other large economic enterprises must be expropriated by such a government to begin the transition to a socialized, planned economy.

Such revolutionary objectives in no way contradict the need to struggle for immediate

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mediate solutions to the economic, social and political problems which confront the working class. They are, in fact, the logical extension of such struggles. The major asset of the ruling class at this time is the political weakness of the working class -- its lack of clear perspective. The workers' movement has shown its will to struggle and built powerful organizations. But they are dominated by a conservative bureaucracy, which seeks to maintain the status quo in order to preserve its own privileges. To this bureaucratic domination, we counterpose the self-organization of workers struggles and the principles of workers' democracy. Such measures are indispensable to ensure the unity of the working class and the broadest possible mobilizations to fight the ruling class. They are also indispensable in order to popularize a revolutionary program in the labour movement.

At the present time, no revolutionary organization has significant support in the working class. The NDP is the only mass political organization of the working class. By virtue of its organizational ties and the class character of its support, if not its program, the NDP remains a component of the labour movement. In all ridings where the ISA/LSO and RMG are not presenting candi-

solutions to the economic, social and political problems which confront the working class. The task for revolutionaries is to help the masses in the daily struggle to find the bridge between the present demands and the socialist program of the revolution. This bridge should include a system of transitional demands, stemming from today's conditions and from today's consciousness of the wide layers of the working class and unalterably leading to one final conclusion: the conquest of power by the proletariat. The major asset of the ruling class at this time is the political weakness of the working class movement -- its crisis of leadership. The workers movement has shown its will to struggle and built powerful organizations. But they are dominated by a conservative bureaucracy, which has a reformist strategy whose aim is to maintain the capitalist system and with it their privileges. To the reformist program of the bureaucracy, we counterpose the strategy of the transitional program: mobilization of the masses for a sliding scale of wages, open the books, expropriation of private banks, end military spending, self-determination of oppressed nationalities, factory committees, workers democracy; leading to the building of the revolutionary leadership.

At the present time, no revolutionary organization has mass support in the working class. The NDP is the only mass political organization of the working class. By virtue of its organizational ties and the class character of its support, if not its program, the NDP remains a component of the labour movement. In all ridings where the ISA/LSO and RMG are not presenting candidates, therefore, we call for



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dates, therefore, we call for a vote for the NDP candidates, not as a vote of confidence in the NDP, but as a working class vote against the capitalist parties.

But in calling for a vote for the NDP on this basis, we give no support to the strategy and program of the NDP, which has the reformist perspective of making the capitalist system work better.

The election of an NDP government will not solve the urgent problems which face the working class. In B.C., Saskatchewan, and Manitoba, NDP governments are the loyal servants of capitalist interests. We oppose the NDP's class collaborationist alliance with the Liberals in the last Parliament. We call for an unequivocal break with all forms of class collaboration. To the reformist and parliamentary strategy of the NDP, we counter the proletarian method of independent mass action by the working class. Only through such mass action outside the parliamentary arena can the labour movement effectively respond to the developing crisis of Canadian capitalism.

In addition to our common approach on this question, we also agree on a number of other key issues in this election. In particular, we call for the following:

1. Quebec: Support Quebec's right to self-determination, that is, the right to form an independent state if the Quebecois so desire.
2. Resist inflation through fighting for a rising scale of wages which go up in direct proportion to a cost-of-liv-

the election of the NDP candidates, not as a vote of confidence in the NDP, but as a working class vote against the capitalist parties.

But in calling for a vote for the NDP on this basis, we give no support to the strategy and program of the NDP, which has the reformist perspective of making the capitalist system work better.

Workers cannot rely on the election of an NDP government to solve the problems which face the working class. In B.C., Saskatchewan and Manitoba, NDP governments are the loyal servants of capitalist interests. We oppose the NDP's class collaborationist alliance with the Liberals in the last Parliament. We call for an unequivocal break with all forms of class collaboration. To the reformist and parliamentary strategy of the NDP leadership we counterpose the proletarian method of independent mass action by the working class. Participation in elections and use of the parliamentary tribune can only be one aspect of the mass action strategy of the working class, the main thrust of which will develop outside the parliamentary arena.

In addition to our common approach on this question we also agree on a number of other key issues in this election. In particular, we call for the following:

1. Quebec: Support Quebec's right to self-determination, that is, the right to form an independent state if the Quebecois so desire.
2. Inflation: fight for a rising scale of wages which go up in direct proportion to a cost-of-living index determined by

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ing index determined by the  
trade unions.

3. Resist unemployment through  
fighting for a sliding scale  
of hours, that is, the equal  
distribution of all available  
work with no loss in pay.

the trade unions.

3. Unemployment: fight for a  
sliding scale of hours, that  
is, shortening the work week  
to spread the available work  
around with no loss in pay.

The following material was the last proposal made to the RMG Political Committee in an attempt to make possible a united stand by revolutionary socialists in the federal elections. The RMG Political Committee rejected the proposal.

334 Queen St. W.  
Toronto 2b, Ont.  
June 30, 1974.

Political Committee  
Revolutionary Marxist Group,  
Toronto, Ont.

Dear Comrades,

We believe that the federal election programs of the candidates of the Revolutionary Marxist Group and the League for Socialist Action/Ligue Socialiste Ouvrière indicate a sufficient area of agreement to justify a united stand by the two organizations in support of the candidates of both groups.

On June 26 we proposed to you that our two organizations make a joint statement declaring our united support for the four revolutionary candidates. We gave you our proposed text for this statement.

But negotiations to agree on the text of the joint statement have not been successful. We have been unable to agree on the proposed sections describing the role of the Transitional Program and indicating how it should be applied in Canada today.

The LSA/LSO Political Committee has therefore redrafted the proposed joint statement, to limit its scope to areas of our respective written programs where our positions coincide. The text of this new proposal is enclosed. It consists of sections of the statement already agreed on by both groups, plus section no. 12 of the election program of the RMG.

We hope this proposal permits us to reach rapid agreement. It records the agreement of both groups on the fundamental questions posed before socialists in this election, particularly in counterposing a class struggle course to the reformism and class collaborationism of the present leadership of the English Canadian working class. It would be incorrect to allow disagreements on other questions to obstruct our united stand in the elections.

Regardless of your response to this proposal, the enclosed statement outlines the principled basis on which the LSA/LSO supports the three candidates of the RMG in the July 8 federal elections.

Comradely,  
s/Arthur Young

## REVOLUTIONARY SOCIALISTS UNITE EFFORTS IN FEDERAL ELECTIONS

Proposed statement of the Revolutionary Marxist Group and the League for Socialist Action/Ligue Socialiste Ouvrière.

The Revolutionary Marxist Group (RMG) is presenting revolutionary candidates in three ridings in these elections: Bret Smiley in Toronto-Greenwood, Linda Peevers in Peterborough and Murray Smith in Winnipeg-North Center. The League for Socialist Action/Ligue Socialiste Ouvrière (LSA/LSO) is presenting a revolutionary candidate in Toronto-Eglinton, Kate Alderdice. The RMG and LSA/LSO are presenting separate programs, and waging separate campaigns.

Nevertheless, the programs advanced by the two organizations express major areas of agreement on the central issues in this election. That is why we have decided to join forces in calling for a vote for the four revolutionary candidates. Through this stand, both groups can unite on a platform that advances workers' political consciousness and explains the need for independent class action, while retaining their full right to criticize the other group, in areas where they disagree.

As revolutionary socialists in a common world organization, the Fourth International, we are combining to focus our fire on the ruling class and its parties. We also aim to criticize the bankruptcy of the program and policies of the New Democratic Party and the trade union leadership, and to explain why they cannot resolve the pressing tasks which confront the working class movement.

The RMG and the LSA/LSO believe that workers can best indicate their class sentiments by voting for our candidates. But in most ridings, a class struggle candidate will not exist. The question of the electoral policy of class conscious workers is therefore posed.

The NDP is a qualitatively different type of political organization from the capitalist Liberals and Tories. As much as it tries to hide the fact, its base lies in the trade unions and the working class. It receives no support from any appreciable sector of big business.

Politically, the NDP has repeatedly betrayed the interests of the working class. Its liberal program offers no positive perspective for working people. In B.C., Saskatchewan and Manitoba, NDP governments are the loyal servants of capitalist interests. Militant workers and socialists must wage a sharp struggle against the NDP leadership in order to politically rearm the labor movement.

But by virtue of its organizational ties and the class character of its support, if not its program, the NDP remains a component of the labor movement. In the ridings where we are not presenting candidates, therefore, we call on workers to vote NDP, not as a vote of confidence in the NDP, but as a working class vote against the capitalist parties.

In addition to our common approach on this question, we

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also agree on a number of other key issues in this election. In particular we call for the following:

1. Quebec: Support Quebec's right to self-determination, that is, the right to form an independent state if the Québécois so desire.

2. Inflation: Fight for a rising scale of wages, which go up in direct proportion to a cost-of-living index determined by the trade unions.

3. Unemployment: Fight for a sliding scale of hours, that is, shortening the work week to spread the available work around with no loss in pay.

We call on Canadian workers and socialists to support the revolutionary candidates of both the RMG and the ISA/LSO, on the basis of the above programmatic points, which we hold in common.

ITEM NO. 6

334 Queen St. W.  
Toronto, Ontario.  
July 10, 1974

Political Committee  
Revolutionary Marxist Group,  
Toronto, Ontario.

Dear Comrades,

We are now preparing our coverage of the election results, and we wish to include a report on the Revolutionary Marxist Group's (RMG) stand on the League for Socialist Action/Ligue Socialiste Ouvriere (LSA/ISO) candidacy in Eglinton riding.

On June 18, your Political Committee adopted the text of a letter to be sent to us stating the reasons you were not supporting our campaign. You gave us a copy of this letter on June 28. On July 1 you announced at the LSA-RMG public debate that you had changed your stand. But we have as yet received nothing in writing setting out your new position..

Moreover, we note that at your major public meeting in Toronto on the election on July 6, you did not tell the audience that you were supporting our campaign. You did not even reply to a question posed during the meeting as to your stand on the LSA/ISO campaign.

What final conclusions did you come to on the question of the LSA/ISO campaign?

Comradely,

John Riddell,  
Executive Secretary  
LSA/ISO

cc: United Secretariat.

.....  
Note: As of August 9 no reply has been received from the RMG.

July 31, 1974

Dear Comrade Sheppard,

Your letter of June 28 contains in my opinion misunderstanding on three accounts.

In the first place, neither the United Secretariat nor any of its members ever raised the question to disregard the special status of the Socialist Workers Party created by the Voorhis Act. We know perfectly well that you cannot affiliate as a section to the F.I. as a result of the reactionary legislation in effect in the USA, and that, in the framework of that legislation, dues or financial contributions to the F.I. are prohibited. Nobody wants to take any "factional advantage" from that situation or wants to change acknowledging it.

If you received information to the contrary, this can only be interpreted as misunderstandings or mistaken reporting. It would have been wiser to check with those whom your informants claim to have been guilty of such change of attitude, rather than to record without verification an alleged irresponsibility or the fact that "threats" were made against you. Otherwise, the way in which "reports" of oral discussions at United Secretariat meetings are being "transmitted" could put into jeopardy the freedom of discussion at such meetings, which, in the democratic tradition of our movement, is complete and unrestricted, and will remain so, without anybody having the right to warn anybody that "anything you say might be written down and used against you."

Representatives of the IEC minority faction in the United Secretariat have several times insisted upon the same principle. It would be wise if they and you would stick to it.

In the second place, the questions raised in the United Secretariat meeting did not concern the Socialist Workers Party, but the IEC minority faction which is a faction of members of the F.I. who claim full membership and voting rights and therefore have full membership duties. It so happens that, since the 10th World Congress, with the honorable exception of the New Zealand section, not a single section or sympathizing section whose leadership supports in its majority the IEC minority faction has contributed a single penny to the budget of the international center. Far from being a normal and traditional situation, this is a new one. It is true that some of the organizations whose leaderships support in their majority the IEC minority faction had already made such a "turn" before the 10th World Congress. We raised this matter several times before and during the world congress, but didn't want it to cut across the absolute priority of conducting a political debate to clarify political issues.

However after a world congress, this situation changes. The continuation and generalization of what can only be described as a financial boycott raises grave questions as to the application of democratic centralism on behalf of that faction. The strengthening of the international center is explicitly mentioned as a key task of the world Trotskyist movement by the political resolution adopted by a clear majority at the 10th

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World Congress. A refusal of the IEC minority faction to take its full part -- to the extent of its membership claims -- in the expenses implied by the strengthening of that center can only be interpreted as a shirking of its statutory duty, if not as an outright refusal to apply world congress decisions.

In the third place, you are absolutely right that it has always been the custom to give credit to those organizations doing so for any genuine expenses of an international character not directly made in the form of contributions to the center. Nobody proposes to change that custom. But your misunderstandings regarding that matter concern:

(a) The nature of these expenses. Only those which have been previously agreed upon can be credited, not any expense arbitrarily decided by one side as being of such a nature. To give two examples: travel expenses in Europe of an IEC minority faction supporter in the United Secretariat, who has never been assigned by the United Secretariat to any activity in Europe whatsoever, cannot be credited as supporting the building of the world Trotskyist movement. They are faction building expenses, and should be supported by the said faction, without any credit being given for this to any organization. Travel expenses incurred in bringing to United Secretariat meetings "translators" without previous agreement (or even proposal made to!) by the United Secretariat to underwrite such expenses cannot be credited either. Likewise, expenses explicitly excluded by United Secretariat decision from the financial efforts for building the world Trotskyist movement and channelled toward special campaigns cannot be credited in any way as international expenses to any Trotskyist organization.

Differences of appreciation on the above mentioned expenses already run into the equivalent of several thousand dollars. This has been brought to the attention of the IEC minority faction many times.

In short, we do not propose to modify anything in regard to mutually agreed upon credits. The IEC minority faction supporters seem to have decided a change in attitude, "crediting" unilaterally what they want. This we cannot accept.

(b) If credits have to be evaluated, they have to be evaluated for all sections and sympathizing organizations, several of which incur the same type of expenditures you mention over and above the dues they pay. In that case, it simply is not true that the credits you mention, in so far as they concern mutually agreed upon expenditures, amount to "several times more than the contributions of the largest sections."

(c) Our key complaint is not this question of "credits," or a change in their evaluation compared to the past prior to the eruption of the present faction fight. It is the question that over and above any genuinely creditable expenditure on international matters, the sections and sympathizing organizations of the F.I. led by IEC minority faction supporters had in the past regularly paid contributions to the running of the international center. Sometimes they were large, sometimes they



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were modest, but they were always real. We want to return to that situation, which is the only normal one.

The proposal made by us involves contributions of this sort not covering "a large part" but hardly 20% of the current expenses of the center. They are not ultimatums but proposals. We would be perfectly willing to consider any reasonable counter-proposal.

We understand that, inspite of the reactionary Voorhis Act which prevents you from formally affiliating with the IEC minority faction in the same way, as it prevents you from affiliating with the F.I., you have close relations of sympathy and collaboration with the leadership of that faction. We think it would be wise if you would most strongly advise that leadership to change its behavior in that respect, which is abnormal and intolerable.

In no organization could the rank-and-file -- not to speak of the leadership -- accept that those who claim more than 40% of the membership and more than 40% of votes at congresses pay much less than 20% of the financial contributions for party-building purposes (not counting, we repeat, faction building activities, which cannot be included in these).

Fraternally yours,

s/Walter

translation

translation

translation

THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IN FRANCE AND  
THE POLITICAL LINE OF THE FCR

What is the "Union of the Left"?

The dispute over the political character of the Union of the Left dates from its founding. With each new French election, it waxes hot again. We recall the dispute and exchange of letters between the SWP and the Ligue Communiste during the legislative elections in the spring of 1973 (this will shortly be submitted by the LTF for publication in the German-language edition of the IIDB). At that time all the differences had indeed come to light, but their depth could not yet be precisely estimated. Since then they have developed farther in every respect:

a) In the meantime the question of the character of the Union of the Left has clearly been answered by the events themselves.

b) The mistakes made by the leadership of our French organization with respect to evaluation and political action have considerably widened and deepened in the current presidential election.

The 1973 debate turned on the question of whether the Union of the Left is, essentially, a united front of working-class parties, or whether it represents a class-collaborationist maneuver, of a different class character than the working-class parties it is mainly based on. The comrades of the LTF showed even at that time that the latter was the case.

\*The Union of the Left program is a moderate bourgeois program aimed at winning over bourgeois parties.

\*All the words and deeds of the Union of the Left's architects are aimed at pulling the liberal section of the bourgeoisie into the bloc.

\*This has already succeeded. The Left Radicals, an indisputably bourgeois formation, are already involved in it.

From this, the political character of the undertaking was deduced by the Leninist-Trotskyists as early as spring 1973: it represents an offer made by petty-bourgeois working-class leaders to the bourgeoisie to resolve their crisis of leadership with the aid of a popular-front maneuver.

The bourgeoisie in its majority did not go for it, above all because the class struggle in France has not reached the stage where it would appear advantageous to the bourgeoisie to form governments with the CP, or to make them dependent on CP support as in 1936 and 1945.

In this presidential election the question is even clearer than in spring 1973. The transformations within the Union of the Left are characteristic of its nature. The role of the Communist Party has become more and more discreet; it is stepp-

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ing more and more into the background and even doing its best to minimize its role. Mitterrand is turning to the right, taking somewhat more distance from the CP. The Common Program hardly plays a role anymore. And the CP is very helpful in this: they give Mitterrand carte-blanche and display discretion. Marchais states that the government should be formed on the basis of equality for the three parties participating in the Union of the Left, that means, 6 to 7 ministerial posts each for the SP, CP, and Left Radicals (Le Monde, April 24, 1974, p. 5). Of course, Mitterrand's candidacy is formally independent from the Union of the Left, but unimaginable without it. The character of the Union of the Left is decisive in determining the character of Mitterrand's candidacy.

At the same time, the gentleman of the "Left" indefatigably proclaim that their venture brings only good things for French imperialism and deserves every assistance. Thus, Gaston Defferre, chairman of the Socialist fraction in the Assembly, stated with respect to the fears about accepting CP ministers in the government voiced by government minister Guichard: "It is not dangerous. Quite the contrary. It is insurance. After sixteen years of backward social policy, the presence of Communists in the government will be a guarantee for us. We will be able to avoid a certain number of difficulties with social unrest." (Le Monde, April 24, 1974, p. 5)

In this way, a certain measure of success was attained by the "saviours of the nation": the left Gaullists, the "Front Progressiste," are supporting Mitterrand even in the first round of the elections and are campaigning everywhere for the candidate of their choice with the Cross of Lorraine (Gaullist symbol). And Monsieur Marcel Jeanneney, a worthy De Gaulle minister, advises a vote for Chaban Delmas in the first round of elections and in the second...Mitterrand (Le Monde, May 2 1974, p. 4).

So, while they certainly have not yet succeeded in making a decisive breakthrough, they have won some ground. The Radical Socialist gentlemen and those of the Democratic Center stand ready on call, but still hesitate. Their hesitations reflect those of the bourgeoisie.

## II. Rise of the class struggle with a Mitterrand victory?

Our French comrades have decided to call for supporting Mitterrand on the second round. In our opinion this is an unprincipled decision, which flies in the face of one of the fundamental programmatic bases of the Fourth International; namely, an uncompromising attitude toward popular-front betrayals. The decision to vote Mitterrand can be traced to pressure from the "left" milieu; the PSU and OCI/AJS are supporting Mitterrand even in the first round of the elections, Lutte Ouvrière in the second. Furthermore, the fear of (temporary) isolation from the masses is involved. But the decisive argument used by the French leadership to justify this step is that a victory by Mitterrand will without fail lead to a sharpening of the class struggle.

The inadequacy of this argument can be demonstrated on

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various levels. First, the tendency toward sharpening class struggles is a general one. It began under De Gaulle, continued and deepened under Pompidou, and will go further if the working class does not suffer a decisive defeat. The popular front is a sure means to lead the class into such a defeat. It must be shown that an election victory by Mitterrand will result in an immediate upsurge in the factories, in the universities, and on the streets. That can well be doubted. The opposite is more likely. The whole maneuver is in fact expressly organized for the purpose of diverting the mass struggles into parliamentary channels. That will not succeed in the long run, but can have limited success.

Second, the argument has no bearing on determining our position on the elections. It is simply not a criterion. Under certain circumstances, the assumption of power by a right-wing regime can lead to the sharpening of class struggles, as shown previously in England and elsewhere. That is for us no reason to call for the election of the Tories or the CDU [Christlich-Demokratische Union -- Christian Democratic Union, the main right-wing party in Germany]. With a somewhat more realistic evaluation, our French comrades -- according to this criterion -- should come out for Giscard d'Estaing. The CGT has, after all, threatened an offensive if he is elected.

Third, one simply can not disregard the negotiations now in progress. Mitterrand can already go knocking on doors with an offer from the trade unions "to maintain social peace" for his first six months in office. Isn't that some offer! Who else could now make that promise to the French bourgeoisie but Mitterrand?

Our comrades, however, are building their whole campaign on the opposite assumption. Comrade Krivine is already on television warning about a right-wing putsch, issuing an appeal to soldiers to turn against their reactionary officers and not march against the people...in case of an election victory by Mitterrand. The whole campaign is moving in an unfortunate direction. All the arguments lead to the conclusion that even in the first round one should vote not for Krivine, but for Mitterrand. It is wholly analogous to the campaigns of the DKP [Deutsche Kommunistische Partei -- German Communist Party-- the pro-Moscow West German organization], which suggest metaphorically: better vote SPD. Comrade Krivine begins his article in the May 4, 1974 Le Monde (p. 10) thusly: "To defeat the right, to get rid of the regime that has raged for 16 years -- that is the immediate stake for the workers in these elections....The workers will not give the representatives of the bosses a single vote, not a single vote for Giscard, the Plague, or Chaban, the Pox. And to defeat the candidate of the right in the second round, it is necessary to mass all working-class votes behind Mitterrand, provided in the meantime that he hasn't made an agreement with the bourgeoisie." The last qualification can only be understood as a bad joke after all that has gone before.

It is sad to have to say that the politics of our French organization can at best be characterized not as Trotskyism, but as POUMism. Trotsky's critique of POUMism is as relevant now as then.

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### III. The middle layers and the elections

It has become clear in the last years, particularly in France, that the general upsurge of workers' struggles is not isolated. The deterioration of the economic situation has also produced intensified struggles in the middle petty-bourgeois layers, that increasingly meet with greater economic problems. Their political conduct is one of the more interesting aspects of these elections, especially since the bourgeoisie finds itself in a leadership crisis.

In the face of this crisis of leadership, part of the Gaullist movement -- even if numerically not especially significant -- has called for the election of Mitterrand. The Democratic Center is split: a section led by Lecanuet is for replacing Gaullism with Giscard d'Estaing. The Servan-Schreiber Radical Socialists haven't officially issued an election recommendation.

We should add that the Left Radicals have supported the popular front for a long time.

In his election campaign, Mitterrand, as candidate of the popular front, has wooed the middle petty-bourgeois layers and the Radical Socialists to a very considerable extent. He has tried to lure them in by explaining that the class-collaborationist program of the Union of the Left is not binding, etc. It is hardly surprising that the PFC accepted this "tactic."

The renunciation of a separate program and independent struggle by the working class for its own goals had, of course, already led to the Common Program. The approval of Mitterrand's election tactics by the PFC only makes more clear the Stalinists' readiness at any time to betray the goals of the class in return for participation in the affairs of the bourgeois government. The concession is explained to the working class by referring to the necessity of establishing an alliance with the petty-bourgeoisie, etc.

In the struggle for class autonomy of the workers as against the class-collaborationist maneuver of the Union of the Left and Mitterrand's popular-front candidacy, a clear answer to the question of how an alliance with the petty-bourgeois layers is to be established is required.

The FCR's propaganda has largely ignored this topic. To be sure, without giving a satisfactory answer to this question, you can hardly weaken illusions in the popular front and further the resolution of the crisis of revolutionary leadership for the working class.

Of course, the FCR is right when in connection with an election victory by Mitterrand it points to the necessity to breach an eventual social pact; when it emphasizes that the class must struggle independently for its interests. But it ignores the decisive question and the "most obvious" argument of popular front politicians for their readiness to make concessions when, on the basis of the Chilean experience alone, it abruptly calls attention to the danger of a putsch and summons the soldiers, in this event, to resist. That comrade Krivine

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offers only such answers shows that the FCR has no ready answer for the workers on how to minimize the danger of a putsch. That would certainly be the first question to come up.

An election victory by Mitterrand clearly presupposes a turn toward the popular front by a significant section of the petty-bourgeoisie. The problem of every popular front (and Chile can be studied as a model) is that by virtue of its fundamentally bourgeois politics, it cannot solve the economic problems it faces, at least not in a period of general downturn in the imperialist economy.

If the economic downturn leads to a leadership crisis for the bourgeoisie, with a section of the petty-bourgeoisie turning toward the popular front, and to its victory, this is because a popular front suggests strength on the parliamentary level, and the petty bourgeoisie expects decisive solutions for its difficulties. To be sure, the popular front represents strength only on a parliamentary level, since it directly depends on tying the hands of its most militant section, the conscious revolutionary workers, with illusions.

Given an intact bourgeois state apparatus, decisive interventions in the economic structure are not only not on the agenda, but also impossible. Parliamentary cretinism will thus inevitably lead the petty-bourgeois middle layers to look around for an alternative -- under certain conditions, a fascist movement. Similarly, in view of economic difficulties and a diminishing mass base for the popular front, the danger of a putsch also increases.

But such a danger can be avoided -- if starting today the workers say "no" to concessions; if they show their full strength in struggle and unequivocally reject their petty-bourgeois leadership in the elections; if they offer the petty-bourgeois layers genuine action alliances, making an energetic struggle against the bourgeoisie possible.

#### IV. The political line of the FCR

Unfortunately, that is not the political line of the FCR. The question of establishing an alliance with the petty-bourgeois layers -- a cardinal question for every class-conscious worker concerned with making his class interests prevail -- is not raised, or is only treated insufficiently. Instead of pointing out how this problem is bound up in content with a totally independent class struggle, and thus unequivocally (!) taking a stand against popular front politics, their readiness to support Mitterrand confuses the issue. Instead of emphasizing that appeasement politics, which the popular front politicians pursue in the class struggle, make a putsch more possible and accordingly deserve no support, they support the popular front, although critically.

Briefly stated, we do not believe support to class-collaborationist maneuvers of petty-bourgeois working-class leaders is wrong simply on the grounds of abstract principle. A tactic must stop at the class line -- any other conduct is opportunist! And opportunism is not corrected by seeking to prop it up with

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an extremely subjective analysis, in which one maintains that the victory of a popular front candidate would have a positive effect on working-class struggles. What is wrong in this reasoning?

We have mentioned that popular front maneuvers can only be realized in specific situations of capitalist downturn-- whenever the bourgeoisie, in the face of an upsurge of mass struggles, finds itself in an acute leadership crisis, and the petty-bourgeois working-class leaders offer the bourgeoisie a bloc to contain these struggles within the framework of the parliamentary system. The objective basis of this phenomena is the sharpening of the contradictions of the capitalist system! Whether the betrayal of working-class struggles by the workers' organizations supporting the popular front yields success depends on the depth of the objective crisis (!). "Success" in this case means: acceptance of restrictions by the workers and no turn toward a revolutionary alternative.

If the Trotskyists pursue the wrong political line, if they offer no clear political alternative to popular front politics and its false perspectives, if there is a persistent crisis and a series of struggles, that is, if the containment power of the popular front reveals itself as insufficient, then a putsch threatens. To place this in the forefront of election propaganda, now (!), as is the case, shows what kind of political evaluation the FCR has of itself....But in any case, it is ridiculous to speak of the treachery and containment measures of the popular front politicians as historically progressive. Working-class illusions in treacherous leaderships can have no progressive function. In a crisis situation they can only hinder the development of struggles. In contrast, what should the position of Trotskyists look like in the second round?

In the presidential election, in contrast to the 1973 legislative elections, programs in the form of individuals are up for elections, rather than parties. The possibility of calling for a vote for only the CP and SP, instead of the Union of the Left, therefore does not exist. It is only a choice between two essentially bourgeois candidates, between Giscard, the right-wing Plague, and Mitterrand, the popular front Pox. So the only possibility that remains is to call for abstention. Under certain conditions a temporary isolation from the masses has to be accepted.

We should maintain a principled position in the present' period, carry on uncompromising agitation in opposition to the popular front swindle, point out the fact that Mitterrand's candidacy is not only a betrayal of the historical interests of the class, but even of its immediate interests (e.g., the trade-union social pact). Then we would be in the best position to face the coming period with its unavoidable disappointments and disillusionment.

#### V. The question of the Socialist Party

The Compass tendency has proved to us once again that political mistakes must be promptly corrected or they will deepen. After further confusion about the nature of the non-German Social Democrats, the die is now cast once again and another

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piece of Trotskyist analysis is lost: the Socialist Party of France is an ordinary bourgeois party.

In the Compass steering committee's April 27, 1974, position paper on the French presidential election, the reasoning is as follows: The SP has also gone through a transformation into a "people's party" only it was not as successful as the SPD. The "new" SP under Mitterrand has merely taken a tactical turn. It is not a working-class party, since it is only based on peripheral (?) sections of the working class (public sector, service sector, white-collar sector, "climbers" in the wage hierarchy, class-politically backward sectors (!), as well as the main sectors of the petty bourgeoisie. It is not based on the organized working-class movement, and its electoral followers want to preserve the capitalist system, while the electoral followers of the PCF want to overthrow the capitalist system.

What is striking here, first of all, is the method of analysis. While in the case of the SPD, the basis of argumentation was that the SPD's control over the trade unions plays no role in determining its political nature; here in the case of the SPF, it is considered important that the SPF's trade union federation, force Ouvrière, has degenerated, and its base in the other trade unions is slight. The transformation into a people's party under Gaston Defferre has indeed "succeeded," but was not "successful." Hence: operation successful, patient dead. But the patient, conforming to the motto "You only live twice," rises up again: as bourgeois. And after that follows the next operation: Operation Mitterrand.

Let's get serious again: the "new" SP under Mitterrand does not differ in political nature from the old SP, the SP under Gaston Defferre, nor the SP under Leon Blum. During the 1936 popular front there was a shifting of rank and file supporters from the SP to the CP; the 1973 popular front will fairly certainly have the opposite shift.

But we don't want to concentrate here on the question of the SP in too great detail, since the characterization by the Compass comrades is too sketchy and doesn't offer enough points of departure for a thorough critique. We will say only this: in no way do they try to point out where the politics and program of today's Socialist Party differ from those of the earlier SP, something they at least tried in the case of the SPD. It isn't indicated in what respect the class base has changed. (Is it in the shifting from "central" sectors of the working class to "peripheral"? Not enough "real" workers in blue overalls?) The argument is used that the SP does not base itself on the organized workers' movement. That is not accurate. Of course, its trade union federation, F.O., is actually fairly unimportant, but it is currently in the process of procuring a larger base in the CFDT. By the way, one more thing on juggling with criteria: in the SPD discussion this criterion was always played down with a reference to Peronism (here not comparable), but now in the case of the SP this must be reckoned with. And lastly: the Union of the Left is "still not a popular front" (see p. 3 of the Compass position paper), but the SP is a bour-



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geois party? One must admit that with this "innovation" the confusion has grown considerably.

The French comrades present a similar contradiction. Their congress in 1972, as is well known, refused in its majority to characterize the SP as a bourgeois working-class party. This makes support of the popular front by the French comrades even more unprincipled.

We will take up this problem again in connection with the SPD in the discussion on the Social Democracy.

VI. Would support of Piaget's candidacy have been the correct response to the current situation in France?

The question of whether, in the current presidential elections in France, it would have been correct to forgo an FCR candidate and support instead the running of a working-class candidate who represents independent working class action, we consider a tactical problem, which has to be decided on the basis of the concrete situation.

In principle, there is nothing to be said against such a tactical course, provided such a candidacy:

- a) Represents an attempt to unite all forces that are decisively opposed to every form of class collaboration and support class independence behind such a candidate.
- b) The candidate as an individual symbolizes independent working class action, e.g., the leader of a significant strike.
- c) Provided the support for such a candidate does not hinder our comrades from leading a campaign with independent content, which serves to present and explain to the masses the revolutionary Marxist program.

We reject in principle any eventual programmatic blocs. They are not within the tradition of the Trotskyist movement.

Such a candidate, as a representative of the independence of the working class, could have been counterposed to the popular front candidate Mitterrand.

Such a proposal would also be justified as a maneuver to win over from those organizations supporting the popular front their members who are against this policy, be it in the first or second round of elections (e.g., the PSU).

The split in the PSU shows that such a maneuver, based on the above premises, would have been thoroughly justified.

However, such a proposal loses all sense and purpose if one takes an opportunist attitude vis-a-vis the popular front, as is the case with the FCR.

We have the impression that the considerations we have outlined did not underlie the FCR's proposal for a united campaign behind Piaget. The FCR proposal was based neither on a correct

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assessment of the popular front maneuver, nor on a thorough analysis of the internal situations in the left organizations. Rather it appears that the comrades of the FCR have simply enthusiastically adopted the proposal of the Maoist newspaper Libération. This, and the fact that the FCR wanted to present Piaget so that he would be known as the united candidate of the "revolutionary left" (?), suggests that in supporting the Piaget candidacy, the FCR let itself be guided not by the objective needs of the class struggle, but rather by the "needs" of the "new mass vanguard" (?) (see communique in Rouge from April 5, 1974).

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Dieter-Frankfurt (LTT)  
Hermann-Mannheim (LTT)  
Siegfried-Heidelberg (LTT)