

August 1, 1975

TO THE LENINIST-TROTSKYIST FACTION STEERING COMMITTEE

Dear Comrades,

The material contained in this mailing concerns applications for membership in the LTF from 13 comrades in the French LCR, and one comrade who is a member of the Belgian section. Consideration of these applications has been referred to the faction steering committee and they will be taken up at the coming meeting.

Enclosed you will find:

1. A letter from myself to the faction coordinating committee suggesting a procedure to follow.
2. Two letters of application received from members of the LCR, and subsequent correspondence with the comrades.
3. A letter of application from comrade Gaston of the Belgian LRT, a letter from comrade Marcel concerning this application, and subsequent correspondence.
4. Translation of some of the Tendency 4 documents that were part of the discussion in the French section prior to their December 1974 convention:
  - a. Part I of T4's major political document entitled "Neither a Workerist 'Turn' nor a Revisionist 'Correction' -- Build the Trotskyist Party [translated from the LCR internal bulletin, CRS #22].
  - b. The "Theses on Work Among Women" submitted to the FCR convention by T4 as part of their organizational theses [translated from supplement to Rouge No. 270].
  - c. The statement by the LTF members in France explaining why they joined T4 [translated from internal bulletin CRS #22].

Two additional documents are in the process of being translated and will be available at the steering committee meeting.

Comradely,

Mary-Alice Waters

May 29, 1975

TO THE COORDINATING COMMITTEE OF THE LTF

Dear Comrades,

Attached you will find copies of two letters of application to join the Leninist Trotskyist Faction, one from nine comrades, most of them from Paris, and the other from three comrades in Dijon. Also attached are copies of my initial replies to these comrades indicating we received their letters and that the Coordinating Committee of the faction would be meeting soon.

Since I will not be able to be present for the Coordinating Committee meeting I want to indicate my opinion.

These applications for membership in the faction are different from others we have received to date. The nine comrades indicate that they are not in agreement with one of the main political points developed by the LTF documents. This does not necessarily preclude membership, of course, but it does mean that we should discuss their applications thoroughly and as broadly as possible before making a decision.

There is a second question involved as well. All the comrades in France who are applying took part in the last convention discussion of the LCR by participating in one of the organized tendencies. All but one of them were in Tendency Four, in which members of the LTF in France also participated after making a statement that they had some differences with some positions expressed by T4.

In my opinion, the documents of T4 were in contradiction with the line of the LTF on a number of important points such as the character of the 9th world congress turn, the June 21 action, and women's liberation, just to mention three examples. On many other points, the documents were so abstract as to permit comrades with totally divergent political lines to say they agreed with them, and in good faith vote for them.

The case of Laffitte, which the comrades mention in their letter of application, is instructive in this regard. I have no idea if Laffitte was or is an actual member of Spartacist. But one would have to work pretty hard to find differences between his positions and those of the Spartacists. Yet he was a central leader of the T4 (one of the three comrades they placed on the Central Committee), and clearly had no great difficulty in working within the line of T4 or voting for it. If my information is correct, at least one other member of T4, Gorbio, joined the Lambertists immediately following the convention of the LCR.

Others, like Krasno, identified with the Kompass Tendency in Germany and the TMR in Italy.

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Comrades will recall that we had planned to discuss the T4 and the differences concerning T4 that had arisen within the LTF in France at the Steering Committee meeting of the faction following the last IEC. Because our time was limited, and because it did not seem to be a pressing problem (the LCR convention was over and the T4 was in the process of dissolving, we thought) we took it off the agenda. However, it now seems clear to me that we must have that discussion about T4 before we make the decision concerning the comrades who have asked to join.

Secondly, I think we should ask the comrades whether they still stand on the documents of the T4 (or T1). It will be relevant to our discussions to know if they have rethought some of the T4 positions and now consider them to be wrong; if they think the T4 positions are correct as opposed to the line of LTF; or if they see no contradiction.

In deciding on these applications we must make clear to the entire International that the LTF is not simply a collection of comrades who want to fight the IMT or who consider the LTF to be the best vehicle for fighting the IMT "at this stage," but a principled faction based on a clear and concrete political program.

I would propose three things: (1) that we defer a decision on these applications until we can have a full discussion at the steering committee meeting in August; (2) that we translate some of the key documents of the T4 so that comrades can read them; (3) that we inform the comrades who have applied what our concerns are and why we want to take more time to consider their applications and within that framework have some discussion with them and with the LFT comrades in France.

Comradely,

Mary-Alice

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Paris, April 4, 1975

TO THE STEERING COMMITTEE OF THE LENINIST-TROTSKYIST FACTION

Comrades:

Following the first congress of the ICR (French section of the Fourth International), important differences appeared within Tendency Four (T4) over the proper balance sheet to draw for the benefit of the entire French section concerning what was at stake, what was gained from the major battles the tendency engaged in during the pre-congress discussion, and what its limits were. These differences were rapidly concretized in opposing organizational conclusions essentially centering around whether T4 as it was constituted had a basis for further elaborating a line or was sufficiently cohesive on a programmatic level to realistically consider maintaining itself after the national debate was closed, especially and above all in the framework of the preparations for the eleventh world congress of the Fourth International.

As for us, from the beginning we have been in complete agreement with the position expressed at the time by the French comrades of the LTF (see CRS 26, "Declaration of the LTF in France") -- i.e., that precisely because of the grounds for its formation, the decision of the majority of T4 to hold together stemmed from the most serious sort of political irresponsibility, indeed to an "international plan" (like the third international tendency or something else) which we categorically refuse to endorse. T4 was formed in response to the precise need to define the axes of an orientation different from the line of the organization's leadership at the juncture of a national congress, and it could not go beyond those limits without losing its whole meaning. And it is our assessment that following the congress a new stage opened up, qualitatively different from the one we have just passed through, which inevitably will involve political reclassifications and will obviously require more adequate instruments for discussion.

Thus, our "break" with T4 could not be put off any longer, insofar as extending our participation in the internal life of the tendency objectively implied support, direct or indirect, to the undertaking launched by Krasno and Laffitte's statement of February 15-16 to the Central Committee. Subsequent events were to fully support us: the disintegration of the "continuation" of T4 became apparent with Laffitte's hallucinatory performance at the last CC and the difficulty experienced by the rest of T4 in differentiating itself from the positions he took.

The disorientation and demoralization which will overtake the ranks of the former T4, now dissolved for all intents and purposes, as well as the danger of passively sitting by and watching the virtually complete liquidation of the remaining "gains" from T4's fight at the time of the national congress, spurred us to grasp this opportunity to take a clear, educational position with respect to the whole French section, a position that could force a real political confrontation on the majority in spite of all diversions. Today, we cannot undertake to do so better, in the eyes of the activists of the ICR and the whole International, than by joining the LTF.

Although this decision comes about in the context of Laffitte's expulsion and its consequences for everyone who lays claim to the past struggles of T4 it is in no way dictated by tactical considerations. On the contrary, it is merely the result of a lengthy, systematic process which has enabled us to register our basic agreement with the faction's program (that is, with the general line of the documents listed in the ITF platform and with the political resolution submitted to the 10th World Congress), and to test that agreement in discussion with the comrades of the French ITF. This broad agreement encompasses all the positions developed by the faction at the various stages of its intransigent struggle to defend the unity of the International and democratic centralism, especially the problematique contained in the ITF Steering Committee's declaration, "The need for a special World Congress," which clearly separates out the importance of the "organizational question" and its relation to the method of party-building. This agreement also includes the general line of the PST's "In Reply to the IMT's Open Letter No. 2" adopted by the faction at the last IEC meeting.

Since most of us come from the "Against the Stream" tendency, it is incumbent upon us to draw from our own political evolution all the lessons of the obvious bankruptcy of the third international tendency. Originally conceived of as a means to "break the factional logjam of the debate," this "third tendency" has for some time demonstrated its inability to differentiate itself on both sides, which was its only apparent reason for existing, and thus to present itself as a viable alternative. To this day, the balance sheet not only demonstrates the inconsistency of all attempts to plot a political course between the International's two protagonist camps, but also shows that any centrist schema of that sort inevitably slides into impotent parasitism and paralysis, and in the worst of cases even serves as a temporary alibi for a split dynamic (as in the Italian FMR). We owe it to ourselves to incorporate this balance sheet of failure in its entirety into our political experience as part of the basis for joining the faction.

Having stated all this, a fully responsible stance requires us to note one difference concerning the characterization of the international majority that underlies the documents produced by the faction: seeing a one-sided logic of concessions to ultraleftism behind the political line of the majority since the 9th world congress turn. A scientific characterization of the majority is all the more necessary in that recent developments in the class struggle, especially in Europe, further accentuate the distinctive features of the practical political course followed by the sections and sympathizing organizations of the IMT, and this path is less and less encompassed by the single category of ultraleftism.

To accurately define the problem this raises, we must recall what is at stake and go back to the fundamental considerations on which the faction's struggle within the International is based. Comrade Joe Hansen illuminates it very well in "The Underlying Differences in Method," replying to E. Germain's accusation attributing to the minority the alleged thesis that "ultraleftism is the main danger:" "As to the main danger right now, I think that is to be found in the crisis in orientation and leadership now facing the Fourth International, which opens the way to shifts toward ultraleftism or opportunism or combinations of both." [IIDB, Vol. X, No. 12, p. 20]

This passage points directly to the level on which the question is posed: exposing the roots of the International's crisis of leadership through as rigorous as possible a dissection of the political and theoretical mechanisms of the orientation underlying the crisis. To be precise, Comrade Hansen's formulation "combination of ultraleftism and opportunism" offers the advantage of reflecting more closely the concrete dynamic of the IMT's positions and allows us to point out what the content of characterizing the majority's politics as centrism might be. In a general way we could hold that the two decisive criteria justifying this characterization of the majority line are:

1) on the one hand, their inability to put forward a fully rounded alternative strategy, counterposed to the class-collaborationist strategy of the old leaderships, and their vacillating attitude toward the popular front which is a consequence of this impotence.

2) on the other hand, their abandonment of basic party-building tasks, which they delegate to "empirical" substitutes in some areas of the world (e.g., adapting to the Stalinism of the Vietnamese leadership).

To substantiate this first definition, we must understand precisely what determines the methodological unity of the lines the majority has proposed, for Latin America as well as for Europe. The basic theoretical error that is common to both orientations lies in a misunderstanding of the laws of revolutionary mass mobilization, a scientific deduction of which is fundamental to Bolshevik strategy (Trotsky); the contradictory relationship this objectively conditioned process introduces between the masses and their leaders; and the repercussions of these contradictions for vanguard militants. This misunderstanding, characteristic of centrism, leads to an incorrect equation of the masses and their leaders. Their objectivist schema rests on two postulates: either the masses radicalize and force the leaders of their organizations to move to the left, or the masses are spontaneously reformist. The first postulate lies at the root of Pabloite entrism, as well as their frenzied idealization of the Vietnamese leadership. There it is a question of attributing to the Stalinist bureaucracy a progressive, revolutionary role in order to better call into question the need to build a Trotskyist party. The second postulate buttresses the whole line of exemplary initiatives in action. Whether it is a question of presenting the socialist revolution as the task of a guerrillaist vanguard rather than the conscious task of the masses (Latin America); or of giving priority to winning hegemony over the new vanguard and on this basis constructing an organizational apparatus on the fringes of the vast movement of the class during a stage preparatory to the revolutionary crisis (European document) -- the central goal assigned to the sections remains one of "instrumentalizing" the "new living forces" which have appeared and necessarily assigning them attributes which properly belong only to the revolutionary party.

Both cases offer a justification for abandoning the central strategic task set by the Transitional Program: building a Leninist party through the daily struggles of the masses.

With this definition, it is noteworthy that the adoption of the guerrilla warfare strategy advocated for Latin America through the formulas given in the armed struggle resolution adopted at the 10th

world congress, introduces a degree of explicit programmatic revision never before reached.

In the first case under consideration, we find ourselves faced with a direct adaptation to reformist apparatuses, particularly to Stalinism. In the second, we find an indirect adaptation to Stalinism, mediated by a direct adaptation to centrist currents, Castroism or at this juncture, the new vanguard.

In the case of Mandel and the current associated with him, this political adaptationism is accompanied by a characteristic overestimation of Stalinism, evident in their theorizing about the twofold character of the bureaucracy and the "bureaucratic centrism" of the Stalinist parties which have taken power and led armed struggle. It is precisely here that the theoretical mechanisms of revision are most easily disclosed: they resort to what can only be called an objectivist-subjectivist method, a kind of master-key which allows them to extricate themselves with little effort from an embarrassing contradiction.

If in Pabloist entrism it is the objectivism that fundamentally prevails (under pressure from the masses the leadership changes its character), with the line of initiatives in action it is subjectivism which comes to the fore (the masses-leaders equation is reversed to make room for the notion of a "revolutionary pole of attraction" to play a dominant role in the new schema, to the point where constructing that pole is posed above all else as a precondition for setting the revolutionary crisis in motion). In this fashion, the method we are dealing with today arises from a combination of objectivism and subjectivism, of opportunism and leftism, which explains how the embellishment of the Vietnamese leadership and marginal, minority initiatives go together. Whence its affinity with Pablo's objectivism, which Comrade Hansen recalls most opportunely in several places when he affirms, in justly referring to entrism sui generis: "This historical background offers considerable illumination on the derivation of comparable orientations today" [p. 33]. Or when he writes, concerning the timetable projected in the European document, "All this echoes the method used twenty-two years ago to stampede the movement into voting for the tactic of entrism sui generis and putting it into effect with the utmost haste" [p. 37].

But it is undoubtedly the practical consequences of adapting to Stalinism that best illustrate the centrist character of the international majority's politics. This combination of leftism and opportunism turns up everywhere. In Argentina and Bolivia, if guerrillaism actively contributed to the liquidation of our sections, deserting all their responsibilities toward the struggles of the masses led them to cover for the betrayals of the traditional leaderships, just at the moment when these leaders were pushed to the head of the masses bursting on the political scene. The PRT-ERP's participation in the FAS and the integration of the POR into the FRA can hardly pass for models of ultraleft capers.

In Europe basically a similar policy was set in motion, perhaps in an even clearer form: the LCR/ETA VI's recent critical support to the demagogic, demobilizing call for a "general strike" issued by the Democratic Junta; the FCR's support to the Popular Front since 1973; the refusal to put forward a clear alternative of breaking the coali-

tion in Portugal; the political line toward the MFA; or still most recently, the revisionist positions put forward at the ICR's last Central Committee meeting by comrades as influential as Krivine and Garcin on the role of the Portuguese CP, which they termed "bureaucratic centrist" and to whom they generously gave credit for a plan to build "bureaucratic socialism, that is, without soviets" (?); all this is part of the evidence of a single process of a strong tendency to adapt to the apparatuses and can only spur us to subscribe to Tom Kerry's remarks, bestowing on the majority the epithet "centrist muddleheads."

From this point of view, the example of the current evolution of the French section coming out of its national congress seems especially eloquent. Without a doubt, the founding congress of the ICR (French section of the Fourth International) marked a leap in the majority's political adaptationism and a rather opportunistic slide which took place under the sign of fusion with the PSU. Indeed, if there were a time when the majority could rightfully avail themselves of "revolutionary initiatives" and "outflanking" (cf. June 21), this seemed to be it. Adapting to the subjective wishes of the new vanguard can only lead one to adapt to its political oscillations, and it is these oscillations that lead the ICR into a direct adaptation to centrism (PSU) and through it to the apparatuses.

However, we must avoid any contempt or mistaken sectarian or oversimplified conclusions. The process we have described must be analyzed as the dynamic underlying the majority's political orientation, but as a still unfinished dynamic, not a hardened one. This partial, incomplete trend of the majority's centrism is what justifies the faction's struggle in the ranks of the united International.

At the present time, the most urgent task is to work on strengthening this fight, and the discussion opened by this text is not meant to obstruct it; far from it. Such strengthening requires building the LTF in France, in the heart of the European section which throughout the discussion has most often been the international majority's "model" and "example." We are firmly resolved to do so.

To actively contribute to this effort we are undertaking at this time to prepare a text synthesizing the balance sheet of the IMT and the third international tendency, which we are in the position to draw.

Trotskyist greetings.

Benjamin, Calvin, Kalandra,  
Kazan, Nemo, Promethee, Raphael,  
Tiry, Ulysse

Dijon, France,  
April 11, 1975

Dear Comrades,

We are three active members of the LCR (FSFI) from the city of Dijon.

Two of us were part of the Against the Stream Tendency at the time of the Tenth world congress, and part of T4 prior to the first congress of the LCR. The other took part in the Tenth world congress as a member of the LCR ETA(VI) in Spain. While not being able to agree with the framework of the majority, he nevertheless did not declare himself for any other position. He took part in the struggle against the majority of the LCR (FSFI) at its first congress as a member of Tendency 1.

Having thus carried out the political struggle against the international majority and the majority of the LCR (FSFI) in different ways and in different frameworks, we have today reached a common position on how to continue this struggle.

At a time when the pace of history is accelerating, making concrete the "stage of sudden breakdowns" (Portugal, Indochina. . .), and as the discussion for the Eleventh world congress opens, we think it is indispensable to go further in our battle against the majority line elaborated at the 9th and developed further at the 10th world congress -- which today reveals its total and paralyzing ineffectiveness in the French situation -- in favor of a return to the transitional program and its method.

From this point of view, it seems to us today that it is only in the framework of the LFT that we can carry out this struggle, the LTF representing the only alternative to the international majority.

We are familiar with the platform of the faction published in No. 29 "new series" of "Sociology Documents and Information", December 1973, and we state our agreement with this platform.

We therefore ask to join the Leninist Trotskyist Faction.

Communist salutations,

Fragal, Margot, Sepion

June 19, 1975

To: Benjamin, Calvin, Kalandra, Kazan, Nemo, Promethee,  
Raphael, Tiry, Ulysses

Dear Comrades,

The coordinating committee of the LTF discussed your letter of application for membership at its last meeting. Since your applications were the first ever received from comrades who wanted to join the faction but who also stated their disagreement with the line of the faction on one or another important point, the coordinating committee had an extended discussion concerning your request.

Some comrades were in favor of accepting your applications on the basis of the letter. But after discussion it was agreed to postpone any decision in order to have time for further discussions with you, with the comrades in the LTF in France, and with the broader steering committee of the LTF.

Very briefly, I would like to indicate to you some of the concerns that were discussed and why it was decided to postpone any decision.

As you may be aware, there were differences in the LTF leadership internationally and among the LFT members in France concerning the decision of the French LTF members to join the T4. Those of us who disagreed with this course and who first tried to persuade the LFT members in France not to join T4 and later urged them to leave it did so for two reasons. (1) Some of us who read the documents of the T4 saw obvious political differences between the line of the T4 and the LTF on key issues such as June 21, women's liberation and the balance sheet of the line of the FCR leadership in the last year and a half. (2) We saw T4 as a combination of comrades in the FCR coming from divergent origins and going off in quite divergent directions. As everyone in the FCR knew, the T4 included comrades who were very close to Lambertist positions, others to the Spartacists, others to Kompass, others in the LFT, etc. In my opinion this was not simply a case of different groups inside and outside the International doing entry work in the T4. On many questions the documents of the T4 were so abstract as to permit comrades with totally divergent political lines to say they agreed with them and vote for them -- then interpret them to their own liking.

The case of Laffitte, which you mention in your letter of application, is instructive in this regard. I have no idea if Laffitte was or is a member of Spartacist. But, as the Spartacists point out in their press, their only differences with Laffitte are over some slightly "ambiguous" formulations. Yet Laffitte was one of the central leaders of T4, and was elected to the Central Committee of the LCR by the T4. He clearly had no great difficulty working within the line of T4 or voting for it.

In my opinion the documents of T4 were abstract on precisely the points where they should have been clear and concrete because the T4 was a combination. Whenever it got off the level of abstract analysis and tried to define a concrete line, what to do next, comrades could not agree. But what good is a tendency if it cannot project clear, concrete proposals on what to do next?

One of the best examples of this was the difference on the presidential elections. T4 members succeeded in coming up with a generally correct analysis of the character of the Union of the Left, but when it came to political line, that is, who to vote for in the presidential elections, T4 was silent -- because there was no agreement.

Those of us who opposed LTF participation in T4 did so because we considered it to be an unprincipled combination that could do nothing to further political clarification in the FCR or in the International. The ranks of the ICR are today more -- not less -- confused about the line of the LTF than they were one year ago.

The differences within the LTF leadership concerning the decision of the LTF members in France to join the T4 were never discussed in the steering committee of the faction. By the time the steering committee met at the IEC in January, the FCR convention was over, and the LTF members in France had decided to quit T4 even if other T4 members decided to continue. There seemed to be little advantage in an abstract discussion on whether joining T4 had been correct or not.

In your applications to join the faction, however, you indicate an essentially positive balance sheet of the T4 experience and agreement with the positions adopted by the T4.

A number of comrades on the coordinating committee felt strongly that a more general discussion in the entire LTF steering committee about the T4 and its relationship to the LTF had to be part of the discussion on your applications for membership, and we are anxious to solicit your opinions about the balance sheet to be drawn.

How do you evaluate the political positions adopted by the T4, do you still stand by them or have your positions evolved since then, do you see any contradiction between the documents of T4 and those of the LTF, what conclusions do you draw from the Laffitte affair, etc.

We are also interested to know if you have different opinions among you, or if you all draw basically similar conclusions.

Our concern is that while you have stated that you agree with the general line of the LTF platform, some of us see contradictions between the LTF positions and those contained in the T4 documents. We think these should be discussed out and clarified for the entire world movement so that it is absolutely clear on what basis you are asking to join the faction. Otherwise there is a real danger that comrades in the International will begin to think the LTF is no different than the IMT, that is, a combination of people who formally say they are in political agreement but in reality are not, a combination held together not by principled political agreement, but by common antipathy to the LTF and who desire to maintain an unprincipled bloc in the International based primarily on that antipathy, or what they would call "a common problematique."

We are of course concerned that you understand the reasons why we decided to postpone action on your applications. We are anxious to discuss with you and clarify the differences as rapidly as possible. A couple of members of the LTF coordinating committee who share the concerns outlined above will be in Paris following the next meeting of the United Secretariat and would very much like to discuss these matters with you personally. Will it be possible for them to meet with all or some of you at that time? They will be in Paris from July 10 or 11 to July 15.

Comradely,

Mary-Alice Waters  
for the Coordinating Committee

June 20, 1975

Fragal, Margot, Sepion

Dijon

Dear Comrades,

The last meeting of the coordinating committee of the LTF discussed your applications to join the faction along with the applications from another group of comrades all of whom were in T4 at the last congress of the LCR.

The discussion was a very broad one, touching on the whole history of the T4 and the character of the differences between the line of the T4 and LTF. In the end it was decided to postpone decisions on all the applications in order to have time for discussions with the comrades who were applying, and to have more discussion among the comrades already in the faction concerning the balance sheet to be drawn of the T4 experience.

The political substance of our concerns and the questions we wanted to discuss with the comrades in France who have asked to join are explained at some length in a letter sent to the other nine comrades, so I am enclosing a copy of it for you.

A number of comrades from the leadership of the faction are planning to be in Paris during the second week in July and it would be very good if you could meet them and have a chance to discuss. I know that it is not necessarily so easy since you are all in Dijon, but it would be very useful. If you think it would be possible to arrange something, perhaps you could get in touch with Mario Maraviglia, [address and telephone follow] and see what can be worked out.

Comradely,

s/ Mary-Alice Waters

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Brussels  
May 14, 1975

From: Francois Massion  
To: Mary-Alice Waters

Dear Comrade,

Excuse me for writing to you in French, but I speak no English. Marcel has undoubtedly informed you of the purpose of this letter: my request to join the LTF. I can send you a more detailed biography, but to sum it up, I have been a member of the French section of the Fourth International since May 1973, without ever being active before then. During the international debate I belonged to the "third international tendency" (CLC) [Contre le Courant--Against the Stream] and at the last national congress of the FCR, to T4 [Tendency 4]. I have been in Belgium since the end of December, and plan to remain here. Up to this point my position was rather ambiguous: against the IMT, against the idea of leaving the International, against the third international tendency's plans and also against the LTF on account of my differences with it, which were in large part due to the "wall of silence" erected by the United Secretariat majority around the faction's positions, and to the undemocratic propaganda against the SWP's alleged rightist deviations, with the help of slanders heaped on it (the latest being that the SWP had attacked strike pickets!). In view of the fact that my position can only strengthen the majority and sow illusions regarding a third force in the international, and that one never finds an organization that totally suits him, I have decided to join the faction.

I agree with the faction's platform as it is set forth in International Internal Bulletin no. 29 (December, 1973). Beyond that platform, I have read your document on Europe, J. Hansen's "The Underlying Differences in Method," and the world political resolution as it appears in Quatrieme Internationale, no. 16/17. My criticisms have to do with that resolution and with various positions the faction has taken.

1. Concerning the world political resolution:

The part on "the maturing of the objective conditions" (p. 90) contains no reference to the destructive forces, which leaves room for the interpretation that capitalism, although it may experience increasingly frequent economic crises, has not completely exhausted its resources and can still develop humanity's productive forces. As it stands, this part of the resolution resembles the Kautskyst theory of "neo-capitalism." If it is true that there are no hopeless situations for capitalism, and that it will not fall by itself, the way in which it "reestablishes" itself each time should not be theorized as capitalism's ability to transcend its own contradictions. It played its "progressive economic role" until the beginning of this century. Since then, it has be-

come an obstacle to the development of the productive forces. The fact that production of one substance or another has increased in absolute figures proves nothing; the growth of the means of production brings with it the growth of the destructive forces of the capitalist system (including destruction of the chief productive force, human labor, through unemployment). Trotsky began the Transitional Program with the fact that the productive forces have ceased to grow; Mandel repudiates this basic concept with the theory of "neo-capitalism," a pale imitation of Kautsky's "super-imperialism." I remind you of several passages from the Communist Manifesto, which confirms and explains the theory of capitalism's destructive forces. "The history of industry and commerce is but the history of the revolt of modern productive forces against modern conditions of production, against the property relations. . . . In these crises a great part not only of the existing products, but also of the previously created productive forces, are periodically destroyed. . . . there is too much civilisation, too much means of subsistence, too much industry, too much commerce." Therefore, I think that it was indispensable to raise the question of capitalism's destructive forces, not only because this concept is part of the founding program of our movement, but also because we must destroy all illusions, internal as well as external, about capitalism's ability to overcome its own contradictions. (Wasn't it Pablo who spoke of "centuries of transition"?!)

Another weakness of the resolution is found in its analysis of the deformed workers states. (The resolution uses the ambiguous term "bureaucratized workers states," which leaves room for no distinction between deformed and degenerated workers states.) The one example that is developed a little further is that of Cuba. If the process of permanent revolution in Cuba is correctly analyzed, doubts must be raised about the nature of the Cuban leadership and its objective limitations. The text speaks of the "eventuality" (!) of a "degeneration" (!) (you will find the entire quotation at the bottom of the first column of page 91). Cuba might "degenerate"?! That would mean that the Cuban proletariat holds political power now, that it is organized in its own organs of power (soviets), that there is no bureaucracy in Cuba and that, in the event that there should be one, it would not in any case hold political power, since the resolution speaks of the eventuality of Cuba's "degeneration." In fact, we must analyze Cuba as a deformed workers state, that is, one that never experienced workers democracy. On this subject, the resolution lacks an explanation of the insurmountable limitations of such political leaderships: at best they can only lead the proletariat to a society in which, although they may expropriate capital, the proletariat will not have political power. The logical conclusion is that we must work at building sections of the Fourth International in these countries. Why doesn't the resolution say so? It simply states that soviets are needed in Cuba. But who will set them up, who can propose building them and defend a correct line within them

if not a section of the Fourth International? The resolution leaves a question mark hanging over the possibility of Castro's team establishing such structures.

The third, and next to last, criticism I would like to make of the resolution is the very weak attention given to the question of the workers united front (a total of eight lines in the entire resolution). You know Trotsky better than I do, and you certainly are aware of the enormous importance he placed on this tactic (as did the entire Communist International in its early years) for party building. It is important whether the sections be large, medium-sized, or very small. For small sections he certainly doesn't foster illusions about revolutionary groups directing mass actions in this oblique fashion; but he sees this tactic as a means of avoiding being eliminated from the working class movement. The majority pretends to apply this tactic of the workers united front in forming "revolutionary fronts" (whether they call them that or something else) that aim to "win over the vanguard" on the basis of a centrist political program as the common denominator of various capitulations of "the mass vanguard," reflecting its political backwardness. Even if we can only reach part of the radicalized workers in the near future, we can teach them to turn toward their class brothers to meet the objective needs of the proletariat, only on the basis of the approach outlined in the workers united front. The majority's whole approach has its own consistent logic; on the other hand, a key element is lacking in the faction's resolution, that of the workers united front as a tactic of party building and a means of exposing the traditional leaderships on the basis of their refusal to take up the demands of the working class.

To finish with this document: the question of the Paris accords on Vietnam. I completely agree that the accords, as they were written, represented a betrayal of the interests of the Vietnamese proletariat. On the other hand, I think that they had to arrange a truce intended to allow the Vietnamese to catch their breath and to reorganize themselves. They had to benefit from their military advantage and from the crisis of the American army (as well as from the weight of the international solidarity movement) to impose a truce and the withdrawal of the U. S. troops. In France, some comrades were shouting, "The struggle of the Vietnamese people is invincible." That is true in an absolute sense; but it takes no account of the fact that the massive bombing of the North kept the Vietnamese economy from being organized beyond a certain economic level, the fact that the terms of assistance to the NLF resistance fighters were becoming more difficult, etc. If the accords that brought about the withdrawal of U. S. troops had not been signed, there might have been longer delays in liberating the country. In any event, I agree with saying that a revolutionary leadership worthy of the name would not have signed THOSE accords; but I think that others should have been proposed. France GARNIER, in the March 1975 issue of Liberation recalls that "the nine-point agreement achieved a very

important conquest for the Vietnamese people: the withdrawal of the troops." These are all my criticisms of this resolution; there are other points to be discussed, central to which is the tactic the faction adopted for the 10th World Congress.

## 2. Differences on other documents of the faction:

Here I want to develop my chief objection to the LTF. That concerns the "turn" of the 9th World Congress. To avoid any false disputes, I explicitly state that I completely agree with the criticism of the guerrilla line in Latin America, but at the same time I do not believe that it represents a turning point in the history of the Fourth International, any more than I believe it was correct to do battle over the possibility of "geographically" extending the guerrilla line to capitalist Europe. You have presented the essence of the majority's method as being seeking to apply the guerrilla warfare "strategy," first in Latin America, then in Europe. In reality, this did not represent the majority's method (and thus it was not a strategy, but simply a tactic); it was only the tactical application of a method you are familiar with: Pabloism. The Pabloites give up building the revolutionary party; they idealize the traditional leaderships of the working class by attributing to them a role they don't have (that of defending the minimal interests of the working class). They capitulate to every petty bourgeois current (the "new vanguard," whether it is named Ben Bella, Che Guevara, Fidel Castro, Ho Chi Minh, Mao or Charles Piaget) and give up the role of leading the working class in revolution (Jebracq's document, guerrilla warfare in Latin America, "victory to the NLF and the PRG!" "the Sorbonne, first liberated territory in France in 1968." For them, objective reality consists of "the capitalist regime and the Stalinist world"). I am not analyzing Pabloism at length, because you have known it since its beginning, but THAT is what the majority's strategy consists of, not the guerrilla "strategy." That is the reason why the Ninth World Congress did not represent a turn, but the Third Congress did. It merely applied tactically, at a given moment in the class struggle, the Pabloite method; at another point, the tactical application was "entrism sui generis." I am spelling out all this because I believe you have erred in centering your whole struggle on the geographical extension of guerrilla warfare to Europe. You have missed the target. In the current situation, that is by no means the danger menacing the Fourth International in Europe, and all the European members have felt that way. The LTF's criticisms did not hit home in Europe (except among very limited layers of militants) because in reality they represented "political fiction." This outcome is not astonishing if you begin with an analysis that the Ninth World Congress represented a turn (as if all was well until then) and the guerrilla line is a "strategy." What should have been done is very different: Pabloism's general method (whose essential traits are listed above) should have been exposed in order to illustrate the majority's different

analyses at the start. By reducing Pabloism to the guerrilla strategy, you appear to be disarmed when the majority does not apply it. Minority violence is one aspect of the adaptation to the preoccupations of the petty-bourgeois "new vanguard;" the other is setting up a "progressive front" in Belgium on a centrist program, and in France refusing to fight for a CP/SP government and struggling for a tendency in the unions that would only be organized around one part of the Transitional Program's axes. What I am proposing is not, as the Lambertists make it, the arbitrary demand for a debate on entrism sui generis and Pablo's line (besides, I think that you were entirely correct to reunify in 1963), but a debate on the essence of the Pabloite method (which cannot be reduced to guerrilla warfare). If this sort of battle is not joined, the function of the reunification will not be carried out.

As another point, there is the question of the PST; but my criticisms will be severely limited because the majority provides little information. The debate hinges on the question of whether defending democratic rights comes down to defending "democratic institutions." The PST says it does. Taking the example of the bourgeois parliament, the correct position should be that we defend the right to speak in it, but we do so in order to show that it must be destroyed. In no case do we defend that institution, even against fascism, because such a defense of a bourgeois institution would be, as Trotsky said, "a democratic noose fastened to the neck of the proletariat by the bourgeoisie's agents." The PST's error (which, among other conditions, could have ominous consequences if not corrected) lies in the fact that there is a separation between the struggle against the fascist danger and the struggle against the source of that danger, the capitalist system. The slogans that allow an effective struggle against fascism are precisely those that allow the swiftest destruction of the "democratic" institutions in order to replace them with organs of the workers movement. The PST's position, putting defense of the institutions on the same footing with defense of democratic rights, leaves the illusion that the continuation of democratic rights for the working class would be linked to those institutions. We should show just the opposite. For example, if the working class wants to ensure its right to meet and to organize, it should do so within the perspective of destroying the bourgeois system (including the laws that are supposed to "guarantee" their right to organize). Defending democratic rights and defending institutions are two actually antagonistic things: you can really only defend the rights if you fight

against the institutions. The PST's position explains it the opposite way and separates the struggle against fascism from the struggle against the "democratic" bourgeoisie.

In closing I would like to speak of the LTF's attitude since the Tenth World Congress: the expulsion of the IT, then the organization of the PRT in Portugal. As far as "principles" are concerned, the expulsion was completely justified by the IT's internal and external factional activities. But this decision has had several consequences. First, it increased tension in the International and the weight of split-minded currents, both internal and external (unfortunately, the Spartacists succeeded in France in picking up some fine members who were opposed to the IMT: Lesuer, then Lafitte). It managed to slow down the implantation of the faction in Europe, thanks to the IMT's hypocritical propaganda on the theme: "There is no internal democracy in the SWP, see how these apprentices of the Stalinists handle their internal debates." Instead a compromise should have been accepted; that would certainly have facilitated our implantation in Europe. In any case it would not have been the first time in history that this would have happened; remember Lenin's attitude toward the Bukharin faction at the time of the signing of the treaty of Brest-Litovsk. They had even gone further than the IT; they were publishing their own paper. I think that there was room to accommodate the IT's excesses until the real splitters resigned on their own.

As for Moreno's PRT in Portugal, I totally fail to comprehend the advantage of the operation he has tried to pull off. It seems obvious to me that, in view of the political youthfulness of the LCI members and in view of the crisis they currently face for lack of cadres, there were enormous possibilities for work inside it. I won't mention the need to respect the agreements of the Tenth World Congress, which brings up the same question as the IT.

I have surveyed my differences with the Faction. They are certainly not final, in view of the lack of documentation available to me. I have not mentioned our areas of agreement, since that would only serve to fill up paper repeating the analyses published in the documents. In any event, whatever your decision as to my joining the Faction, I would certainly like you to respond to the different problems I have raised.

Communist greetings,  
Gaston

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May 21, 1975

From: Francois Massion

Comrade,

I have just received a letter from Marcel asking me to send you a document I wrote on the workers government. You will find it enclosed. One part is still under discussion, on concretizing this formulation in Belgium. I had only been in Belgium one month when I proposed "a CP/SP government." That will very likely not be included; for a slogan to be transitional, it must be able to mobilize broad masses of workers, and it must appear credible. But in our country the CP has only a few thousand members. Moreover, that formula leaves out the CSC. I agree with Marcel's (and the majority's) formulation of "a PS/FGTB/CSC government."

In another connection, I see that in the letter he sent you he speaks of the (bad) Lambertist influences I have been under. I was not aware before that the ITF did not use the term "Pabloite." I was using it in connection with the analysis developed in my last letter, according to which the origin of the current debate is to be found in the 1953 split. As for the passage on the destructive forces, I recognize that I wrote it with S. Just's analyses of this subject in mind, which seemed correct to me. But I would rather pursue this discussion following your response.

Communist greetings,

Gaston

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May 18, 1975

From: Marcel

Dear Mary-Alice,

Since Comrade Francois writes quickly, you will receive this letter several days after his.

The Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency (LTT) of the LRT is in favor of Comrade Francois joining the LTF. I shall describe the situation for you briefly.

The first time we discussed it with Francois, at the beginning of the year, we immediately realized that it was essential to collaborate with him, in view of the fact that our political ideas converged on important points. On the other hand, we had two very important disagreements with him:

--on the LTF. Francois believed that his disagreements with the PST (which are expressed in his letter) and on what he calls the "expulsion of the IT" would prevent him from joining the LTF.

--on Belgium, a difference on the Christian workers movement. Francois considered the Christian trade union federation, the CSC--like the CFDT in France--to be a bourgeois organization, with all that follows with respect to the united front tactic, the workers government slogan, etc.

These problems are now being ironed out. Francois continues to hold his positions on defending bourgeois democratic institutions against fascist coups, and in doing so he joins the comrades of the Liga Comunista of Spain, members of the LTF. The difference over "the expulsion of the IT," which Francois holds was "entirely justified by their factional activities," but which he disapproves for tactical reasons relating to the discussion in Europe, should not be an obstacle to his joining the Faction.

From the outset we have explained to Francois that any "third tendency" position was politically inconsistent and therefore untenable. We have stressed that maintaining hardened "third tendencies" held out the danger of serious political deviations (e.g., the Kompass positions on social-democracy).

Although he holds different opinions on the IMT and on the LTF's function than we do, Francois is ready to join the Faction. On April 25 he wrote to us:

"I have reflected at length on the international problems, and arrived at the conclusion that I can no longer remain outside the LTF. The position I have held until now only reinforces the IMT, because the forces that oppose the majority have been scattered. The LTF is the only tendency in the Fourth International that puts political debate on Trotskyist grounds in op-

Marcel/2

position to the majority's Pabloite centrism. Correcting the present line can come about only through the LTF. . . . What we must do is build an alternative leadership in Europe, and the failure of the third international tendency is proof that we must start with the LTF."

With respect to Europe, I believe that we won't have trouble convincing Francois that our opposition to the IMT's European document was not inspired exclusively by fear of "a geographical extension of the guerrilla strategy to Europe." Your document on that question has already proved that, and the TLT in the LRT for the most part will continue to conduct a debate against the theories of "instrumentalizing the new vanguard" and an "adequate instrument," as it has done so in the past.

In summary, it must be said that Francois agrees with the LTF platform. We think his application should be accepted.

That leaves the Belgian problem. The last time I discussed it with Francois, he maintained his positions on the CSC. Our TLT in the LRT was in favor of Francois joining the LTF. But all the same, we decided to ask your opinion on the problem of being in the same international faction while disagreeing on how to characterize an organization that includes half the Belgian workers. This was not a negligible problem, since it made it almost impossible for us to be in the same tendency within the LRT!

This problem has been resolved. In a letter of May 15, Francois wrote to me:

"As for the question of the CSC, I finally concur with your analysis. In Trotsky's analyses, he never spoke of bourgeois or workers trade unions; he just assessed the degree to which the unions were integrated into the bourgeois state. That is one of the differences between trade unions and political parties: the former are susceptible to being reformed, to becoming independent of the bourgeois state (and for that reason it is impossible to categorize them as bourgeois or working class), while parties exist to carry out a certain political program, and to defend a certain class or social layer."

Thus there is no longer any obstacle to Francois joining the LTF and the TLT-LRT.

Of course, there is still the more general problem of what I shall call the Lambertist influences Francois has been under. They show up in his characterization of the IMT as "Pabloites" and in his remarks on the "destructive forces" of capitalism.

Francois also has a tendency--as do the PST and the LC of Spain--to consider the LTF to be the "true international," with which we do not entirely agree.

I am not going to discuss these points of disagreement here. Ultimately, that is not the point of this letter. We shall discuss them with Francois in the LTF and in the TLT-LRT. So I am asking

Marcel/3

you to reply to Francois, after consulting with other members of the Steering Committee, as quickly as possible, if only by a very short form letter if you wish to take more time to reply to him concerning the differences mentioned in his letter.

We are now preparing for the third Congress of the LRT, to be held November 8-11. In the weeks to come I shall get you our "Theses for a political reorientation," which encompass the points on which we will fight at the Congress. The discussions with Francois have already been very fruitful for editing the document. I shall ask him to send you a very interesting document he has written on the workers government.

Because we have not had any further opportunity to discuss it, I can just tell you this: I now totally agree with the SWP position on sending troops to Boston. Your letter removed my last doubts and was of great educational benefit. That was a lesson in the concrete application of a revolutionary line.

Revolutionary greetings,  
Marcel

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June 19, 1975

Francois Massion  
Belgium

Dear Francois,

Your letter of May 14 apparently went astray in the mails as it was not delivered until a few days ago. Since I had already received the May 18 letter from Eddy, and your second letter of May 21 and document on the workers government, I knew there must be a missing letter and was just about to write you for a copy when the original finally fought its way through capitalism's declining mail service.

That's simply by way of explanation for the fact that you did not receive a reply before now.

At a meeting two weeks ago, the LTF coordinating committee discussed applications for membership from a number of comrades in the ICR (sfqi) who were also part of T4 at the last convention. Like yourself, the comrades indicated in their letter of application that they had some important differences with the positions of the faction.

Some members of the coordinating committee were in favor of accepting the applications without further discussion. Others felt that since these were the first applications from comrades who stated they disagreed with the line of the LTF on a number of points we needed to carefully consider whether the stated differences were more than merely secondary disagreements which would not preclude principled membership in a common faction.

After extensive discussion the coordinating committee decided to postpone any immediate decision on the applications in order to have time to discuss them more broadly within the faction leadership, and in order to have time to discuss more thoroughly with the comrades in France who had asked to join.

Unfortunately, because of the mail delay, your letter had not arrived, and was not available to the coordinating committee to consider at the same time. I will refer your letter and Eddy's to the next meeting of the coordinating committee, in July. But I mentioned the discussion on the applications from France simply to indicate that comrades may well want to postpone a decision on your application also until the steering committee meeting at the end of the summer has a more general discussion.

I will not take time now to discuss some of the political points you raise in your letter, as I don't want to delay this response any longer. But if you are going to be in Brussels during the first couple weeks of July, it may be possible to arrange to have some discussions. That would be very fruitful.

cc: LTF Coordinating  
Committee

Comradely,  
s/ Mary-Alice Waters

Neither a Workerist "Turn" nor a Revisionist "Correction" -- Build the Trotskyist Party  
(Part I)

[The following is a translation of Part I of Neither a Workerist "Turn" nor a Revisionist "Correction" -- Build the Trotskyist Party, printed in CRS #22, the internal bulletin of the French section, in November 1974. The document begins with a table of contents, which we have also translated, since it indicates the subjects dealt with in parts II, III, and IV of the document. ]

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"How then can we explain the International's abandonment of the policy of the united front? . . . the Stalinist bureaucracy has acted like the nearsighted monkey in the fable: having put his glasses on his tail and having cleaned them off without any result, he decided that they were useless and broke them on a rock. Everyone acts like he wants, but it isn't the fault of the glasses." (Trotsky, "The German Revolution").

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"An imprecise majority, defining itself through a vague consensus and grouped passively behind the majority of the leadership. . ." (Position statement of the Group of 7 (Tendency 2), August 1974.

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This orientation document follows the general line of the document "New Vanguard or Construction of the Revolutionary Party" and the analysis of the Union of the Left developed in "Workers' Government Against Popular Front."

We did not present our methodological criticisms out of a desire for a vain polemic or because we dogmatically scorn concrete situations. Today it can be shown that only these criticisms of the majority criterion are able to explain the present crisis of the organization and to serve as a guide for action in the present conjuncture of the class struggle.

Therefore we will begin by recalling that we criticized fundamentally a theory which holds that the building of the revolutionary party can and should be accomplished today by a stage in which the tasks of revolutionary Marxists are mainly to "win hegemony over a "new vanguard."

By this we do not mean to underestimate the particular opportunities for implantation and intervention which the working-class radicalization, especially since 1968 (with all the differences in practice and consciousness which it brought into the workers' movement) could provide for revolutionary Marxists. But we called attention to the fact that our tasks of politicizing and organizing the radicalized elements of the working class could not, without serious harm, be separated (whether separated politically or, all the more so, separated into "different stages") from an overall political approach. Starting now, this approach must be based on the objective situation and address itself to the whole of the mass movement, at the same time taking account of its objective needs, its very uneven levels of consciousness, and its very complex relationship with its political and trade-union leaderships. In other words, the problem is to build the party in "the struggle for the interests and needs of the masses such as they are." (Transitional Program) For us, this means:

--that in the absence of a true mass revolutionary party, the radicalized elements, whatever their degree of combativity or the extent of their ideological progress, remain in the final analysis politically dependent on the reformist leaderships which have hegemony in the working class. (This is the reason why we are against characterizing them as "new vanguards" and especially against saying in an objectivist-

subjectivist way that they escape the control of "the traditional organizations" or, worse, "act independently of them."

--that the role of revolutionary Marxists, however weak they may be, cannot be limited to "capturing" this "new vanguard" or "winning hegemony" over it, nor even limited to basing ourselves on radicalized elements so as to strengthen the leadership role of revolutionary Marxists in partial workers' struggles. These tasks cannot contribute to building a real party of mass action unless revolutionary Marxists work actively to sharpen the general crisis of the reformist organizations. Only on this condition will revolutionary Marxists be able to politically complete the rupture begun by the radicalized elements and assure that the political convergence with them will occur on a basis allowing them to be effectively constituted as the vanguard of the working class.

This conception of the construction of the party is necessarily based on a programmatic approach which is able to concretize the imperatives of the permanent revolution, not only in the form of a political "pedagogy" in relation to the "new vanguard," but in opening up concrete perspectives for the struggle of all the workers.

This programmatic approach is inseparable from a general united-front policy: revolutionary Marxists contribute, to the extent of their present forces, to the unification and class independence of all the workers, while counterposing their proposals to the practice and policy of the reformist leaderships on every front of the class struggle.

On these two points, it seems to us that the definition of programmatic tasks included in the European document and the substitute for the united front proposed in the tactic of "unity-of-action-outflanking" lead to a narrow and distorted conception of the political confrontation with reformism and of our intervention among broad masses of workers. These proposals thus pose a fundamental risk of political adaptation to the so-called "new vanguard," and even to its most peripheral elements, of making a detour from the basic tasks of building the revolutionary party of mass action and, in the last analysis, of marginalizing revolutionary Marxists through a purely propagandistic and substitutionist way of intervening.

These risks were manifested in a very real way in the recent period when at various points in the class struggle there occurred wide-ranging political oscillations between phases of at least partial adaptation to ultraleftism and phases of political self-effacement under reformist pressures.

## I. ROUGE FROM 1973 TO 1974: SOME NECESSARY BALANCE SHEETS

The organization seems to have a short memory; we live on fragmentary recollections, raised to the level of myths, of certain "big days": of our internal discussions (the Revolution! trauma, the ORJ sea-serpent, the Roger-Jebraq match), or of our interventions (Burgos, Lip, the Appeal of the Hundred, etc.). Aside from that, our ability to draw up political balance-sheets rarely goes beyond the horizon of the last demonstration, the last publicity "coup" or the last ephemeral "mass organization."

This impressionism only expresses, on the level of the discussion, the empiricism and lack of method which prevails in the organization's practice at all levels. Without trying to substitute ourselves for a collective political balance-sheet of the organization in its various intervention "fronts," we think that an initial self-critical reflection can be undertaken, at least in relation to the central political intervention of revolutionary Marxists in the recent period. Rouge's initiatives, particularly in the legislative elections, June 21, the Lip affair, December 6 and the presidential elections are good indicators of the mistakes of the leadership. They thus allow us to clarify criticisms which we have undoubtedly formulated too abstractly and generally and to put our finger on the way that the organization, for all its "initiativist" bluster, at every decisive point in the class struggle is unable to go beyond a totally abstract and marginal propagandism.

### A. FROM THE LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS TO DECEMBER 6

#### 1. The 1973 Legislative Elections

The campaign of the revolutionaries in the legislative elections was mainly conceived as an occasion for general propaganda developed around three axes. For instance, the internal newsletter at the beginning of the campaign contains the following: a popularization of recent workers' struggles combined with defense and illustration of democratic organs of struggle (strike committees); a denunciation of reformist illusions; an explanation around the general theme of "the socialism we want."

The explanation around the theme of "the socialism we want is prepared in today's struggles" remained singularly incomplete and hence not very convincing. This general propaganda in effect limited the programmatic confrontation with Stalinism to the sole question of "roads to socialism," further schematizing it into a simplistic dichotomy of the type "struggles versus elections." This was the only programmatic basis of the slogan "vote revolutionary." This certainly didn't prevent a rightward adaptation, the cautious voting slogan "neglecting" one of the issues which made it possible to call attention to the class-collaborationist character of the Union of the Left (the presence of the Left Radicals, a point on which the Political Bureau

had to make a confused and embarrassed self-criticism); revolutionary Marxists, in spite of their use of the Chilean counter-example, seriously neglected to address the immediate political problems from which they could have concretely illustrated their critique of the "reformist road" and more precisely posed the problem of working-class unity and independence in concrete terms: what immediate demands, what forms of mass mobilization and organization responded to this situation? What political forces should be called upon to take power? What immediate tasks would such a government have had to take on in order to respond to the workers' most urgent needs and to break decisively with the bourgeois order and state?

A real programmatic approach at that time would have been to organize our whole intervention around the most concrete possible response to these central questions.

## 2. June 21

June 21, 1973 illustrates fairly accurately the line of the Third Congress of the Ligue Communiste, the line of so-called "unity-of-action-outflanking."

This important event in the history of the French section also gives us a chance to concretely approach the question of the struggle against fascism and the question of mass violence.

No political campaign preceded the "initiative in action" taken by the leadership of the organization.

Only military preparation (however imperfect) was considered. The idea was to more or less reenact the March 9, 1971, action against the Ordre Nouveau meeting at the Palais des Sports.

Afterward, it appeared that the June 21 counter-demonstration was not organized on the basis of a clear and concrete analysis of the political situation but only according to a principle which had already become part of the organization's spontaneous reflexes. This principle was that it is indispensable for revolutionary Marxists never to lose a single opportunity to militarily confront fascist groups, that they must be "crushed in the egg." June 21 discloses the double characteristic of the leadership's political line in every event of any importance. On the one hand, its "initiativism" without a programmatic basis, which here takes on a clearly adventurist coloration; on the other hand its basic political opportunism which leads it to always count on the existence of the traditional workers' movement to protect the organization against the blows of the repression. It is the famous theory of the "democratic umbrella," which the leadership cheaply likens to unity of action, if not to the tactic of the united front.

On June 20, 1973, the Ligue Communiste's approach in participating in the demonstration was to put its initiative for the next day, in advance, in the framework of defense of democratic rights, seeking in this way to get the cover of the mass movement led by the reformists, but without ever putting its perspectives for the anti-fascist struggle into the framework of the mobilization of the labor movement, nor specifying the responsibilities of the traditional leadership in relation to this struggle. For the leadership of the Ligue Communiste, the anti-fascist struggle is specially reserved for the far left; simply the spectacle of the courageous initiative and military audacity is supposed to contribute to breaking the advanced elements of the class from the line of their leadership.

This dual aspect -- opportunism and adventurism -- which marked the initiative of June 21 is reduced in the last analysis to the former element. The explanation given by the organization's leadership following the dissolution was basically the following: "The government was able to ban the Ligue Communiste because the traditional workers' movement refused to mobilize massively against the fascist meeting." This is only true abstractly, to the degree that this argument ignores our own responsibilities in relation to the capitulationist policy of the labor leaderships, i. e., the total lack of a mass campaign on the issue of the fascist groups and the inability to fit this question into the mass agitation in the workers' movement, particularly the trade unions. In the view of the Ligue Communiste leadership, on the eve of June 21 it was only necessary to participate in the June 20 demonstration without any political demarcation other than of the propagandistic sort ("workers' self-defense") and the triumphalist sort (fascist meeting, banned meeting) in order to consider ourselves "covered" by the traditional workers' movement and hence authorized to engage in whatever kind of minority "outflanking" we liked.

Afterward, the organization's leadership attempted, through a series of tactical operations, to force the political (CP and SP) and trade-union (CGT, CFDT and FEN) leaderships to make a united response to the dissolution. This was concretized at the Cirque d'Hiver meeting. The comrades of the leadership then tried to justify the June 21 error in retrospect by putting it on the account of . . . Marcellin. The "democratic umbrella" indeed existed, Marcellin, paranoid in his fixation on repression, had forgotten this; he thought he could dissolve a workers' organization with the tacit agreement of the traditional leaderships. . . . He was wrong. The dissolution was a two-edged sword, etc. This is no longer adventurism but quite clearly right-opportunism, i. e., illusions about the real purpose of the response of the traditional leaderships. Did June 21 force them to defend the Trotskyists? This is nothing but talk. The only concern of the CP, the SP and the trade-union leaderships at that time was to give an ap-

pearance consistent with their proclaimed desire to defend democratic rights and to make another cheap, purely electoral move. The leaders of the Ligue Communiste were not allowed to speak. The decree was never abrogated, which proves concretely, in the last analysis, the organization's weakness as well as the demagogic character of the traditional leaderships' stance. In short, the former Ligue Communiste leaders slipped into the shallowest legalism by waging only a sadly juridical battle for the abrogation of the dissolution decree.

### 3. Lip

Rouge understood the importance of the forms of struggle and organization tested by the Lip workers (unity of action and workers' democracy, violation of the bosses' legality, seizure of the productive apparatus, etc.), but seriously overestimated certain aspects of this experience: its real self-organized character (the problem of the limits of the action committee, and even its role as an obstacle to the formation of a genuine mass strike committee with democratic leadership, were raised only after the central phase of the conflict and in a very confused way, as the Garcin document shows. Its spontaneous and immediate quality as an example for struggles in other sectors,

This was combined with a general tailendism in relation to the CFDT and to what Tendency 2 (Garcin) still characterizes as "empirical revolutionary leadership" (like Tito, Ben Bella and Castro?). Here again there was confusion between the objective movement of the workers and of their leaderships, no more revolutionary at Lip than elsewhere (whatever the contradictions may have been between the local CFDT and the CFDT Confederation and the CGT). This explains the inability to clearly expose the nature of the Neuschwander accords (for example, Rouge's theme of the "first victory" and of "applying the Dôle accords"!) and the role played by the union leaderships. The "Lip beacon" alone could not suffice to light the way for this combative working-class rentrée [resumption of work and school schedules after August vacation - tr.] which we uncautiously prophesied in the delirious, catastrophic atmosphere of the summer of 1973.

These errors of assessment were reflected in an intervention one-sidedly centered on popularizing the "exemplary" aspects of Lip and a purely propagandistic support (whether in the Lip committees or the march on Besançon). Rouge consequently failed seriously in two tasks, and this failure was clearly consummated in our policy for the march on Besançon:

A. to explain clearly (beginning with the police invasion) the responsibility of the labor movement and the union federations to centrally organize solidarity with Lip. The idea of a one-day general strike should have been

raised in mid-August, not in propagandistic terms ("strikes," said one Rouge poster. . .), but by basing ourselves on a broad struggle in the trade-union federations.

Not doing this, we were able to tacitly maintain the illusion that while Lip certainly could not win alone the mobilization of the far left could by itself substitute or make up for the inaction of the labor leaderships. This was clearly illustrated in the slogan "Lip fights for all the workers" in which sentimental effusiveness covered up very poorly our total deficiency in relation to the real requirement of the situation: that on the contrary all the workers (and their organizations) fight for Lip!

B. to contribute to formulating slogans capable of simultaneously removing the Lip struggle from the impasse and making this experience help the whole working class to organize a combative rentrée on a plan of action responding to the major problems of the period (jobs, inflation, etc.). The masses are mobilized on demands not on catchy slogans (some of which are stupid as well: "Giraud, this is your last Tango").

For Lip, the demand for "nationalization under workers' control," perfectly justified by the objectives of the struggle and by the existing forms of mobilization, was not raised in a serious way: put forward at first with an explanation which rendered it incomprehensible ("You don't need a boss" -- that's how to stick in a strategically correct statement in a conjuncture where just the opposite is true!), it was later hidden away (at the march, for instance), then it reappeared once it had lost all its effectiveness. As for the plan of action for the rentrée, its laborious gestation lasted until the end of 1973.

### 4. December 6, 1973

Rouge undoubtedly understood the importance of this occasion and its extremely contradictory character: the December 6 initiative reflected at the same time the need for the workers' leaderships to centralize the struggle for demands and to make it a broad mass mobilization, taking into account the considerable aggravation of the objective difficulties of the class (inflation, unemployment). But at the same time, it represented an attempt to limit combativity to an economist terrain (so as not to politically confront the Pompidou regime) and on the same terrain to prepare a new dispersing of trade-union struggles ("Now, everyone fights in his own plant"). But Rouge's intervention was well short of the responsibilities created by such a situation. The organization was completely silent (at any rate on the 6th and during its preparation) about the demobilizing role which the working-class leaderships in the last analysis played, and was totally unable to raise concrete and clear perspectives for continuing the movement and politicizing it as necessary at its present stage. In this regard, "The

only Solution: Revolution" (to which the Stalinists quite simply responded, in turn, "The Only Road: the Common Program," in face of which we were completely disarmed). Even "Out With the Government" hardly responded to the problem which was posed to its full degree beginning December 6 : why do the leaderships refuse to organize the political offensive against the Pompidou regime? Why is this possible and necessary today if the workers' movement only takes the required steps? Why, under what conditions, and for what tasks is a workers' government now on the agenda?

In fact, in this conjuncture, Rouge's intervention was mainly to popularize the "lessons of Lip" and to try to counterpose to the reformists' platform a plan of action, more offensive and more effective from the point of view of satisfying the most immediate needs of the mass of workers. This praiseworthy attempt gave the impression of relearning how to walk on two legs after the hopping on one foot which Rouge had done throughout the Lip affair. But, by the hasty improvisational character of the attempt, Rouge showed that it was seriously unprepared in this field (take for example the great weakness about the transitional demands to be put forward on the problem of unemployment with its various aspects: conjunctural crisis, capitalist restructuring, etc.). But, more fundamentally, this platform of demands, to the degree that it did not combine criticism based on current circumstances of the political leadership of the struggles and clear proposals in terms of courses for the December 6 mobilization to take, could only have a parasitic relation to the movement -- half-support, half-outbidding -- which, despite a totally abstract final call for a "workers' government," placed itself basically on the same ground as reformism: economism (with, as a bonus, in the main leaflet, rather picturesque overtones of rank-and-fileism and ultraleftism: "this government should be removed as an early priority, not waiting for the next elections but right away, preparing a general movement as in May 1968." Okay so far, comrades! But what initiative do you propose to this end? "Do as they did at Lip, start running the factories without the bosses, for our own benefit"?).

#### B. AGAIN ON THE "PROGRAMMATIC APPROACH"

(1) These are the kinds of deficiencies we were referring to when we challenged the narrow and distorted conception of the Transitional Program which is behind the majority's practice. By this, we did not mean to establish a fetishistic and semi-magical view of the program. For us, having the program in the formal sense of the term is not sufficient to solve all the problems of building the party. Nor do we advocate using every opportunity to propagandize "the whole program." We repeat, if necessary, that when we speak of the need for a complete programmatic approach, we mean precisely that to

intervene in the struggles "of all the classes of the society" (Lenin) and to build the party of mass action under the political leadership of the proletariat require that we be able to link up with the most advanced elements of the working class and their radicalized layers so as to break them from reformism and bring them to a higher level of consciousness and organization. But this is on the basis of an approach (of propaganda, agitation, and organization) which constantly seeks to set off and develop struggles and concretely demonstrates our ability to put forward at each conjuncture of the class struggle, action proposals and political perspectives corresponding to the objective needs of the working class as a whole and to the development of all its struggles (struggles for demands and political struggles). In this way, on the basis of practical experience, we will be able to establish our right to lead the proletariat.

(2) The empirical oscillations observed during 1973 confirm the correctness of the criticism of the majority's concept of program which we made in the document, "New Vanguards or Building the Revolutionary Party": the importance correctly given to the problems of self-organization of the workers in the present period led to arbitrarily isolating "workers' control" from the revolutionary-Marxist program as a whole, with a corresponding serious misunderstanding of the role of transitional demands in uniting and radicalizing the workers' offensive. But this correct criticism itself remained one-sided and might therefore have been taken as an economist criticism ("put a few more demands in your program and everything will be better"); thus we think this real deficiency was undoubtedly not the most decisive. Even when Rouge tries to respond to the immediate concerns, in terms of demands, which the mass struggle reflected (as in the participation in December 6), its political intervention is far short of its political responsibilities in relation to the working class.

There are two types of reason for this: the first has to do with the method, still mainly propagandistic and external to the profound movement of the masses, by which they put forward their proposals; revolutionary Marxists were physically present at the December 6 demonstration and had something to say about the forms of struggle (the lessons of Lip) and about the immediate objectives for the action to have. But their inability to carry on in depth a vast preparatory struggle around these proposals (in particular, in this case, through a wide-ranging trade-union struggle) considerably limited their real audience. But it mainly seemed that this fundamentally propagandistic and marginal character of Rouge's intervention has a much more general cause which explains the small response to its proposals during the legislative and presidential elections as on December 6. This cause has to do with the fact that starting when the development of the class struggle reaches a high level of centralization (even if this centralization remains limited by the working-class leaderships to the electoral arena or

the arena of demands), Rouge showed its inability to formulate proposals capable of effectively ending the separation between the economic struggle and the political struggle maintained by the reformist leaderships (in the form of economism-electoralism), that is, to pose the question of power in immediate political terms. In other words, the organization is able to propagandize generally about socialism (as in the legislative elections) which we can in principle counterpose to the strategic dead-end of the Union of the Left; it is also able to explain immediate agitational slogans concerning the crisis of the regime (as in 1973: "Down with the Pompidou-Messmer regime! Marcellin resign!"), but it is completely unable to make a bridge between these two extreme types of propaganda on the question of power and to trace the concrete political perspective which, taking into account the real experience of the working class and its organizations, responds to the problems objectively posed in the immediate struggle of the workers. This requires in particular knowing how to concretize clearly the governmental slogan in a precise agitational form.

These problems were posed in their full extent at the time of the presidential elections. But once again, they were carefully skirted by the majority in its various lucubrations, tending to justify its totally abstract and propagandistic formula of a "workers' government."

### C. REMARKS ON THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

We will not take up in detail here our analysis of the more profound theoretical bases of the vagaries of the FCR in the presidential elections: its inability to analyze the Union of the Left as a popular front, the substitutionist concept of "outflanking." We will only cite, to refresh the reader's memory, the passage of the document "Workers' Government Against Popular Front," which characterized the overall strategy of the organization as having a centrist conception of the political struggle: "an ultraleft conception at first, to the degree that it tends to limit the political preparation of "outflanking" to the regroupment of the "broad workers' vanguard," mainly on the basis of its desire to struggle ("group all those who wish to go into action," according to one of the main leaflets of the campaign), and without placing it politically in the perspective of the united-front approach (which would imply demanding clearly of the existing workers' organizations that they break with the bourgeoisie and take power).

This conception is right-wing in its results, since in speculating about the "dynamic" of the Union of the Left, it in fact makes it impossible to arm the advanced workers with a clear understanding of the fundamental strategic nature of the Union of the Left (its popular-front program as the underlying foundation of all its politics, all the organizational coalitions which it can make or try to make,

its necessarily counter-revolutionary role in relation to the mass movement). Such a conception therefore can only lead to building a centrist movement, partly imprisoned by illusions about the Union of the Left, and whose "outflanking" role in the last analysis cannot bypass the construction of a left wing, combative and critical of the popular front. But if the concrete unfolding of the election campaign is examined in retrospect, it is interesting to consider the self-criticism (partial and inconsistent, as usual) which the majority itself had to make (see the Garcin document). Today it must recognize in particular the Piaget operation "as a campaign independent of any basis of programmatic agreement, not only among those who supported this candidacy but also between Piaget and us, with the result that every far-left current invested its political line behind the Piaget candidacy." But how can it get anyone to believe that, in a "second phase," an operation based on such openly opportunist foundations could have miraculously found a "programmatic basis" while remaining a "united candidacy"? Through a "fight for clarification," we are assured, even an "intense" fight where we would have benefited from "our relative force, in particular with the daily paper" and "the populists' inability to make a centralized response to the reformist thrust"!

Let's be serious. Could Piaget, the populists, the ultralefts have accepted our centralized response? Moreover, what was this famous "centralized response"? The "workers' government"? It must be admitted in fact that on that basis unity was undoubtedly possible, as well as on the oh-so-precise characterization of the Union of the Left as "reformist."

Furthermore, the majority must today itself concede that in the case of the Krivine candidacy the programmatic basis of the FCR was at best vague and poorly adapted to the conjuncture: "Our campaign in fact lacked a whole dimension on the immediate problems which would have been opened up by the electoral victory of Mitterrand. . . . (We should have) posed a series of specific questions to Mitterrand. . . concerning workers' demands, nationalizations and the anti-crisis plan, women, immigrants, the rights of soldiers, the participation of bourgeois ministers in a future government, committees united at the base, the dissolution of parliament and the way the ballot is made up, the abolition of the 1958 constitution. . . ."

The confession is of some size, even though for revolutionary Marxists the problem is not to "pose questions to Mitterrand" but to mobilize and politically arm the masses around these decisive programmatic questions. Two naive questions remain:

1. Isn't it a bit embarrassing not to have effectively developed any of these agitational themes, when we claimed to define the workers' government by its "concrete tasks"?

2. What does it mean to "pose a series of specific questions to Mitterrand concerning the participation of bourgeois ministers in a future government"? Was it necessary to distinguish between "significant" bourgeois (Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber) and "not significant" ones (Fabre)? Next, doesn't this go a bit in the direction of those who said that the fight for "a CP-SP government without bourgeois ministers" was an inseparable part of the tasks of revolutionary Marxists at that time?

The majority ought to get control of itself. It is manifesting serious weaknesses in relation to certain "opportunists" who even before the beginning of the electoral campaign wrote: "to present a Piaget candidacy as the 'revolutionary' alternative to the 'reformist' front proposed by the CP and the SP could only lead us to bypass the problem of the workers' government with revolutionist formulas; it is so much easier to say, 'Everyone behind Piaget' than to confront ultraleftism and the most feeble-minded forms of 'anti-reformism' or 'anti-revisionism' in order to explain the meaning of the slogan 'CP-SP government'. . . . Once again we succeeded in accomplishing the seemingly impossible task of contributing no more to programmatic clarification inside the working class

than to the political unity of the workers" -- and who, further on, went so far as to say: "Piaget campaign or Krivine campaign, the style of our struggle was the direct product of this oscillation. The 'Ten Points' -- a quick digest of the manifesto and the action plan -- show that this is true. Certainly 'everything is there,' from women's liberation to the arming of the proletariat, but this catalog is not sufficient to conceal a profound inability to extricate what counts today: simple and concrete political responses ("Workers' Government Against Popular Front") to the central questions which are immediately posed to the workers."

But, we will be told, that is all in the past. Today we are at the "turn": doesn't the majority itself talk about fighting "shortcuts," even about a "united front" (oh, Lambertoid abomination!) which would have "strategic implications" (see the Garcin document). Let's take a closer look. . .

[Translator's note: Throughout, where parentheses and quotations are not closed in original, I have tried to close them in the logical place. ]

## THESES ON WORK AMONG WOMEN

[The following is a translation of the Theses on Work Among Women submitted by Tendency 4 for a vote at the December 1974 convention of the French section. It was printed in a special, unnumbered issue of the internal discussion bulletin entitled "Draft Theses on the Construction of the Party."]

\* \* \*

1. The international rise of women's struggles (the United States, Germany, France, etc.) is an expression of the intensification of all the contradictions of bourgeois society in a period of acute class struggle.

This mobilization also lays open the living conditions which bourgeois society forces on women and which form the objective basis for their struggle against the existing social order. These conditions link oppression and material superexploitation together indissolubly. Women's oppression predates the capitalist mode of production but plays an irreplaceable role in the reproduction of the bourgeois order. The family, the basic economic unity of class society, is also an indispensable structure for the transmission of the dominant ideology. Furthermore, the specific oppression of the woman inside the family, particularly her domestic role, is part of the capitalist division of labor and provides the social and ideological basis for her superexploitation as a worker.

Here two types of deviations must be fought against: a workerist deviation which denies or underestimates the specific oppression of women and reduces it purely and simply to a particular aspect of wage exploitation of the working class in general; and a feminist sexist deviation which in various forms leads to ignoring the tie between the struggle against the social inequality of the sexes to the class struggle (hence reformist struggles for "equal rights" or the war against the "male" raised to the level of a strategy). Contrary to these conceptions, communists must have an overall understanding of the status of women in bourgeois society, not arbitrarily isolating one or another aspect, and linking the struggle for their emancipation to the struggle of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie.

2. The general dominance of bourgeois ideology and its penetration into the labor movement are expressed by the refusal of the reformist leaderships to really undertake the struggle for the demands of women against their superexploitation and against the social bases of their oppression. The same reasons explain also why the working masses will not go into motion on their own for the emancipation of women.

For its part, the revolutionary-Marxist party is of course conscious of the absolute necessity for the struggle for the emancipation of women, as one of the fundamental tasks of the class struggle in general.

But in this struggle as in all others, the party cannot substitute itself for the masses themselves, but seeks to stimulate and orient their own movement. Thus, it is through their own involve-

ment in the struggle, their own experience, that women will learn the need to unite and that their isolation and lack of confidence will be destroyed. Under the conditions of bourgeois society and the crisis of working-class leadership, women are the first to be susceptible to mobilize around problems which affect them most directly. But left on its own, the mobilization of women, taking place essentially outside the framework of the organized labor movement, has every possibility of remaining under the hegemony of the various forms of sexist feminism, that is, bourgeois ideology.

On this point, as with all other mass struggles, communists need not postpone the mobilization and their own intervention in the struggle until the time when the trade-union or political organizations are ready to really fight for the emancipation of women. Their struggle to put this struggle under the political direction of the proletariat and to mobilize the whole class for the liberation of women necessarily and jointly passes through many channels:

\*On one hand this fight is an integral part of the confrontation of programs between communists and the reformist organizations, particularly the struggle to transform the trade-unions into an instrument of revolutionary struggle in the interests of the whole class;

\*On the other hand, this fight implies that the revolutionary Marxists actively join in the mobilizations of women, to do their best to give them a clear class-struggle orientation.

This requires a clarification: communists reject the reactionary perspective of a "Women's Party" but give the greatest attention to the forms taken by the mobilization of the masses in this field: "While strenuously declaring themselves against any kind of separate organization of women inside the Party, the unions or other workers' associations, the Third Congress of the Communist International recognizes the need to employ particular methods of work among women." To these particular needs of mass action among women corresponds the work of communists toward orienting the mobilization of women on a clear class line.

This does not imply, however, a narrowly workerist conception of the mobilization of women. In widely differing forms according to their objective, class status, the oppression of women as such touches women of all classes of society. But the mobilization of working-class or petty-bourgeois women under the political direction of the proletariat must be counterposed as an alternative to the idea of bringing them together on the ground of bourgeois (or "revolutionary") feminism.

While it is necessary to seek to mobilize working women as a priority, the class orientation of this mobilization will be mainly expressed not on the sociological level, but on the level of the political and programmatic relationship it has to the labor movement and to the overall struggle of the working class for power: "The proletarian united front can only be realized if women are part of it. A solid link between the CP and the working women will permit the latter in certain circumstances to open the way to the proletarian united front in the movements of the proletarian masses." (Fourth Congress of the Communist International.)

3. Communists must clearly understand the difference between this perspective and the immediate forms of mobilization and organization of women.

This difference makes it clear that the general crisis of revolutionary leadership has its effects also on the level of the struggle of women for their emancipation.

Despite the breadth of the social mobilization on many fundamental demands of women, the present movement has obvious organizational limitations and remains under the domination of feminist ideologies whether in strictly bourgeois-democratic forms or in "revolutionary" forms.

Relatively massive mobilizations have put forward increasingly advanced demands and raised consciousness on contraception, abortion, equality of work, etc. But the movement remains dispersed, divided between the MLF and the various women's groups in which sexist concepts still predominate and the more centralized organizations such as MLAC [Movement for Freedom of Abortion and Contraception], organizations which nevertheless encompass only an aspect of the women's struggle. . . . The tie between these organizations and the labor movement otherwise remains very uncertain, while conversely, in the trade-union federations, women's demands have been taken up only very incompletely. Lastly, the women's movement, as it exists today, is under strong petty-bourgeois pressures, expressed ideologically but also in the form of strong reticence toward centralization, even toward any form of organization, and a constant distrust of "political activists" in general. The movement's present contradictions, the general pressure of feminism, must be fully understood: the movement reflects the first forms of the raising of the consciousness of many women (essentially petty-bourgeois) and sometimes organizes their accession to a first stage of militant expression and activity, but it also contributes to blocking this raising of consciousness through "sexism," thus, in the last analysis, helping keep it under the domination of bourgeois ideology.

In this regard, it is hasty, to say the least, to predict that the formation of a bourgeois-democratic feminist current is objectively impossible. The same social and political ground today occupied by sexist revolutionism can tomorrow easily be the scene of a development of reformist feminism.

4. The balance-sheet of the past intervention of the organization and the various orientations proposed today for "women's" work manifest serious confusions in regard to the understanding of communist tasks. The organization has only abandoned its ultra-sectarian position (its deficiencies theorized on the basis of generally likening the mobilization of women to the MLF, "petty-bourgeois movement of hysterical girls"!) in favor of a purely maneuverist and tailendist intervention.

As a result, the "Pétroleuses," presented as a "class-struggle tendency," was such a tendency only in name. The attempt always vascillated between a substitutionist effort to "co-opt" the movement (for certain comrades the Pétroleuses as such had the function and task of becoming "the movement") and tailendist adaptation to

the sentiments of the groups. More generally, there is a permanent substitutionist confusion over the relation between a tendency and a movement (is the newspaper of the tendency or of the movement? Is the "coordination of groups," which joins together only the Pétroleuses, the coordination of the movement or of the tendency?) These substitutionist confusions have as a direct counterpart a totally anti-leadership and spontaneist conception of the tendency itself (no organized debate on the platform, the absence of clear direction for the tendency). This adaptation to the spontaneist environment is expressed much more generally through the demagogic idealization of consciousness-raising groups and discussion groups which are raised to the level of necessary stages in the process of consciousness-raising and organization of women, or seen as playing a "subversive role" by the sole fact of their existence.

5. What are the concrete implications of the method of the transitional program, in relation to the intervention of communists in mobilizations and struggles of women?

It would undoubtedly be possible to "explain" politically to women in struggle that only the dictatorship of the proletariat can bring about the social and material conditions for the satisfaction of the various demands on which women are mobilizing, that only socialism can permit a real liberation of women.

But in no case can the intervention of revolutionary Marxists in the women's movement be reduced to such an "explanation," which made in this way can only have the character of ultimatic propaganda for "socialism."

The fight for an orientation toward the working class implies the working out of a concrete platform for intervention in the women's movement. Of course, the "demands" as such are often formulated in a similar way by feminists and by revolutionary Marxists. The latter must, however, combat on this level all ultraleft or reformist deviations: the debates which resulted in the formulation of the slogan "free and legal abortion" are a good example of this type of battle for clarification. But what creates the significant cleavage are less the demands themselves than the general perspective in which communists place these demands and the mobilizations which they permit. For them it is a problem of seeking out all the intermediate means capable of assuring the convergence between the mobilizations of women and the general struggle of the working class against the bourgeois state.

6. Revolutionary Marxists seek to place each partial struggle of women in the framework of the mobilization of the class as a whole against the regime. Without "devaluating" the particular mobilization of women, the revolutionary Marxists should seek in this way to have all the struggles of women, as much as possible waged jointly with the workers' organizations (all the while exposing on this occasion the practical instances of the general political orientation of these organizations), to explain that any partial advance or setback for the demands of women is part of a more general process: the crisis of the regime, the workers' offensive, the role of the reformist leadership. . . In other words:

the demands of women should not be and moreover are not the affair of women alone. This was the standpoint of the Communist International when it referred to the "fundamental principles" of revolutionary Marxism according to which there are no "specially feminine" questions.

This is verified today: the victories -- very partial -- obtained in the field of abortion or divorce by mutual consent must be explained in relation to the whole political situation: the previous mass actions have not drawn in only the women's movement. In addition, Giscard's "liberal" concessions in this field must be understood with reference to the overall relationship of forces between the regime and the workers' movement.

For communists there is no division of labor "by theme," no functional specialization to perpetuate in principle, between the "women's movement" and the workers' movement. Hence, in their work of building the trade-union tendency, they struggle for the unions to effectively take charge of the mobilization and to struggle on the principal demands of women (not only the demands directly tied to employment and wages, but also abortion, contraception, child-care, etc.). In the same perspective, communists fight for the creation of "women's committees" in the unions.

Moreover, revolutionary Marxists also fight for the mobilization of women, freeing itself from bourgeois feminism-sexism, basing itself on the struggle of the proletariat as a whole, to become a component part of the class united front. This implies a fight for the unionization of women. It also implies that the women's movement should mobilize or join in the mobilizations of the workers' movement, on all the problems which affect working women, even if they are not "specially feminine." The present attacks of capital against employment (layoffs, restructuring, etc.) and purchasing power affect all working women objectively and subjectively without in any way lessening the importance of the other fronts of the women's struggle. These are special areas for assuring a political convergence between the mobilization of women and the struggles of the workers' movement as a whole. The point is to "have women participate in all the revolutionary demonstrations of the communists against the bourgeoisie and the coalitionist socialists." (Third Congress of the C.I.)

Lastly, communists must strive to clearly emphasize the central political stakes. This means in each of their partial mobilizations clearly pointing out the immediate adversary (the regime, the Giscard government), denouncing its pseudo-liberal concessions, and showing their limits in relation to the objective needs of women. It also means that a component part of the responsibilities of communists is to place all feminine struggles in the perspective of the workers' government as the concrete transitional expression of the general necessity for socialism.

The platform of intervention in the women's movement, beginning with the immediate demands of women, should therefore place them expressly in the overall struggle for a workers' government. This does not mean making it a sectarian pre-requisite for the participa-

tion of communists in the mass movement nor even that this perspective will have to be advanced in a ritualistic way at each mobilization of women. But only this central political perspective makes it possible to achieve the class break with all versions of feminism. This is why it is the responsibility of communists to actively carry on a fight so that the mobilization of women will effectively join on the side of the workers' movement every time the class struggle conjuncturally puts on the agenda the need for a central battle against the regime, whether this takes the form of participation in central workers' demonstrations, support for strike movements, or propaganda linking the women's struggle and the demand for a CP-SP government.

## WHY WE ARE CARRYING ON THE FIGHT WITH TENDENCY 4

[The following statement by the members of the Leninist Trotskyist Faction in France was published in the internal bulletin of the French section, CRS #22, November 1974.]

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The comrades in the FCR belonging to the LTF are not recognized by the central committee in preparation for the first congress. These "rules" place restrictions on the democratic right of comrades to organize a tendency irrespective of how many members it has.

Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that members of the LTF exist in France. These comrades have clear and distinct positions on national as well as international questions. These positions are expressed in the faction platform (DIS no. 29) and the political resolution of the LTF presented to the 10th world congress. In addition, documents were written by members of the faction during the international debate on political questions that are decisive for the orientation of revolutionary Marxists in France.

In particular, documents were written dealing with the following points:

- the presidential elections, the legislative elections, the characterization of the "Union of the Left";
- June 21 and the question of the minority violence line;
- criticism of the orientation toward the concerns of the "new mass vanguard" and the results of that orientation in mass work;
- the debate over BI 30.

We have principled agreement with positions developed by T4. The agreement encompasses an important part of our positions. On this basis it is possible to create a principled bloc to fight for a series of positions to be adopted by the first congress of the FCR.

Briefly, we agree with the following points in the main political document of T4:

1. The crisis of the FCR is part of the crisis of the majority leadership of the FI. The orientation adopted by the 9th world congress is fundamentally wrong and represents an adaptation to the Castroist current and the preoccupations of the "youth vanguard." This orientation turns away from the method of the Transitional Program and the Leninist conception of party building. This orientation must be reversed.

2. Rejection of the European document, which is only the application of the 9th world congress method of party building. This document's line of "initiatives in action" is a substitute for mass work because it tailends the concerns of the "new mass vanguard."

3. Rejection of the characterization of the "new mass vanguard" as a social or political vanguard. Rejection of the implications following from such a characterization.

4. Rejection of the schema of three tactics, leading to a stages theory of party-building.

5. Agreement on the fact that building the mass revolutionary party must be accompanied by the fight for class independence and unity. We counterpose building the united front to the concept of "unity-in-action-outflanking."

6. Agreement on the characterization of the Union of the Left as a popular front and on its role vis-a-vis the rise of workers struggles. Agreement on the necessity of concretizing a governmental slogan. For a CP-SP government.

7. Agreement on the general line for trade-union and mass work developed in the T4 political document.

8. Rejection of the minority violence line.

9. Agreement on the necessity to carry out consistent work to mobilize and advance the radicalization of the allies of the proletariat. Carry out a campaign to get the working-class organizations to advance demands tied to their specific oppression.

10. Agreement on the necessity of a communist youth organization, without prescribing the timing and political and organizational steps of its construction.

In addition, we agree on the nature of the problems raised by the organizational methods of the FCR leadership in preparing the congress. These measures (such as needing 30 signatures to form a tendency) negate the right of all members to express their positions before the whole organization. Likewise, various breaches of Bolshevik norms on the part of the IMT are encountered on the international level. The LTF has raised this question for several years. These problems creating a danger of a split have become so serious that the LTF decided to call for a special world congress to fight this danger.

Along with these points of agreement, differences exist. The majority of comrades in the T4 aren't members of the faction and thus don't share all of our positions on certain questions and international perspectives. The national and international debates can't be separated.

In addition, the LTF called for abstention in the second round of the presidential elections. T4 has not yet, as a tendency, taken a position on the practical conclusions to be drawn in our electoral policy from the characterization of the Union of the Left as a popular front.

In a Leninist organization the LTF would not have been forced to join a tendency to carry out a common fight on these points where it agrees with the T4, but the rules of the debate in the FCR make this necessary.

## JULY LETTER FROM THE GROUP OF "TEN" TO THE LTF STEERING COMMITTEE

Paris, July 10, 1975

To the LTF Steering Committee

Dear Comrades,

We have read with interest and care the June 19, 1975 letter in which Comrade Mary-Alice Waters informs us of the coordinating committee's position on our application to join the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction. The present letter does not pretend to be an exhaustive or definitive response to the numerous questions you raise. But as a reply it may serve as one of the bases for the discussion you suggest having with us, with the comrades of the faction in France and with the broader steering committee of the LTF.

This discussion seems even more desirable to us since, to tell the truth, your reply has left us somewhat puzzled. You indicate that the coordinating committee had "an extended discussion concerning our request" because of the fact that it "stated disagreement with the line of the faction on one or another important point." You are undoubtedly referring to the questions formulated in our previous letter relative to characterizing the political dynamic of the IMT. These questions seem to us to be part of an important discussion, objectively placed on the agenda by the recent evolution of the IMT and the sections it leads, a discussion we believe can develop in a responsible manner only on the basis of the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction's program and in its organized framework. We do not know whether you share that point of view. Reading your letter could suggest so, since none of the problems it raises to explain your "decision to postpone any decision" bears on this fundamental debate. On the other hand, they all deal directly or indirectly with the political balance sheet of T4. So the present letter will deal exclusively with that point.

In that regard, you express an extremely harsh judgment on T4's fight, blaming it for the "abstraction" of its positions and at the same time for their "unprincipled" character. Furthermore, according to you, the two are linked: "the documents of T4 were abstract on precisely the points where they should have been clear and concrete because the T4 was a combination." That assessment seems to us excessive in more than one way, or based on inadequate information about the reality of T4.

Let us stress at the outset that you cannot assert in a general way that T4 proved unable to get "off the level of abstract analysis to try to define a concrete line." At a time when the FCR leadership was unable to present the organization with a balance sheet of its activities, T4 was the only tendency that tried to systematically

draw the balance sheet of the test of the majority's orientation at the essential points of the class struggle: Lip, the strike of December 6, the elections, June 21. . . . On the other hand, some of the policy proposals it put forward still seem to us the only ones to make in response to the objective needs of the political situation. Such, for example, are T4's positions on the youth movement or on the role of the slogan for a CP-SP government in the present conjuncture.

But in point of fact, your reproaching T4's positions for being "abstract" refers to more fundamental questions.

1.) The first of these questions concerns the assessment of what could and should be the basis for constituting a tendency (not a faction) at a given moment in the political debate (and not forever. . .). In this regard, we indicated in our previous letter that "T4 was formed in response to the precise need to define the axes of an orientation different from the line of the organization's leadership at the juncture of a national congress, and it could not go beyond those limits without losing its whole meaning." So it is in regard to these specific, limited objectives that we must assess the bloc achieved between the LTF and T4 at the time of the LCR's first congress as principled or unprincipled.

Frankly, from this point of view it is your concept of the terms of an oppositional struggle within the French section that seem a bit "abstract" to us. We do not mean that the particular conditions of this discussion justified pursuing an unprincipled regrouping of all the "discontented." On the contrary, we mean that the objective delay in building the LTF in the French section, as well as the role that section plays in the International, implied that a serious opposition could only emerge by beginning to propound the basic elements of a criticism of the majority line on the level of principle and method.

This perspective led us to refuse to give "critical support" at this stage of the discussion to T1, which developed some partially correct criticisms but explicitly remained within the general framework of the "European document," several of whose basic aspects it refused to question. This perspective also inspired what we have always considered the principled agreement that defined the chief axes around which T4 was constructed. The "abstract" questions you speak of concern criticizing the theory of the "new vanguard" and the theory of building the party in stages; the methodological link connecting the European orientation with the Ninth World Congress errors and with entrism sui generis; characterizing the Union of the Left and the question of popular fronts; criticizing the theories of minority "outflanking"; united front policy and the question of the workers government,

etc. . . . Certainly "abstract" questions. But is it necessary to stress that they are precisely the axes along which the minority's criticism of the European document developed? That these questions had never been the subject of an effective fight in the French section? That none of the other minority tendencies (including T1) waged their fight on such decisive matters? Was there material here for a significant tendency fight or not?

For our part, we in fact drew "a chiefly positive balance sheet of T4" with respect to the imperative need for this first battle and for the echo it received in the organization (many of the delegates to the Congress seemed to be impressed by the seriousness and the coherence of the positions T4 defended on these basic questions, even though T4 had previously been the victim of a particularly harsh slander campaign. . .). We think that in this respect there is little justification for asserting that T4 "could do nothing to further political clarification in the FCR or in the International" and that "the ranks of the LCR are today more -- not less -- confused about the line of the LTF than they were one year ago." In fact, in spite of its abstraction and its mistakes, even if it only convinced a weak minority, T4 appeared to all within the LCR as the only tendency to outline a total alternative to the majority line. Further, it is the LTF that generally got credit for this alternative, not any third international tendency. The IMT and the LCR leadership were not mistaken when, after having multiplied obstacles to the debate, they concentrated their public attacks on T4, summoned T1 to "choose sides" (between the IMT and. . . T4) and at every point conceived of the battle against T4 as a battle against the LTF line (for example in raising at the Congress the question of the PST and that of the IT). As for T3, they publicly referred to us in Rouge as "propped up by the LTF."

Of course, T4's balance sheet is not exclusively "positive," for all that. Indeed, T4's line was incomplete, even confused on certain points. That reflected the general slowness of the discussion in the French section, and at the same time the limits of the political consciousness of those who built it. These are chiefly the objective and subjective conditions that explain why T4 was not able to go as far as would have been desirable in the direction of concretizing the political alternative to the leadership that it alone was trying to map out. We are fully aware of the limits of T4's fight and of the fact that a consistent oppositional struggle within the French section can only develop on the basis of the LTF program. That is precisely why all the signers of this document fought against continuing T4 the day after the congress, and against all the illusions that are still placed in the perspective of a "third international tendency." And with this same perspective we intend, without any sectarian preconditions, to carry on the discussion vis-a-vis the various comrades who have partially broken with the majority's orientation. (From this point of view, refer

to the positions we held in common with the comrades of T1 in the recent Central Committee discussions on the youth and on Portugal.) But this new stage of the political debate, like that of our own consciousness, would not have been possible without the fight T4 conducted and without the close, confident political collaboration this fight enabled us to have with the members of the LTF in France.

2.) The second important question raised by your criticism of the "abstract" character of T4's positions touches on the fact that according to you, this "abstraction" conceals "unprincipled compromises" on points that also seem to be the same ones that would be "in contradiction with the LTF platform."

a) We would be most eager to deepen the discussion with you on this matter insofar as, at a time when we believe ourselves in deep-seated agreement with the platform documents of the faction, we have not been able to discover substantial disagreement between its programmatic orientation and T4's line on the key questions you raise.

For example, T4's characterization of June 21 indeed stressed certain opportunist, "rightist" aspects of the policy practiced by the Ligue in the wake of June 21 (notably in its attitude toward the "democratic umbrella" of the reformist leaderships). That never led us to underestimate the principle aspect of the situation, that is, the adventurist character of the policy carried out June 21. T4 even publicly characterized June 21 as "ultra-left and irresponsible" (Rouge no. 277), which seems to us in complete agreement with the faction's positions.

On the other hand, you refer to "obvious political differences" between the LTF and T4 on women's liberation and the balance sheet of the FCR leadership for the last year and a half. These differences are all the less "obvious" to us since -- perhaps through ignorance? -- we are not aware of any public, detailed position the LTF as such has taken on these two questions.

As far as the women's movement is concerned, whatever the limitations of our document may be, we hardly see how it contradicts the brief passage in the "world resolution" devoted to this question. It is true that we emphasized our criticism of the risks of adapting to petit-bourgeois feminism and not those of sectarianism toward the radicalization of women. That is not a matter of any programmatic difference but of concretizing the general line of the LTF document for the concrete conditions of the discussion in the French section during the recent conjuncture.

It is true -- and this comes back to the problem raised by your characterization as an "unprincipled bloc" -- that these two points were those most heatedly discussed within

the T4; it is equally true that on these two points, and on them alone, no general agreement was reached within T4. More precisely, the unresolved disagreements over the first point dealt with the problem of knowing whether mobilizing women in the concrete conditions in France today ought to take the form of an organizationally independent movement, and whether one could develop out of the present women's liberation movement or whether at this time it should go through the existing structures of the workers movement (especially the unions) and through MLAC.

On the second point, the disagreements had to do with the vote to call for in the presidential elections (abstention or vote for Mitterrand with a denunciation of the popular front).

These are not minor differences, but they occurred in the center of a common programmatic understanding shared by all the members of T4. (For example, those who were opposed in principle to an independent women's movement recognized their error in the course of the discussion; there was general agreement on the platform with respect to mobilizing women, as on characterizing the Union of the Left as a popular front and on the perspective of an agitational struggle around the slogan of a CP-SP government.) On the other hand, while they certainly blunted the "concrete" precision of T4's orientation, these two differences did not seem to hinder a common fight based on the real agreement that did exist on the questions we deemed essential.

Finally, we should add in order to be perfectly clear that while the signers of this document are presently in agreement on the need to build "a women's movement," the tactical discussion among us about the electoral formula to put forward at the time of the presidential elections remains open. It seems to us that this discussion, extremely difficult for those who reject sectarian schemas of the Spartacist variety as well as the IMT's empiricist puttering, can be continued methodically and seriously only within the LTF which, as far as we know, has taken no official position on this question.

b) Having thus clearly established T4's internal "compromises," your assertion that T4 was only "a combination of comrades coming from divergent origins and going off in quite divergent directions" remains to be examined. Fuller informations seems to be necessary in this regard:

The comrades outside the LTF who built T4 were not coming "from divergent origins"; the great majority of them had been members of the third international tendency at the time of the Tenth World Congress. No doubt that origin was the carrier for certain political confusions and "prejudices" toward the LTF at the beginning. But that origin also signified that those comrades were among those, very rare in the French section, who were progres-

sively extricating themselves from the majority's influence in order to undertake an in-depth criticism of the IMT's method as it was expressed in the Latin-American orientation and the European document.

It was on the basis of this first break that a political elaboration was undertaken, at the conclusion of which most of the active ranks of T4 were beyond their illusions about the third international tendency and are tending to state their programmatic agreement with the LTF. That is the course we followed and which we recounted in the document "Why we are joining the LTF."

The term "combination" evokes a process of discussion and compromise negotiated between "different groups inside and outside the organization and the International." That has nothing to do with the way the T4 was actually built: the only organized process of political discussion took place between the LTF militants in France and the nucleus of oppositional militants who came out of the third tendency, who were considering pursuing the struggle at the time of the first Congress of the LCR. This serious, extensive process lasted several months beginning in July 1974, through an initial period of elaborating a criticism of the positions of Segur (CRS no. 7), then of the pre-congress discussion (analysis of the crisis of the French section, axes to stress in the fight), and allowed a common elaboration of all T4's documents. . . . If from the point of view of the LTF comrades some differences persisted, they were specifically and publicly enumerated; at the time they did not appear to be of such a nature as to prevent a fight founded on principled agreement on the chief questions under discussion.

On the other hand, it is true that elaborating the positions of T4 was, as is politically healthy, the occasion for lively debates within the tendency. But these debates divided the tendency differently according to the problems being raised and never brought "groups" with clearly different, thoroughly developed problematiques into existence in a crystalized manner.

Finally let us add that nothing justifies the assertion that "groups outside the International" were "doing entry work in T4." In this connection, remember a few facts: it is true that Comrade Gorbio was excluded for "factional contacts with the OCI" on the basis of a very weak dossier dealing with actions before the formation of T4. It is true that Comrade Laffitte was excluded for having expressed positions very close to those of the Spartacists, after the congress. It is true that Comrade Tolbic individually joined the Spartacists. To our knowledge no members of the former T4 were won over to the OCI. But in our opinion, these isolated actions do not establish in any convincing fashion the existence of "entry" work in T4; rather they are evidence of the enormous psychological and political pressures exerted by the difficulties of an oppositional fight in the French section, difficulties that could have led

some of our comrades either to discouragement or to taking politically irresponsible individual positions. (Let us point out that T1 also experienced resignations after the Congress, including some of their representatives on the Central Committee.)

On the other hand, in the hypothesis of "entrism" work within T4 it is clear that we had no other means at our disposal to expose and fight against it than to seek out the most serious political confrontation over the points around which the principled differences could be established with one group of another. From this point of view, you seem to take as a given that "As everyone in the FCR knew, the T4 included comrades who were very close to Lambertist positions, others to Spartacists," and especially taking up the example of Laffitte you assert that these comrades could very well "agree with the orientation of T4, then interpret it according to their own liking." This judgment seems unfair to us; T4's document included positions absolutely contradictory to those of the Lambertistes on both questions of principle and questions of "concrete" orientation (characterizing the PSU as a centrist party and the CFDT as a workers union, not bourgeois; concrete proposals concerning unifying the unions with the right to tendencies; a line on organizational formulations to put before the student movement . . .) and to that of the Spartacists (the whole part on the united front strategy, for example). You will admit that if there had ever been comrades in T4 who were "very close" to these two organizations, they would be the ones who politically capitulated in accepting the orientation of T4.

Your reference to Laffitte's case is hardly conclusive. You intend to prove the character of T4 as a "combination" by stressing that the Spartacists indicated their agreement with Laffitte, who "had no great difficulty to vote for the T4 line." However, you forget that: 1) At the time of the tendency meeting held after the Congress, Laffitte publicly announced his basic disagreement with the documents of the tendency (CRS 22) when previously

he had only raised minor problems and had correctly defended T4's line. 2) The Spartacists gave support to Laffitte's individual positions, following this active break with the former orientation of T4. Their position toward the orientation of T4 itself, on the other hand, was expressed in their press (Spartacist, French edition, February 1975), which characterized T4 as "centrist" referring to basic differences especially in relation to the agreement concluded with the LTF "the right wing, if not the reformist wing, of the United Secretariat," and referring to the united front strategy. Did T4 constitute a "combination" on such matters, opportunistically humoring the positions of comrades who might have been "very close" to the Spartacists?

Comrades, we thought it would be useful to go into detail on the points above. We also think it useful to pursue the discussion on the balance sheet of T4 in a written or oral way, until all desirable clarity is achieved among us. It remains true, as you emphasize, that "there seems to be little advantage in an abstract discussion on whether joining T4 was correct or not."

Our application to join is made in the name of comrades who for the most part left T4 the moment it decided to continue against their will, in the names of comrades who, without repudiating the general line T4 defended at the first LCR Congress, today intend to affirm a political evolution that has led them to state substantial agreement with the LTF platform. So we are anxious that the extended discussion you are proposing to us allow us to clear away the preliminaries as quickly as possible and continue the discussion on the basis of the documents, which express our present political position (our previous letter to the steering committee of the faction; the document, "Why we are joining the LTF," Internal Bulletin no. 31 of the LCR).

With that expectation, communist greetings.

The group of "ten"

## WHY WE ARE JOINING THE LENINIST-TROTSKYIST FACTION

by Alix, Benjamin, Kalandra, Kazan, Kelvin, Nemo, Promethee, Raphael, Varlin

From CRS #31, distributed to LCR Central Committee

Our decision to join the LTF is the outcome of a political course which began at the time of the Tenth World Congress and continued at the First Congress of the LCR. This document will present the main reasons, international and national, for our choice. This document cannot by itself present the theses, which have already been more fully explained either by the LTF or by certain contributions of Tendency 4, nor by itself to anticipate the further clarifications that the political debate will require. (This document may seem brief on certain points. Keep in mind that it has been cut by more than half at the request of the Political Bureau.)

### I. The International Debate: Some Guidelines

#### A. The Tenth World Congress: The Continuation of Error

To draw the lessons of the bankruptcy of the line adopted on Latin America at the ninth world congress, to analyze the symptoms of the crisis that were already apparent in some European sections, and to lead a deep-going struggle for the unity of the international -- such were the fundamental tasks whose accomplishment would have made the tenth world congress a step forward for the Trotskyist movement.

But, during the world congress, the IMT only deepened its past errors instead of recognizing and correcting them. It has thus been led to state that it was necessary to "readjust" the Transitional Program and to explicitly revise it on those points which concern the concept of the arming of the masses -- from strike pickets to workers' militias -- and to substitute for it a theory of "dialectical" combinations between mass violence and "minority violence," theories which have nevertheless already been the cause of so many disasters for our movement (from Latin America to June 21).

In this regard, different developments after the world congress proved that if the resolution on armed struggle played mainly the role of an ideological cover, allowing the majority to hide the failure of its Latin American orientation, it forms part of its general politics and still has practical implications in different countries (even in Europe).

The resolution on The Building of Revolutionary Parties in Capitalist Europe is also important in that it synthesizes all the politics of the IMT, the idealization of the "new vanguard" and the adaptation to its "con-

cerns" at the expense of the elementary tasks of the united front and of the construction of the party on the basis of the objective needs of the masses. This theory, which already guided several sections, was broadened until it was erected into a system. In addition, its method has not been restricted to capitalist Europe: in the United States, the representatives of the majority present their orientation document as an "application" of the European document; likewise the documents of one of the multiple grouplets of the majority in Argentina are attempting to apply this method for Latin America. In this regard, Comrade Roman, in the course of a polemic with Tendency 1 during the first congress of the LCR, was right in stressing that the importance of the European document was its method -- that of initiatives in action and winning hegemony inside the "new vanguard" -- and that the analysis of the political situation was only "secondary."

We permit ourselves to add on this "secondary" point, however, that the analysis of the European situation was also completely wrong. Thus, the analysis of the mounting class struggle and of the crisis of the political domination of the bourgeoisie is reduced to an objectivist prediction: either an early revolution or a forced march to a strong state. This analysis ignores at the same time the political role played by the class-collaborationist leaderships and the contradictory relations they maintain with the mass movement. It is an analysis which caused the majority to take nearly a year (from April 25, 1974 to March 11, 1975) to realize that, behind the contradictions within the bourgeoisie and the class-collaborationist politics of the workers parties, it was a revolutionary situation which was opened up in Portugal by the eruption of the masses onto the political scene. It is an analysis in the name of which they still refuse to understand, even today, the decisive role in the present political conjuncture in most of the countries of Europe (France, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Greece. . .) which is played by the popular-front politics of the Stalinist parties, dressed up in various forms, according to the different conditions of the class struggle. This incomprehension of the process of workers' radicalization and of its contradictory relation to the traditional apparatuses is shown in the mechanistic and objectivist theory of the "new vanguard," pushed to its extreme caricature in the definition which was given by Mandel in a 1969 document: "The appearance of a new revolutionary vanguard on a universal scale which has completely escaped from the control of the Stalinists, reformists and organized in an autonomous way."

The date of this document (1969), as well as its ob-

ject (the analysis of the world situation) certainly prove that the theory of the "new vanguard" is not the fruit of a concrete analysis of the concrete European situation but a thesis that is a "master key", a necessary methodological guarantee to justify the adaptation to centrism, "first phase of the world revolution." (Germain, August 1954.) These theoretical acquisitions of the European document opened the way first to political adaptationism to the ultraleft and centrist aspirations of the "new vanguard" and second, to a paralysis in face of the increasing popular frontism and of other class-collaborationist solutions (a paralysis expressed both in the form of minority exemplary actions and in the form of pure and simple "critical support"). Finally it is this double political adaptation that the "leftist" vocabulary on "out-flanking" the workers' leadership by the "new vanguard" vainly tries to cover.

However, this is nothing new, either theoretically or politically: simplistic and objectivist historical predictions, pseudo-"critical" adaptation to the immediate forms of radicalization and to the Stalinist or centrist leaderships, abdication of the tasks of the construction of the revolutionary party with a mass audience. . . It is item by item the method which prevailed during the centrist abdication of the program of the Fourth International when "the war that was coming" was supposed to be sufficient to make the Stalinists play a "more or less revolutionary" role.

The same things also led to pure and simple adaptation to Castroism and guerrillism at the expense of the most elementary tasks of building the Fourth International in Latin America. It was with very good reason that Hansen could write: "The method [of the European document] is the method that produced the ninth world congress orientation that led to disaster for two sections in Latin America," and that "All this echoes the method used twenty-two years ago to stampede the movement into voting for the tactic of entryism sui generis and putting it into effect with the utmost haste. . ." [IIDB, 1973, No. 12, pp. 42- 37. ]

## B. The International Since the World Congress

After the tenth world congress the international majority had to submit its political orientation to the test of events. Today it is possible to sketch out a balance sheet, first dealing with the internal life of the international.

### (1) Argentina, USA: The Little Maneuvers of the IMT

Coming out of the tenth congress, the centrifugal forces that endangered the unity of our movement were abated by the agreements that were passed at the time. Later developments have shown that the "organizational" concepts hidden behind certain attitudes on the part of

the majority have continued. In regard to this, there are two particularly eloquent examples: Argentina and the USA.

In relation to the Argentine Trotskyists, the majority opted for a new form of debate: it publicly attacked the PST while it knew that the whole starting point of the affair, the supposed signature on a document, was a mistake (a representative of the United Secretariat was in Argentina at the time). When the Ligue Communiste, during the legislative elections in 1973, called for voting for the bourgeois candidates of the popular front, or when the PRTI (C) accused the Fourth International of "harboring counter-revolutionaries in its midst," "agents of the CIA," nobody resorted to public attacks against them. If the IMT has resorted to unprincipled debating methods it is in order to once more cover up the overwhelming failure of its guerrilla line: the "elliptical" formulations of the ninth world congress led to the recognition of the PRT(C), an anti-Trotskyist party, as a section of the Fourth International. Luckily, they understood, faster than the majority did, that their "Brezhnevism filtered through Havana" had nothing to do with our movement and they "separated" themselves from the International. At the 1975 IEC meeting, five or six grouplets in Argentina could be counted claiming adherence to the IMT. This number has probably risen to seven or eight since two more splits have taken place. The majority is "incapable" of accounting for this curious process. Moreover, in the sections that it leads, it refuses to give the ranks the means of knowing the living reality of the PST, the largest party of the Fourth International: since it reads the bourgeois press of Argentina, where it finds arguments to attack the PST, it undoubtedly knows what La Nacion says of the role played by the PST in the major strikes of Villa Constitucion.

Let the ranks of the French section be informed of all the evidence on all of the PST's political activity and on the political orientation of the various majority groups in Argentina! Open up the debate -- this time internally -- on the tasks of revolutionary Marxists in the extremely difficult situation of the class struggle in Argentina! Then the polemic "on the PST" will take on its true dimensions. Then we will see the worth of the purely propagandistic "alternative" that results from applying the method of the European document, under the circumstances. For the moment, despite the depth of the issues under discussion, the debate as it has been launched and conducted by the majority takes on more the form of diversionary maneuvers than of fraternal and responsible confrontation of political lines.

Elsewhere, the co-religionists of the IMT in the USA (the IT) prepared a split that went off prematurely. After three months of secret political discussion,

the IT split was consummated at its congress, which explicitly adopted a political line of "entryism" into the SWP and YSA. Leaders of the International belonging to the IMT knew the dangers of such a line; not once did they bring to the attention of the SWP leadership the split course of the IT, putting their own narrow interests ahead of those of the International.

This demonstrates pretty clearly that the leaders of the IMT refuse to distinguish their responsibilities as leaders of the international from their own factional interests. That is precisely why the redefinition of principles and correct practices of democratic centralism -- an inseparable element of the leninist method of party building -- should be one of the main themes of the coming discussion in the international and is a condition for any long-lasting solution to its present crisis of leadership.

(2) Toward the Eleventh World Congress: From the Balance Sheet on Latin America to the Balance Sheet on Europe

At the tenth world congress the IMT tried to pull back to Europe, where it thought it had some glittering accomplishments, in order to make people forget its failures in Latin America. Unfortunately the acceleration of the crises in the European sections has been in proportion to the deepening of the class struggle.

In Great Britain, the IMG was threatened with a split during its last congress. Three tendencies claiming adherence to the IMT confronted each other in a climate of extreme factional tension that made the debate so confused that it is still hard today to see which were the real political differences.

In Italy, the stagnation of the section, in a period of sharpening class struggle, is a revealing symptom: the incapacity to oppose head-on the "historic compromise" and to accelerate the political crisis of the centrist organizations is the essential explanation for this fact.

In Germany, the confusion of the debate on the SPD, which crystallized all the oppositions, and has still not been cleared up, prevents the section from adopting a clear and coherent line vis-a-vis the workers' movement.

In Spain, the split that divided the section has never been explained by the IMT, except by utilizing routine slanders ("Lambertism" of the LCE, in CRS No. 11). Most of the French organization was, a little while ago, ignorant of the existence of the LCE, while its documents are still unknown. Today, the LCR-ETA VI has made a proposal for unity with the LCE. It would be wrong to see in this only a "tactical maneuver" of the majority; but it would also be wrong to think that this is a concretization of a general line of the IMT, concerning the unity and strengthening of the sections. In any case a complete balance sheet of the roads followed by the

two organizations since the split would permit an appreciation of the results of the two lines in the difficult conditions of the struggle against Franco's dictatorship.

In Portugal, the positions taken by the IMT have contributed very little up to now to clarify to the Portuguese Trotskyists any of the problems that they confront: the class nature and the role of the MFA, implications of the popular front line of the PCP, the alternative of class independence (in this regard we should go back to the document of Nemo, "Remarks on the Orientation vis-a-vis the Portuguese Revolution," and to the positions defended by the representatives of the LTF at the United Secretariat and in the press of the SWP and the LCE).

As in the French section, the crisis which is shaking many European sections of the Fourth International has little chance of being overcome by the voluntarist miracle of "Bolshevization" or of a "working-class turn." This crisis arises from political orientation. This is what puts on the agenda a broad reevaluation of the line defined by the IMT. It is also what puts once again at the center of the debate in the international the questions that have been treated only in circumstantial debates since the reunification congress of the Fourth International: how to analyze popular frontism in its different varieties; how to build the party on the basis of an alternative of class independence? How to struggle for the united front and for a workers' government?

All these questions gravitate, however, around a central problem whose scope goes well beyond Europe, and which had been at the root of the split of 1952-53: the understanding of the counter-revolutionary role of Stalinism and the Social Democracy and all its implications for the tasks of construction of the Fourth International.

On this subject, the empiricism and confusion of the majority has reached such proportions that it is difficult to restore what could constitute, even in an erroneous fashion, an overall conception of Stalinism. At least in its theoretical method the IMT seems on this subject to be definitely passing to the side of "socialism in one country," analyzing in a separate way each Communist Party, setting up real national peculiarities as criteria for strategic differentiation; but it is more and more incapable of clearly relating them to that which, beyond the diversity of situations in the mass struggle and of internal conflicts among the world bureaucracies, maintains the social and programmatic unity of Stalinism: ties to the bureaucratized workers states, "democratic" program, the rejection of real proletarian internationalism...

It is this method which has already led them to attribute a "dynamic of class against class" to a popular front and to analyze the CFDT of Lip as an "empirical revolutionary leadership" after having characterized Tito, Mao and Ben Bella as "unconscious Trotskyists". It is this method which is always looking for "shortcuts" in the construction of the party, and regularly leads to the same temptations to be parasites of the traditional apparatuses

(from the vote for the Union of the Left in 1973 to the current speculations with regard to "the critical wing of the MFA") and that renews at each stage of the class struggle the illusion that a Fifth International -- on the program of Guevara, Ho Chi Minh or of Piaget? -- can advantageously replace the Fourth. It is also this old tendency toward the kind of empiricism which generated all the political adaptations and all the errors in constructing the international, which have surfaced anew, in the current debate on the role of the Vietnamese leadership.

### (3) A Central Debate: Indochina

The fall of Saigon constitutes a gigantic victory of the Indochinese peoples against imperialism and its leader, America, at a decisive moment in the increasing worldwide class struggles. This only gives more importance to a correct political appreciation of the role played by the Vietnamese leadership, and to a definition of the tasks for the construction of the international in that area.

For many weeks, an accredited representative of the IMT, Pierre Rousset, has been directly giving the leaders credit for the victory brought about by the Indochinese masses. Moreover, at no time did the organ of the French section of the Fourth International judge it useful to differentiate itself programmatically from the political line followed by these leaderships. True, according to Rouge No. 298, "... a series of factors are objectively preparing the birth of grave bureaucratic deformations in the new workers states... The orientation of the VCP, inherited in this respect from the Stalinized Third International, adopted empirically, combined with the backwardness of Indochina and with the deformations already existing in the DRV, stands in the way of fighting this danger head on. The VCP's conception of a workers state is not that of a soviet form. This is reflected in its politics of 'National Union.' This is what should be criticized."

One could not, under the cover of "reservations" vis-a-vis that Vietnamese leadership, be more apologetic. Thus, if "grave bureaucratic deformations" are in preparation (and already exist in the DRV), they are not due to the overall strategy and program of the VCP and the North Vietnamese government, nor to their objective situation in relation to the masses on the one hand and the social interest of the international bureaucracy on the other. Rather they are due to the "backward" nature of the Indochinese social structures. Here one finds the old Menshevik thesis on objective conditions that are not "ripe" for the dictatorship of the proletariat. True, Rousset recognizes a certain role of the subjective factor in explaining things. But this is only in order to reduce the "heritage of the Third International" to

simple "empiricism" on the part of the Vietnamese leadership and to a mysterious deficiency in its program: its rejection of soviets. This completely passes over all the political and social ties woven during forty years between them and the Soviet (and Chinese) bureaucracy! It ignores all the programmatic references made to the revolution by stages, which have never been denied.

Moreover, according to Rousset, it is permissible to criticize an anti-Leninist conception of the workers state, but not to confront it head-on and oppose to it a Trotskyist alternative!

This political capitulation to the Vietnamese leadership, however, takes us back to the debates that have been going on in the international for many years and that today take on all their real dimension:

1. Before going to the core of the subject, it would be useful to make a brief review concerning the role played by the international antiwar movement in the imperialist downfall in Indochina. No one would deny, we hope, that its American representatives in particular have contributed to an appreciable degree to force the Nixon administration to withdraw the U. S. troops and to stop the bombing, even though, of course, the determining factor never ceased to be the inflexible resistance of the Vietnamese masses themselves. The American leaders knew that to pursue their policy of intervention was also to take the risk of confronting an unprecedented political and social crisis right in the United States itself. Because of this the withdrawal of the troops, obtained by this double pressure, has been the main factor in the disintegration of the puppet regime which, in the absence of a real social basis, could not survive the departure of its imperialist masters. This proves the merit of the slogan put forward by our comrades of the SWP in the antiwar movement: "immediate and unconditional withdrawal of the troops," around which millions of Americans were mobilized.

At the time, however, it was contested as much by the partisans of "negotiations" as by those who thought it was more important to respond to the needs of politicization of the new American vanguard than to mobilize the masses around the so-called "elementary" tasks of international solidarity. On the other hand, how should we evaluate today the positions of the majority in 1969, which defended the suspension of anti-imperialist activities in Europe? Does anyone still think, as Germain stated at the December 1969 IEC, that "for revolutionaries in France, Italy and Germany, there is no possibility of directly contributing to the victory of the revolution in South Vietnam except by making a revolution in their own countries"?

2. The second debate concerns the fact that unconditional support to the Indochinese peoples should be immediately posed as independent of all programmatic agreement with the Vietnamese leadership. But for Rouge

the total support to the Indochinese peoples has always been subordinate to "homage," itself quasi-unconditional, to their leaders.

This brings us back right away to an analysis of the Paris Peace Accords, which at that time the IMT characterized in a one-sided way as a change in the relationship of forces in favor of the Indochinese peoples. The majority based itself on two points of the Accords: U. S. imperialism could no longer bomb Vietnam; the American troops lost all possibilities of direct intervention. But that was not in any way the essential. As a concession made under the pressure of the Stalinist bureaucracies in Moscow and Peking, coupled with the massive bombing perpetrated by American aviation, the accords imposed on the Vietnamese precise political commitments conforming to the plans for peaceful coexistence in this area: abandonment of the demand for the Thieu regime to be dismantled before any cease-fire agreement; the acceptance of working for the constitution of a "Council of National Reconciliation and Concord with three components": the PRG, the puppets, and an undefined third force; preparation of elections that at a certain time, according to the wishes of the PRG, should set up a coalition government; finally the recognition of the right of the United States to have "a word to say" on the future of Vietnam, in flagrant violation of the principle of total self-determination of the Indochinese peoples. . .

In such a situation, the role of revolutionary Marxists was not, of course, in any way to reproach the PRG for looking for a political compromise. That can and sometimes must be accepted even by a revolutionary leadership at certain points in the class struggle. On the other hand, the Trotskyists then had the imperative duty to denounce the pressures exercised by Moscow and Peking to force the Vietnamese to sign this political accord, which has represented on the part of these bureaucracies the explicit will to lock the class struggle in the strait-jacket of peaceful coexistence and therefore constitutes a major betrayal of the interests of the Indochinese and world proletariat.

The fact is that this "compromise" corresponded in reality to the acknowledged objectives of the PRG's political program and that it, far from presenting the accords as a forced concession, far from denouncing the pressure brought to bear on them by Moscow and Peking, covered up this betrayal by presenting the accords as a "great victory."

We recall in this regard that the Bolsheviks, when obliged by the international relationship of forces to sign the treaty of Brest-Litovsk, never disguised this compromise as a "victory." The French section, however, failed seriously in its tasks. The thesis of the "change in the relationship of forces" hid to a large degree the pressure exerted by China and the USSR. Moreover, Rouge repeated the PRG's characterization of the accords as a "great victory" without stressing in the least

the political price that was paid for the U. S. withdrawal. But how could it have done so, given that since 1971 the Ligue explicitly supported the "seven-point peace program" of the PRG, a program that referred in particular to the goal of a "coalition government" with the bourgeoisie. It should be recalled as well that when, at a Central Committee meeting in October of 1972, a number of leaders of the majority -- among them Krivine and Frank -- attempted to correct this scandalous position, they were in a minority (46 to 6!). This line of complete adaptation to the conciliationist and class collaborationist program of the PRG was deepened even further with the adoption of the slogan, "Sign the accords now" (the January 20, 1973, demonstration) which, being addressed to the American government, led in fact to implicitly recognizing the right to have a say over the future of Vietnam. (In this regard, "unconditional withdrawal" was the only demand that could be made on them.)

The fact that the Paris accords have not been sufficient to hold back the class struggle in Vietnam cannot in any way justify a posteriori either the erroneous analysis of their political content made at the time or the orientation that led us to cover up as much the immensity of the betrayal by Moscow and Peking as the class-collaborationist nature of the program and concrete politics of the PRG. Yes, the Paris accords have proven incapable of stabilizing the "status quo" in South Vietnam: caught between the pull-out of the U. S. troops and the growing mobilization of the masses, the Thieu regime collapsed, and with it the puppet state apparatus -- not under the political and military offensive of the PRG, but rather due to its complete lack of any political and social base. This situation of a power vacuum created then a very clear alternative: either the masses would break onto the political scene and impose structures of their own power (soviets), in which case the revolution would take in all of Vietnam, directly endangering the North Vietnamese bureaucracy -- or the PRG would itself take the leadership of this process in order to channel it within limits compatible with their own bureaucratic interests and those of North Vietnam.

Thus, to place the credit for the taking of Saigon on the "political plans of the PRG" and to use this as an argument to analyze the accords as a "simple tactical maneuver" on their part, is to simultaneously minimize the decisive role the Vietnamese masses played in the recent victory and to cover up for the second time the fact that the framework of the Paris accords fit in perfectly with the "plans" of the PRG and its political program and that this deceived the masses as to their contents as much as presenting them as a "victory."

On this path, Rousset is logically condemned to go further yet. Developing the argument in favor of the PRG, that the class struggle made null and void a number of points of the Paris accords, he became a zealous defender of what, at the time of the taking of Saigon,

could still be salvaged from the class-collaborationist terms of the Paris accords, of the PRG's program for the "democratic stage" (Rouge, No. 294): "the PRG still affirms that it is ready to negotiate, but only after the ousting of the present regime and its replacement by an administration that shows its willingness to apply the Paris accords;" or (Rouge No. 295), "This is also the function of the calls for the formation of an administration in Saigon which accepts the Paris accords."

This led him quite naturally to present without a shadow of criticism the coalition politics of the PRG, which is itself already an interclass bloc. Rouge No. 297: "In addressing itself to them [the third force] the PRG seeks an alliance with that sector of the petty bourgeoisie that is not already organized directly by its clandestine members. . . the PRG's policy in relation to this third component is not purely conjunctural, either." This shameless justification of popular frontism -- of a lasting alliance with bourgeois forces on the program of petty-bourgeois democracy -- finds its full flavor when one recalls the sharp reprimand that the United Secretariat (May 1974) felt obliged to publicly address to the Argentine Trotskyists of the PST, stating that the United Secretariat of the Fourth International, "which has always rejected any form of class collaboration and has consistently counterposed the revolutionary conception of the workers' (or workers' and peasants') united front to the reformist and Stalinist conceptions of class collaboration with the "democratic" parties of the bourgeoisie. . ."

3. This directly poses a second basic question, that of the nature of the Vietnamese leadership. For some people there is no doubt: "the Vietnamese leadership as a whole has assimilated the decisive implications of the permanent revolution for the colonial and semicolonial countries," (Le Parti Communiste Vietnamien, by Pierre Rousset, p. 98.) The "decisive implications" are not better explained anywhere than in theses 2 and 3 about the permanent revolution, by Trotsky:

(2) "The theory of the Permanent Revolution means that the true and complete solution of the democratic and national-liberation tasks cannot be anything else than the proletarian dictatorship, which leads the oppressed nation and in the first place the peasant masses."

(3) "But the alliance of these two classes will only be made through a relentless fight against the influence of the national and liberal bourgeoisie."

On the basis of this reference, Rousset should explain his laudatory characterization of the VCP. He should more precisely situate in time the "turn" towards the permanent revolution by a party born directly from the Stalinist Third International. In 1947, the Trotskyists also underlined that while the Indochinese Communist Party had "given political life to the masses of the cities and the country," its leadership and

Ho Chi Minh in particular had followed step by step all the turns of the Communist International (the ultra-right program of Than Nien in 1925-27, the ultraleftist course of the Third Period, the active application of the peoples' front policy of 1935-37) until the "Communist Party's suicide in November 1945, when at the moment that it was very influential among the worker and peasant masses, it spontaneously decreed its own dissolution, in the name of the national and racial union, sacrificing the class struggle on the patriotic altar."

(Mouvements nationaux et luttes de classe au Vietnam [National Movements and Class Struggle in Vietnam] 1947.)

The Trotskyists characterized this policy at the time, saying: "In Indochina, under the pretext of the small weight represented by the proletariat, under the pretext of realizing a deceptive national union through class collaboration, the Stalinist leadership has looked for a compromise with French imperialism and directs its blows against the vanguard: the Trotskyist leaders Ta Thu Thau, Tran Van Trach and several others were murdered in February 1946 in order to clear the way for the March 6 accords. The Stalinist policy was also determined by the concern of Soviet diplomacy to prevent American imperialism from getting a foothold in that country." (Idem.)

In the same way, in 1954, when the VCP put confidence in the imperialists, disarmed the revolutionary forces in the south, described the Geneva accords as a great victory (using the same method as with the Paris accords), while the North was going on to build socialism in one country -- was this a concretization of the principles of the permanent revolution? And more recently, when Nguyen Hun Too, the PRG President, declared to the Guardian of June 27, 1973, "The NLF and the PRG are defending the rights of the plantation owners, the peasants and the religious communities in relation to the land that belongs to them," when Pham Van Dong, leader of the DRV, stated to the Daily World, "I reaffirm that the objective in the South is to carry out the national democratic revolution, not the socialist revolution. Those who say that we want to impose a Communist administration in the South are imbeciles. It is clear that our perspective is the following: to build socialism in the North and to carry out the national democratic revolution in the South which, step by step, will lead to the political reunification of our country." Is this the most developed expression of the permanent revolution?

4. True, Rousset tries to use the creation of "workers states" in Indochina to show that the "real" program of the VCP was indeed the "permanent revolution" (in an admittedly "non-soviet, bureaucratic" form, which is itself a contradiction in terms).

Let us first note that the class nature of the new states (Cambodia and South Vietnam) is not today (beginning of May, 1975) definitely determined, either on the level of governmental forms (coalition or non-coalition), or on the level of the transformation of property and productive relations, or on the level of effective reunification. Of course, the total downfall of the bourgeois puppet apparatus and the level reached by the class struggle can effectively lead in a short amount of time to the creation of a workers state and to a reunification with the North. But such was not yet the case at the moment (end of April 1975) when Rousset himself described the last efforts of the PRG to give life to a hypothetical "third tendency" which was swept away by the downfall of the puppet regime. Then Rousset did not exclude the hypothesis of an "enlarged" government, but this did not at all prevent him from characterizing the new state as a "workers state," without delay. For him the characterization of an eventual governmental coalition as workers government it deduced, without hesitation, from the fact that the VCP would be "hegemonic" within the PRG or an "enlarged" coalition. This is exactly the same argument that the Stalinists themselves have always used to justify their alliances with the democratic bourgeoisie. Furthermore, in Cambodia this hegemony, according to Rousset (report to the CC, May 1975), would be acquired by the mere fact of the "links" between the FUNK, the VCP and the PRG -- a kind of "impregnation" or "contagion" effect..

On the other hand, even the hypothesis -- probable without being immediate -- of a reunification that implies the assimilation of the South into the social structures of North Vietnam is not enough to solve the problem of the characterization of the Vietnamese leadership and its links with Stalinism. In this regard, it must be remembered that Rousset refers to two possible definitions of Stalinism:

-- The one that he presents as "superficial," which makes a party whose program is Stalinist "in appearances only" into an authentically Stalinist party. Unfortunately for him, the "appearances" of the VCP program strangely enough corresponded to its real politics in 1945, 1954 and 1973, and they are still noted in the "wariness" of the reunification. On the other hand, how can Rousset affirm that the VCP in its "real program" is revolutionary "within regional limits" but still not so in its comprehension of the "overall problem" of the world revolution? (CC report, May 1975,) Would "socialism in one region" be for him a necessary addition to the "permanent revolution in the colonial and semicolonial countries"?

-- The definition of Stalinism presented as the "good one," characterizes as Stalinist a party that subordinates the interests of the revolution in its own country to the interests of a bureaucracy of a degenerated workers state. For him this definition seems inapplicable

to the VCP by virtue of the "independent road" that this party seems to have taken in the international Communist movement. This forces him -- even for the sake of his own definition of Stalinism -- to "forget" that the VCP has subordinated the interests of the Vietnamese revolution to the Kremlin and the French Communist Party, then in the Government, in 1945, and to Peking and Moscow in characterizing the Geneva and Paris accords as "great victories."

And still today Rousset needs to systematically minimize the weight of the bureaucratic interests of the North Vietnamese state and the fact that, at the point reached by the political crisis in South Vietnam, the taking of power by the PRG also had the function of preventing the development of the masses' independent activity. Thus Rousset uses rather unscrupulous maneuvers to demonstrate the "non-Stalinist" character of the VCP and its "centrist and bureaucratic" nature. In his report to the Central Committee in May 1975, he left out even the last adjective, speaking of "left-centrism," moreover apologizing that such a characterization had too much of a distrustful connotation.

This reminds us curiously enough of an article by Weber who, just when interest in China became most fashionable, characterized the Chinese leadership as a "revolutionary bureaucracy".

But this brings us back to an old criterion of the majority. For the IMT, a communist party that practices "armed struggle" or that finds itself driven into the creation of a workers state (even if "bureaucratically deformed") necessarily leaves the Stalinist orbit and must be considered a "centrist" party.

This debate requires a brief historical account. In 1945, in numerous countries that had been dominated by governments tied to German and Japanese imperialism during the war, coalition governments were constituted to defend private property. In France and Italy, the bourgeois order was saved; but this did not satisfy U. S. imperialism, then all-powerful, and the latter began the cold war. In self-defense, the Kremlin answered by adopting a "left" course: insurrections led by Stalinist parties in the Philippines and Indonesia, the beginning of the CCP campaign, the expulsion of the capitalist ministers from the coalition governments in Eastern Europe; the Kremlin could not take the risk of seeing this part of the world fall into the hands of the U. S. and hence become a base that would threaten the very existence of the workers state itself. Deformed workers states, facsimiles of the social and political relations prevailing in the USSR, were created by bureaucratic and military means in Eastern Europe. At the same time a process of armed struggle developed in China and Yugoslavia, directed by the leaders who had been educated in the school of Stalinism, but who at the time kept open some latitude for action independent of Moscow. Their victorious outcome marked a serious defeat for imperialism. The Soviet victory over German and

Japanese imperialism and the extension of the Stalinist system to Eastern Europe nevertheless favored the establishment of social structures in Yugoslavia and China similar to those in the Stalinist Soviet Union.

The IMT will undoubtedly accept the parallel between China, Yugoslavia and Vietnam, because in its view the fact that Mao or Tito had been led to "take power arms in hand" is enough to make them "centrists" and to abolish all that links them organically to Stalinism: their roots in the bureaucratized Third International, their undenied support to the "revolution by stages," their never-repudiated defense of the bureaucracy's social interests. Furthermore, why not apply this criterion to the CPSU itself, which, though Stalinized, did not hesitate to overturn property relations in Eastern Europe? Should all criticisms of the CPSU therefore be accompanied by an "homage" to its vanguard role in the social revolution in Eastern Europe?

In reality, these historical precedents should serve to help understand the complexity of the internal contradictions of the international Stalinist bureaucracy -- not to justify a doubtful category of "bureaucratic centrism." They help illuminate how the world unity of Stalinism today defined by the general role of the bureaucracy in relation to the overall confrontation between the classes, cannot be equated either with the absolute monolith of a unified apparatus or with the Soviet state bureaucracy.

In the first place, the bureaucratic nature of the new deformed workers states is based on particular social interests, which can come into conflict with those of the Soviet bureaucracy. Secondly, the historical function of Stalinism itself -- the Stalinist party's character as the counter-revolutionary leadership of the working class -- implies the breakup of the absolute centralization of the world Communist movement (the dissolution of the Comintern) and an increasing tendency of the various CPs to "adapt" to the particular conditions of the class struggle in their social context. The increasing rivalries between the bureaucratic states (the Yugoslav "schism," the Sino-Soviet conflict, etc.); and the flowering of several "national roads" are thus the manifestations of a crisis of Stalinism which do not call into question the organic unity of the international bureaucracy at a higher level.

On the other hand, the Trotskyist understanding of the "cynically counter-revolutionary" role of Stalinism puts it in "historical perspective."

In other words, interests, tactics and quite diversified political practices can characterize various Stalinist parties. But this can only be understood within the framework to what remains its common theoretical and practical reliance on the "revolution by stages" theory, which is itself the expression of its social links to the interests of the bureaucracies of the workers states. In this regard the impressionistic theories of the majority

from the "social-democratization" of the Western CPs to the "centrism" of most of the others (according to some, even the Portuguese CP) have no other merit than to spread the illusion of a miraculous self-liquidation of Stalinism, that would spontaneously relieve the Fourth International of at least half of the tasks its founding program assigned to it.

Finally, this characterization of the historical role of Stalinism has two other implications for Trotskyists. First, the Stalinist program is not at all identified with "electoralism" as opposed to "armed struggle." Its real opposition to the permanent revolution is much more fundamentally based on the conception of the historical tasks and the role of the various social forces, which leads to the line of a "bourgeois democratic stage." Second, it cannot be excluded that the Stalinists may be forced to go beyond their stated program, in exceptional cases. According to the Transitional Program, "one cannot categorically deny in advance the theoretical possibility that, under the influence of completely exceptional circumstances (war, defeat, financial crash, mass revolutionary pressure, etc.), the petty-bourgeois parties including the Stalinists may go further than they themselves wish along the road to a break with the bourgeoisie." [Trotsky, Transitional Program for Socialist Revolution, p. 95] This is the context in which we must place all the historical cases in which a Stalinist leadership has been led to create a workers state. In so doing, these leaderships went beyond their program without renouncing it ("socialism in one country") and without breaking their social links with the bureaucracy. This is precisely what is reflected in the necessarily deformed character of the new states and of the rejection of all real internationalism. Furthermore, in each of these cases it is necessary to clearly distinguish the leadership's "plan" from the processes of the class struggle as it developed in such a combination of exceptional circumstances; and the Transitional Program was referring to this overall movement of the class struggle and not to the leadership's will, in concluding, "In any case one thing is not to be doubted: even if this highly improbable variant somewhere at some time becomes a reality and the 'workers' and farmers' government' in the above-mentioned sense is established in fact, it would represent merely a short episode on the road to the actual dictatorship of the proletariat." [Idem.]

In the same sense, and not as "homage to the revolutionary vanguard role" of the VCP, the actuality of the socialist revolution in Indochina must be affirmed today. But here as elsewhere, history can only be accomplished in opposition to the Stalinist apparatuses!

In this regard we will note a reassuring sentence (Rouge, No. 298) in which Rousset says, "We are aware that the Trotskyist movement -- the Fourth International -- has an irreplaceable role to play to revive the real conception of workers' democracy and to solve the world

crisis of communist leadership."

At this point in the debate, the IMT should clearly indicate what political implications follow for the Fourth International from the characterization of the VCP as "bureaucratic centrist" -- in connection with the balance sheet of the failure to build a Trotskyist section in Vietnam for twenty years; in connection with such tasks and the need for political revolution in the North and in a reunified state: and while we are discussing this, in connection with the same problems in the many different states that already have the good fortune of being, in the benevolence of the IMT, under the leadership of "bureaucratic centrist" parties: Yugoslavia, Cuba, China, . . .

### C. The End of the "Third Way"

It was during the international debate (1973) that the first elements critical of the international majority appeared in France. These members called at the time for the formation of the "Against the Stream" tendency. At the same time, in two other European sections (Germany and Italy) "nuclei" critical of the IMT were formed. Following the sudden discovery of the Latin American disaster and the majority's refusal to initiate a real self-criticism of its ninth world congress orientation, these various currents began to question -- still in a limited way -- the method of the majority. The LTF-IMT debate, which more and more clearly reflects "deep methodological differences" (see the Hansen document), little by little led these currents to grasp, in a more or less confused way, the common basis for the orientation of the ninth world congress and the European document, and to begin questioning the concept of the "new vanguard" and the theory of party building by stages.

But the rise of these currents in Europe took place in a situation also characterized by hardly any active presence on the part of the LTF in these sections, and by the fact that throughout the European document, the IMT exalted the experiences of its model section, the "Wallonians." Due to circumstantial reasons more than to clearly established programmatic differences, the European "minority" currents remained formally independent of the LTF. However, during the world congress, the "third tendency" had some difficulty politically justifying its independence from the LTF. This led it to a policy of balancing by which it tried to make up for its weak programmatic arsenal. In this way the "Frankfort Statement" (November 1973) hardly hid these nuclei's lack of positive orientation and their serious differences with the LTF: "The LTF, hiding behind principled and abstract criticisms of the majority policy, avoids a series of essential problems that revolutionary Marxists ought to integrate into their strategy. This is the case with the question of workers' self-defense and the preparation of the vanguard for armed struggle." This adds nothing basically new to the empty

arguments used by the majority to liquidate its orientation of a "strategy of prolonged continental civil war" without having to say so. In the same way the document "New Vanguard or Construction of a Party" expresses an unconscious submission to the pressures of the majority "environment". After showing the adaptationist implications of the "new vanguard" thesis, the document hastily provides itself with a "left" cover by writing, without proof, that "whether condemned to build nothing but a broad social-democratic movement (as in the case of the SWP) or a large ultraleft grouplet (as in the case of the ex-Ligue), the same myth of party-building by stages, etc., is applied." The ever-convenient theory of the "two extremes"!

On the other hand, the formation of Tendency 4 during the pre-congress discussion before the first congress of the LCR, facilitated an initial practical confrontation with the program of the LTF. For the comrades who signed this document (we were all either members or close to the "third international tendency"), this confrontation proved that on the essential questions it was useless to try to draw a "political diagonal" between the two lines that confronted each other in the international. On the analysis of Stalinism, on the method of party building, on the practical implications of struggle based on the Transitional Program and for a workers' government, the analysis of the LTF was the alternative to the deviations of the majority. Refusing to draw this objective conclusion from their first battles, other comrades were led to an attitude of Quixotic self-proclamation (Laffitte in France, the FMR in Italy). But the majority seized on the irresponsible behavior which resulted from their political isolation in order to initiate measures of bureaucratic expulsions that helped them avoid a debate on the real issues.

The supporters of the former third tendency, however, were not the only representatives of critical currents which arose out of the crisis of the international majority itself. Thus the comrades grouped around Tendency 1 during the first congress of the LCR expressed on a political level a deep current of questioning about the European document supposedly illustrated by the practices of the French section. Tendency 1 also helped give quite a broad hearing to the fight against the majority's opportunism on the Union of the Left (its fight over the characterization of the Union of the Left as "class collaborationist" not a "class-against-class dynamic"), or concerning centrism (for example, its fight during the convention concerning plans for fusion with the PSU). It also gave form to many members' hopes for a serious reorientation of mass work. But this critical approach had serious limitations. The balance sheet of the congress presented by Tendency 4 remarks correctly, "As soon as Tendency 1 tries to develop its empirical criticisms of the practice of

the organization, a little bit more coherently, it led in fact to challenge the European document, the "new vanguard" and the line of adaptation to centrism, that is, objectively, toward Tendency 4. The elaborately balanced compromises of Tendency 1 do not hide its own inconsistency nor the fact that its criticisms once begun can only be made politically coherent if the majority's method is fundamentally called into question".

This primary contradiction can only deepen with the progress of the national debate and all the more so with that of the international debate. That is why today the effective continuation of the course adopted by Tendency 1 at the congress implies changing the ground of the debate, passing from dispersed empirical criticisms to general questions of method.

If they do not, their course would be reduced to correcting point by point the most obvious errors of the European document. . . But the real problem today is not to "up-date" a useless document; it is rather to show, through the discrimination of sections that have tried to follow it, the fundamentally erroneous character of this "party-building tactic." Any attitude of tactical flexibility can only play the role of a screen hiding the central task of the eleventh world congress.

Is it necessary to remind comrades how the "criticism" operation of Comrade Beauvais during the last congress allowed the IMT to avoid making a real balance sheet of its Latin American orientation? Was it not on a verbal promise of "amendments based on his document" that the French majority succeeded in having the dubious "Resolution on Armed Struggle in Latin America" approved by a massive vote? No, today no more than yesterday, for the comrades who wish to return to the method of the Transitional Program, the first task is not to "gain a better knowledge of its weaknesses in order to better fight the minority." It is to draw up a political and militant alternative on the basis of the gains of the LTF.

## II. THE "WORKING-CLASS TURN" OF THE LCR, LEAD SECTION OF THE IMT

### A. From the Presidential Elections to the Founding Congress of the LCR

The preparation of the first congress of the LCR took place during an alarming deepening of the crisis of the organization, mainly due to its inability to meet the objective needs of the conjuncture, characterized by the rise of the class struggle, the dominant role played by the Union of the Left and the development of the crisis of the political domination of the bourgeoisie. This incapacity was only the continuation of the totally wrong attitude that the LCR had taken toward the Union of the Left since the 1973 leg-

islative elections. During the presidential campaign, the line of the FCR was to put forward an ultra-propagandistic perspective of "outflanking by the new mass vanguard" (as with the Piaget campaign) along with an adventuristic gamble on the "class dynamic" of the Union of the Left.

Likewise, during the postal strike, the accumulation of opportunist errors led to a nearly complete abdication -- Tendency 3 has spoken of a "breach of duty." In the first place, we can mention the open rejection of an offensive agitational fight around the slogan of a strike committee, as a superior democratic form of centralization for the postal workers' struggle. This was justified not only by tactical considerations, which as such would have been perfectly acceptable, but was also theorized in principled terms: "To put forward a strike committee when the trade union leadership recognized by the workers in this struggle are against it can have only one meaning, which is to put forward an alternative leadership, a new divisive factor"!!! (CRS, No. 21, p. 5.) Totally confusing the problem of unity of the mass movement with that of breaking with the treacherous leaderships, this tail-endist position logically also leads the FCR to refuse to denounce the objective role of the pseudo-"general strike" of November 19 and of the "renewable strikes" in the public sectors as a cover for a systematic policy of isolating the postal workers and undercutting the movement. Between the old used-up slogan of the "springboard strike" on the one hand, and a confrontation painfully disproven by reality -- with workers' traditional leaderships around slogans for a "general strike until the demands are met" and for a "CP-SP government" on the other hand, the FCR has once more chosen the path of least resistance.

From the presidential elections to the PTT strike, the FCR thus began to drift powerlessly in the wake of the popular front. This orientation is no longer due to the offhand conduct of "exemplary initiatives" which led to June 21 and led some to hope for "reconquest of the factory" in August 1973 at Lip. On the contrary, the objective consequences of the majority's policy unveil more and more clearly its opportunist aspects vis-a-vis the Union of the Left and its centrist wing.

This tendency of adapting to the popular-front leaderships received its first theoretical cover with Comrade Segur's contribution (CRS No. 7). His cogitations on the Chilean Popular Unity, "a crossroad of possibilities," like his futuristic ramblings about "the Union of the Left having something in common with the parliamentary beginning of the Revolution," feed the old confusions about the "class against class dynamic." They support the same theory of "outflanking" and justify the same conception of party building that Segur airily defined when he stated, concerning Chile, "Because of the absence of a revolutionary party and

the presence of a reformist bloc leading the UP, one can say that the outcome was already decided in advance." (CRS, No. 7, p. 7) If words have any meaning this implies that the UP is no longer identified in an absolute way with what Segur timidly calls the "reformist bloc": that a revolutionary leadership could easily have replaced the CP-SP leadership "at the head of the UP" by resolutely riding herd on the "class struggle dynamic" of this coalition. In this objectivist scheme, the objective is no longer to rely on the movement of the proletariat towards its independence to sweeping away its treacherous leaderships, but to make them evolve in a favorable direction before taking their place. . . in favor of the great outflanking.

The same methodological mistake fundamentally related, appears in the June 15 and 16, 1974, resolution, which in interpreting the increasing recruitment of the SP during the presidential elections, notices only that "it swings to the right but also to a certain degree to the left of the CP." This journalistic style hardly hides the leadership's difficulties in analyzing the working-class radicalization through the distorted prism of the passing fads of the "new vanguard." The fantasized characterizations of the French social democracy, which prevailed at the third congress of the LC ("marginal bourgeois grouplet," then "a composite party, neither working class nor bourgeois") reveal the same method. The facts themselves have since then obliged the organization to make an empirical adjustment. But the only purpose of attributing "left" reflexes, in relation to the CP, to certain currents within the SP is to reconcile the "theory" of the "new vanguard" with the revival of reformism, in spite of all the evidence. In a word, what Segur's document and the June 1974 resolution show is that all the elements of indecision and confusion brought together in the Majority's orientation crystallize on the key question of the relationship between the masses and the apparatuses. Whether the progressive characteristics of the mass movement are attributed to the leaderships or all manifestations of radicalization are reduced to the simplistic schema of a broad vanguard "breaking politically with reformism," the effect is to develop two aspects of the same methodological aberrations: the unwarranted identification of the masses with their leaderships. In the first case, this confusion leads to ignoring the counter-revolutionary role of the Stalinist and social democratic bureaucracies; in the second case, it leads to failing to understand the dialectical strengthening of the traditional organizations and weakening of their leaderships, which occurs in any period of rising class struggle.

Through these serious political uncertainties there

is, nevertheless, a discernible change of the objective position of the French section in the new political conjuncture. In its own way, the congress of the "working class tum" recognized this.

#### B. The Congress of the Outstretched Hand to the PSU

We do not intend to draw up here a detailed balance sheet of the Congress. The balance sheet of Tendency 4 correctly does so. Two points need to be re-emphasized, however:

1. The focus of the leadership on external publicity of the discussions had no parallel except the numerous methods used to avoid internal political confrontation; limitations on the rights of expression of tendencies; inability to seriously answer the criticisms of Tendency 4 (except in an article published in Rouge based on a shoddy amalgam); factional behavior throughout the congress, which functioned to avoid the real debate and to mask the deep internal difference within Tendency 2 by unworthy means. (Thus, without any real debates, the Sand Amendment was achieved, setting up autonomous women's groups within the organization, the slogan of a CP-SP government was rejected, and the perspective of fusion with the PSU was set).

2. As the Tendency 4 balance sheet notes, "the adaptation to the 'aspirations' of the new vanguard can only follow its political oscillations. But today these oscillations lead the LCR to the right, toward direct adaptation to the centrist organizations (the PSU) and through them to the apparatuses. Moreover, an article by Bensaïd published in Politique Hebdo, No. 157, has given the Majority reply to the question asked by Tribune Socialista before the Congress, yes or no, will Tendency 2's "lucidity" lead it to abandon the unfortunate "Leninist and Trotskyist conception of the party"?

Thus, for Bensaïd, the Union of the Left should not be likened to "a classical popular front, calling for an equally classical response of denouncing the compromise with the bourgeoisie and demanding that the workers' parties apply their program." It seemed like a bad dream! Who in the Trotskyist movement has ever understood the "classical response" to mean demanding that the workers' parties apply their program? But Bensaïd does not go fighting windmills just by chance. By doing so, he surreptitiously makes the point that it isn't worth the trouble to "denounce the compromises with the bourgeoisie" and takes up an old refrain: history is breathing down our neck and we don't have time to build a mass Leninist party, so we need to find some other means, etc.

"For that, we need, as quickly as possible, a revolutionary force which is really implanted in the working class. The LCR will contribute to this. It cannot

succeed alone." What "revolutionary force" is meant? In the past, we were inflexible and full of 'Leninist self-sufficiency.' It was because we had to fight the ultra-lefts by ourselves. The PSU at that time was content to play an arbitrating role without taking a position on basic issues, This point of contention can now be eliminated." In other words, "Leninism" is fine for fighting the ultra-lefts, but it becomes a cumbersome "self-sufficiency" when the goal is to merge with the PSU. For the problem of building the party is discussed in these same unbelievable terms:

"What is involved here are not tactics, maneuvers, conflicts over influence or recruitment operations. What is involved is a decisive battle to establish a revolutionary party in France. In this battle the LCR and the PSU have the heaviest responsibility... We think the winning of the broad vanguard implies the converging of our courses. To be effective, this convergence cannot be limited to one-shot, conjunctural alliances. ... We are ready, following a discussion which is not conducted by quotes from the classics but in the light of action, to seek organizational unity with the comrades of the PSU."

It couldn't be more clear! Defined in this way, the "PSU operation" plays a central role today in the policy of the majority: it is no longer satisfied with the idea that "winning hegemony in the new vanguard" can advantageously replace patient work of propagating our program and exposing the treacherous role of the leaderships, so a further step is taken in substitutionism and putting tactical considerations first: from now on it is sufficient for an organization "with the program" (or what is left of it, ...) and a party with the "attraction" for the new vanguard, according to Bensaid, to be wedded for this wonderful operation, in which each side retains major responsibilities equally, to allow the LCR -- but not it "alone" -- to win "as quickly as possible" this miraculous "hegemony." From one form of substitutionism to the next, the French section will only have given up triumphalistic and sectarian gestures and ultra-left initiatives in order to fall into the worst kind of maneuvering opportunism.

"The programmatic rigor" which would permit the LCR, according to Bensaid, to "vigorously" attack reformist positions" has already allowed him to abandon Leninist self-sufficiency." A further step of flattery to the "aspirations" of the centrist currents was taken when Rouge proclaimed, "We are quite ready to participate in a discussion of the nature of and the problems of building the revolutionary party for socialist self-management." A whole program! To recall that Bensaid wrote that precisely on "the nature of the party to be built" we had in the past, particularly yielded "to an inclination toward dogmatic extrapolations"! To see the majority accepting as a founding theory of the revolutionary party the same "socialist self-management" which is the basis for a confusionist unanimity among not only

most of the reformist forces but also not negligible sectors of the "enlightened" bourgeoisie! To realize that on the basis of this very "frame of reference" the majority plans to build the class-struggle tendency in the CFDT!

### C. The Crisis of the LCR Today

The balance sheet of ex-Tendency 4 emphasized that "The very requirements of the class struggle will not fail to quickly and cruelly show up the lack of precision concerning the mass movements, (uncertainty) (for example, on the characterization of the Union of the Left and the governmental slogan) and contradictions (for example, how to merge with the PSU without abandoning all reference, even formal, to the Fourth International?)." A few months after the congress, the leadership itself spoke of an advanced political and organizational "decay". The glorious "PSU operation" was lost in the most questionable meanderings. Each member of the Political Bureau seems to have a different interpretation of the governmental slogan. Furthermore, not a sector of intervention exists where an improvised "rectification" of the Congress theses has not had to be hurriedly made in recent months.

### 1. Work Among Women: Adaptation to the Milieu

"Work among women" is undoubtedly the area where the disorientation of the organization is the most complete today. Whereas the demagogic policy of the government called for a clear redefinition of the programmatic axes, whereas the whole political situation further reinforces the need to relate struggles for demands to the fight against the present government, the discussion once again became bogged down in the most confusing distinctions over the respective roles of the "Petroleuses" [women grouped around the newspaper by that name] and the "movement." How do the two resolutions submitted to the April 1975 Central Committee differ on these organizational proposals? Does such a debate have any other function in the last analysis than to cover up the total fragmenting of activity, to simultaneously avoid politically centralized fraction work (the indispensable basis for any "tendency" policy) as well as a serious analysis of the female radicalization and the tasks necessary to develop the mass movement in a united-front perspective?

The Central Committee discussions at least show that these are not the real debates: first of all, it is necessary to point out the ideological and political harm done to a whole section of the organization by the pressure of petty-bourgeois feminist currents. Dar melle understates the reality when she says that fem-

inist ideas, "accepted by our comrades without sufficient discussion and education in our ranks, in reality foster our opportunism in the women's movement and shape the application of any orientation." It would be more correct to say that today they are dominant and lead to the most pernicious forms of political autonomization of a sector within the organization.

The state to which things have developed is reflected in the "letter of three women militants" addressed to Rouge after March 8. But the political responsibility in the matter certainly does not fall on women militants who are isolated in their practical work, disoriented and disarmed; it falls entirely on a leadership which only abandons an extremely sectarian course in relation to the female radicalization in order to fall into resignation and demagoguery (its behavior in relation to the "Sand amendment" at the last congress is the best example).

But the adaptation to feminism is far from being the only obstacle raised by the majority policy in regard to strengthening the mass mobilization of women. The orientation proposed at the April 1975 Central Committee of a narrow view of the female radicalization - identified with the diminishing and distorted reflection given it by the "movement" in its present forms, inherited from the MLF (Women's Liberation Movement) -- has a purely pragmatic concept of mass work. The proposed definition of a "class - struggle orientation" is reduced to totally abstract and formal, criteria which make sense only in relation to internal cleavages in the movement in the narrowest sense of the term. On this level, a "class struggle line" can be effectively outlined at little cost: it is sufficient, by purely ideological reference to the "class struggle" in general, to oppose those who call for a "struggle of the sexes." There is no need at all for a more complete platform of intervention outlining axes of mobilization in the present conjuncture! There is no need at all to define ourselves in relation to the overall political perspectives of the class struggle or in relation to the attitude to take toward the workers' movement and its organizations!

Thus, the Darmelle resolution forthrightly states that "an understanding of the Stalinist and social-democratic workers' movement is not a precondition for participation in the Petroleuses." We can agree that there is no need to set up a formal precondition for the first groupings having a "tendency" role to play. But how can we leave open the idea that a "class-struggle pole" can be founded durably on forces which have totally contradictory attitudes to ours concerning "the understanding of the workers and Stalinist movement"? The Darmelle resolution emphasizes that "as soon as questions of an alliance with the workers' movement come up" the coexistence with the Revolutionary

Feminists will "shatter." Of course, But how can it be thought that "the orientation of unity with Revolution! and the AMR [Alliance Marxiste Revolutionnaire] ," on which the "class-struggle pole" is supposed to be built, can be implemented without serious concessions on the "understanding of the workers' movement" and the "questions of alliance" with it?

In the present state of the discussion, the majority line only combats petty-bourgeois feminist temptations -- very late and uncertainly -- in favor of a perspective of an alliance which seems to be more aimed at breaking off a more or less presentable "broad vanguard" in the existing movement than at laying the basis for real mass work.

## 2. The Army: Edmond Maire, the Soldiers' Union.. and the FCR

The LCR, at the April 1975 Central Committee, noted that the fight for the formation of a soldier's union had "passed from pure propaganda to a perspective based on concrete initiatives," seeking to "bring into this process both the soldiers' committees and the workers' movement." In addition, the minimal conditions for an ongoing mass organization of soldiers were correctly defined: "autonomy in relation to the military hierarchy" and the "establishment of organic links to the trade unions."

This position statement in effect implies "critical reconsideration" of the majority positions since September 1974. It is regrettable that the "main springboard" for this change of line was the position taken by Edmond Maire in favor of a soldiers' union. (CRS No. 26.) But to return to the previous discussion, it must be emphasized that the real issue was neither the name ("union" or "federation of united committees"), nor only the "assessment of rhythms." The majority position was at that time to oppose a motion stating that "the soldiers' union is an objective which we should campaign for starting now" and to favor the view that "the creation of semi-clandestine soldiers' committees is the central line for the whole period, committees which cannot be compared to the embryos of mass soldiers' union sections." The real issue was: should it be a purely propagandistic battle or an immediate agitational campaign? A simple "central political" battle or a battle also carried on actively among the soldiers' committees themselves? Behind the unanimity over the reference last September to a union organization as the goal "of a central political battle," therefore, deep differences emerged over the objective of the mobilization of the soldiers as a movement limited in function to the "broad vanguard" or as having the task of actively becoming part of an organic united-front framework.

Likewise, the resolution presented to the April 1975 Central Committee tried to outdo each other on the "central" role of the fight for a soldiers' union. But the Arthaud-Tristan (minority) document drew "a generally positive balance sheet" of the September 1974 resolution, and is an example of the persistence of extremely strong reticence (in the Army Commission itself) over going beyond a purely propagandistic conception of the fight for the union. For Arthaud-Tristan, whose attention is all on their "broad vanguard," the main thing is not to go against the grain of the "specificity of the radicalization of the radicalization in the barracks," which "advances the tendency for confrontation with the hierarchy and the military apparatus more than the tendency for a systematic liaison with the workers' movement," and that the soldiers' committees include only "the extremely tiny minority of soldiers who understand the need to organize clandestinely . . . more or less 'politicized' men in the broad sense but as distinct from the 'mass' who are not political". . . This does not prevent Arthaud from charging those who wish to fight today in the barracks for the soldiers' union with looking at it as "the opportunity to make points against the reformists" and with ignoring "the proper goal of struggle in the military institution." As if this struggle did not also above all correspond to the objective necessity for the development of the mass movement!

Even though this is said from a mistaken point of view, Arthaud is correct to stress the dangers of opportunist adaptation contained in the present majority orientation, particularly in relation to the "democratic" proposals of the working-class leaderships. It is in fact quite naive to think that the struggle for the soldiers' union as such could be enough to "concretely unmask the class-collaborationist line of the leaderships" (Garcin document). Opposition to the reformist line cannot in fact be expressed in the principle of the soldiers' union by itself, or even by a concrete demonstration that the leaderships "talk about it but do nothing"; the programmatic level is where we should explain our alternative to the line of democratizing the army in the context of which the leaderships are now discussing the soldiers' union (which tomorrow may be a reality.)

What does this mean practically? Certainly not an ultimatic and substitutionist fight to force on the mass movement a founding platform "more radical" than the one on which it tends to mobilize and be organized. On the contrary, it means preparing ourselves to intervene in this movement as a fraction, put forward at each stage in its development, in the army and outside, the overall revolutionary-Marxist

analysis of the army as well as our view on the need to relate the mobilization to the general struggle for a workers' government.

Here we need to recall that during the Draguignan trial the LCR and its press limited themselves to echoing the "just struggle" of the draftees without ever taking advantage of the occasion to explain our whole antimilitarist analysis or to relate this partial mobilization to the entire struggle against the Giscard regime. A self-criticism on this point is generally accepted. But for the future, the problem is hardly solved. Reviving a real antimilitarist propaganda campaign would require having clear positions on national defense and against NATO and nuclear armament, not just denouncing the absurdities and indignities of the military hierarchy. Furthermore, it would be urgent that on this issue the tasks of trade-union tendencies no longer be reduced to the required "motions of solidarity" and taking positions in favor of the soldiers' union, but that they be broadened to all the themes of our antimilitarist propaganda every time the discussion offers an opportunity for it.

In addition, the positions reaffirmed by the Central Committee in April 1975 concerning the tasks of building the political vanguard inside the army are particularly light-minded. The Garcin-Sylvain amendment puts off to the future all possibilities of programmatic and political watering-down by characterizing the Schmutz[ word deleted?-tr. ] as "our enlarged fraction" defined, furthermore, on a purely sectoral programmatic basis. "Its platform is the revolutionary Marxist program on the army" (not the essential points of the revolutionary Marxist program as a whole, including its central political perspectives); the sole condition placed on broadening it to include "revolutionary militants of other organizations" is to "break in practice on this point" (i. e., the army) and only "eventually on other points." The tasks of building the party could not be more clearly abdicated.

### 3. Between the "Broad Vanguard" and the United Front: the Youth Sector in Midstream

The "youth" sector too has recently gone through a rude reorientation, sparked by the spectacular failure of the sector leadership's "initiatives," particularly in the struggle April 26-27 against the Haby-Soissons reforms.

The negative balance sheet presented in Rouge No. 298 brings together, at least implicitly, all the elements which show that the problem is not only a conjunctural error in assessment, but more fundamentally the basic principles of the majority's conception of "mass work," as illustrated even to the point of caricature in the high school and university student milieu since 1968 and as reaffirmed at the first congress of the LCR:

--Workerism, summing up the "priority orientation toward the broad workers' vanguard," which leads to treating the youth milieu as simply a reservoir of activists or limiting the basis of mobilization there to the pure ideological-political struggle. From the "Second Souffle" [ pamphlet issued in 1969 ] to the contributions of Tisserand (CRS No. 9) and the "working-class turn," there is more continuity in this than there appears to be.

--Substitutionism, presenting as a "specific application of the united front" an initiativism narrowly limited to the clientele of the so-called "broad vanguard" to the detriment of all the tasks of building a united and on-going mass movement;

--Sectoralism in building the party. Whereas the Haby reform was an attack on all the workers, the response was viewed as the problem of the "youth sector" alone rather than as a central task for the whole organization (particularly the trade union fraction); only just before the 26th and 27th, i. e., long after the mass demonstrations of the movement, was a circular issued which attempted to correct this error.

Following such a fiasco, the Puech resolution (approved at the May 1975 meeting of the Central Committee) seems to make a significant reassessment of the course marked by the departure from UNEF (National Union of Students of France), the various sectarian and self-proclaimed substitutes such as the FNCL (National Federation of Struggle Committees) and the latest attempts to extract ourselves from it on a workerist basis. It is a pleasant surprise to see a recognition that:

-- the youth radicalization has somewhat more complex forms than "the appearance" of a broad vanguard "escaping from the control of the traditional organizations"; thus, the Puech resolution says, "The new rise of reformism among the high-school and university student youth is not a conjunctural phenomenon but results from the general political characteristics of the period."

-- "the development of struggles in these sectors poses objectively as a central struggle a fight for a united front of all the tendencies claiming to be part of the working-class struggle, and the establishment of the student movement as an ally of the workers' movement."

The real scope of this "turn" must however be assessed taking the following limitations into account:

-- When the "reorientation" had already been actively explained in the high-school and university milieu, praised by Revolution! and brought to the attention of most of the members by way of Le Monde, rather shabby maneuvers took place in the Central Committee to avoid any "premature decision." This inglorious buffoonery

says much about the attitude of part of the leadership (and of the sector leadership) toward the practical conclusions to be drawn from the principles which it has just rediscovered.

-- The Puech resolution facilely abstains from self-criticism for past errors (and those of the last congress) while justifying the present reorientation as resulting from a "change" in the "objective situation." This makes it possible not to recognize that, given the attacks of capital, seeking a united front has corresponded to the objective and subjective needs of the milieu and of the class struggle for years, and that it was our policy which went against these needs. We are told, for example, that the Haby reform "sanctions the new policy of big business in the field of education." Therefore only now presumably, does the struggle suddenly need to be "united" and "on-going." The fact that a very small minority of the Central Committee (May 1975) supported amendments which rejected such fraudulent theorizations is grounds for some concern over the interpretation and application of the "new line."

-- Fundamentally, the programmatic points for our fraction to defend in the mass movements of the youth are still very unclear. To say that "the main axis of intervention will continue to be the struggle against bourgeois education" and that it is necessary to "fight for unity with the reformists against the government policy" at least has the advantage of breaking with ultraleft ideas that there was no basis for mobilizing the youth around capitalism's attacks on education. But these axes remain strictly sectoralist, limited to the struggle against the school and the policy of the government on education.

When it is said that we cannot "reduce our activities to this level" it is in favor of a conception, which is itself sectoralist, of "joining" with "anti-militarist mobilizations" or "women's groups." What happens in all this to the tasks of anti-imperialist solidarity, solidarity with workers' struggles, and the referring to the overall struggle against the existing government and for a government of the workers' organizations? Is it possible, without such political axes, to really fit the "class struggle" currents into a perspective of a united front which is not limited to seeking "unity with the reformists" in only this milieu but which effectively moves toward the "establishment of a student movement as an ally of the workers' movement"? It should also be noted that the document is completely silent on the implications of the new line in relation to the teachers' milieu, on the ongoing united forms of organization to be developed in the CET (College d'Enseignement Technique - Vocational school) milieu, (pre-trade-union organization), on the concrete trade-union tendency tasks through which we must contribute to making the workers' organizations themselves take up the axes of the struggle over the schools.

The tactical means proposed are mainly designated as "building 'class struggle' currents nationwide which indicate a desire to build mass united organizations," possibilities of immediately concretizing the united front being limited to the conjunctural achievement "of structure of self-organization of university and high school students in struggle (assembly, high-school committee, classroom committee, strike committee, etc.)."

This orientation is highly ambiguous. The Puech motion seems more in a hurry to "carve out" the organizational contours of the "current" than to specify the programmatic basis of its "class struggle" orientation. This empiricist approach leads to grossly idealizing the audience and even the political line of the various "components" of the "class-struggle current." How can the socialist students, the JEC, the MARC be seriously called "centrist"? Furthermore, isn't it far from the truth to say that the "centrist" currents as a whole "have not succeeded in acquiring an active force in this area"?

But there is more cause for apprehension. The resolution rejects, correctly, the opportunist temptation to reduce the struggle for united ongoing mass movement to simply the "reunification of the two UNEF's". But, beyond the "conjunctural" united front and the general affirmation of a "desire to build mass united organizations," the entire main problem remains: is it or is it not necessary to wage a current and ongoing fight for the unification of the whole movement? What concrete tactics in relation to both UNEF or UNCAL does this imply?

On this point the Dominique amendment could be considered an important "statement of intention"; while putting forth basic conditions (right of tendency, link with the workers' organizations, recognition of the forms of self-organization, etc.), it affirms the present need to publicly wage a fight for the organizational unification of the university and high school student movements. But the unanimity achieved on this proposal covers up the differing interpretations of those who saw it as defining simply a "position of principle" and those who saw in it an "axis for struggle" engaging us actively immediately. But without a complete change of tactical attitude toward existing organizations of the university and high school student movements, the orientation proposed by the Puech document would be reduced in effect to very little: proposing that the organization re-allocate its forces to do ongoing work in the student milieu (after years of ideologicistic and/or workerist wandering) and a tactic of alliance toward centrist forces (after years of sectarian self-proclamation and/or desertion of the milieu). If it were definitively reduced to those dimensions the new youth orientation would only really be a new unfortunate experience in this quest of the majority for the elusive "broad vanguard." We furthermore

note that the guarantees cited against the risk that such an "ultraleft movement" would crystallize, whether objective ("the political situation does not permit just any kind of folly") or programmatic ("the prolonged struggle over the schools"; "unity with the reformists") seem quite light-minded in relation to those which were required in order to better reject the vanguard task of building a communist youth organization (politically and programmatically tied to the Fourth International). (This last point is furthermore directly related to the concept of the "youth sector" which is in fact narrowly centered on student youth. The problem of unity among the youth, including its working-class component, is totally absent from a resolution which claims to advocate a "united front".)

As long as the indecision and imprecision contained in the proposal of a "class struggle current" are maintained in relation to the tasks of building the vanguard (OCJ) [ Organization Communiste de Jeunesse -- Communist Youth Organization] and uniting the mass movement, the perspective outlined today will be far from breaking with the sophisticated temptations of the "broad vanguard,"

#### 4. Impotence in Face of Popular Fronts

The search in every "sector" for tactical gimmicks to group or break off the broad vanguard brings us, however, to a more fundamental inability of the LCR to unify its different interventions around a political and programmatic approach capable of combatting the policy of the working-class leaderships on all levels. This paralysis of the LCR results from its longtime misunderstanding of the role of the Union of the Left in the class struggle. Of course, we are no longer in the period when the leadership would contemptuously overwhelm the few comrades who doubted the correctness of characterizing it as an "overall reformist alternative stimulating a class-against-class dynamic." By successive shifts, the Union of the Left finally has become "a class collaborationist front" (1975 Plan of Action). But what separates this characterization from analyzing the Union of the Left as a popular front is the fact that only the latter would have made it possible to break with a purely conjunctural observation of the policy of the leaderships and to clearly relate it to the overall policy of Stalinism and to define the necessary tasks for counterposing to it the fight for a workers' government.

Proof for this is the inability of the leadership to see the implications of "class collaboration" in the heat of events and to really oppose it. In retrospect, the Plan of Action, in drawing up the balance sheet of the PTT strike, notes correctly that the working-class leaderships did not want a test of forces "brought about by a mass movement." Let's recall, however, that at the time the LCR carefully refrained from confronting the policy of the trade-union leaderships (who were supposed to have

"not yet" betrayed) and, all the more so, failed to clearly say what the political responsibilities of the working-class leaderships were. Worse, the slogan "Giscard will give in or give up his position," created a double confusion, leading one to think that this government could "give in" to the demands, and failed to point out at all the direct responsibilities of the CP and the SP to effectively make Giscard "give up." In fact, Giscard neither gave in nor was given up.

Likewise, at the beginning of the year, the leadership analyzed the reasons for the "CP-SP polemic" as resulting mainly from the CP's hope to "re-establish the relationship of forces in its favor" (Central Committee, February 1975). Three months later, however, the Plan of Action must note that "the CP-SP polemic has a negative effect on the workers' struggle" and that the reformists propose nothing more than letting Giscard "handle the crisis with his own solutions." So isn't the real meaning of the whole policy of the leaderships summarized in systematic support for keeping the Giscard regime? Isn't this the meaning of their attitude during the PTT strikes and their present inaction, the "sectarian" attitude of the CP as well as its earlier call for a union of all the French people? But at the February 1975 Central Committee meeting, only fifteen comrades supported motions by Saulnier and Nemo which tried to relate the issues in the CP-SP polemic to the needs of maintaining the social and international status quo.

Sweeping aside any "superficial analogy between the French and Portuguese situations," the leadership preferred to stick to the purely descriptive analysis concerning the "sectarian" course of the CP. Its only "virtue" was to doom the LCR to complete and total political passivity during the whole first half of the year. In this, the majority for no good reason locks itself into an insurmountable contradiction. On one hand, particularly at times when the centralization of the class struggle would make it especially necessary (the elections, PTT, Renault, May Day, etc.), it fails to carry on a campaign of agitation and mobilization around the slogan "CP-SP Government" (seeming to believe that such a campaign is necessarily exclusive of a fight around a plan of struggle or around our program.) Thus, the Puech motion in the February 1975 Central Committee said, "Our agitation and propaganda are not in this conjuncture carried out around the governmental formula as the key element. What is concretely on the agenda is the 'resumption' of the workers' offensive." But on the other hand, the majority must recognize today that what holds back "the resumption of the workers' offensive" is not the lack of combativity but the political shackles of the workers' leadership's attitude (see the Renaud motion, April 1975 Central Committee). But from

this point of view, this is a vicious circle for it since it stated at the beginning that directly political slogans could at most be "advanced in the newspaper, in general explanations" but above all not as "the axis of our struggle in the eyes of the masses" (February 1975 Central Committee). The result was an organized withdrawal, after years of furious initiative, into pure propagandism. Thus, according to the Renaud motion (April 1975 Central Committee), "While this situation does not favor an intervention allowing us to immediately affect the social and political situation, it is particularly favorable for an intensive propagandistic campaign on our alternative to the dead end of the reformist responses." The LCR thus deliberately doomed itself to bypass a very concrete opportunity to carry on a big campaign of politicization and mobilization based on the need to confront the government and expose the shackles of the policy of the workers' leaderships. By resigning itself to the "lack of a political way out," it limits itself to "general explanations" concerning workers' leaderships and their present policy of strengthening the Giscard regime. Thus the May 1 demonstration appeared as the first real "success" of the LCR. It is true that the organization correctly argued for the need to join the contingent of the trade-union organizations. Moreover it made a particularly good impression with its ability to mobilize. This immediate success could refute the old argument of the insufficient "relationship of forces" to apply the united front, but unfortunately, this application of the "working-class turn" does not really signify an end to the majority's obtuseness in the matter.

Trivial considerations on the mood of the "new vanguard," and not the objective needs of the mass movement, were still used to justify the participation in the May 1 demonstration. Also, according to the May 1 circular, "Our principled position on the workers' demonstrations, particularly the May 1 one, is this: we are always for a single (if not a really united), contingent, unless the reformists appear as really responsible for the division... But when we are unable to convince the broad vanguard of our position, we do not cut ourselves off from it by taking a sectarian ultimatic position while demonstrating our position in practice." In other words, according to the wishes of the broad vanguard, "the same "principled position" leads to the attitude taken around May 1 and the one taken toward the women's mobilizations last March: it was undoubtedly the rejection of a "sectarian ultimatic position" which led the organization to a double parasitic adaptation to the "showy" initiatives of the movement (the "revolutionary" demonstration of March 8) and to the demonstration of the workers' organizations (where its participation was purely symbolic and apolitical).

Furthermore May 1 clearly showed our inability to politically confront the workers' leaderships on the high-

est level. The circular specified that the LCR's participation was "fundamentally due to the desire to specifically assert the need for a government of the workers' organizations." This "assertion" was certainly "specific" enough: one had to be a good observer to notice a banner, lost among all the others, calling for a "government of the workers' organizations" while all the bullhorns were used to chant, "We must hit them all together!" Of course we will be told that "it's the same idea" basically, it's simply a question of how to "best present" it, etc. But unfortunately just the opposite is true. "The majority motion of the Central Committee itself stressed that we cannot be satisfied with counterposing to the CGT and the CFDT central demands and the 'all together' one; such a simplistic attitude would encourage the wait-and-see attitude of many militants." In addition the slogan which was put forward remains a general invocation, applauding "combativity" and "unity" but without giving them any concrete central perspective, while the other one (and all the more so the "CP-SP government" slogan) gives the mass mobilization a precise perspective, on an objective which concretely confronts simultaneously the present government and the capitulationist policy of the leaderships.

In the overall framework of the majority line, likewise, "actualizing" the action program was hardly enough by itself to get the organization out of its propagandist rut. It at least has the merit of making official the majority's "corrections" in regard to the Union of the Left and concretely designating the central political issue of the struggle against Giscard, the representative of capital.

But how does this plan of action contribute to making "the path to victory" more "clearly outlined in the eyes of the great mass of workers"? How can the flights of eloquence about "the new world where people can stop being wolves to each other" or the description of a "constituent assembly representing the factory committees, community and neighborhood committees" have a mobilizing value for the present struggle for the united front and the workers' government? At the same time the problems of working-class unity are only discussed on the level of "struggles" or trade-union unification, avoiding any specific reference to the clearly indicated responsibilities of the workers' organizations in relation to the problem of political power. For if it is surprising to see the "CP-SP government" brought up in passing, this is precisely where it implies no significant "political approach": it is all very well to wonder "what the workers should demand of a CP-SP government," but this cannot have much interest or political meaning when the only question which has immediate implications is never posed clearly: what should the workers demand today of the CP and the SP, confronted with the Giscard regime, so that they will begin to break with the bourgeoisie and move to

a workers' government? Especially when for months the organization has obstinately rejected any consistent and coherent campaign on this theme, solely in favor of sophisticated journalistic tricks.

In its letter to the PSU at the beginning of the year, the Political Bureau was still writing that to bring up the CP-SP government "can very well have its place in a situation of pre-revolutionary crisis, including for the purpose of emphasizing the evasions of the reformist leaderships." Our congress concluded that "this was not today the case." The slightest political responsibility would demand that the leadership either make a self-criticism or explain what has fundamentally changed since last December for a "class-collaborationist plan" to be realized as a "class-collaborationist front" and for the "CP-SP government" to suddenly "become perfectly appropriate"!

While waiting for this explanation, we are uneasy about asserting that after three months in which the leadership's whole policy has demonstrated that it is indeed its own back yard that needs to be cleared of "abstract propagandism" and "practical opportunism," (sic.) The minority proposal at the February 1975 Central Committee retains all its validity: "An action program can only really play its role on the condition that it clearly draws the political conclusion before the workers: Out with the Giscard government! We need a workers' government! ... The CP-SP polemic, far from diluting the propagandistic and agitational fight around the slogan of a 'CP-SP government,' reinforces its necessity as a means of mobilizing the masses and advancing the understanding of the political treason of the recognized workers' leaderships. Nevertheless the problem is not, today any more than yesterday, to pose the objective of unity as such ... To oppose the program which arises from the objective needs of the broadest masses to the Common Program and to confirm this as the only basis capable of really guaranteeing the unity of the workers' front against the bourgeoisie." (Nemo motion.)

#### FOR A REORIENTATION, FOR THE UNITY OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

It would be a grave error to view the debate in the International as having no concrete repercussions on the daily tasks of the Party. At the heart of the debate are the different conceptions of the vanguard/mass relationship (which necessarily includes the analysis of the workers' bureaucracies and their role in the class struggle). From this methodological core, the discussion goes on to the analysis of the popular fronts and class-collaboration in general, with its concrete implications for the daily mass work of the organization. Against the IMT policy based on increasing adaptation to the so-called "new vanguards," it is necessary to counterpose a determined struggle for the class united front, that is, for the unity and independence of the proletariat in relation to the bourgeoisie and all its lackeys.

We think that the program of the LTF provides the necessary theoretical and political means to resolve the crisis

of the International and to meet the immense responsibilities imposed on it by the rapid development of the class struggle in the present period. For our part, we will exert ourselves, in the most scrupulous and loyal respect for democratic centralism, to unite the left elements for a political reorientation of the French section. The second part of this document is a first step in this direction. Others will follow in the course of the debate!

We hope that the leadership will accept an honest and fraternal political confrontation. Methods like those which may have been used to avoid the debate with Tendency 4 or to put it on the level of pure polemic seem to us particularly reproachable. For our part, we plan to pursue the debate in a responsible way and we believe that this will be a useful contribution to the construction of the Fourth International.

Alix (Poitiers)  
Benjamin (Paris. S. 23)  
Kalandra (Paris. S. 23)  
Kazan (Paris. S. 24)  
Kelvin (Poitiers)  
Nemo (Paris. S. 22. CC)  
Promethee (Angers)  
Raphael (Paris. S. 23)  
Varlin (Paris. S. 24)