

International Internal Discussion Bulletin

volume XV number 1

March 1978

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The International Internal Discussion Bulletin is the English-language edition of the internal discussion bulletin of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International.

It is published by the Socialist Workers Party as a fraternal courtesy to the United Secretariat of the Fourth International.

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The Responsibilities of the Leninist Trotskyist Faction in the New Stage of the International Debate

By Melan, Nemo, and Sarah

[The following document was presented on August 16, 1977 to a meeting of the Leninist Trotskyist Faction Steering Committee. The general line of this document was defeated by a vote of 2 for and 17 against. The consultative vote was 1 for and 6 against.]

(The following document is a draft resolution submitted for vote at the enlarged meeting of the LTF Steering Committee held in August 1977 by Comrades Melan (LC, Spain), Nemo (LCR, France), and Sarah (OST, Costa Rica). It represents a counterresolution opposing the proposal for immediate dissolution of the LTF both as a faction and as a tendency.)

* * *

1. The LTF reaffirms its dedication to the fundamental objectives of the struggle it has waged in the Fourth International. In forming and maintaining the LTF for several years, the sole objective was to struggle against the grave errors in orientation committed by the majority of the leadership of the Fourth International beginning with the turn of the Ninth World Congress and the disastrous policy this represented and to reestablish fully the regular functioning of the bodies of the International in conformity with the Bolshevik norms of democratic centralism.

In the fight it has waged, the LTF has always placed the interests of the International as a whole and defending the unity of the International above its own interests. It has always subordinated all tactical and organizational choices to achieving the greatest possible clarity on the political questions.

It is in conformity with these same principles and on the basis of an objective judgment of what is at stake in the debate as well as of the existing positions that the LTF intends to define its political responsibilities in preparing the Eleventh World Congress of the International.

2. In the light of the evolution in recent months, the LTF considers that the tasks defined by the August 1976 Steering Committee meeting corresponded in fact, in the conditions that existed at the time, to the needs of pursuing the fundamental objectives reiterated above.

At the time, the LTF was correct to reaffirm its proposal for an immediate dissolution of the factions existing in the International and for returning to a tendency debate within the framework of the normal functioning of the leading bodies of the International.

The LTF likewise made an important contribution to strengthening the entire International by setting as a primary task a year ago, the fight for democratic preparation of the Eleventh World Congress and for giving a favorable political response to forces adhering to Trotskyism that had called for opening discussions with the Fourth International without posing any conditions.

Finally, on the political level, the LTF correctly considered at the time that its activity should center on trying to achieve a correction of the International's line on the following fundamental questions: the substitutionist and ultraleftist policy for Latin America adopted at the Ninth World Congress; the methodological and political extension of this policy through the orientation on armed struggle and on Europe adopted by the majority at the Tenth World Congress; the orientation of the majority that was put to the test in Portugal and proved disastrous. As regards Europe, in particular, the LTF correctly assessed the stakes in the fight for a reorientation, saying that it was necessary to correct "*the error of orienting to the new vanguard, including errors in electoral policy such as adaptation to popular frontism, confusion about the character of Stalinism, and errors on mass work.*"

3. The LTF welcomes, in the name of the higher interests of our movement, the positive gains that have been made in recent months in the fight for the unity and reorientation of the Fourth International.

If they are in fact faithfully applied, the decisions reached unanimously at the October 1976 meeting of the United Secretariat will, by assuring the democratic character of the pre-congress debate, make it possible to endow the decisions of the coming world congress with full political authority. These decisions should likewise make it possible to remove the last obstacles to opening a political debate without any prior conditions to the Trotskyist forces that remain outside the Fourth International.

Moreover, important steps have been taken toward organizationally and politically overcoming the splits in various national sections of our movement. This process has already been carried through to fruition in Australia and Canada and must be completed by a principled reunification in Mexico and Spain on the basis of an objective and democratic debate.

On the political level, developments of equal importance should be noted. The most decisive of these is the publication by the IMT of a "self-criticism" on Latin America. The LTF shares the estimation expressed in Comrade Barnes' report to the January 1977 plenum of the SWP as regards both the positive significance of the document and its limitations and contradictions. It considers that this "self-criticism" opens the way for trying to reach a balance sheet on the Latin American orientation common to the entire International. The LTF believes that this document places on the agenda a fight for officially rescinding the resolutions of the Ninth and Tenth World Congresses on Latin America and on armed struggle, which constituted a serious blow to the integrity of the Trotskyist program.

Moreover, the LTF points out that on several political questions, the recent developments in the international

debate indicate the possibility of either reducing some of the old differences or of differences in orientation arising on the basis of new lines of cleavage. This is illustrated for example by the discussions on women, or on the national question, the discussions opened up on the political situation in Spain and on Cuba, as well as on the tasks of the Trotskyists in both of these countries.

4. The LTF considers that the changes introduced in the conditions of the international debate make it possible to move toward completely overcoming the grave organizational problems that justified the LTF's being organized as a faction, and toward returning to a healthy functioning of the bodies that organize debate within the International and have the responsibility of leading the International.

It is for these reasons that the LTF, which intends to continue its fight to reorient the International as a whole on the basis of its line documents, has decided to unconditionally and immediately drop the faction organizational form it was compelled to adopt in August 1973. It will continue the political debate as the Leninist Trotskyist Tendency in the strictest respect for the statutes of the International and the Bolshevik norms of democratic centralism. The Leninist Trotskyist Faction does not need to form a "new" international tendency or to "redefine" its programmatic and political platform. It is giving up its faction form of organization. The fundamental political task it is obliged to take up as a tendency remains to achieve the maximum political clarity on the issues in the discussions that are on the agenda and to contribute as actively as possible to reorienting the International on the political questions on which it seems that the differences of orientation that justified forming the LTT and later the LTF which have formed the basis for its struggle in recent years have not so far been overcome.

Without making any prejudgments about the realignments that may develop through the continuation of an honest and democratic debate, the LTT points out that an objective examination of recent positions taken by the IMT indicate that on several fundamental questions the differences in orientation that remain in the International are sufficiently large to justify continuing a tendency debate up to the opening of the discussion for the world congress. Moreover, the fact that on these points the differences coincide, in their main political implications, with the lines of cleavage that have appeared in recent years between the IMT and the LTF fully confirms that the fight of the LTT today, for reorienting the International, represents a continuation of the struggle that was waged by the LTF and of the political progress it achieved. The main questions that today justify such a course are the following:

The balance sheet that is to be drawn on the orientations followed during the Portuguese revolution.

The reorientation of the European sections of the Fourth International on the basis of the balance sheet of the application on the majority's European document and of a criticism of the new version of this document and errors involving especially the orientation to the "new mass vanguard," the policies of "unity of revolutionists," the analysis of the treacherous policy of the workers parties and of the crisis of Stalinism in Europe, and the question of popular fronts, the fight for a united front and for a workers government.

China and Vietnam.

A balance sheet of the positions on the Angolan question.

On all these questions, the LTT, basing itself on the political gains represented by the LTF line documents, will submit for debate in the established bodies of the International such new documents as are needed to clarify the issues in the debate with the aim of narrowing through discussion the initially existing differences.

In the immediate period ahead, the LTT intends to present to all members of the International in a clear and concise way, what it considers to be the issues in the international discussion at the start of the period preparatory to the Eleventh World Congress. To this end:

a) The LTF has decided to add to its line documents the political assessment of the "self-criticism" on Latin America in Comrade Barnes' report.

b) It adopts as an immediate task drawing up and bringing to the attention of all members of the International, a concise document presenting a balance sheet and orientation for Europe (including the main lessons of the Portuguese revolution); a balance sheet of the debate on Angola (reiterating the line of argument followed in the recent document by Comrades Doug Jenness and Tony Thomas) [See "The SWP's Policy in Relation to Angola: 'Historic Error' or a Record to be Proud Of?," by Doug Jenness and Tony Thomas, SWP Discussion Bulletin, Vol. 35, No. 10, July 1977.]; a document characterizing the positions of the Bolshevik Tendency and its differences with the LTF; and a document characterizing the current issues in the debates on China and Vietnam (on the basis of the world resolution of the LTF to the Tenth World Congress).

5. On the other questions under discussion (including a number of aspects of the orientation toward the various mass movements, on which there are possibilities for a convergence with the positions advocated by the LTF for many years) as well as new problems that can be put on the agenda by the class struggle, the LTT refuses to consider a priori that the discussion of orientation must or will necessarily follow the lines of cleavage between the present international tendencies.

The LTT considers that from this standpoint the discussion must be conducted without prejudices or prior conditions within the bodies of the International. It states that the sole criterion for any ideological groupings on one or another of these questions in all circumstances must be the actual positions, without regard for any alignments that may exist on other political problems.

It is by acting in such a sincere and responsible way that the members of the LTT will contribute most effectively to political clarification within the International; to the process of resolving the differences in orientation; and to the reorientation of our movement as a whole. It is in this way that they will help to put the International in a position to respond correctly to the major tests looming up in the class struggle on a world scale.

August 15, 1977

Appendices to this draft resolution:

1. "The Debate on Europe and the Responsibilities of the Leninist Trotskyist Faction," July 1, 1977
2. "After the IMT Declaration: Against Factionalism, for the Correction of the International's Course," July 20, 1977

The Debate on Europe and the Responsibilities of the Leninist Trotskyist Faction

By Carmen, Gabriel, Letourneau, Melan,
Nemo, Raul, Seldjouk, Ulysse

At its August 1976 meeting, the Steering Committee of the Leninist Trotskyist Faction unanimously adopted a statement (published in English in *International Internal Discussion Bulletin*, Vol. XIV, No. 2, April 1977) that, following a discussion on the current situation in the Fourth International, defined "the basic objectives of the LTF." Among them, this statement listed the "central goal of the LTF" as the attempt "to attain clarity on the main political questions facing the Fourth International, that is, the questions that have the most immediate implications for the current practice of the national sections." To that end, the following task, among others, was assigned to the LTF for the period ahead:

"1. The LTF will present a critical summary of the results of the IMT line in Europe as a whole."

As a matter of fact, this mandate—that followed one saying the LTF would "continue to press for discussion of the consequences of the IMT line in Portugal, the key test so far of the IMT line in Europe"—is presented too narrowly in its written form. The Steering Committee discussions led to the firm conclusion that the critical balance sheet of the majority's orientation that was needed ought to be accompanied by positive proposals from the LTF. These should present in summary form our analysis of the trends in the European class struggle and the tasks flowing from them, in order to reorient the activity of the national sections in conformity with the method of the Transitional Program. And that was the orientation of the drafting committee that met to apply this Steering Committee mandate during the second half of 1976.

However, a new element was introduced at the Coordinating Committee meeting in Brussels on April 29, 1977. Following a brief debate, a proposal formulated by Comrade Sheppard was adopted that said the LTF members of the United Secretariat would state their intention to open the discussion within the Secretariat in order to "explore the possibility" of writing a common document on European perspectives with the other members of the United Secretariat, or with some of them.

This proposal was formulated orally, which allowed some ambiguities to exist about its scope. The most immediate consequence, and this was specified at the Brussels meeting, was to suspend drawing up a perspectives document in the name of the LTF that had been worked on since last August. Thus this tactical reorientation objectively meant calling into question a unanimous political mandate from an enlarged Steering Committee meeting, on a matter the faction itself considered "essential to steer the Fourth International back onto a correct course" (August 1976 statement).

Two members of the Steering Committee who were present at the Brussels meeting found the arguments put

forward in support of this questioning to be unconvincing, and found the new course proposed for the European discussion to be inadequate both tactically and politically. Comrade Carmen (LC, Spain) and Comrade Nemo (LCR, France) voted against Comrade Sheppard's position and proposed that the faction leadership pursue the attempt to apply point "c" of last August's statement. The objective of this document is to put forward the main arguments for the latter proposal.

It will take up the following questions:

1. How has the LTF up to now collectively estimated the basic stakes of the debate over European perspectives?
2. Do the new developments in the Fourth International concerning either the IMT perspectives documents or the practice of the sections offer a sufficient objective basis for concluding that the terms of the debate have significantly evolved, and for thinking there is the political possibility of a common orientation on Europe at the present time?
3. In view of the present conditions of the discussion, what ought to be the LTF's attitude toward opening the discussion on Europe before the next world congress, in order to take advantage of all the positive elements that have arisen in the recent period, in order to move toward political clarity and the reorientation of the International?

1. The Stakes in the Debate on Building the Fourth International in Europe Since the Last World Congress

To deal with the tactical matter under discussion correctly, our point of departure should be to recall the way the LTF has collectively estimated the differences in method and in perspectives with the IMT concerning Europe, and the practical tasks that flowed from them for our struggle to reorient the International. This reminder is even more important since—whatever disagreements there may have been among us over our theoretical characterization of the majority's line or over the respective weight of one or another of their errors—the LTF was able to demonstrate the principled character of the basis on which it was founded and of its fight within the International by being based on *substantial agreement* on the political criticisms to make of the application of the IMT's line, and on the alternative to counterpose to it.

This was especially important in the fight at the Tenth World Congress against the perspectives of the "European document," and during the decisive test for that orientation that was presented by the Portuguese revolution.

Thus, at the last world congress, Comrade M.A. Waters' document correctly stressed the similarity of method between the IMT's European orientation and their errors at the preceding congress, as well as the seriousness of the political consequences flowing from them:

- "7. Underlying these multiple errors is an attempt to

extend the orientation and method of the 1969 resolution on Latin America. This line is based on a doctrinaire continental schema in which a pat formula promising a shortcut to success (like rural guerrilla war in Bolivia or transforming the 'vanguard') is substituted for the Leninist strategy of party building and the method outlined in the Transitional Program for intervening in and leading the mass struggles of the working class."

"The difference between these two starting points—the concerns of the vanguard or the objective needs of the working masses—is neither minor nor hair-splitting. From the two different starting points flow two divergent courses of action. One tends toward maximalist demands and so-called 'militant' actions that presumably reflect the level of consciousness of the 'vanguard.' In reality they are adaptations to its political backwardness. The other is firmly based on the *method* of the Transitional Program, which aims at mobilizing the masses in struggle, whatever their level of consciousness, and moving them forward toward the socialist revolution." [See "A Criticism of the United Secretariat Majority Draft Resolution on 'Building of Revolutionary Parties in Capitalist Europe'—an Initial Contribution to the Discussion," by Mary-Alice Waters, IIDB, Vol. X, No. 3, March 1973, p. 8.]

The disastrous results of "adapting to the political backwardness" of the so-called new vanguard have been amply demonstrated in the test of the class struggle during recent years. The ultraleftism of "initiatives in action," ultraleftism in the mass movements, or dismembering of the Transitional Program (making a fetish of workers control and self-organization by isolating these slogans from the struggle for democratic and transitional demands as a whole and for the workers united front), have led to sharing the inability of the centrist and leftist currents to counterpose a clear political alternative to the class-collaborationist orientation of the traitorous leaderships.

This opportunist implication of the IMT's substitutionist orientation was manifested as early as 1973 by the French LCR's electoral support to the Union of the Left lists, and by their refusal to characterize that coalition as a popular front. It is was fully shown as well in the test of the most important experience of the recent period: the Portuguese revolution. In our opinion, the minority resolution of the February 1976 IEC correctly expresses the political consequences of the course taken since the Ninth World Congress:

"This ultraleft deviation from a Marxist strategy was deepened and extended, and then codified by the IMT in its European perspectives document and other documents adopted by the IMT at the Tenth World Congress. The payoff came on November 25. That debacle also constituted a debacle for the IMT's European resolution. This was the verdict of a developing proletarian revolution. In practice, the IMT's ultraleft deviation, which signaled a turn away from the method and strategy of the Transitional Program, led the IMT to adapt to centrism and ultraleftism in Portugal. This in turn meant adapting to the Stalinists, and finally to the MFA itself."

Our common understanding of the totality of the errors the line of orienting toward the "new vanguard" objectively leads to was also laid out in the clearest possible fashion by Comrade Barnes in his report on the signifi-

cance of the IMT's "Self-Criticism on Latin America" (IIDB, Vol. XIV, No. 5, May 1977):

"One was toward adaptation to Guevarism and concessions to ultraleftism—opening the door to adventurism, sectarianism, workerism, which would, over time, make us vulnerable to the New Lefters, centrists, and ultimately to the Stalinists. As Trotsky explained, centrists in the last analysis are either a left wing of the Social Democracy or of the Stalinists. There is no other place for them. . . . Democratic demands, according to this approach, were either ignored, as in the case of the peasantry, or downplayed. This would disarm us in the face of the growing struggles of oppressed nationalities, the development and continuity of the youth movement, the deepening of an international antiwar movement, and what was soon to take place: the rise of the women's movement. There was a strong tendency to underestimate the mass reformist organizations. The Communist and Socialist parties were supposedly being bypassed by a new vanguard."

These lines deal with the 1969 turn; they could just as well be applied to the consequences in Europe of the orientation adopted by the Tenth World Congress pursuing the errors of the preceding congress. The IMT's European orientation could also be characterized with the same words Comrade Barnes uses in another passage in the same document, as a composite of "concessions to ultra-leftism," of "pressures from petty-bourgeois milieus," and of "dangers of adventurism" that could "open the door to opportunist mistakes." That is why the LTF's August 1976 statement defined in a totally correct manner what should be the axes of a consistent political battle to reverse the majority's European line and to reorient the Fourth International:

"This document will show the results of the error of orienting to the 'new mass vanguard,' including errors made in election policy, such as adaptation towards popular frontism, confusion about the character of Stalinism, and errors in mass work in areas such as the trade-union movement, the women's liberation movement, the student movement, and national liberation movements."

But it is precisely this political mandate whose application was suspended as a result of the proposal adopted last April 29. It would be important for the comrades who proposed or voted for this turn to indicate to us in the most specific way the objective political justifications for it. Do they have reasons to believe that the stakes of the debate in the International in relation to Europe have significantly changed in relation to the way the LTF characterized them at the time of the discussion on the IMT's first "European document"? Have these stakes significantly changed since the test of the Portuguese revolution? Have they changed since last August, when they were described in a way all the members of the LTF who were present agreed on? For our part, we must state that at least up to the present, no argument has been put forward to justify any of these hypotheses. For our part, we believe that there have been new, positive developments in the life of the International, but that these preliminary indicators are not sufficient to give an objective basis for the Coordinating Committee's recent decision, which will not truly allow us to effectively exploit the opportunities now offered by the debate.

2. The Objective Conditions of the Debate on Europe Today

We are all aware of the political importance of the developments in the life of the International since last August: publication by the IMT of a "self-criticism" dealing with several fundamental aspects of the Latin American line of the Ninth World Congress; reopening of an international discussion on the women's movement under conditions that allow us to hope that past differences may be diminished; commitments undertaken for democratic preparation of the next world congress; opening of a political debate with the forces belonging to the "Organizing Committee," in spite of many maneuvers by some components of the IMT. Regardless of the limitations, we are all aware of the importance of these gains, which are the fruit of the LTF's struggle to strengthen the unity of the International and to correct its political course. Likewise, we are all watching for new possibilities that a presenting themselves for this same struggle, the growing differentiations developing among members of the IMT, whether over questions of the democratic functioning of the International or over questions of perspectives.

But all these factors do not justify a positive response to the *one* question that should determine our political and tactical stance in the debate on Europe: on *this particular point* in the international debate, and in its role as the leading political current in the International (and not as one or another individual member), does the IMT or does it not demonstrate in its theoretical and practical *orientation* an evolution that would allow us to seriously consider that from now on an objective basis exists for a significant rapprochement between our positions on the questions the LTF has defined as the fundamental stakes in the debate over Europe? It goes without saying that as materialists we must look at this question with respect to the present political *realities*—perspectives documents, the practice of the sections—eliminating in advance our subjective wishes or adventurous speculations about the future.

Let us begin with the perspectives documents the IMT has drawn up during the recent period. Concerning the questions under discussion here, the most important of them is obviously the one commonly called the "second European document," whose exact title is "Draft Theses on the Tactics of the Fourth International in Capitalist Europe." (IIDB, Vol. XIII, No. 3, November 1976.)

Even though its formulations are somewhat more subdued or more prudent than in the past, the goal of this document is essentially to reaffirm the correctness of the majority's orientation at the last world congress. A detailed criticism of this document should be a collective effort by the LTF. Simply reading it makes it clear that it virtually repeats the basic errors we fought against in the past, whose consequences were dramatically illustrated in Portugal:

—The central reaffirmation of theories about the "new vanguard";

—analyses that make "the hold of bourgeois parliamentary traditions on the working masses" the chief explanation for the obstacles to passing over to a revolutionary situation, and at the same time minimize the actively counterrevolutionary responsibility of the treacherous *leaderships*;

—an inability to clearly characterize the role of the Stalinist parties and their popular front policy which is being carried out in several European countries; reaffirmation of all the errors in analysis of the Portuguese CP's policy during the year 1975;

—bypassing of a consistent struggle for a political break with the bourgeoisie and its parties and for a workers government, in favor of an abstract fetish for "emerging organs of self-organization of the masses" as "the central and centralizing goal";

—continuation of a substitutionist, subjective concept of party building that they define not as a process based on the *mass* movement to lead them against the policies of their *leaderships*, but as a kind of pedagogy aimed at using "initiatives by the new vanguard" to "demonstrate" by "practical example" to the masses—who are supposedly spontaneous parliamentarists—"the superiority of workers democracy";

—a tactical, restrictive conception of the struggle for the united front and of participation in the mass movements, actually subordinating the latter to the goal of "instrumentalizing the new vanguard" and to the needs of the policy of "unity in action with the far left."

The most recent developments in the debate have not produced elements that fundamentally change this state of affairs. As Comrade Barnes stresses, their recent "self-criticism" on Latin America, whose intrinsic importance no one underestimates, is limited by the fact that it leaves unresolved the most important *methodological* question that, in different forms according to the circumstances, has enabled the Latin American errors to be *extended* to the European continent, especially in Portugal:

"Another area that needs more discussion is the role of the 'new mass vanguard' and our orientation toward it—as projected in the 1969 World Congress documents and as carried over to the European resolution and the experience of the FUR in Portugal." [See "The Meaning of the IMT Steering Committee's Self-Criticism on Latin America," by Jack Barnes, IIDB, Vol. XIV, No. 5, May 1977.]

This allows the IMT to limit the scope of its "self-criticism" and up to now evade having to reconsider their overall political course since what they themselves characterize as the "turn" of the Ninth World Congress. Comrade Barnes is thus correct in asserting that although the recent self-criticism allows us to take up the debate over Latin America on a new basis, "At the same time we can't hold back concurrent discussions on Europe, Portugal, and other pressing questions on which there are disagreements and that involve ongoing practice."

This last necessity remains entirely valid. The corrections that the IMT seems ready to make today to the formulation of its theory of the "new vanguard" remain superficial. In face of the reality of the movement of the masses who turn toward their old organizations in order to begin struggling, the IMT is obliged to recognize that its schema that reduced the process of radicalization to "the appearance of a new vanguard escaping from the control of the traditional organizations" is one-sided, to say the least; thus it attempts to differentiate its "new vanguard" from simply the organized "far left."

The political significance of such a correction remains however quite limited in relation to the requirements for a rectification of the erroneous method of party building that resulted from the theses adopted at the last world con-

gress. The IMT's corrections actually only specify the limits and socio-political characteristics of the so-called "new vanguard" but do not question the whole method that led to arbitrarily setting up the "new vanguard" as a priority "target" and special "lever" for building the European sections. This is illustrated by the fact that for several years already, the French LCR has been able to put forward big theoretical refinements, substituting one after another for the "concept" of a "new vanguard," a "broad vanguard," a "broad working-class vanguard," or a "vanguard of increasingly working-class composition." In this way, once its *description* is clarified, the so-called "new vanguard" is in fact put back into the commonly accepted category of "advanced" or "combative" workers. In doing this the French leadership admitted at least implicitly, that the radicalization could not be reduced to a phenomenon external to the old organizations and that it did not lead spontaneously to "the appearance" of a "vanguard" in the *political* sense of this term. However, the LCR did not break with an *orientation* that is aimed particularly at narrow layers and that consequently leads to political adaptation to the concerns of the "far left," any more than the IMT does today. Furthermore, the recognition of a radicalization "internal" to the old organizations, far from leading to restoring a correct understanding of the contradictory relations that exist between the *objective* movement of the *masses* (whatever their different levels of consciousness) and the treacherous policy of the leadership has, on the contrary, served as a new argument to cover up old opportunist and empirical theories: the illusions of the masses and the "broad vanguard" serve, for example, to justify the "social dynamic" attributed to the Union of the Left (thus minimizing its immediately and actively counter-revolutionary character) or the refusal to clearly and actively wage a struggle for the formation of a government without bourgeois ministers (this question being judged as unimportant "in the eyes of the advanced workers"). Likewise, the refinements in socio-political analysis now introduced by the IMT do not correspond to a serious reconsideration of the substitutionist and adaptationist method adopted at the Tenth World Congress, that broke with the requirements of the transitional method and the struggle for the united front.

"The weakness of the Trotskyists" and not the errors of orientation inspired by the IMT are held responsible for the grave political defeats in Portugal and Italy. This too-convenient explanation allows the IMT to fully pursue its line of winning "hegemony within the new vanguard," in the form of systematically seeking "unity among revolutionaries" in France or in Spain. There as elsewhere, even if the Trotskyists are stronger, the same method cannot lead to anything but the same results: programmatic confusion, adaptation to ultraleft and centrist currents, and bypassing of a consistent struggle for the united front clearly breaking with the class-collaborationist formulas of the Stalinists and Social Democrats.

The recent practice of the European sections under majority leadership still offers only limited signs of a political rectification. Thus, in several countries, "turns" or partially positive corrections have been made in certain areas of activity. Under the impact of events and the pressure of the political discussion, breaks have begun with the most outrageously sectarian or manipulative aspects of the orientation toward various mass move-

ments. For example, one could point to the rectifications made in several sections on the student movement (the abandonment of the practices following from the famous thesis of the "Second Breath"), on the women's movement (the failure in France of the "Pétroleuses" project) or on the question of the oppressed nationalities. But, at least up to the present these empirical evolutions have been made in great methodological confusion and have not led to a consistent political reorientation toward work to mobilize the masses. This is expressed in phenomena of various types. On the one hand, the past sectarianism is paid for today by the emergence of currents tending to adapt politically to the dominant ideological tendencies in the mass movements. This is manifested in particular in the discussions on the national question and especially the women's movement. On the other hand, the absence of a complete break with the maneuvering and substitutionist orientation toward "regroupment of the broad vanguard" within the various movements is expressed in practice by an inability to wage mass campaigns in a consistent way for particular objectives (for example, on political repression in Eastern Europe, on southern Africa, or on elementary women's demands) and by a pursuit of "tactics" that contradict a real mass orientation (for example, the disastrous entryism practiced by the French LCR in the "Union Action Movement," the MAS, in the university).

In addition, even as the rhythm of the political crisis accelerates in most of the countries of Europe, the orientation put forward by the IMT's "European document" more and more concretely demonstrates its consequences in the practice of the class struggle. The generalization of the substitutionist line of "unity of revolutionaries" turns many sections away from elementary tasks of party building and a consistent defense of the program of the Fourth International, intensifies all the harmful effects of political adaptation to the concerns of the so-called "far left" and consequently creates impotence and increased confusion in face of the class-collaborationist policies of the treacherous working-class leaderships.

This political course was clearly analyzed and vigorously fought by the LTF around the Portuguese and Italian elections of 1976. (See IIDB, Vol. XIV, No. 2, April 1977.) Concerning the Portuguese presidential elections and support to the Carvalho candidacy, the LTF very correctly stated:

"The ultraleft course followed by the IMT with regard to the Portuguese revolution led it to fail to project an independent class line. The opportunist position the IMT leaders took of supporting Carvalho's electoral campaign was an extension of their wrong course in relation to the Portuguese revolution as a whole." [P. 24.]

Concerning Italy, the statement of the faction ends by stressing: "The critical support of the centrists' politics disarmed us in front of both the centrists and the reformists." [P. 26.]

In his report to the SWP convention in 1976, Comrade Sheppard fully argued in favor of this severe judgment by showing how the program of the "Italian FUR" included "downright reactionary planks" and "called for a more left version of the popular front."

The recent political developments in Europe only illustrate however a similar "disarming" of the European sections "in face of the centrists and reformists," a similar failure, in face of major developments in the class struggle,

to "trace a line of class independence" and to consistently fight for the workers united front. The recent electoral examples are sufficiently eloquent:

In the municipal elections in France, the formation of "unity of the revolutionaries" slates was obtained at the price of the gravest political confusion in relation to the Union of the Left. While most of the campaign was waged around local questions and themes of "control," no political alternative was really outlined in opposition to the popular front. The LCR refused to carry out agitation around the slogan of a "CP-SP government without bourgeois ministers" and called for a vote, in most districts, for the Union of the Left slates, including their Radical and Gaullist candidates. This was a serious setback in relation to the self-criticism that followed the vote for the Union of the Left slates in 1973. Moreover the desire to preserve the "unity" achieved in the municipal elections led the leadership of the LCR to accept as one of the slogans of the "revolutionary" contingent on May Day, "Right government, left government, the workers can rely only on their own struggles." This slogan, underneath its rank-and-filist and ultraleft formulation, is profoundly opportunist: it denies both the fact that the question of power is posed and the need to oppose the policy of popular frontism with the demand for a government of the workers parties without bourgeois ministers.

In *Belgium*, the LRT campaign had the aim of "working-class unity to the left of the PSB leadership, around the LRT-PC axis," a policy on which the following comment was published in *Inprecor* (April 28, 1977): "The CP finds itself in a political impasse, for its unity approach to the PSB corresponded neither to the relationship of forces . . . nor to the political conjuncture. In Antwerp, an RAL-CP-Left Christian bloc was on the point of being concluded when the national leadership of the CP intervened to stop it."

Can such a strange initiative on the part of a section of the Fourth International contribute to the clarity of our programmatic confrontation with the Stalinists? Does it go in the direction of a struggle for the workers united front? In reality, this policy merits the same criticism as the one formulated by the LTF concerning the Mexican presidential elections in 1976: "It is not correct to seek vague common programmatic formulations with the Stalinists, which the Stalinists interpret in accordance with their opportunist line. To claim that such formulations advance the class struggle and that the Trotskyists are in programmatic agreement with the Stalinists amounts to giving opportunism a left cover." [P. 27.]

Finally, the discussions on the opportunity to participate in the elections to the *Spanish Cortes* cannot excuse us from the task of critically assessing the method and program advanced by the LCR on this occasion. The formation of a "FUT" in common with two ultraleft organizations comes fundamentally from the same method as the one that inspired various "blocs" formed in Europe since the unhappy experience of the Portuguese FUR, a method that the LTF vigorously criticized for all its substitutionist and confusionist characteristics. These characteristics are evident in the strange conclusion of the electoral campaign: according to the June 17 *Rouge*, "The Communist Action Group withdrew at the last minute, explaining that it had 'only used the elections as a speaking platform.' With similar arguments, to which was

added the idea that it was necessary not to 'divide the working class vote,' the local sections of the LCR in certain provinces (Cadiz, Asturias) called for a 'working-class vote,' even a 'PCE vote.'"

On the programmatic level, the FUT platform supported by the LCR is hardly any better than the ones defended in Italy and France on the key questions of the governmental slogan and class political independence. Is it outlining a clear alternative to the policy of National Union and all the more or less "left" versions of the popular front to say: "The struggle for all the demands listed in this program can be developed only on the basis of the independent action of the workers' and people's (?) movement, without any *strategic* (?) agreements with bourgeois forces.

"It is through this road that it will be possible to establish a *workers' government* (?), the only government capable of advancing a solution to the present crisis favorable to the workers." (*Inprecor*, No. 8, May 1977. Our emphasis.)

It is highly positive that the LCR is today reconsidering some of the harmful consequences of such a policy. Likewise, we should consider it a not negligible gain that within the French LCR a minority of the IMT members took a position in favor of the agitational use of the slogan of a "CP-SP" government. Our role is precisely to base ourselves on such changes in order to make broader layers of members understand the *root* of the errors—the orientation to the new vanguard—and to combat the concrete form which the policy of the IMT has tended to take in all countries: the "fetish" of "the unity of revolutionaries," a systematic search for blocs with the "far left" to the detriment of programmatic clarity on the decisive political questions. The reorientation of the Fourth International in Europe requires a complete break with the "doctrinaire continental schema in which some standard formula promises a shortcut to success." The IMT has not up to now shown its intention of making such a break.

3. "Our Main Goal: Political Clarity"

In view of the considerations presented above, the course adopted by the majority of the Steering Committee on the attitude of the LTF in the discussion on Europe appears to us to be without an objective political basis, and therefore incorrect from the standpoint of the methods of discussion which should be—and have until now *always* been—used by the LTF in its fight to reorient and strengthen the Fourth International.

From this standpoint, we want to reaffirm our complete agreement with the LTF as a whole on two points:

In the first place, we consider that the political struggle in its factional form cannot be an aim in itself. It was justified at a particularly difficult time in the international discussion and has precisely the *aim* of establishing conditions for overcoming the political differences and restoring more satisfactory conditions of functioning, discussion and leadership. From this standpoint we think that the faction was correct to reaffirm last August the position already expressed a year earlier: "The Leninist Trotskyist Faction will seek to subordinate organizational questions to the goal of achieving clarity on the political questions." Accordingly, the LTF Steering Committee reiterates what it said in its August, 1975, statement: ". . . the Leninist Trotskyist Faction proposes that both of the organized factions dissolve themselves."

"We urge the IMT leadership to study this proposal once again and reconsider its rejection of this proposal."

In the same spirit, we share the opinion of Comrade Barnes when he affirmed our desire to "reorient the Fourth International through an objective and collective effort and not through factional polemics aimed at scoring points."

This political aim implies in particular that we seek to restore in the International and its leadership an open and loyal discussion that is not made artificially rigid by past lines of cleavage. It implies that we fight all practices that would risk creating inside the various ideological groupings a separate discussion from that carried on before all the members of the International. It also implies approaching the discussions that occur on new questions without factional prejudices. As Comrade Barnes stresses, the return to "Bolshevik norms" of functioning presupposes that we admit "the possibility of different lineups on different questions."

The course adopted on the debate on Europe appears to us to go precisely *against* the two concerns recalled above that all the members of the LTF share.

In this particular aspect of the international discussion, our desire to restore a discussion inside the leadership of the International without factional prejudices cannot ignore a *material fact*: "draft theses" on Europe exist, were approved by the majority of the United Secretariat, and are circulating throughout the International as "opening the discussion preparing the Eleventh World Congress" as a "document on a key political problem." It is to be noted that this same document after being adopted at the United Secretariat by the members of the IMT, was the subject of a discussion *separate* from that of the whole leadership. (In this way the IMT considered including this draft among its basic documents while announcing its intention to make several amendments resulting from its own factional discussion.)

Furthermore, it will be admitted that if we "seek to subordinate organizational questions to the goal of achieving clarity on the political questions," this principle should apply in several ways: it forbids any artificial hardening of the debates and should lead us not to prejudice the lines of cleavage on new questions; but *conversely*, it forbids us from sacrificing political clarity to our wish to overcome the old lineups when it is obvious that on a particular question major political differences remain and that they largely follow the old lines of cleavage from the previous debates. Even though we have every reason to deplore this, no one can deny that both the basic documents of the IMT and the current practice of the European sections prove that this is indeed the case, at least on this aspect of the international discussion.

As Comrade Barnes correctly recalled, the attitude of the LTF has never been to demand "self-criticisms" as a precondition for discussion. But we must point out that contrary to what has happened concerning Latin America, the leaders of the IMT, despite the failure of their orientation on Portugal are deliberately turning their backs on their most elementary responsibility in helping the European discussion to open up on a politically healthy basis: "to initiate a process of drawing a critical balance sheet that is long overdue and required to help move the Fourth International forward." In these conditions, the only

correct and responsible method by which the LTF can "explore the differences" that exist today in the International on Europe and to contribute to their eventual *surmounting* in the course of the discussion preparatory to the Eleventh World Congress, is the following:

—To begin from *what is* (and not what we might hope for), that is, the present draft theses published by the United Secretariat and the practice corresponding to it, in order to precisely assess on this basis the present state of differences and agreement.

—To begin the drawing up of a summary document expressing the main criticisms formulated by the LTF of the theoretical and practical orientation of the majority in Europe and its alternative proposals. This document—and obviously all the eventually different positions that its elaboration could bring to light—should be brought to the attention of all the members of the International and constitute one of the elements for the opening of the general orientation discussion for the next world congress.

It can be noted that such a course would simply amount to applying the mandate approved in August 1976. Its aim would be to let the whole International appreciate, in all political *clarity*, the *present* state of the differences on orientation on the European questions. In no way does it oppose a later evolution of the terms of debate and of the lines of cleavage in the International. On the contrary, such a document would enable all the members or leaders of the International—particularly those who have already begun a critical reassessment of the IMT's orientation—to appreciate on a concrete and current basis what are the LTF's proposals for reorienting the International and its European sections, as well as the continuity of its struggle for this aim since the discussions for the last world congresses and the discussion on Portugal. There could be no better *starting point* for taking organizational or political initiatives during the discussion for the next congress that would appear to be capable of facilitating the positive evolution of at least part of the present members of the IMT. In this way—that is, in seeking to promote clarity *at each stage of the discussion* on the real state of the positions concerned—that we can contribute in a politically effective and educational way to the success of the objective that Comrade Barnes outlined when he spoke of trying to forge, *through a sincere political discussion*, "a new majority on a whole series of key questions."

In our opinion a useful way to work for this objective would be to proceed as Comrade Barnes does concerning the discussion on Latin America. In this matter a new fact has appeared: the publication by the IMT of a "self-critical" document on its line at the Ninth and Tenth World Congresses. Whatever the limitations of this document may be, Comrade Barnes is correct to underline its importance and to base himself on its existence in order to get the international discussion to pass into a new stage. It could be noted, however, that while Comrade Barnes correctly states that "our *aim* should be a single document on Latin America" (for the next world congress), his *first* initiative in this direction is to write a detailed document recalling in the clearest way the origins of the Latin American debate and the positions the LTF defended in it, making a responsible assessment of the present stage of the debate taking into account both the positive aspects of the recent self-criticism and the "unresolved political questions and the contradictions." This is an *entirely*

exemplary method of discussion. We regret that a *different* method is applied on the European question: whereas in this area the IMT far from correcting its errors reaffirms them in a document known to all the members, the LTF refuses to use the means of discussion necessary to make its assessment of the stakes in the discussion and its own proposals known. Quite the contrary it adopts a course that, whatever its real results may be, today gives many members the impression that a common "European document" seems politically possible given the present positions held, that it could be enough to collaborate loyally in the United Secretariat in order to achieve this, and that the result of such a process could be something other than a collection of vague formulas open to contradictory interpretations without any relation to the real practice of the sections as it is inspired by the IMT.

Such a course leads, in our opinion, to sowing political confusion and disorientation in the ranks of the Interna-

tional. This is further aggravated by the fact that up to now no document has appeared to explain to the members what are the justifications and political objectives of the proposal formulated in the United Secretariat. The latter can thus be the subject of all sorts of misinterpretations, intentional or not. In regretting the absence of any written argumentation and given the information that we have, we consider for our part that the tactical reorientation decided on last April does not go in the direction of helping the LTF to "attain its main goal, political clarity."

For this reason we propose that the Steering Committee reconsider this decision of the Coordinating Committee and affirm the mandate approved last August.

July 1, 1977

Carmen, Gabriel, Letourneau, Melan, Nemo, Raul, Seldjoug, Ulysse

APPENDIX II

After the IMT Declaration: Against Factionalism, For the Correction of the International's Course

By Melan and Nemo

A new political factor has recently appeared in the International. The International Majority Tendency has published its "Declaration," an earlier draft of which had circulated among the leadership of the International just before the April meeting of the United Secretariat. [See "Declaration of the International Majority Tendency," IIDB, Vol. XIV, No. 7, September 1977 or SWP International Internal Information Bulletin, No. 1, July 1977.]

The political importance of this document is clear, since it is presented as "adopting a position" in the sense that "The International Majority Tendency redefine its political platform." As such, *it makes possible a precise and objective evaluation of what are now the issues and circumstances of the discussion in the International.*

1. On the political level, the only even partly positive element introduced by this "Declaration" consists of certain corrections which the IMT adds to its theory of the "new vanguard." Thus, it states that the new vanguard "is a *social* phenomenon and not as assemblage of the so-called far left organizations," and that it "is also expressed in a process of differentiation within the traditional parties. . . ." These corrections do tend toward a less schematic *socio-political* description of the forms taken by the radicalization in the current rise of mass struggles. The political impact of this correction is conspicuously weakened, however, by the rest of the IMT "Declaration."

In the first place, instead of holding the members of the International responsible for "many misunderstandings" resulting from the theory of the "new vanguard," it would be more correct for the leaders of the IMT to admit that they are the ones who were the source of these errors. Thus the Majority's "European document" at the last world congress spoke of a "new vanguard . . . by and large eluding the control of the bureaucratic leaderships," and stated that it is a phenomenon "quantitatively and qualitatively different from everything that happened in the decades following the crisis of 1918-23." [See "Documents of the World Congress of the Fourth International," *Intercontinental Press*, December 23, 1974, p. 1822.]

Furthermore, what the "Declaration" says about Portugal, a living laboratory of the class struggle, is enough to show that the IMT has not changed its conception of "the vanguard." Thus it states: ". . . the broad vanguard of the Portuguese proletariat (not grouplets, but hundreds of thousands of workers and poor peasants) *were defending the interests of the entire class*, the interests of the Portuguese revolution." But it refers immediately afterward to "the political leadership of this social vanguard falling into the hands of centrists and ultraleftists. . . ." How can it be claimed *simultaneously* that "the social vanguard" was composed of "hundreds of thousands of workers" and that it was under the leadership . . . "of the

centrists and ultraleftists"? With this totally contradictory definition, the IMT is actually trying to defend the disastrous line it followed in the summer of 1975. This line turned the IMT away from the real movement through which the *masses* (by the "hundreds of thousands") were mobilizing against the Gonçalves government (while retaining their illusions with respect to their old leaderships, mainly the SP) and aligned it in actuality with the centrist and ultraleft groups. The IMT thus maintains the view that "defense of the interests of the Portuguese revolution" and a "vanguard" role fell to those forces that made up the FUR. Adding the adjective "social" and referring to "hundreds of thousands of workers" only serves to throw a veil of confusion over an unchanged line that still deserves the characterization made of it at the time by the international minority:

"The IMT vagueness as to what 'vanguard' they are talking about serves to mask their political adaptation to the centrists and ultralefts whose 'revolutionary' phrases and tactics attract them. This blurs the line that must be drawn between centrists and adventurers and the program of Trotskyism.

"The IMT line of transforming the 'new mass vanguard' into an 'adequate instrument for recomposing the organized workers movement . . . was put to the test with the formation of the FUR, which in practice regrouped or 'recomposed' the 'vanguard.'" (Minority document at the February 1976 IEC.) [See "The Test of Lines in the Portuguese Revolution," IIDB, Vol. XIII, No. 2, April 1976.]

Finally, the IMT confines itself for the time being to further explaining its *analysis* of the so-called "new vanguard." These clarifications break with neither the *concept* (which tends to arbitrarily isolate a certain layer from the overall process of mobilizing the working class and the various oppressed layers), nor the *general method* of party-building, a substitutionist and subjectivist method based on the "instrumentalization" of this "new vanguard" and orienting mainly to its "concerns." From this standpoint, the debate with the IMT is actually not much different from the way it was stated in Comrade Mary-Alice Waters critique of the 1973 "European document." This critique correctly pointed to the gross errors and mistaken analyses that characterized the concept of the "new vanguard" as it was then defined; but the fundamental criticism concerned not the *description* but the *general method* of party-building that went along with the majority theory of the "broad vanguard." This is forcefully expressed in a major passage of Mary-Alice Waters' document:

"What is wrong with such a guideline?

"The starting point for revolutionary Marxism is not our own subjective concerns or the immediate outlook of the 'vanguard.' We start with what is objectively in the interests of the broadest working masses and what must be done to advance the class struggle nationally and internationally. . . .

"The difference between these two starting points—the concerns of the vanguard or the objective needs of the working masses—is neither minor nor hair-splitting. *From the two different starting points flow two divergent courses of action.*" [Emphasis added.] "One tends towards maximalist demands and so-called 'militant' actions that presumably reflect the level of consciousness of the 'van-

guard.' *In reality they are adaptations* to its political backwardness." [Emphasis added.] "The other is firmly based on the *method* of the Transitional Program, which aims at mobilizing the masses in struggle, whatever their level of consciousness, and moving them forward toward the socialist revolution." [See "A Criticism of the United Secretariat Majority Draft Resolution on 'The Building of Revolutionary Parties in Capitalist Europe'—an Initial Contribution to the Discussion," by Mary-Alice Waters, IIDB, Vol. X, No. 3, March 1973, pp. 7-8.]

This same criticism had to be restated after the test of the Portuguese revolution, which graphically demonstrated that what was at issue was a *method* of party-building, not just a mistaken *analysis* of the radicalization. That is the sense of the following statement by Comrade Barnes (at the 1975 SWP convention):

"*The real thrust of the European document is now crystal clear . . . the line has been applied in Portugal. . . . And this gives us a preview of what's likely to happen in Spain, or France or Britain or Germany under similar circumstances.*

"*The adaptation to the 'new mass vanguard' under the guise of winning, or transforming, it into an adequate instrument and thereby outflanking the reformists, has resulted in the substitution of minority action for the method of the Transitional Program based on the need to win the majority of toilers. It has led, not to outflanking the traditional workers parties and 'recomposing' the workers into a new Marxist vanguard, but to the disorientation of the vanguard. Instead of outflanking, they ended up tailing after the CP and even to some extent the bourgeois government.*" [Emphasis added.] [See "The Portuguese Revolution and Building the Fourth International," by Jack Barnes, IIDB, Vol. XII, No. 6, October 1975.]

Furthermore, the political weaknesses of the IMT's reassessment of the "new vanguard" have been shown in practice by the fact that the new "Declaration" contains no real critical reappraisal of the "revolutionary unity policy," which in many countries is now the main vehicle for the attempt to "instrumentalize" the "new vanguard." Accordingly, it is the "weakness of the Trotskyists" that has been blamed for the serious political setbacks suffered in Italy and Portugal relative to the centrist currents, not the IMT's political line. Conversely, the IMT leans on the "growth of our sections" to press for "positive experiences" with the "new vanguard" in France and Spain. This also makes it possible to gauge the limitations of the observation contained in the "Declaration" to the effect that there have been "incorrect, 'vanguardist' interpretations of the European document"—which, however, are said to have undergone "the corrections necessary as to line in countries like France or Spain." Are we to understand, after the June 21, 1973-type ultraleft deviations that the present "unity policy" of the French LCR—new outgrowths of which were seen in the municipal election campaign and last May Day—constitutes an example for the IMT of what it calls "positive experiences" or a correct "interpretation of the European document"?

2. In addition, throughout its recent "Declaration," the IMT carefully avoids making a detailed balance-sheet of its line during the most important events in the class struggle. The general validity of this line is supposed to be demonstrated by way of contrast, through the assertion

that "The minority's line during the Tenth World Congress had not prepared it politically for these events." (This refers to the discussion on Vietnam, Portugal, Angola and Spain.) "Its balance-sheet is one of striking failure." The "arguments" used to support this proof are worth examining one by one.

On *Vietnam*, the IMT reaffirms the view that the fall of the Thieu regime and "... the creation of a workers state, albeit bureaucratically deformed from the outset," shows the "... partial and empirical break" of the VCP with Stalinist doctrines. It finds fault with the LTF for having insisted on "a purely literal interpretation of the 'program' of the Vietnamese NLF, and for having characterized the Paris accords as "a partial implementation of a program aimed at consolidating capitalism in South Vietnam." On this last point, the final victory of the Indochinese revolution offers us no grounds whatsoever for revising the LTF's assessment of the Paris accords, which was not as it is presented by the IMT, but as follows: "The signing of the Paris accords in 1973 represented a setback to the Vietnamese revolution. Although Washington did not realize its full goal of smashing the Vietnamese revolution and had to withdraw its troops, it remained in a relatively favorable position to preserve a capitalist South Vietnam. Instead of being able to point to a clear-cut success, revolutionists had to face up to the unfavorable aspects of the cease-fire that Hanoi was forced to accept. This task was made more difficult because the leading figures of the North Vietnamese government hailed the ambiguous compromise as an unalloyed victory." (World Political Resolution of the minority at the Tenth World Congress. Emphasis added.) [See "The World Political Situation and the Immediate Tasks of the Fourth International," in *Dynamics of World Revolution Today*, (New York, Pathfinder Press, 1974), p. 134.] We would add that the task was also made "more difficult" by the fact that the IMT at that time characterized the Paris accords as such as signifying "that the Indochinese revolution is continuing within an improved relationship of forces." (Emphasis added.) [See Documents of the World Congress, *IP*, December 23, 1974, p. 1726.] As for what the IMT calls "the reality of the line of action" of the VCP, it must be judged not by the outcome of the mass movement but from the standpoint of the VCP's contribution as a leadership at each stage of the revolutionary process. The VCP's attitude in 1945, 1954 and in the Paris accords is entirely in keeping with its "literary" program. The fact that this same VCP was finally forced to "go further along the road of breaking with the bourgeoisie than it wished," further than the class-collaborationist program that it actively defended with arms in hands for thirty years, does not change its nature, any more than the establishment of the people's democracies changed the nature of the Soviet bureaucracy or the CPs of Eastern Europe. It is essential to understand this in order to correct the tendency to partly adapt to the Vietnamese leadership, which is heavily fostered by the IMT's views.

In place of an evaluation of the results of the test of lines in the *Portuguese revolution*, the IMT sticks to its old charges that the LTF analyzed the policy of Soares in 1975 as "a defense of democratic rights by the Social Democracy." The IMT actually knows very well that the LTF in all its documents clearly distinguished the mobilizations by the masses against the attacks on their gains and in

defense of democratic rights from the counterrevolutionary line of the social-democratic leadership. The IMT's factional attack attempts to conceal its own inability in 1975 to make such an elementary distinction and its adaptation at that time to the worse illusions of the Portuguese and European "new vanguard," as well as all the blunders it itself fostered with its theory of "two camps," a theory that rubbed out the class lines and led it to adopt positions hardly in keeping with the interests of the Portuguese proletariat—whether with regard to the trade-union unity law, the *República* affair, the "Copcon document," or the Carvalho candidacy in the last presidential elections.

On *Angola*, the IMT claims that the LTF's strategic errors "made it impossible for the publications carrying the LTF line or for the LTF reporter at the February 1976 IEC to give any coherent line flowing from their own correct position of support to the military struggle against the South African invaders and made it impossible for them to explain the different attitudes which revolutionary Marxists had to take towards imperialist mercenaries and South African troops on the one hand and the troops of the Cuban workers state on the other hand."

This charge is unfounded. The "LTF reporter at the February 1976 IEC" did not defend his "own correct line," but one that had been submitted to a unanimous vote within the LTF. The very first paragraph of the resolution thus adopted sheds full light both on "support to the armed struggle against the South African invaders" and on the "different approach" to take towards the forces involved: "For revolutionary Marxists and supporters of democratic rights, it was an elementary duty to offer material support to the military struggle against the intervention, and to organize an international campaign under the general slogans of 'Hands Off Angola!' 'South Africa Out of Angola!' and, in view of the threat from American imperialism because of Havana's aid to the MPLA, 'Defend Cuba!'" [See "Resolution on Angola, Draft Resolution of the Leninist Trotskyist Faction," *IIDB*, Vol. XIII, No. 8, December 1976, p. 17.] Moreover, it is public knowledge that throughout 1975, the SWP carried out an intensive educational campaign focusing on the struggle against imperialist intervention and the demand for immediate withdrawal of U.S. and South African troops.

The LTF did indeed "deny" however, that the three nationalist movements "represent different social forces," and stated that, whatever their political orientation and respective ties to imperialist forces had been, as far as their class nature was concerned, they all came under the heading of petty-bourgeois nationalist movements. The IMT's blunders on this point, on the other hand, explain the tendency—displayed in a number of *Inprecor* articles in 1975—to substitute an analysis based on "camps" for one based on class, and to slide from "a correct position of support to the military struggle against the South African invaders" and the imperialists to one of political support to the MPLA itself.

Concerning *Spain*, the IMT raises serious charges against the LC leadership, accusing it of "ultra-opportunist maneuvers" and of having "openly opted for trade-union division." But the most serious evidence brought in support of this charge is that the LC went "to the point of stating that it favored the breakup of the Coordinacion Sindical of the Workers Commissions, UGT, and USO." This definitely means that, according to the

IMT, the struggle for trade-union unity in Spain must involve *defense* of the said "Coordinating Committee." Is it necessary to recall that not only is this agreement a purely bureaucratic one, but it explicitly refers to the "representative" character of those elected to the CNS and represents one of the methods used by the Stalinist leadership to resist constituting the workers' commissions as a genuine organized trade-union federation, and turn the masses away from the struggle to smash the CNS and establish the utter independence of the trade-union movement? Is it here that the IMT thinks it can find an alternative to the LC's supposed "ultra-opportunism"?

It is only on the basis of an outrageously *distorted* picture of the real nature of the major recent debates in the International that the IMT feels justified in drawing conclusions as serious as these:

The LTF, which "reduces the workers movement to the traditional organizations . . . may well find itself out of step with explosive struggles. In practice it tends to lead to combining a policy of denunciation of the traitorous leaderships with a failure to take initiatives going beyond the policy put forward by these bureaucracies. It even threatens to become counterposed in practice to struggles that clearly express the interests of the entire class. . . ."

"To this day the LTF has drawn no lessons from its evident inability to apply the traditional Trotskyist line . . . during a situation that is becoming revolutionary. . . ."

"In face of each successive revolutionary crisis since the Tenth World Congress the LTF has made wrong prognoses and analyses and has proposed a line of action which would have been a political disaster for our movement had it won a majority in the International."

In this way, the IMT leaders can score a few easy points about the "disastrous positions" of the LTF. But the fact that they are as incapable of presenting these positions with a minimum of factual accuracy as they are of recognizing the very grave errors into which they themselves led several sections of the International, flatly contradicts the IMT's claims to represent "maturity of international leadership."

3. Lastly, the IMT "Declaration" explains what it now considers to be its "political platform." From now on, it will be "based on the four following points:

"a) the political line of the present declaration;

"b) the general line of the European document presented to the Eleventh World Congress, to which the IMT is preparing a series of amendments;

"c) the general line of the document of self-criticism on Latin America;

"d) the defense of the conception of international democratic centralism. . . ."

This new platform calls for several observations.

It is encouraging that the self-criticism on Latin America, whatever its limitations and contradictions, is included in the founding points of the new IMT. It is surprising, however, that whereas the IMT states that the Latin American line "cannot be considered the main cause" of the factional struggle in the International and stresses the greater importance, in its view, of questions like Indochina, Portugal and Angola, the IMT deems it unnecessary today to endorse the various line documents on these questions over that it supported in recent years. The only way in which the new IMT defines itself politi-

cally on these points, therefore, boils down to the particularly sketchy—and, as we have seen, somewhat misleading—characterizations made in "the present declaration." This hardly helps bring about a loyal reassessment of the recent debates and is evidence of the IMT's current desire to shirk the political consequences that should logically proceed from the "self-criticism" begun on Latin America to a whole series of other political questions (starting with a balance-sheet on the European line of the Tenth World Congress and the disastrous way it was put to the test in the Portuguese revolution).

The IMT, incidentally, is presented as the only tendency upholding democratic centralism "as it is defined in all the statutes of the International." In the absence of a clearly defined position on this fundamental point, the IMT's only basis here too consists of the relevant paragraphs of "the present declaration."

Lastly, the IMT officially incorporates the general line of the second "European document" of June 1976 into its current platform. It should be noted that this is the *only* definite line document on which the IMT is now based, and that, given its special conception of how a tendency operates, this "general line" is binding on all its members. (In fact, while IMT members "are not bound by any discipline," this applies only "apart from the *duty* to fight for adoption of the line of the documents *selected as the tendency platform.*" [Emphasis added.] This means that whatever "series of amendments" the IMT plans to make to its own European document, or the various interpretations this document may give rise to within the IMT, the "general line" of the European document now constitutes the *main political basis of the IMT*. The IMT could hardly give clearer proof of its refusal to undertake an honest assessment of its grave errors in Europe, particularly in Portugal. It thereby states its commitment to a method and a line that the LTF has fought unwaveringly for several years, and which it correctly described in August 1976, when it announced that the following was one of its urgent tasks:

"The LTF will continue to press for discussion of the consequences of the IMT line in Portugal, the key test so far of the IMT line in Europe. Here, too, the IMT line proved to be *disastrous*."

"Rectification of the errors made in Latin America *and Portugal* is the top priority. On other questions, too, it is essential to steer the Fourth International back onto a correct course. The LTF will present a critical summary of the results of the IMT line in Europe as a whole. This document will show *the results of the error of orienting to the 'new mass vanguard,' including errors made in election policy, such as adaptation towards popular frontism, confusion about the character of Stalinism, and errors in mass work* in areas such as the trade-union movement, the women's liberation movement, the student movement, and the national liberation movements. (Emphasis added.) [See "Statement by the Steering Committee of the Leninist Trotskyist Faction," IIDB, Vol. XIV, No. 2, April 1977, p. 29.]

4. The recent "Declaration" of the IMT is unacceptable. Both its tone and content, and the political decisions reflected in the "redefinition of its platform" represent new, serious obstacles to launching a loyal and fruitful discussion leading up to the Eleventh World Congress.

With regard to the *fundamental issues of the debate on*

strategy, the publication of this declaration and the official adoption of the "European document," objectively show that, at this stage of the debate, the IMT's positions have not undergone significant positive changes with respect to either Europe, Portugal, Angola, or Vietnam. This contrasts with the real progress made in the discussion on Latin America, made possible by the recent "self-criticism" of the majority.

Concerning the *organizational framework of the discussion*, the form and content of the "Declaration of the IMT" are in *flagrant contradiction* with its statements of intention to the effect that it hoped to restore "a mode of functioning more in conformity with the traditions of Bolshevism," and would "henceforth act as an ideological tendency."

The fact is that the very nature of the charges made against the minority currents reveals factional intentions on two counts: first, the groundlessness of most of the charges; second, the logical consequences which the IMT would have to draw from these charges once it claims they are true. How could a mere "ideological tendency" suffice to defend the International against currents that are unflinchingly described as seriously violating "the elementary norms of democratic centralism," committing "genuine provocations," and capable of leading "our movement into political disaster when it comes to a revolutionary crisis"?

The *factional* character of the IMT's current intentions is fully confirmed by its new platform—quietly abandoning *all* its line documents written before 1976; refusing to make an honest, detailed assessment of its previous line (except on Latin America, a debate almost ten years old). The IMT now says it is calling for an "ideological tendency" on the basis of a platform that boils down to:

A "Declaration" both self-justifying and factional.

A "European document" that repeats all the errors of the previous one in addition to those on Portugal.

Promised amendments.

An *as yet unwritten* document on democratic centralism.

"Possible" additions (such as a resolution on Indochina). Hence, what can *the real political function* of such a platform be, if not to attempt to reestablish a *majority faction* whose only political basis is confidence extended to the "leadership" unconditionally, and factional hostility toward all "minorities"?

5. In the climate of discussion prevailing in the International after the publication of the recent "Declaration of the IMT," the LTF in order to be faithful to the fight it has led since the Ninth World Congress to defend the Fourth International and correct its political course, and on the basis of the political gains of that fight, should collectively undertake *the following urgent tasks*:

a) Submit for discussion a reply to the majority "Declaration," elaborating on and explaining the above brief remarks for all the members.

b) Draft and publish several concise documents setting down the main axes and the present status of the debates that have been going on for several years within the International on China and Vietnam and on the balance sheet of the Portuguese revolution.

c) Go back to carrying out the mandate voted on last August concerning the drafting of a balance sheet on the application of the majority's "European document" and proposals on strategy for building the Fourth International in Europe.

Accomplishing these tasks is essential for obtaining political clarity on a number of important questions on which differences remain with the IMT. Of course, this does not preclude initiatives aimed at exploring the possibility of working out common positions with all or part of the IMT on those questions where the objective basis for doing so would appear to exist (women, Latin America, etc.).

July 20, 1977

Melan and Nemo