

*John Mahan*

# International Internal Discussion Bulletin

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# THE CRISIS IN CAPITALIST EUROPE AND THE PRESENT TASKS OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

[Draft resolution adopted by majority of United Secretariat]

1. May 1968 marked a fundamental shift in the relationship of class forces in capitalist Europe. This turn occurred in the context of a deepening crisis of both Stalinism and imperialism—the shakeup of bureaucratic control and the new rise of mass struggle in the deformed workers states (Czechoslovakia, Poland, Yugoslavia, and China); the development of the Indochinese revolution; and the stepping up of the national liberation struggle in the Portuguese colonies. At the same time that the Kremlin and imperialism were signing accords formalizing the division of Europe established at Potsdam and Yalta (the Berlin Accords of the Four, treaties between the Federal Republic of Germany, the Democratic Republic of Germany, the Soviet Union, and Poland), the working classes of capitalist Europe and the “people’s democracies” were challenging the status quo.

## The Period Opened in 1968

2. The fundamental features of this turn and the ensuing prolonged crisis in capitalist Europe are as follows:

2.1. The new upsurge of working-class struggles reflects the qualitative change in the class relationship of forces. The roots of this upsurge lie in a sharpening of the contradictions of the capitalist mode of production after more than two decades of expansion.

2.2. A profound crisis of all social relations and bourgeois institutions has emerged in capitalist Europe. The first effects of this crisis became apparent prior to May 1968, and have deepened since. One of the most significant expressions of this was the youth radicalization, which found its first voice in the student movement. This movement was fed both by the social crisis affecting the educational system and by the successful anti-imperialist struggles of the Cuban, Algerian, Indochinese, and African peoples. It was in the course of student mobilizations that the first signs emerged of the women’s liberation movement, which was to burgeon in the following years. (See the draft world congress resolution, “Socialist Revolution and the Struggle for Women’s Liberation,” IIDB Vol. XV, No. 4, May 1978.)

2.3. In the early 1960s—Belgium in 1960-61, Spain in 1962, France in 1963, Italy in 1962, Britain in 1962—the combativity of the working class found a new impetus. These struggles expressed workers’ resistance to capitalist rationalization of crisis-ridden branches of industry (such as mining), as well as the potential for mobilizing layers of the working class concentrated in fast-developing industries (such as steel, automobiles, chemicals, and petrochemicals). These mobilizations, even though they were followed by a pause or retreat, were harbingers of the turn of 1968-69.

May 1968 in France and the autumn of 1969 in Italy were characterized not only by an explosive increase in the number of strikes, by the breadth of working-class participation, by the irresistible and semispontaneous upsurge of the mass movement, which tended to come into conflict with the labor bureaucracy and its methods—but also by the nature of the demands and the forms of these struggles.

Wage demands remained primary, but the demand for equal wage increases for all occupied a more and more

prominent place. This was accompanied by challenges to some of the more despotic aspects of the capitalist organization of work (elements of workers control were introduced), as well as the functions and powers of supervisory personnel, and working and safety conditions. Struggles around jobs and the demand for a shorter work week were already beginning to be seen. More generally, struggles to defend and extend freedom of trade-union activity on the job were a constant feature of working-class mobilizations in most countries of capitalist Europe. Factory occupations and the tendency toward self-organization (strike committees, factory committees, etc.)—despite all their limitations—revealed the aspirations of the masses and the depth of the crisis of capitalist relations of production.

2.4. The emergence of or development toward prerevolutionary crises in France in May-June 1968, Italy in the autumn of 1969, Portugal from March to November 1975, and Spain at the end of 1976, as well as the tendency toward a simultaneous appearance of revolutionary upsurges in these four southern European countries between 1974 and 1976, highlight the character of the period opened up by the French May. Socialist revolution is once again on the agenda in capitalist Europe, not only in the historic but in the immediate sense.

However, this workers upsurge developed very unevenly from one country to another. It varied according to the diverse experiences of the workers in the period leading up to 1968, the dissimilarity of political traditions and leadership in the working class, as well as the historic resources possessed by each ruling class. Moreover, the upsurge proceeded in anything but a linear fashion. However, in most countries it oscillated around a higher level than in the previous period. Where setbacks occurred, the masses showed a great capacity for recovery.

2.5. The organized workers movement has been strengthened in all the countries of capitalist Europe. The trade unions have increased their influence in the key branches of industry. The growing industrialization of all economic activity has given rise to a growing proletarianization of sectors of the so-called new middle classes. These layers of wage earners have joined trade unions. They increasingly identify with the working class (e.g., bank, insurance company, and public service employees, technicians). The mass organizations have proven their power of attraction, and when the unions take initiatives that correspond to the needs and aspirations of the masses, they receive wide support, even where the degree of unionization is not very high (as in France). Legalization of the trade unions, and the formation of a strong trade-union movement in Portugal and Spain, along with the growth of the trade unions in Greece and Turkey, have added to the arsenal of the working class across Europe. This constitutes an organizational expression of the change taking place in this period.

Along with the growth of the organized workers movement, there has been a change in the relationship of forces inside these organizations between the bureaucratic leaderships and a broad layer of advanced workers.

Of course, there remain important gaps in the workers’ system of defense, such as the lack of unionization among

millions of immigrant workers, and their relegation to the most menial jobs, and the low level of unionization of the female work force—which constitutes the majority in several branches, such as textiles, clothing, health, and services—although some progress has been made. These gaps may widen in a time of recession.

2.6. The rise in the level of organization of wage earners, and the upsurge of struggles, have also been reflected in a general trend toward a swelling of the ranks of the workers parties and a broadening of their electoral support among sectors of the masses who are entering politics for the first time. Their influence is widening. Their control over the mass movement, though weaker than in the period prior to 1968, is still effective, above all in the political arena. However, the process of politicalization, which is reflected in these parties' own growth, has the potential to undermine their hold. A growing layer of advanced workers has emerged. These workers have served their apprenticeship in numerous struggles, and have acquired trade-union, and often political, experience. On several occasions they have challenged the orders of the bureaucratic leaderships. They represent a decisive factor in the building of a revolutionary party of the working class. On the electoral plane, this phenomenon has been partly expressed in the votes won in various countries by centrist or Trotskyist organizations, which even workers belonging to, or influenced by, the SPs and CPs have voted for. By doing so, they were registering a protest against the line of their leaderships.

2.7. The change in the class relationship of forces has led to a political crisis for a series of regimes and governments (e.g., the crises of the center-left in Italy; Gaullist bonapartism in France; the Conservative government in Britain in 1972-74; the CDU-CSU regime and the "big-party" coalition in West Germany; the dictatorships in Spain, Portugal, and Greece; and the dissolution of the Stormont regime in Northern Ireland).

The bourgeois parties are riddled with factionalism and some have split apart. The driving force behind these conflicts is not differences over technical-economic options, but disagreement on how to respond to the workers upsurge. This is not simply a feature of the bourgeois democracies. It was also present in Greece, Portugal, and Spain prior to the disappearance of the dictatorial regimes, and signaled their approaching end.

2.8. The limitations we have noted in these impetuous upsurges of the mass movement do not stem from the inherent strength of bourgeois institutions. True, the bourgeoisie has considerable political experience in manipulating all the devices of bourgeois democracy. The reserves built up over the long period of expansion could thus be used to brake the momentum of mobilizations. However, the decisive factor has been the policy of the bureaucratic leaderships of the trade unions and workers parties. In one or another variant, they have put forward their policy of class collaboration, fragmenting mobilizations and strictly limiting their scope. At all the high points of workers upsurges, they have given the bourgeoisie its main weapons. Once again it has been shown that the reformist leaderships represent the central obstacle to a proletarian victory. Despite the opportunism and compromises of these leaderships, the working class will not throw them off until big class confrontations take place, a large number of recognized worker cadres already exists, organized in a revolutionary party whose base and numerical strength are sufficient for it to be seen by broad layers as an alternative

instrument, and unless the basic elements of a class-struggle left wing in the trade unions exist.

### The Capitalist Recession in Europe, Interimperialist Contradictions, and the Bourgeois Offensive

3. The 1974-75 international capitalist recession changed the context in which the class struggle in capitalist Europe is unfolding.

The bourgeoisie is no longer capable of making major concessions in an attempt to stem mobilizations. It is compelled by economic necessity to launch a wide-ranging attack on the gains won by the workers during the years of expansion. These blows must be struck above all in the decisive sectors of the capitalist economy (industry, transportation, communications). At the beginning of the crisis, the bourgeoisie was able to single out the weakest sectors for attack. Now it must strike at the main body of the working class.

This battle is being fought in the context of a further shift in the international relationship of class forces to the detriment of imperialism, as a result of the weakening of world capitalism by the defeat of American imperialism in Indochina and the first worldwide recession since 1937-38.

The recession broke out in the context of a change in the class relationship of forces in capitalist Europe, which shifted to the advantage of the proletariat in 1968-69. Before the development of the economic crisis and the launching of austerity policies, the European working class had not suffered any big political defeats similar to the defeat of 1945-47 or even 1958 in France. In spite of unemployment and attacks on their standard of living, the workers retain confidence in their strength and in their mass organizations. Thus, the capitalist class has launched its offensive from a position of weakness. This explains why it is having trouble implementing on the social level the few partial victories it has scored in the political arena. It also explains why governmental instability is a permanent feature.

The credibility of the reforms proposed by the bureaucratic leaderships is objectively undermined by the gravity and duration of the crisis. Moreover, they all tend to go along with austerity, presenting it as the only solution for overcoming the crisis and "reforming the system." In this new social and economic situation, the limitations of a spontaneous upsurge of the mass movement can be seen. The need for an overall political solution permeates all major working-class mobilizations.

The recession has weakened the bourgeoisie's positions. The working class has its strength intact to fight back against the capitalists' attacks, and its anticapitalist consciousness is deepening. The decisive battles are still ahead.

4. In 1974-75, all the big imperialist powers were hit simultaneously by a recession. The recession was the outcome of a phase of falling profit rates, which could be seen in all the capitalist economies, combined with an expansion of excess production capacity (overproduction) in a growing number of key branches of industry. This crisis of overproduction overlapped with the end of the long period of expansion following the 1948-49 years. While the scope of the recession cannot be compared to the 1929-32 crisis, its major symptoms will remain a constant feature of the years to come.

The recovery since 1976 has been uneven among the different European countries, as well as among the different branches of the economy. On the world market, demand is increasing very slowly, and the rate of productive investments remains very low in most branches of industry. This counteracts the cumulative effects of the upturn.

Even at the highest point of the recovery, industrial production remained either only slightly above or even below the level reached during the last boom. The limited nature of the recovery, combined with steps toward rationalization and raising productivity, has meant that unemployment has remained steady and is even growing in most countries. Inflation remains high, especially in comparison to the average level in the 1950s and 1960s.

4.1. The recession, the creeping recovery, and the relative stagnation of the world market have intensified competition among the imperialist powers in the search for markets. At a time when all the imperialist bourgeoisies are putting the emphasis on a revival of exports as the "solution" to their problems, the trend is toward protectionism. These practices create further obstacles to a cumulative upturn.

4.2. While the 1974-75 crisis provoked this wave of protectionism, the fact remains that the bulk of international trade agreements have held up. Despite the magnitude of the crisis, the EEC has withstood it; protectionism has not been allowed to run rampant among its member countries.

The crisis has, of course, slowed down the implementation or advancement of various projects, such as the Economic and Monetary Union or the European Regional Development Fund. The root of these delays and bottlenecks actually lies in the fact that the social, economic and monetary situations of the member countries—including rates of inflation and the balance of payments—have developed differently.

The crisis of the Greek, Portuguese, and Spanish dictatorships has placed on the agenda the question of these countries entering the EEC. Their bourgeoisies are demanding that they be rapidly admitted to the Common Market. But some of the EEC member countries have balked at this, and there is strong opposition within each country to admitting the three applicants.

Nevertheless, the persistence of semistagnation, the opposition to trade agreements with the United States, the effects of the dollar's plunge, and the advantages of forming a combined market that would amount to a total of one-fourth of world trade could hasten decisions pointing the way toward a gradual inclusion of the three countries of southern Europe. These could include special long-term reservations, and would always be subject to withdrawal.

For the moment, the major contradiction that characterizes the EEC is the discrepancy between the progress made in achieving economic interpenetration in the areas of trade and banking, and the deadlock in the monetary and political spheres. The West German government, with the assent of the French government, will probably maneuver to come up with a more or less workable solution to the monetary problem.

In the bleak world economic climate, the policies of the Carter administration, and the strengthened position of the European imperialists, may spur some steps toward widening membership in the EEC. But social, economic,

and political disparities will remain obstacles to any firm and effective moves in that direction.

5. The winning of independence by the Portuguese colonies marked a new stage in the historic crisis of the traditional European colonialist powers. Between 1948 and 1975, Britain, France, the Netherlands, Belgium, Spain, and Portugal lost almost all their former colonies.

This retreat from direct domination by the European imperialist powers did not deter them from organizing a system of indirect domination. As the principal European capitalist economies grew stronger, especially the West German economy, the European imperialists' field of action widened, bringing them into competition with the U.S. and Japan.

Since the 1960s, the dominant feature of the historic trend in interimperialist relations between Europe and the United States has been a shift in the economic relationship of forces in favor of the European imperialists, especially West German imperialism. This transformation can be seen in the weakening of the big American corporations' position relative to the multinational trusts of various European countries in the major industrial sectors (chemicals, automobiles, machines, electrical equipment, and pharmaceutical goods) over the last twenty years. These transformations have also been reflected in the role West German imperialism has acquired in world trade. By 1974 it had taken first place in the export of manufactured goods on the world market, and gained a strong foothold in trade with the USSR and "people's democracies." West Germany has become the second-ranking imperialist power in the economic field. In recent years it has gone on a real offensive to export capital. Since 1970, its foreign investments have grown at an annual rate of 20%-30%. It took advantage of the decline of the dollar to step up its investments in the United States, setting an example for Britain, Switzerland, the Netherlands, and France to follow.

West Germany is now in a leading position on the arms export market, along with French imperialism. It is in the forefront in the construction of nuclear reactors, along with France, and is giving the United States some serious competition in this field.

Time and again, the West German bourgeoisie has intervened politically in support of capitalist forces threatened by an upsurge of the working class in Europe, notably in Italy, Portugal, and Spain. Social stability in West Germany has freed the hands of the bourgeoisie, and its current mouthpiece, the SPD, for such activities. But the beginnings of renewed activity on the part of the West German working class in the face of continuing unemployment and capitalist rationalization of industry may reduce West German imperialism's margin of maneuver.

Moreover, for all its arrogance, the West German bourgeoisie has not played a decisive role in the outcome of political events in any of the countries where it has intervened. The class-collaborationist line followed by the bureaucratic leaderships in those countries was a much more decisive factor.

5.1. The European imperialist powers have used the EEC's institutions to preserve all the advantages of an imperialist presence in their former colonies within the framework of so-called decolonization. The Lomé accords, signed in 1975 with forty-six African, Caribbean, and Pacific countries, aimed not only at preserving the gains of the Yaoundé convention (1963) in the areas of trade,

finance, and industry, but also at setting up a system that would guarantee the imperialist powers in the EEC a steady source of raw materials.

Although the Latin American military regimes offered the European capitalists opportunities for investment, Africa is the main arena for direct intervention by the various European imperialist powers, especially France, Britain, West Germany, and Belgium.

Taking advantage of U.S. imperialism's difficulties after its rout in Indochina, French imperialism asserted its claim in Africa and stepped up its military intervention. It was able to use the opening provided by Washington's indecisiveness to defend its own interests as best it could. But its degree of independence is still limited by the relative scantiness of its resources. Its policy, especially in military matters, falls within the general framework of the dominant imperialist power, the United States.

As for West Germany, while it primarily plays its economic card, it has no qualms about providing military aid and training to Somalia, Iran, Argentina, and Chile.

British imperialism has stepped up its military occupation of Northern Ireland. One-third of the fighting forces of the British army are stationed in the Six Counties. It is concentrating its efforts on southern Africa to prevent a further deepening of the crisis affecting the regimes in the area. Given the enormity of the stakes for world imperialism, Washington, London, and Bonn—however much they may compete for influence—are carrying out a joint counterrevolutionary operation in southern Africa.

This new expansion by the European imperialist powers is continually threatened by the explosion of working-class and mass upsurges in the semicolonial countries, and by the depth and scope of the crisis in southern Africa (see the draft world congress resolution, "The World Political Situation and the Tasks of the Fourth International" [IIDB Vol. XV, No. 5, July 1978]).

5.2. Interimperialist contradictions between the European powers, Japan, and the United States were given a fresh stimulus by the 1974-75 crisis and the dim outlook for the international capitalist economy. Nevertheless, capitalist Europe, the main area of contact between the imperialist military bloc and that of the bureaucratized workers states, remains in the straitjacket of the imperialist system imposed at the end of World War II. It was shaped by the 1954 Paris Accords, which provided for capitalist Europe's entry into NATO. In this area, U.S. political and military hegemony is undiminished.

West Germany has considerably increased its military capacity in terms of conventional warfare. However, since it is in the front lines of the imperialist military forces ranged against those of the Warsaw Pact, and since it lacks a powerful nuclear arsenal, all it can do is build its entire strategy around NATO.

After de Gaulle's decision in 1966 to withdraw French military forces from the NATO command, France developed its own nuclear arsenal. Today, its collaboration with the NATO command—which was never totally interrupted—is again on the increase.

Thus, NATO is still the backbone of the European imperialist powers' military policy. At most, they seek to establish a slightly better relationship of forces within the Atlantic Council, where the United States continues to set policy. They are also involved in efforts to coordinate and streamline their military industries (weapons, aircraft, and electronics) to strengthen their position vis-à-vis the Uni-

ted States, including in the battle for control of the world market in the sale of weapons and planes.

6. The hesitant recovery, and the stagnation of productive investments, are a result of the fact that the growth of surplus value has not been sufficient to bring about a corresponding increase in the rate of profit. This failure for the capitalists has social and political roots. It follows that in the next few years, the central objective for the capitalist class will be to achieve a sharp and substantial rise in the rate of exploitation of the working class, first and foremost in the decisive sectors of the economy.

Austerity—the capitalists' solution to the crisis of their own system—was and will remain the fundamental orientation of the governments of the European bourgeoisie. As usual, the bourgeoisie has tried to turn the crisis to its own advantage, but the degree of organization and the combativity of the working class have jammed the gears up to now. That is why the bourgeoisie must centralize its forces to deal harsher blows and carry out its plans.

To that end, the bourgeoisie has relied on the complicity or collaboration of the SP, CP, and trade-union bureaucracies. The emergence of ruling-class figures onto the political scene has shown how hard the bourgeoisie is looking for a fast solution, as well as its difficulties in finding one, given the class relationship of forces.

6.1 In all the countries of capitalist Europe, an onslaught is shaping up to one degree or another. It combines an attack on direct and indirect wages and social spending with the rebuilding of an industrial reserve army. This combination reflects the new dimensions of the bosses' strategy since the 1974-75 crisis. Direct wages are the primary target, for from the end of the 1960s to the mid-1970s, the workers, taking advantage of the situation of full employment, carried out mobilizations resulting in substantial wage increases. Next, the bosses are using the threat of unemployment to institute speedup and harsher working conditions.

Britain and Portugal are where the farthest-reaching austerity policies have been put into effect. As early as July 1975, the Wilson and Callaghan governments, in collaboration with the Trades Union Congress (TUC) bureaucracy, launched a policy of drastically limiting wage increases. By 1977, wage earners' real incomes had been pushed back to 1970 levels. Nevertheless, in the first six months of 1978, workers in the industrial sector won real wage increases.

It took two successive governments headed by Social Democrat Mario Soares, and the de facto complicity of the CGTP-Intersindical, to launch a full-scale attack in February 1977 against the gains won by Portuguese workers. By the end of 1977, their wages were already at a level close to what they had been prior to April 25, 1974.

However, neither in Portugal nor in Britain has there been a significant recovery of investments.

In France, Spain, Italy, and Belgium, the implementation of austerity plans has not produced the results hoped for by the bourgeoisie.

Despite the various Barre plans that have followed one after another since 1976, real wages in France have not dropped significantly.

In Spain, the Moncloa Pact was instituted with the help of the leaderships of the PSOE and UGT, and the CP and Workers Commissions. But in spite of the limited political and economic benefits that the bourgeoisie got out of this pact, the big capitalists are far from satisfied with it, and

are demanding "firmer" measures and another social pact.

In Italy, the CP and three trade-union federations had to take the lead in the austerity campaign before the plans that had continually been postponed by Christian Democratic governments could be implemented. However, working-class resistance, and the impact of automatic cost-of-living adjustments for wages and social benefits, have sharply limited the drop in real wages experienced by workers in the key branches of industry. It is no accident that the bosses and their government are focusing their attacks on the sliding scale of wages, which was won after 1969.

In countries like West Germany, Switzerland, or Austria, the policy of the employers, with the complicity of the Social Democracy and trade-union leaderships, has consisted mainly of putting strict limits on the growth of real wages, which is far less than the increase in industrial productivity. This ensured a redistribution of income in favor of the capitalists. As in most other countries, direct and indirect taxation has cut into the growth of wage earners' buying power for the first time in twenty years.

The attack on indirect wages (dismantling of the social security system, restrictions on benefits, increase in payroll taxes, and the use of tax money to pay for social services formerly provided by employers in Italy and the Netherlands) is aimed at reducing the employers' "social responsibilities." Social wages are also under attack. There have been spending cuts in the areas of health, education, housing, and social services in general. This is another form of attack on the living standards of wage earners.

All these measures show what the bourgeoisie's real plans are for the coming years. But to achieve goals that are sufficient for a real recovery of capitalist accumulation, what is necessary is a redistribution of national income, favoring profits at the expense of wages. This will be more massive and brutal than current plans even timidly intimate.

6.2. For the bourgeoisie, the function of the crisis is simply to make "full employment" with its effects on the labor market and thus on wages, a thing of the past. The crisis must reintroduce permanent unemployment. That is one of the levers the capitalists intend to lean on to carry out their austerity plans in the medium term and impose "labor discipline."

At the bottom of the recession in the European capitalist economies, according to official figures, seven million workers were unemployed. In 1977, in the midst of a "recovery," unemployment hit eight million. In the nine countries of the EEC, the unemployed represented 2.9% of the active population in 1974, 5% in 1975, 5.3% in 1977, and 5.6% in 1978 (June).

This increase stems from the following:

1. A rise in the productivity of labor, which is the result of investments made by the capitalists to carry out the rationalization and restructuring that are common in periods of crisis. This throws part of the work force out of the production process.

2. The reduction in the length of the work day is practically nil, in spite of the crisis.

3. The masses of youth entering the labor market cannot find jobs.

4. Women are either excluded from production (especially given the "fat-trimming" in public services and the crisis of certain branches such as textiles and clothing), or remain perpetual "job seekers."

Unskilled workers, youth, and women are prime candidates for unemployment. In the EEC, the proportion of women registered as unemployed rose from 29.2% in 1971 to 41% in 1977. In the same period, the proportion of unemployed youth under twenty-five years of age went from 27% to 37.4%, although they represented only 17% of the active population. Older workers, even technicians, also have great difficulty finding a new job after being laid off.

The recession has also highlighted the way the capitalists in the imperialist countries use immigrant workers. They have become a permanent, organic component of the work force in the highly industrialized capitalist countries. In a number of industries (automobiles, steel, mining, textiles, construction, etc.), they represent—as in France, West Germany, or Switzerland—more than 25% of the work force. They serve as a "shock absorber" for the explosion of unemployment. France, Belgium, Switzerland, and West Germany export their unemployed, thus reducing the social and political cost of their "anti-inflationary" measures. From 1973 to early 1976, 1.3 million immigrant workers lost their jobs (600,000 in West Germany, 300,000 in Switzerland and France). Most of them were forced to return to their native countries, where unemployment and underemployment are already rampant. Several of the European imperialist bourgeoisies have taken measures making it possible for this mobile industrial reserve army to be used in a more flexible way, while meeting their structural needs for labor power. The British ruling class has adopted the same fundamental course. Although it tries to retain the benefits of the Commonwealth, it would be glad to get rid of all the legal obstacles this institution puts in the way of imposing an immigration policy more in line with the interests of a declining imperialism.

6.3. The breadth and persistence of unemployment have greatly undermined the illusions of broad layers of wage earners and youth in the capacity of the present system to meet fundamental social needs. The glaring failure of all the "job programs" of the European governments has deeply shaken the myth of the "welfare state" propagated by the Social Democracy. Indeed, the number of workers who have experienced a few months of unemployment—in some cases more than once—is considerable. The number who are becoming long-term unemployed is slowly rising. But unlike in the 1930s, they still have many kinds of social insurance resulting from the gains of the workers movement in the two previous decades. Moreover, many unemployed workers still have hopes of finding a job.

Still, in countries where the boom of the 1960s arrived late (Portugal, Greece, and Spain), and in some underdeveloped regions, or those suffering from a long-term structural crisis in one branch of industry (the south of Italy, Wales, the Lorraine in France, the Hainaut in Belgium), unemployment has begun to weaken the structure of the working class. Large poverty belts have appeared. They likewise exist in the working-class suburbs outside the industrialized urban areas.

Finally, unemployment among youth, women, and immigrant workers has created a "secondary job market" (moonlighting, temporary jobs, part-time jobs, cottage industries) that makes possible a brutal offensive by the capitalists (the lack of any social security, arbitrariness on the part of the employer, degradation of skills, lack of regard for safe working conditions, outright banning or restrictions on trade-union activity).

The international reorganization of production is one of the weapons the capitalists use to reduce employment. The big monopolies, in search of low wages, move their factories either to the semicolonial countries, or to areas of Europe where high unemployment and a low level of union organization ensure a high rate of exploitation.

6.4. Another aspect of the austerity policy consists of putting nationalized sectors of industry on a profit-making basis (in France, Britain, and Italy, for instance), turning profitable sectors back over to private ownership, and running public services (the post office and railroads) at a profit, with corresponding effects on the benefits, jobs, and wages of their employees.

6.5. The sphere of activity of rank-and-file bodies at the factory level has been reduced, frequently with the direct aid of the bureaucracy. This is what happened to the workers commissions in Portugal in 1976. In Britain, the TUC bureaucracy is trying to limit the shop stewards' freedom of action by taking away their powers and bringing them into joint labor-management structures and the trade-union apparatus.

In Spain, the factory committees and councils, which were legitimized by union elections, are facing attempts to impose restrictive regulations. In Italy, the delegate councils have been stripped of part of their functions by concentrating decision-making power in the executive bodies, which are tightly controlled by the bureaucracy. In France, Portugal, and Spain, the bosses are trying to infringe on the recognized rights of shop stewards, and firing them by the dozens.

In several countries, the trade-union bureaucracies have agreed to extend the life of contracts signed earlier, by deferring renegotiation, agreeing to designate periods in which wages cannot be discussed, and so on. Freedom to negotiate over wages and contract terms in general is under attack everywhere in one form or another. The right to strike is also a target.

The use of repressive bodies against strike pickets and factory occupations has widened. In Belgium, France, Portugal, and Spain, the police, CRS, GNR, and Civil Guard frequently intervene. In West Germany, during the 1977 printing workers strike, and in Britain during the 1977 Grunwick strike, police forces moved into action.

Finally, on the pretext of "fighting terrorism," emergency legislation has been enacted, sometimes with the cooperation of the reformist leaderships, that constitutes a direct threat to activists in the workers movement. Such legislation could be used on a broader scale in case of a setback for the working class.

Once again, the crisis of capitalism has revealed the inherent tendency of bourgeois regimes to chip away at democratic rights and build up their repressive apparatuses. But for the time being, in no European country has the bourgeoisie been able to sufficiently weaken the working class, or to assemble the social and political forces from among the petty-bourgeois layers, the so-called new middle classes, or the unemployed, to enable it to drive toward a confrontation aimed at establishing a strong regime, or indeed, a dictatorship.

The fascist organizations, while stepping up their activity, have not been able to attract a mass social base, and their influence, for the time being, is limited. The exception to this is Fuerza Nueva (New Force) in Spain, which draws its strength and resources from the legacy of Francoism,

and takes advantage of the cowardice of the reformist leaderships.

However, as long as the economic and social crisis persists, the resurgence in one form or another of substantial, active, extreme right-wing forces will remain a characteristic of the period.

6.6 The climate of recession, and mounting unemployment, lend themselves to racist and antiforeigner campaigns aimed at giving credit to the idea that the roots of unemployment lie in "too many foreigners." This attack has been launched deliberately at a time when a series of job struggles (sit-ins to protest factory closings and demands for sharp reductions of work time) are fostering the conviction in workers' minds that unemployment is not inevitable.

The fascist far right has become the main purveyor of these racist, xenophobic ideas. This is true of the National Front in Britain and the Parti des Forces Nouvelles (New Forces Party) in France.

Furthermore, the Conservative Party in Britain, led by Margaret Thatcher, has launched a vast campaign against immigrant workers, aimed at rebuilding its base among the intermediate social strata and backward layers of workers.

### **Workers Resistance to the Capitalist Offensive**

7. The effects of the generalized recession of 1974-75 and the end of the postwar expansion period on the activity and political radicalization of the masses depend on two factors: on the one hand, the total gains won by the workers during the previous period of expansion; and on the other hand, the sharpness and duration of the crisis itself.

In addition, the first wave of working-class reactions was strongly influenced by the political and social context in each country at the outbreak of the recession.

The working class that entered the crisis is one whose social weight has grown considerably in recent decades. The number of wage earners has greatly increased. Unionization has increased, both in the key industries and in many branches tied to the sphere of reproduction or the civil administration.

The working class, which made substantial gains in the preceding years, is conscious of its strength in this new economic situation. Its bargaining power is high. The resistance of organized layers to mass layoffs is strong. The social insurance available to those thrown out of work means that most of the unemployed are not plunged into pauperization, which has disintegrating effects on the unity and fighting capacity of the entire class, as was the case in the prewar period.

Moreover, in a number of countries, a layer of advanced workers has been forged in the course of several years of struggles. In no European country has the working class lost a decisive battle, either before or during the recession. The attack on buying power, and especially on jobs, is seen by the working class as a real assault. The crisis has not generated demoralization or disorganization among the great majority of the working class. Rather, it is promoting a political radicalization in all the capitalist countries, at different speeds and in different forms.

Several factors, such as the steadiness or growth of unemployment in the midst of a "recovery," the accelerating crisis of whole industries, the bosses' fierce efforts to



force workers out of the production process, and the sharpness of the government's attacks, are changing the attitudes of ever broader layers of workers. They are making a more or less distinct connection between the present crisis, the anarchy of capitalism, and the policies of the bosses and their state.

Thus, profound changes are beginning to appear even among the West German working class, the biggest in capitalist Europe, which had shown a definite wait-and-see attitude when the economic downturn began. The crisis appears to be structural and long-lasting, contrary to what the bosses and trade-union leaders said initially. The continuing attacks on previous gains, particularly jobs, are transforming workers' reactions, including in such traditional bastions as the steel industry. The fear of losing one's job, which predominated up to now, is slowly giving way to the determination to fight back more firmly, to protect gains that workers think should be taken for granted.

Throughout Europe, the political radicalization is rooted in the overlap between a series of struggles initiated in 1968-69 by an organizationally strong working class, and the end of the period of economic expansion for capitalism internationally. This implies that the chances of coopting the mass movement through substantial concessions are smaller in the medium term. Here, we find one of the major differences with the dynamic of the working-class upsurge in the immediate postwar period. That upsurge was to end in a phase of economic upswing, which enabled the employers to make concessions to a working class just emerging from a period of defeat, and whose living standards were low.

8. The thrust of the reactions and mood of the working class can best be seen in the growth or steadiness of membership in the trade unions, despite the slow increase in unemployment.

Thus, in Italy, from 1973 to 1977, the three trade-union federations (CGIL, CISL, and UIL) continued to experience a growth in membership. In 1977, the rate of unionization among wage earners reached 45.5%, compared to 31% in 1967. In 1978 membership stagnated. In France, the CGT has experienced a stagnation in membership since 1973, and even a slight erosion in 1978, as a result of acting as a transmission belt for the CP at the time of the March 1978 elections. On the other hand, the CFDT has seen its ranks swell greatly since 1968, even if it has experienced a relative stagnation since 1976. But the most significant feature of the development of the trade-union movement in France is the spread of union locals in the workplace, which grew at an even faster pace between 1974 and 1978. In West Germany in 1977, despite unemployment and the departure of immigrant workers, trade-union membership reached a record level since World War II—7.5 million. The same trend can be seen in Britain, where from 1974 to 1977, membership in the TUC grew by 14.7%.

In Spain, the winning of trade-union legalization in June 1977 gave rise to a rapid growth of the trade-union federations, the Workers Commissions and UGT. They encompass about 5 million workers, out of a laboring population of 9 million.

A similar process has taken shape in Portugal. After the upsurge in 1975, and the setback in November of the same year, the trade-union movement has taken giant strides. It now boasts 2 million members, 1.6 million of whom are in

the CGTP-Intersindical. This is out of a working population of 3 million.

Even in countries where the level of mass activity remains low, workers' natural reactions to the crisis are leading them to join trade unions.

9. However, four phenomena must be noted, to give a fuller profile of the labor movement, four years after the profound change in the economic climate.

First, some traditional sectors of the trade-union movement have been weakened. This attrition is the product of a structural crisis affecting certain branches—in some cases for more than a decade—which deepened with the recession, as well as a sweeping restructuring of industry through the massive introduction of new techniques, or both factors at once (mining, textiles, shoes, steel, shipbuilding, printing, and construction since 1973-74).

However, the situation of the working class in a given branch of industry varies according to country and even according to region in a given country. The potential for fighting back against a massive attack is frequently great, as was shown in West Germany (printing workers) or France (textiles, steel, or shipbuilding).

Second, the growth in membership in the trade-union federations is partly the result of the influx of members in sectors with little previous union organization and no long experience of struggle (e.g., banks and insurance companies). In many countries, class-struggle traditions are weak, the degree of proletarian consciousness is highly uneven, and the number of trade-union activists is small.

Third, the unemployed, particularly the youth, have not been organized into the trade-union movement. Immigrant workers are likewise poorly organized, or do not take part in union activities.

Fourth, while a drive to organize women in unions can be seen in all countries, for example in Britain, union membership remains low in many plants and branches of industry where the work force is primarily female.

These four elements do not invalidate the basic tendency, even though in the long run they may serve to open gaps in the workers' lines of defense. They are an obstacle to achieving working-class unity. The bosses can try to use them to carry out maneuvers aimed at dividing the trade-union movement.

10. The capacity for resistance and undiminished combativity of the working class in most European capitalist countries are also reflected in the number of strikes, despite conjunctural ebbs and flows.

The way in which this combativity is expressed is shaped by the changes that have occurred in the economic and social situation. The obstacles created by the objective situation, and those set up by the bureaucratic leaderships, make it much more difficult to launch vast, semispontaneous movements like those that broke out in 1968-69 and immediately after.

An effective fight against austerity policies in the context of unemployment and inflation more and more requires coordinated and united mobilizations. Control by the reformist leaderships, and their acceptance of austerity, have often been a roadblock.

The working-class vanguard is not yet in a position to offer a clear and credible alternative to the policy of the leaderships, either because of its numerical weakness, or because of its political heterogeneity and the fact that it is not organized into a class-struggle left wing in the trade unions.

Thus, the ebbs and flows of strikes do not mechanically reflect the mood of the toiling masses and their confidence in their own strength.

The reaction to the crisis by the different European working classes was highly varied. While the economies of the Netherlands, Austria, Switzerland, Sweden, and Norway have been hit by recession—very hard in some cases—there has been no qualitative increase in working-class combativity. In some cases it barely held steady during 1975-77.

The situation in these countries is rooted in a number of factors whose weight varies in each case. These include: economic reserves possessed by the bourgeoisie, which in the first phase made it possible to limit the attacks on the masses' living conditions; illusions held by the working class in the possibility of maintaining its standard of living through the power of the trade unions, union-management boards and comanagement bodies, as well as governmental action by the Social Democratic parties; and an overall level of combativity and consciousness on the part of the class that was still low at the outset of the crisis, as a result of long traditions of class collaboration, the predominance of Social Democratic and parliamentarist ideology, and limited, fragmented experiences of struggle since 1968.

On the other hand, in France, Spain, Italy, and Portugal, the crisis broke out at a time when the mass struggle was more clearly on the upswing. Government economic offensives and the bosses' opposition to demands for wage increases and a shorter work week accelerated the strike wave. They also deepened the anticapitalist dynamic of working-class struggles and the political radicalization. Broad masses are beginning to see the winning of their demands as more and more connected with political change.

This upturn in working-class activity reached a very high level in 1975-76. But control by the reformist apparatuses, and the consequences of their policies, had an impact on the tempo and breadth of direct action by the masses. The working class in these countries must now reorder its fighting forces in a new phase of the economic offensive by the bourgeoisie, which is trying to implement on the social level the few points it was able to score on the political level.

In Britain, it took close collaboration between the Labour government and the trade-union bureaucracy—including its so-called left wing—to channel the strike wave into the framework of class collaboration. In 1975, and especially in 1976, there was a clear drop in the number of strikes. But the level of struggles in 1977 and 1978 indicates that the fighting potential of the working class is still high. A similar phenomenon occurred in Denmark (with the general strike against the government in 1978), Belgium, and West Germany.

11. The crisis is forcing the workers to raise a number of demands focusing mainly on defending jobs and buying power. There is a tendency for the same demands to be raised in all the European capitalist countries. Thus, in less than two years, pressure from the workers' strong sentiments and struggles in favor of a thirty-five- or thirty-six-hour week forced a large number of trade-union federations to take up this demand. To be sure, the leaderships have kept from making this an immediate goal and are prolonging the timetable for implementing it.

The economic situation makes defensive demands neces-

sary. Demands that were traditionally raised in the period prior to the recession are frequently combined with demands relating to the struggle to protect earlier gains. In response to the attack on jobs, experiences of struggle against the capitalist organization of work, sometimes including elements of workers control, are being used to advantage. To defend buying power, at a time when unemployment is tending to sharpen the divisions in the working class, the demand for equal pay increases and equal cost-of-living increases in unemployment benefits is spreading. This constitutes an indication that the workers are approaching these tough defensive battles with a determination to take the offensive.

In response to the proliferation of factory closings, or attempts at mass layoffs, the demand for nationalization, particularly in the branches chronically hit by crisis, is being raised more and more often. Here we see the same tendency toward a deepening of the objectively anticapitalist aspect of the demands.

A characteristic feature of recent years has been the incorporation of a number of demands relating to the specific needs of working women in trade-union platforms.

Demands have developed in six areas: wages (equal pay for equal work), jobs (against hiring women workers on an as-needed or temporary basis; against discriminatory layoffs), training, working conditions, social services, and abortion. The growing participation of working women in strikes and mobilizations, and the bigger role of demands aimed at the exploitation and oppression of working women, are helping to link up struggles to defend previous gains with those that challenge bourgeois social relations. This brings demands that were originally raised by a movement that developed outside the mass workers organizations into the ranks of the workers movement.

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The relationship between the economic crisis and mass action has not resulted in a continuous upsurge of struggles. However, nowhere have there been signs that the workers are generally demoralized, or that the forces of the workers movement are beginning to disintegrate. Owing to the lack of prospects for a rapid change in the political realm, a certain unevenness can arise between layers of workers who question the effectiveness of routine trade-union struggles, and those who are trying to give the mobilizations a different meaning than the one their leaderships would like them to have. But a working-class vanguard can overcome such divisions and draw the bulk of the workers ranks into action, if it is sufficiently organized in the trade unions around a clear class program.

### **The General Crisis of Social Relations and the Mass Movements**

12. The long period of capitalist expansion introduced profound changes in the training and nature of the labor force. These included a substantial growth in enrollment at the high-school and university level; the need to raise the level of skills of many categories of wage earners; the massive entry of women into professional schools and universities; the growth in female employment; and the development of waves of immigration from the countries on the "periphery" to the industrial centers. The rapid

concentration of capital considerably reduced the categories of the traditional petty bourgeoisie. All of these transformations have a profound impact on the consciousness of broad social layers. These changes are reflected in the student movement, the women's liberation movement, and the partial mobilizations of immigrant workers.

Thus, the fact that the imperialist economies have entered a phase in which the productive forces are stagnating has implications that go well beyond the economic sphere alone. The recession, and budget-tightening by bourgeois governments, are exacerbating a general social crisis that reflects the historic decline of an entire system and mode of production. In addition, a multitude of social needs that had been asserted during the boom are now being denied, often brutally.

12.1. In the health-care field, budget cutbacks and the dismantling of social security have revealed the inadequacy of the health-care system in the most advanced capitalist countries. Mobilizations by health-care workers have focused not only on working conditions for hospital employees, but also on the capitalist organization of health services. This has eased the way for the inclusion in trade-union platforms of demands that challenged the organization of health services in capitalist society (e.g., for free, quality medical care). Furthermore, the interrelation between such mobilizations and those protesting health hazards in the workplace is leading to a more radical questioning of social relations of production.

12.2. The unchecked rise of real-estate speculation, the decay of urban structures, and limits on government spending for public housing and social services have given rise to movements that combine demands around housing, social services, and transportation. They are generally organized on a neighborhood basis. Sometimes such groups have ties to the trade unions, whose platforms give greater emphasis to their demands.

13. Since 1974, the high-school and university student population has generally continued to grow, although there has been a tendency for it to stagnate in some countries since 1978.

The social composition of the student milieu is continuing to change. The percentage of students from bourgeois backgrounds is decreasing, even though students from working-class backgrounds still represent only a small proportion. A growing number of students have to work part-time to support themselves. Job opportunities are dwindling for good in a greater and greater number of fields. Unemployment is the road increasingly trodden by those seeking to enter "professional life." The jobs found by many university graduates either do not correspond to their training, or create a large gap between their level of skills and the use that is made of their labor power.

The attacks on the system of training, the intensification of tracking at the high-school level, and the often harsh limits placed on access to higher education have dealt a harsh blow to reformist illusions about the "democratization of education" and "equal access to education." The proportion of students who have been affected by tracking that bars them from further study, by the prospect of unemployment, and by cutbacks in financial aid continues to grow. That is the root of the massive mobilizations by high-school and university students.

To be sure, the pressure of unemployment, the threat of competition, and occasionally repression can cause high-school and university students to seek individual solu-

tions, and can act as a brake on mobilizations. Moreover, the policy of the reformist leaderships makes it more difficult for mass movements to develop. Given the economic situation, and governmental policy, such movements soon run up against the need for a change in the entire political system. Thus, the orientation of the reformist leaderships increases divisions among the youth, and even helps relegate certain sectors of the student population to a permanently semiemployed status. The most glaring example of this can be seen in Italy.

However, the potential for explosions among the student population has been confirmed in many countries (e.g., France, Italy, Belgium, Portugal) over the last few years. The emphasis given in these movements to demands related to the material conditions and professional futures of high-school and university students points not only to a new stage in the development of the student radicalization since 1968, but also to the often stated need for a linkup with the workers movement.

Regardless of the ebbs and flows of student mobilizations in the different capitalist countries, reactionary currents have not been able to win back a major foothold, despite some occasional partial gains.

The underpinnings of the ideological crisis among high-school and student youth remains firmly rooted. This crisis takes manifold forms of expression. The participation of high-school and university students in movements against the capitalist destruction of the environment or the dangers involved in civilian uses of nuclear energy is one form. The feminist radicalization among high-school and college women, as well as the rejection of the hypocritical norms of bourgeois morality, is another. Moreover, the fact that broad layers of youth have rallied to anti-imperialist or antimilitarist mobilizations is a sign of the enduring nature of the changes that took place in the early 1960s.

14. The struggle of the working class, its increased questioning of the bosses' power, its refusal to foot the bill for the recession, and its rejection of the inevitability of unemployment have reinforced and spread the rebellion among broad sectors of youth against the many kinds of oppression produced and reproduced by the very workings of the system. This questioning focuses on the institutions of bourgeois society that carry out the process of socialization and social reproduction, particularly the family and the schools. The uncertainty that hangs over the future of large layers of youth can only exacerbate the crisis of bourgeois values. Rejection of the work ethic, the social hierarchy, and traditional social norms in general is spreading.

The change in the economic situation has forcefully revealed the inability of capitalist society to meet the economic, social, and cultural needs—sometimes even the most elementary ones—of broad layers of students, young workers, and unemployed youth. The austerity policy represents a direct assault on large numbers of youth. Unemployment and superexploitation (apprenticeship conditions, temporary jobs, lack of a steady job, illegal employment, wage discrimination) have become the lot of many young people. This only brings into sharper focus the way bourgeois society assigns them the status of "minors," by keeping the age of "adulthood" at eighteen or twenty, denying or limiting their right to organize politically and in the trade unions, maintaining sexual repression and sexist discrimination in the schools and on the

job, and keeping up dependence on the family, with all of its resulting obligations.

The potential for radicalization remains high among broad layers of youth. The forms in which this radicalization is expressed, as well as its dynamic, fundamentally depend on the working class's assertion of its capacity to radically change society. Winning broad sectors of youth to support the struggles of workers and the labor movement largely depends on the ability of revolutionary Marxists to show in practice that there is no separation between the demands and combat of the working class and the goals and mobilizations of youth. This is the way to avoid wasting the capacities of many young people to struggle against capitalism, and prevent the spread of skepticism as to the possibility of thoroughgoing social change. In this way, the bourgeoisie's attempts to mount reactionary ideological counteroffensives can be thwarted.

15. The transformation of women's role in society, specifically in the labor process, has created similar objective factors leading to a radicalization of women in all the European capitalist countries. The crisis has exacerbated these factors. Attacks on education, jobs, and social services bear down particularly on women.

The women's movement has made great strides in all the European countries, but its development per se, as well as its impact and public presence in the workers movement, still vary considerably. This results from a complex interaction of ideological, cultural, social, and institutional factors, and those having to do with the general development of the class struggle.

However, there is a tendency everywhere for the women's movement to no longer remain completely outside the workers movement, its struggles and demands. The breadth and social impact of the women's movement have hastened its emergence among the ranks of working women. Independent initiatives by women within the mass organizations of the working class, especially the trade unions, have multiplied since 1975-76.

On the one hand, the women's movement is greatly stimulated and strengthened by the development of struggles and demands by working women organized in the trade unions. On the other hand, the impact of the women's movement and its demands on the trade-union movement is helping to strengthen it as well, and to deepen the anticapitalist consciousness of its members.

The women's movement has fully maintained its capacity for independent mobilization. The battles for free abortion on demand have revealed this huge potential; so have the struggles to overcome the resistance to implementing portions of the laws that the bourgeoisie was forced to enact which are most favorable to women. The independent women's movement can spur the radicalization of the broad layers of women, students and workers, who are still outside the activity and organizations of the labor movement.

15.1. There exists no social factor that would inevitably drive the various social movements either into conflict with the workers and their organizations, or to diverge from their historic interests and struggles. But none of these social movements by itself can deal decisive blows to bourgeois rule and the bourgeois state. Unless their forces are combined with those of the workers as a whole, and unless the workers movement adopts their demands as its own—while respecting and defending their organizational independence (e.g., the women's movement)—the anticapi-

talist potential these movements represent may wear thin and be deflected into actions and an ideology that can either isolate them or bring them back into the bourgeois orbit. One of the indispensable conditions for ensuring this linkup between the social movements and the workers movement is the emergence of an alternative leadership to that of the reformist bureaucrats. The emergence of these social movements—whose growth is conditioned, in the last analysis, by the class relationship of forces—is one more factor prolonging the social instability and crisis of political leadership of the bourgeoisie.

16. As a result of the rise in oil prices in 1973, and pressure from the trusts for investment in the nuclear power industry, plans for construction of nuclear power plants and the opening of new sites have proliferated. This could only lead to the blossoming of a mass movement against nuclear power in France, West Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Denmark, Sweden, Spain, and Belgium.

This mass movement has its basis in the real peril to humanity that the use of nuclear reactors represents, given the anarchy of the capitalist system and the general level of technological and scientific knowledge.

This movement has been sustained by the fact that many leading scientific figures have condemned these appalling dangers. For the first time in capitalism's history, such a movement is giving rise to a vast debate on how society's development is to be organized. In opposing the opening or establishment of nuclear facilities, the movement has run up against the collusion between the bourgeois state—the protector of profits—and the big nuclear power trusts. This represents one of the concrete bases for its taking on an anticapitalist dynamic. Furthermore, the antinuclear movement tends to expose the nature of bourgeois democracy, whose basic limitation lies in private ownership of the means of production and in the inalienable right of a handful of capitalists to decide by themselves on making investments that place the very future of the majority of the population in jeopardy.

This movement, regardless of its conjunctural ups and downs, is one that is likely to include large sectors of the population in its ranks in the long run.

The mass movements against nuclear facilities have generally come into existence outside the workers organizations. Moreover, several factors make a spontaneous linkup between the mass workers organizations and the antinuclear movement difficult. These include the widespread "zero growth" and antiscientific ideology in the movement; the statements of the reformist leaders, who endorse the decisions of big business in regard to nuclear development—when they are not the main proponents of them, as in West Germany; and the supposed neutrality of the technology that is being applied.

However, the popularity of the demands put forward by the movement—as shown by the referendum in Austria in November 1978—and the appeals issuing from scientific quarters and sometimes from workers and unionized technicians in the nuclear power industry, are increasing the pressure within the reformist parties. Some of their leaderships have even been compelled to tone down their open support to nuclear development plans.

The antinuclear movement cannot develop its potential for struggling against the system that leads to the use of such deadly technologies except insofar as it becomes a participant in the anticapitalist struggle of the working class.

17. In recent years, mobilizations by small and middle farmers, as well as agricultural workers, have marked the social and political situation to varying degrees in a number of European capitalist countries (Portugal, Spain, Greece, Italy, and France particularly).

Beyond the specific features that shape the agrarian situation in the various European capitalist countries, some basic trends have emerged. Under the impact of the increasing takeover of agriculture by the big agribusiness companies, and government policies, the active rural population is undergoing a rapid decline, which has further accelerated in recent years. A layer of small farmers has not been able to keep up with the trend toward modernization of agricultural methods. They make up a pauperized social layer.

Whether they own their farms or engage in tenant-farming, small farmers trying to keep pace with modern agriculture have wound up in debt, squeezed between the capitalist companies they buy from (fertilizer, machinery) and those they sell to (the agribusiness trusts). They have become a dependent link in the chain of a real agribusiness industry. Their living conditions are getting worse and worse.

The exploitation of family members is sharpening. The work day is lengthening. Working two jobs is often the only way to survive. Buying power is falling.

Mobilizations by small and middle farmers have taken place around demands focusing on market prices of farm products and guaranteed outlets for them; the role of the big distribution and canning companies; the gap between the prices of agricultural and industrial products; credit; and farm leases.

For agricultural workers, working conditions (length of the work day, vacations, social security, wages, etc.) and job security are at the heart of their struggles.

In Spain, Portugal, Greece, Ireland, and southern Italy, the agrarian question has a qualitatively greater social weight than in the other countries of capitalist Europe. In these countries, the fundamental tendency of mobilizations poses the problem of a genuine agrarian reform, as was shown in an exemplary way in Portugal.

A new characteristic of farmers mobilizations in recent years is that in the course of struggles, links have been forged—still in a piecemeal way, of course—between industrial workers and those who work the land.

However, despite the sharpening of social divisions among farmers, the organizations representing small farmers still remain ideologically dominated by the agribusiness spokesmen. Moreover, the general attitude of the reformist leaderships of the workers movement, as well as the repellent example of land collectivization in the USSR and some of the "people's democracies," can only slow the process of winning poor peasants to the struggles and demands of the working class, and thus retard the forming of an alliance on an anticapitalist basis.

18. Since the beginning of the 1970s, regionalist or nationalist movements have developed or have been revived inside several European capitalist states. In Spain, various movements in Galicia, Valencia, and the Canary Islands have been added to the traditional nationalist movements in Euzkadi and Catalonia. In France, such movements have appeared in Corsica and Brittany, as well as Occitania and Alsace. In Britain, they have appeared in Scotland and Wales; in Italy, in Sardinia; in Austria, in Carinthia. In Belgium, the question of the

Walloons and Flemings is still unresolved, although the economic and social development of the past two decades has changed the terms in which it has historically been posed.

In most cases, these movements are socially rooted in the disparities produced among different regions in terms of development and the distribution of social wealth by the type of capitalist development that took place over the last thirty years.

The long phase of growth created an unequal distribution of investments, a selective choice of locations for industry based on labor costs, and a transfer of resources (capital and labor power) from one region to another and from one country to another. Multinational corporations have been the motor force in carrying out this uneven development, particularly since the Common Market was established.

18.1. The generalized social crisis has unleashed challenges to cultural and social forms of oppression, which are combined with the effects of regional underdevelopment. Such movements—whether they come across as nationalist or regionalist, whether they demand autonomy or separation—are a vehicle for the social indignation of the workers, poor farmers and other petty-bourgeois layers that participate in them. The social and historical roots of these movements vary greatly. Some are of recent origin, basically reflecting the unevenness of economic development, with all its social consequences. Basing themselves on the persistence of distinct cultural and linguistic traits, they express opposition to superexploitation and oppression in nationalist terms, and have a mass following.

In Catalonia and Euzkadi, there exist nationalist movements whose historic roots lie in the irreconcilable contradictions created within the bourgeoisie itself by the bourgeois revolution and the formation of the Spanish state. It was against this backdrop that these two nationalist movements developed. They combine national-democratic demands with a series of democratic demands related to the struggle against the Franco regime. The nationalist movement in Catalonia and Euzkadi cannot be put in the same category as those that are the product of regional or structural economic crises. As a matter of fact, Catalonia and Euzkadi—at different speeds and in different ways—have become the pacesetters of capitalism in the Spanish state.

Certain political formations that play a big role in several of these movements have a petty-bourgeois and bourgeois social base. This is true, for example, in Carinthia, Scotland (the SNP), Wales (Plaid Cymru), Corsica (the ANC), Wallonia and Flanders (RW and VU), etc. Finally, given the very origins of the historic nationalist movements in Euzkadi and Catalonia, and the Catalan and Basque social formations, bourgeois parties such as the PNV and CDC have a great deal of influence within these movements. It is used against the interests of the toiling masses, who are mobilizing to defend their democratic rights, nationalist aspirations, and class interests.

The bureaucratic leaderships of the workers movement, with their policies of class collaboration, are not providing effective answers to the social problems behind the emergence of these movements and mobilizations, and are not fighting for democratic demands in an effective way. Thus, the chances are all the greater that bourgeois and petty-bourgeois formations and ideology will maintain their hold over the toiling masses.

18.2. The centuries-old struggle of the Irish people against British domination is of special importance. Ireland remains divided into two states. One, which is directly controlled by British imperialism, is cut off from the rest of the country; the other is in the clutches of imperialism and under indirect political domination.

A new upturn in the Irish struggle began in the late 1960s. It was aimed against the system of discrimination imperialism had set up in the North, and the repression it carried on there. London reacted to this upsurge by sending thousands of troops to strengthen the military occupation of the Six Counties. It was later forced to withdraw support from the Stormont regime. Despite their claims to be socialist, both major wings of the Republican movement developed an erroneous line. The Provisionals continued their terrorist campaign, subordinating all political activity and mass mobilizations to it. The Officials adopted increasingly economist and Social Democratic positions. Even though this has disoriented the struggle, the masses retain their capacity to launch new battles, as the strikes in the South and the recent mobilizations in the North have shown.

Ireland remains an important country for British imperialism. The fight against British domination is not only central to the Irish proletarian revolution, but is a key element of the revolution in Britain as well.

### **The Bourgeoisie's Crisis of Political Leadership**

19. The deepening of the economic and social crisis, and the high level of combativity of the toiling masses, have shaken bourgeois forms of rule within the bourgeoisie's own state. This has frequently been accompanied by unstable governments, shaky parliaments, and the rapid spread of conflicts within the bourgeois parties.

To ensure a recovery of productive investments, the bourgeoisie needs a free hand to carry out an extensive, ruthless restructuring of capital and raise the rate of exploitation considerably. The present class relationship of forces stands in the way of completing this task, at least in the short run. There lie the roots of the bourgeoisie's crisis of political leadership.

The bourgeoisie remains trapped in a fundamental contradiction. It does not have enough of a base to launch an attack against the gains of the working class on the scale that is urgently needed for capital accumulation. Nor does it have the reserves that would enable it to make sufficient concessions to make the bureaucratic leaderships' job easier in carrying out their class-collaborationist orientation. Thus, the latter are having a hard time supporting government policies because they are not getting anything in return. They have to face challenges from sectors of the class in the unions they control and in their own parties. This also contributes to political instability on the governmental level.

20. However, this crisis of political leadership for the bourgeoisie does not automatically put the working class in a better position. The cracks in the bourgeoisie's system of rule are papered over by the SP and CP leaderships. The trade-union bureaucracy's long years of integration into the various cogs of the bourgeois state apparatus has prepared these leaderships to come to the rescue of bourgeois regimes in distress.

The capitalist class, with its centuries of political expe-

rience, has once again shown its skill at using the labor bureaucracies' propensity for keeping the boat from springing leaks everywhere. This enables the ruling class to bring the coopting mechanisms of bourgeois democracy into play, and to call on its remaining economic resources to carry out some readjustments. This situation reveals less about the strength of bourgeois democratic institutions than about the lack of consciousness, organization, and revolutionary leadership on the part of the proletariat.

21. The wrangling that goes on inside the bourgeois parties, and among them, reflects the bourgeois crisis of leadership. Under the impact of the changing economic climate and the speedier concentration and centralization of capital, and given the helplessness of the bourgeois parties to offer a way out of the crisis, sectors of the petty bourgeoisie or "new middle classes" have shifted their votes away from parties that have long held the reins. They have swung these votes both to bourgeois parties playing the role of outsiders and to the Social Democracy and even the Italian CP. This has reduced the electoral strength of well-established parties such as the Conservatives in Britain, the Christian Democrats in Italy, and the Gaullists in France, many of which have been implicated in scandals.

These shifts in votes have brought an element of uncertainty into the parliamentary arena. They have spurred battles between warring factions inside these parties, which sometimes also reflect conflicts of interest between capitalist sectors and the parasitic state political apparatuses.

22. The bourgeoisie is stepping up the trend toward centralization of power, which has been under way for some time. The real decision-making power of parliamentary bodies is rapidly shrinking. The power of the executive branch is growing, and within this branch, a number of committees that set general policy in key areas (economic, industrial, and financial policy on the national and international scale; military policy; the repressive apparatus) are clearly predominant. In this period of upheavals and sudden turnabouts, the function of such bodies, which escape the hazards of political and parliamentary life, and ensure that the interests of big business are directly represented, can be seen even better. But a good many of the decisions dreamed up in these exclusive clubs are being called into question by the stubborn reality of the class relationship of forces.

Hence, the collaboration of the reformist parties is the key to ensuring the maximum effectiveness of this centralized power. With their consent or participation, the ruling class is assembling the legislative, judicial, and repressive arsenal that will be needed in a confrontation with the workers and their vanguard, once the political situation is ripe for it.

Thus, we see how well the function and organization of the bourgeois state correspond to the two fundamental tendencies of bourgeois politics in the period of capitalist decline. One tendency is for the bureaucracies of the working-class organizations to become openly integrated into the state; the other is for the tools of repression to be strengthened. The bourgeoisie swings back and forth between these two aspects and sometimes combines them.

23. A crisis is developing that is splintering the institutions of the bourgeois state. It is the result of the change in the class relationship of forces and of its byproducts. These include the shakeup of social relations; the ruling

class's inability to find a way out of the crisis, and its occasional near-paralysis when initiatives are called for, as well as the atmosphere of corruption pervading ruling-class circles; and the radicalization of new working-class layers employed by a state whose field of intervention has been considerably widened. To varying degrees, the army—soldiers and even noncommissioned officers—police, and courts are affected, not to mention the schools, mass media, and the church. The fiscal crunch plaguing most regimes, with the budget-tightening it leads to, is helping to deepen this crisis.

This crisis of bourgeois institutions is both a cause and an effect of the ruling-class crisis of political leadership. However, it is necessary to fight the illusion that this crisis could lead to paralysis of the state, rendering it incapable of reactionary and repressive moves, or to a loss of the capacity to maneuver of an experienced bourgeoisie. In no way can it lead to a kind of disintegration of the very function of the bourgeois state, which is to reproduce a given social structure—namely, the domination of capital over labor. At best, this crisis can provide an opportunity to more fully expose the qualitative limits of bourgeois democracy (see the statements of the “judges’ unions” in France and Italy), and to educate on the necessity and significance of destroying the bourgeois state.

24. The crisis of political leadership is also reflected at the level of European institutions. All the mishaps that have befallen the EEC bear this out, try as German imperialism might to assert its leadership and establish a “nucleus of the strong” (France, West Germany, the Benelux countries, and Britain).

The inability of the bloc of conservative parties to establish a common program of any real substance for the 1979 elections to the European parliament is another indication of this.

The establishment of a European parliament, whose powers will be largely fictitious, is aimed, nonetheless, at a more open coordination of bourgeois policies vis-à-vis the workers who refuse to pay for the crisis; at putting a democratic veneer on the real decisions made by the European commissioners; and, finally, at opening the way for coopting the workers organizations to ensure their collaboration in the bourgeoisie's European policy, which also bears the trademark of austerity.

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### The Crisis of Proletarian Leadership

25. The period begun in 1968-69 has lasted much longer than similar periods of crisis in the past.

As this situation continues, as the gears of bourgeois society become jammed, and as dissatisfaction grows among the masses, confrontations loom on the horizon. To defend their own interests, the bureaucratic leaderships have put up a wall of class collaboration, in an attempt to avoid a head-on battle and to derail and fragment a working-class upsurge.

To win acceptance of this policy, above all in countries where the workers have challenged bourgeois order most openly, the leaderships of the trade unions and SPs and CPs, in the wake of the recession, have either dropped references to the “peaceful transition to socialism” from

their propaganda, or have launched a vast ideological campaign aiming to show that it is impossible for the working class to abolish capitalism and overturn the bourgeois state.

A sober look at the masses' level of activity, the goals that broad vanguard layers have taken on in the course of their struggles, the contrast between these goals and the orientation of the reformist leaderships, and the limited but real outflanking of the bureaucracies that has taken place, leads to an entirely different conclusion. It reveals the importance of concrete factors in the evolution of the class struggle over the past ten years, such as the political parties and trade unions, their program, leadership, and continuing control over the working class. This is especially true given the absence of a revolutionary party, which, in the course of the various waves of struggles, could have drawn in a large number of worker cadres with authority in the plants and mass organizations, who would be capable of giving leadership to a class-struggle left wing in the trade unions. The chief characteristic of the period is not the masses' self-subordination to the goals of the reformist bureaucracies, even though the reformists have by and large kept majority control over them. The outstanding feature is the crisis of proletarian leadership. That is what is keeping prerevolutionary crises from turning into revolutionary situations. The recent example of Portugal confirmed this yet again.

26. To protect the thousand and one ties they have to bourgeois society, the reformist leaderships have gone to the aid of a class whose rule was being challenged or endangered.

Thus, the Social Democratic leaders in West Germany, Britain, the Scandinavian countries, Belgium, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Portugal, and Spain have become staunch defenders of the “market economy,” making the public sector profitable, limiting direct and indirect wages and government spending, and restricting the right to strike.

In nearly all of these countries, they have played a decisive role in getting the trade-union leaderships to adopt austerity policies, despite opposition from some sectors of them.

In order to get a majority in parliament, the Social Democratic parties have either been flanked by liberal watchdogs (West Germany, Denmark), or included in broader coalition governments (the Netherlands, Belgium, Portugal, Switzerland). This is also because the capitalists distrust the Social Democrats' very ability—because of their ties to the working class and the trade unions—to take the kind of anti-working-class measures that the gravity of the economic crisis calls for.

27. Likewise, the leaderships of the Communist parties have rushed to the rescue of bourgeois regimes in trouble or on the point of collapse. Leaving aside the specifically Italian aspects of the “historic compromise,” the line of the Communist parties of Western Europe falls within this strategic framework. If the international political context is different, if the period itself is by no means similar, and if the root causes of this orientation are not identical, the fact remains that the general outlines of this strategy remain those drawn by the Stalinist international at its Seventh Congress (1935).

The capitalists' mounting attacks have aroused a tendency among the toiling masses to begin to fight back in a unified way, and to put forward anticapitalist demands.

The very function of the CPs' policy is to divert this movement towards goals and forms of governments that are compatible with bourgeois interests and with the survival of private ownership and its state institutions.

However, except in Portugal—and leaving aside the case of Finland, which is based on international political considerations—the CPs have not been brought into the government.

On the one hand, the bourgeoisie was not forced by an impetuous mass upsurge to do this. It did not want to pay the price, and firmly marshaled its ranks against this possibility with the backing of U.S. imperialism. On the other hand, in the present economic context, the CP leaderships were unenthusiastic about coming to power on the crest of a broad wave of mobilizations, which they would have had to give an impetus to in order to speed up their entry into the government.

They even tried to head off and defuse mobilizations. Political and trade-union divisions, and those between various categories of workers engaged in struggle, were the tools of this operation. The ups and downs of the Union of the Left in France or the "historic compromise" in Italy flowed from the same source.

Of course, in the event of mass explosions capable of threatening the capitalist system, the CPs could always be brought into a coalition government as a means of derailing the mass movement and making sure the ruling class stays in power.

27.1 The policy of the Italian CP from 1973 to 1978 gives a perfect picture of the logic of the "historic compromise." Berlinguer actually went from the prospect of a coalition government with the Christian Democrats to outright support for a Christian Democratic government. The Italian CP became the chief public defender of the austerity policy, "law and order," strikebreaking, and restrictions on trade-union freedom. This policy helped undermine the gains won by the working class in 1975-76. It surrendered the field to a worm-eaten Christian Democracy, whose goal was precisely to wear out the CP by keeping it waiting endlessly on the threshold of power for the sake of "national unity."

27.2. In Spain, the PSOE and CP leaderships allowed Juan Carlos and Suárez to make the transition from the Franco regime to one of bourgeois parliamentary democracy centered around the army, the repressive apparatus inherited from Francoism, and the monarchy. In 1975, the Franco regime had been pushed into a corner. Spanish capitalism was deep in a morass; workers struggles were on the rise; and Franco's death had raised the awkward problem of a successor. The bourgeoisie was floundering in an acute crisis of leadership, caught between the rebuffs of the "bunker" (the irreconcilable supporters of Franco), and the upsurge of the mass movement. It was forced to put off all economic measures of any scope, despite the severity of the recession.

Thus, the reform of Francoism would be played out on two apparently separate stages. But everything proceeded as if the players of each side knew the script of the other. Mass struggles sometimes forced a change in the plot, but the denouement sought by both parties—the Suárez government and the reformist PSOE and CP leaderships—remained the same. It was necessary to avoid a confrontation, to save the capitalist system.

At each critical stage, the leaderships of the PSOE and CP broadened their policy of class collaboration. After

merging the Democratic Junta with the Platform of Democratic Convergence to form the Democratic Coordination in March 1976, they set up the Liaison Commission of the Democratic Opposition in September 1976, which included nearly all the bourgeois opposition parties.

The bureaucratic leaderships strove to fragment the strike wave that spread widely at the end of 1976. Through direct negotiations with Suárez, the CP and PSOE would ease the way for the monarchy's first political victory with the referendum on the reform law (December 1976).

The June 1977 elections, in which the UCD won a plurality of votes, fortified the government's position. But the results also reflected the breadth of proletarian mobilizations. In the big industrial centers, the workers parties won a clear majority. In the autumn of 1977, the strike wave intensified. Achieving a social pact thus became the number one goal of the bourgeoisie. The bureaucratic leaderships complied. They signed the Moncloa pact in October 1977.

Around the time of the trade-union elections, in early 1978, the policy of division carried out by the leaderships of the UGT-PSOE and the Workers Commissions-CP overlapped with that of "national unity." It disoriented the workers and resulted in limiting and fragmenting struggles against the austerity policy.

27.3. In Portugal, the role of the SP and CP leaderships in the revolutionary upsurge made it perfectly clear what the function of their class-collaborationist policy was—to contain the mass upsurge, divide it up, reduce its independence, and make its objectives compatible with the survival of a market economy and bourgeois state institutions.

Immediately after April 25, 1974, the SP and CP leaderships declined to call for a constituent assembly elected on the basis of universal suffrage and proportional representation. They gave the bourgeoisie time to organize its political forces under the wings of the military hierarchy. In the name of "national unity," the SP and CP participated in various coalition governments, backed Spínola, even after the civilian attempt at a coup d'état in September 1974, and bowed to the dictates of the "pact between the political parties and the MFA."

After the April 1975 elections, the workers parties refused to form a government that reflected their absolute majority in the constituent assembly. They were perfectly aware that an SP-CP government without military officers would strengthen the masses' drive toward unity and encourage independent political action by the working class.

In response to the workers and neighborhood commissions, which arose on a massive scale in the wake of the mass resistance to the abortive coup attempt of March 11, the Soares leadership spearheaded the bourgeois counter-offensive. In the name of fighting "anarcho-populism," Soares aimed to smash the movement toward self-organization that was developing among the workers and even in the army. He openly championed bourgeois democracy and private ownership. The SP campaign widened the split that the CP's sectarian maneuvers had produced among the toiling masses.

The CP's line was the counterpart to the SP's. In the name of defending the "national democratic revolution," the Cunhal leadership subordinated the mass upsurge to support for the MFA, that is, for a section of the imperialist army in crisis. The CP leadership sabotaged the formation of the soldiers commissions, seeking to tie them



to the MFA. It tried to turn the workers commissions into a weapon in the "battle for production." Its multiple sectarian maneuvers, attacks on the freedom of expression of other currents in the workers movement, and manipulation of all the embryonic coordinating bodies, especially under the Fifth Provisional Government, became an obstacle to the broadening and centralization of these potential organs of workers powers.

The SP and CP leaderships, each in their own way, did all they could to block the development and coordination of the workers and soldiers commissions, and prevent them from being transformed into broad united-front-type bodies. In this way, the masses could not derive all the possible advantages from the acute crisis of the bourgeois state apparatus to strengthen their position. The gap between this crisis of state institutions and the level of self-organization of the masses was maintained. The bourgeoisie took advantage of it to gather its forces, to regain its capacity for initiative, which was shown on November 25, 1975. It was then in a position to reestablish its power, to restart the machinery of bourgeois parliamentary democracy and the presidential system.

The policy of the centrist groups wavered between ultraleftism and tail-ending the MFA, CP, and even the Fifth Provisional Government. Sometimes both aspects were combined. In this way, they made the SP and CP leaderships' job easier.

By characterizing the SP as "social fascist," by their sectarianism and rejection of the principles of workers democracy, and by the illusions they fostered about the MFA, they helped reinforce divisions among the workers. Their inability to put forward a correct united front policy, and their failure to understand the class nature of the government, were a major political obstacle to organizing a mobilization of the masses, who were seeking different solutions from those offered by the SP and CP leaderships. Their adventurism likewise facilitated the maneuver of November 25, 1975.

27.4. In France, the objective of the reformist leaders was to prevent a repetition of May 1968, which caught them by surprise, to divert the advancing radicalization to their own advantage and gain control of it. This was the purpose of the formation of the Union of the Left on the basis of the governmental common program signed in 1972. It was a coalition between the two workers parties and a small bourgeois party, the Movement of Left Radicals. This program challenged neither the essential mechanisms of the capitalist economy, nor the bonapartist constitution imposed as a result of the coup d'état of May 13, 1958.

The reformist parties were to use the electoral gains they made in the presidential elections in 1974, the cantonal elections of 1976, and the municipal elections of 1977, to dampen and divide the response of the working class to the attacks of the bosses and the government. In the name of broadening the Union of the Left, they scaled down the demands. They preached patience to the workers, dangling before them the promise of a victory right on the horizon in the March 1978 elections. The Union of the Left subordinated the mobilization, activity, and organization of the workers to its parliamentary and class-collaborationist perspectives.

The conjunction between the effects of the recession, which overshadowed the proposals for economic reforms contained in the Common Program, and the deepening of

the radicalization and politicalization of the workers introduced an imbalance into the plans of the SP and the CP. In fact, the situation threatened to lead to a challenging of the CP bureaucracy's exclusive control over the CGT, a challenge to the Maire leadership in the CFDT, as well as difficulties in the relationship between the latter and the SP.

Then, the SP leadership offered some guarantees to the bourgeoisie by reaffirming its respects for the constraints of the "profit economy," the "international economic environment," and interimperialist competition. The CFDT bureaucracy followed suit by giving priority to so-called qualitative demands at the expense of so-called quantitative ones.

The CP leadership concentrated its fire on what it claimed was "the SP's right turn." It launched a demagogic assault on the austerity policy advocated by Mitterrand all the more readily because it itself steered clear of organizing any major counterattack against the austerity imposed by Barre. The CGT bureaucracy followed in its footsteps and lined up the union confederation with the CP's positions. After several months of a crossfire of invectives, the division in the workers ranks was driven deep, because the union bureaucrats promoted it and exploited it as a way of avoiding doing anything to mobilize the workers.

The division created by the CP and SP leaderships, especially after September 1977, had the effect not only of smothering any counterattack by the workers but also of breaking the momentum of the Union of the Left in the electoral arena. The beginning of the electoral campaign was marked by Marchais's refusal to make a commitment that CP candidates would withdraw in favor of SP candidates in the second round in those districts where the latter were ahead. In order to justify this orientation, the CP claimed to be the only party of the working class. It openly took the risk of bringing about a defeat of the Union of the Left in the elections in order to protect its interests as a bureaucratic apparatus. These interests could have suffered as a result of the CP being involved in running the government during a period of deep economic crisis. The narrow victory of the UDP and the RPR in March 1978 was the result of this divisionist and class-collaborationist policy of the CP and the SP. Since March 1978, the masses' aspiration for unity has been shown in the by-elections showing a majority for the workers parties, but with the SP gaining at the expense of the CP.

### A Period of Sharp Turns

28. An examination of the development of the class struggle in various countries in capitalist Europe points up two features. One is that there is an upsurge of mass movements that adopt goals often in contradiction to the orientation of the bureaucratic apparatuses. The other is that the SPs and CPs are able to maintain their policies without suffering notable losses in the short term. Where should the explanation for this combined and contradictory phenomenon be sought? It is one thing to strike back immediately against the most brutal attacks by the bosses on wages, working conditions, and even against layoffs. It is quite another to mount an effective opposition to a governmental policy of austerity pursued in all fields, to prevent the closing of factories in crisis-struck industries, to fight back against a general rise in unemployment, or

even to wage successful struggles against massive layoffs.

At this level, the semispontaneous mass movement runs up against its limits. Here, the full force is felt of the need to go beyond whatever scattered victories are possible, the need for an alternative to the orientation maintained by the apparatuses that serve as instruments of the austerity policy within the working class and which derive their power essentially from their material capacity to keep opposition dispersed.

28.1. Over the past ten years, in the course of struggles that have often converged from a certain angle with the line of the reformist leaderships, a layer of advanced workers has been forged. To some extent, it has revived, and even extended, the accumulated experience of the working class as a whole in trade-union and political struggles. In a partial way, these workers oppose the class-collaborationist orientation of the bureaucratic leaderships.

On more than one occasion, these advanced workers have forced the bureaucracy to make adaptations in order to hang onto its positions. When the reformist leaderships have shown their hands, coming out openly in support of austerity policies, these workers have frequently expressed repudiation of such capitulation. But nowhere have these opposition tendencies had the coherent policy, organizational solidity, authority throughout the entire union organization, or even in extensive sections of it, that would give them the means for mounting an effective fight against the bureaucratic apparatuses and presenting an alternative strategy with credibility on the practical level.

This weakness has been revealed most clearly when the question of power, in the form of a governmental alternative, was posed. These workers have generally stayed in the framework of the overall political solutions proposed by the reformist leaderships. This was the case in Portugal during the summer and fall of 1975; in Italy at the time of the 1975 and 1976 elections; in Spain in the period of the Moncloa Pact; in Great Britain, when in the fall of 1975 the Labour government adopted its antilabor measures.

The limitations of this workers vanguard on the trade-union and political levels arise in part from the fact that the revolutionary Marxist organizations have too weak a base at present in the key sectors of the industrial working class and therefore have too few revolutionary worker cadres. If the revolutionary Marxist program and organization do not become more rooted in the working class, the process of organizing this layer of advanced workers in a class-struggle left wing will remain limited, and the potential of the tendencies moving to the left in the reformist parties will not be realized. The bureaucratic leaderships will not have to confront the challenge of an alternative leadership.

28.2 All this explains why the reformist apparatuses have been able so far to succeed in their operation of bailing out the capitalist system. On this question, Trotsky wrote:

"Imitating the liberals, our sages tacitly accept the axiom that every class gets the leadership it deserves. In reality leadership is not at all a mere 'reflection' of a class or the product of its own free creativeness. A leadership is shaped in the process of clashes between the different classes or the friction between the different layers within a given class. Having once arisen, the leadership invariably rises above its class and thereby becomes predisposed to the pressure and influence of other classes. The proletariat

may 'tolerate' for a long time a leadership that has already suffered a complete inner degeneration but has not as yet had the opportunity to express this degeneration amid great events.

"A great historic shock is necessary to reveal sharply the contradictions between the leadership and the class. . . . But even in cases where the old leadership has revealed its internal corruption, the class cannot immediately improvise a new leadership, especially if it has not inherited from the previous period strong revolutionary cadres capable of utilizing the collapse of the old leading party. . . .

"As regards new leadership, the choice is very limited. Only gradually, only on the basis of their own experience through several stages, can the broad layers of the masses become convinced that a new leadership is firmer, more reliable, more loyal than the old. To be sure, during a revolution, i.e., when events move swiftly, a weak party can quickly grow into a mighty one provided it lucidly understands the course of the revolution and possesses staunch cadres that do not become intoxicated with phrases and are not terrorized by persecution. But such a party must be available prior to the revolution inasmuch as the process of educating the cadres required a considerable period of time and the revolution does not afford this time."

28.3. From 1975 to 1978, the working class in capitalist Europe has thus gone through the experience in various forms of seeing the results of the reformist leadership's policy in the context of a souring economic climate. The most advanced layers have had an opportunity to begin to draw a balance sheet of the strategy of the SPs, the CPs, and the union leaderships, as well as its results on both the general political level and on the level of the material conditions imposed on the workers. The orientation of the bureaucracies is being seen not simply as an obstacle to organizing struggles democratically, extending them, carrying them forward, or deepening them as regards their objectives. It is beginning to be seen as direct assistance to maintain the ruling regimes or governments (Spain, Portugal, Italy, France, Belgium) or as loyally managing the interests of the bourgeoisie, or as an ineffective means for defending the workers' gains against bosses who are less and less inclined to make concessions (West Germany, Great Britain, Denmark).

On the basis of this twofold experience, the level of consciousness of this working-class vanguard is rising, in the context of a relationship of forces between capital and labor favorable overall to the latter.

The points scored by the bourgeoisie, thanks to the help of the bureaucratic apparatuses, have not involved any qualitative change in the relationship of forces. But the introduction of antilabor plans by governments has been facilitated, and a general counterattack by the workers made more difficult, by the political context created by the November 25, 1975, crackdown in Portugal; the freezing of the political situation after June 1976 in Italy; the signing of the Moncloa pact and the reformist parties' support for the draft constitution (October 1977, July 1978) in Spain; and the defeat of the Union of the Left in France in the March 1978 elections.

However, working-class resistance remains strong. Counterattacks in one branch of industry or an important sector can win gains and may even open up political crises. Any serious struggle for a partial objective can lead

rapidly to a large-scale battle. A revival of workers struggles in an industry less hard hit by the crisis can rapidly stimulate a resurgence of mobilizations in sectors of the working class that have already engaged in struggles without achieving any significant results. This reflects the mood of the working class as a whole. The attempts of the governments, despite the hardening attitude of the bosses, to co-opt the unions by means of pacts in their way reflect the nature of the period.

Thus, the bourgeoisie cannot in the short run upset the balance of forces that was established years ago and shift the relationship of forces decisively in its favor. It needs the reformist political and union apparatuses to contain the mass movement in order to try to wear out working class resistance over a long period, relying on the demoralizing effect of the crisis, before it risks a head-on confrontation. It could even score some relative successes in applying its austerity plans. But in every new stage of this offensive, profound tremors could develop.

The inability of the two main classes to impose their own general solution in a context of deepening economic, social, and political crisis is leading to a relatively prolonged period of major class struggles, a period marked by prerevolutionary crises, large-scale bourgeois offensives in some countries, and sharp political turns. In the course of these clashes the bourgeoisie will try to assemble the forces needed to carry through its plans. But at the same time, these shifts will offer opportunities to take steps forward toward solving the crisis of proletarian leadership.

The working-class vanguard is thus going to go through numerous sharp political fluctuations. This offers a favorable ground for an apprenticeship in strategy and tactics at a time when the facade of the reformist organizations that dominate the working class is crumbling. This period is rich in possibilities for rooting the sections of the Fourth International more deeply in the working class, for recruiting and training revolutionary worker cadres, and for applying a conscious long-term policy of training leadership teams in these sections.

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### **The Crisis of the Organizations of the Workers Movement**

29. A wide range of different levels of consciousness has developed in the working class over this past decade. Some layers of wage earners have attained trade-union consciousness for the first time. Others have acquired elementary political consciousness, joining workers parties. On the basis of their experiences in struggle, sections of workers see joining these parties and being active in their unions in a perspective of bringing about a radical change in society. Some of them no longer go along with the campaigns mounted by the apparatuses against the centrist and revolutionary Marxist organizations and their members. They already engage in, or demand, unity in action with these forces. However, the course of their political development has not yet led them to lose their faith in the reformist leaderships, even if they are working for a change in the internal life and in the line of their party.

In reality, these levels of consciousness are more numerous than enumerated here and they overlap in a more complex way. The essential thing is that this upswing, the

growth of internal contradictions, and the emergence of opposition currents in the parties and unions are rooted in a process of transformation of the consciousness of the working masses.

The base and audience that the centrist and revolutionary Marxist organizations have won in the working class are part and parcel of this reshaping of the attitude of the proletariat.

Against this background, a general crisis is unfolding in the bureaucratic workers organizations, both in the parties and in the unions. It arises from the interrelation between two factors—the crisis of imperialism and that of Stalinism.

The crisis of imperialism is undermining the material bases of reformism. The strategy and methods of action of the bureaucrats are beginning to be seen as illusory by significant sections of the class. The bureaucratic apparatuses are finding themselves more and more trapped in an impasse by the conjunction of a deteriorating economic climate and strong working class militancy.

The new stage in the crisis of Stalinism has brought the end of monolithism in the “international Communist movement” into most of the European CPs.

One of the major features of this phase of recomposition in the workers movement is the capitulation of left currents or “oppositions” in the SPs and CPs, as well as the unions, to the ideology and policy of austerity defended by the bureaucratic apparatuses. They have often covered up this surrender with talk about a “left form of austerity” as an instrument of reform. The vacuum left by the retreat of these currents is tending to be filled today by a new generation of activists who have participated in, or led, many struggles. Finally, the youth, which has not been scarred by defeats in the past and is worried about its future, is showing a strong suspicion of the bureaucratic practices and petty-bourgeois ideology of the reformist leaderships. These youth express doubts about the effectiveness of the class-collaborationist orientation of the SPs and CPs and a clear rejection of imperialist barbarism as well as bureaucratic dictatorship in the workers states. The SPs and CPs are thus encountering difficulties in organizing the student and worker youth solidly and on a large scale. Moreover, there are many critical elements in the youth organizations of the Social Democracy and the CPs.

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### **The Social Democracy**

30. The objective role that the Social Democracy plays has been confirmed once again in this period.

The counterrevolutionary role of the Social Democracy is not limited to defending bourgeois and petty-bourgeois ideology in the ranks of the proletariat, diverting upsurges of wage earners, and integrating the workers and their organizations into the mechanisms of capitalist society. Social Democratic parties may advocate labor-management boards on the German, Swedish, or English models; or Rocard's version of “self-management,” which is only a form of sharing of responsibility for management; or the sort of “workers control” preached by the Portuguese SP in 1974-75.

In its role as a buttress of the bourgeois order, the Social Democracy has more than once applied repressive mea-

sure directly against the working class.

In its tradition of defending imperialism, which led it to carry out massacres of the colonial peoples fighting for their liberation, the Social Democracy has taken up the cudgels for neocolonialism. In Sweden, West Germany, Belgium, and Switzerland, it helps the big trusts export capital to the underdeveloped countries. This promotion of imperialist superprofits is also concealed under the mask of "aid to the third world."

In Asia and Latin America, the Social Democracy plays the role of democratic ambassador of the European imperialist powers. It is working there to put together alternative solutions (forming SPs with the backing of sections of the local bourgeoisie) to dictatorships that are always in danger of being rocked by popular explosions.

This mission as the political agent of imperialism stands out more sharply in view of the impact of the class struggles in capitalist Europe and the weight they are bringing to bear on the world balance of forces. The German SPD, which runs the government of the main European capitalist power, has assumed a major role in shoring up bourgeois regimes shaken by workers struggles.

30.1. The Social Democratic parties serve the imperialist bourgeoisie, but they are based on the workers. They are in fact the "labor lieutenants of capital." As a result, their place in the state apparatus and their manifold links with bourgeois society depend very largely on the relationship of forces between the classes and the degree of organization and activity of the workers.

In the last analysis, these two aspects explain, for example, the fluctuating fortunes of the Swedish SP or the SPD in the electoral arena. Demobilizing the workers for a long period and refusing to appeal for their active support, as the SPD did in the 1976 election campaign, can lead to an erosion of the vote for such parties.

The same two aspects explain the swelling of the ranks of the French, Spanish, and Portuguese SPs. In addition, the revival of these parties is explained more precisely by the following factors:

First, important sections of the working class are entering political life for the first time under the impact of a crisis that has hit suddenly after twenty years of capitalist expansion. Some of them are turning toward the SPs, since these parties' historical links with the workers movement, their presence in some struggles, and their professions of faith give them the image of big workers parties that could introduce reforms to assure the maintenance and improvement of the workers standard of living.

Secondly, the traumatic experience of fascism and Stalinism lends special acuteness to the question of democratic rights and the relationship between democracy and socialism. The Social Democratic parties have been able to tap these democratic aspirations by means of demagogic postures.

Third, the expansion of sectors such as distribution, banking, insurance, and secondary and higher education, as well as the tendency more generally for intellectual labor to be reintegrated into productive labor (technicians, engineers) have given birth to new strata of wage earners in which the SPs have found part of their social base. These sectors generally lack a class-struggle tradition. They enjoy a position of material privilege. They are particularly prone to the ideology disseminated by the SPs about the possibilities for using the state apparatus to

introduce reforms through a "stricter application of political economy," and "utilizing talents and skills" wasted by an archaic hierarchial system.

Fourth, in contrast to the image and style of functioning shown by the bureaucratic leaderships of the CPs, the SPs have seemed to offer possibilities for more discussion, the expression of a range of opinions, and even the existence of public currents. While maintaining this democratic facade as much as possible, of course, the Social Democratic leaderships keep tight control over all the centers of political decision making.

As a result of decades of incrustation in the bourgeois state apparatus, these bourgeois workers parties are experiencing a shift in the balance between the various components in their leaderships. While their relationship with the unions—with the exception of Portugal—remains their main tie to the working class, the role assumed by state functionaries, ministers, city council members, and technocrats is more and more preponderant. This transformation within the SPs has repercussions on various levels. Ideological degeneration has deepened still more. The leaderships are increasingly filled up with bourgeois politicians for whom these parties are simply springboards for their career.

The independence that sections of the SP leaderships have acquired vis-à-vis the mass movement remains, however, relative. The electoral support for these parties still comes overwhelmingly from wage earners. This may lead these parties, in certain circumstances, to call on the workers to mobilize. We saw this in 1972 in West Germany at the time of Barzel's attempted parliamentary coup d'état. Other examples have been seen in Belgium when the local SP renegotiated its place into the government (the February-March 1977 strike); and in Portugal in July 1978, when, faced with the ultimatum from the CDS and his ouster by President Eanes, Soares raised the threat of mobilizing in the streets against the danger from the right.

30.2. The internal cohesion of the Social Democracy can break down when the contradiction sharpens between the level of activity, consciousness, and organization of the class, and the objective role played by the leadership. Thus, the tensions in the Labour Party, on the one hand; and the calm prevailing in the Austrian Social Democracy, on the other, reflect the higher levels of militancy and organization of British workers relative to the Austrian working class.

Understanding this fundamental mechanism makes it possible both to avoid academic disputes about the "extent of bourgeoisification" of the Social Democratic parties and to grasp all the opportunities for dialogue with workers in the SPs or influenced by them.

The forms taken by the contradiction between the role of the leaderships and the radicalization of workers in the ranks and in the periphery of Social Democratic parties also vary, depending on whether these parties hold a long-established dominant position in the working class or must confront the competition of CPs that lead unions.

In countries such as Norway, Sweden, West Germany, Austria, Denmark, Great Britain, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Switzerland, the Social Democratic parties influence the attitudes of the overwhelming majority, or at least a decisive section, of the working class on both political and trade-union questions.

In such SPs, tensions and the appearance of opposition groups can be generated by the following factors: Dissatis-

faction in the unions with the way the party is running the government, or conflict over this between sections of the unions and the dominant circles in both the party and the trade-union movement. The development of a wave of wildcat strikes, led by working-class cadres at the rank-and-file level of these parties. Rebellion of sections of the parliamentary party that balk at the overly flagrant way the top party leadership panders to the needs of the capitalists.

In France, Portugal, Spain, and Italy, the Socialist parties have to contend with CPs. The adaptations they may make at certain times to mass upsurges and the demagogic declarations that they make in the attempt to outbid the CPs change nothing as regards their Social Democratic nature. In the electoral arena, these parties seek to win the broadest possible base in order to assure themselves a key position in any governmental combination. But even when they have acquired significant electoral weight (France, Spain, Portugal), their footing remains unstable. They are thrown on the horns of a dilemma that faces the entire party as well as the unions, to turn to an alliance with the CP or a coalition with the bourgeois parties excluding the CP.

These contradictory options provoke debates and internal clashes over problems of overall political strategy, unity of the workers parties, and the governmental question.

The SPs need to acquire a trade-union transmission belt. Without this, they cannot put over their policies, gain credibility in the eyes of the bourgeoisie as candidates for forming a government, or hold their own very long in competing with the CPs for influence in the workers movement. This is a difficult undertaking. Even when successes are achieved, as in Spain with the UGT, or partially even in France with the CFDT, they remain fragile. These SPs do not have a stable base in the factories that could serve as the backbone of a trade-union fraction.

In these SPs, currents with roots in the unions may serve to voice opposition to both the strategic policy of the top party leadership and its line in the unions. To varying degrees, this has happened in Spain, Portugal, and France.

More generally, under the impact of developments in the class struggle, leftward moving currents may arise in the SPs.

The existing "left tendencies" that boast of having developed their own alternative to the strategy of the Social Democratic leaderships are strongly marked by gradualism. They reduce everything to "processes," and "movements," thereby conjuring away the question of the goal—that is, the conquest of power. In doing so, they in effect eliminate strategy, or at least reduce the question of socialist revolution to a combination of modifications in the organization of work, life style, institutions ("decentralization," "regionalization"), and the "cultural hegemony" of the workers parties, which is supposed to transform the consciousness of the masses. They tend, thus, to put an equal sign between the partial and temporary breaches that the mass movement can open up in some peripheral spheres of the institutions of the bourgeois state (for example, education) and breakthroughs in the central areas—private power of decision over investments, the functioning of the market economy, the links with the world capitalist market, and the repressive apparatuses of

the bourgeois state (the army and police). The revolutionary crisis and dual power are dumped by these tendencies in favor of an illusory "prolonged process of structural reforms."

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## The Communist Parties

31. In the historical context of the unfolding of the world revolution, the breakdown of the Stalinist system is occurring on three interdependent levels: (1) Difficulties in the Kremlin bureaucracy's relationship with the ruling Communist parties. (2) A crisis of the bureaucracies' control over the societies of the degenerated or deformed workers states. (3) Tensions between the Soviet Communist Party and the CPs in the capitalist countries. The policy of "socialism in one country" leads, among other things, to transforming the CPs into instruments of the Kremlin's diplomacy and to stimulating chauvinist tendencies within them.

As the European CPs have become more and more ensconced in city administrations, regional governments and councils, the machinery of the bourgeois state, gotten involved in running a vast network of cooperatives (in the case of the Italian CP) and infiltrated layers of functionaries, they have become increasingly integrated into bourgeois society. This is the material basis for the nationalist centrifugal tendencies in this part of the "international Communist movement," for the "Eurocommunist" parties' attempts to dissociate themselves from the Kremlin, for the limited conflicts between their leaderships and that of the Soviet CP, as well as for the dissensions among them.

At the Berlin Conference of CPs in June 1976, the Italian, Spanish, and French CPs, supported by the Rumanian CP and the Yugoslav League of Communists, questioned even the usefulness of such meetings as this, although since the dissolution of the Cominform they are the only place where the CPs come together to make decisions.

31.1. On the one hand, the CPs still maintain ties with the Soviet bureaucracy, even though these are very strained. On the other hand, they are more and more dependent on the base they have acquired in bourgeois society. The process of change itself through which most of the CPs in capitalist Europe are going—with the exceptions of the Portuguese CP; the West German CP, which is an agent of the East German regime; and the Austrian CP—reflects this contradictory situation in which they have become immersed.

• Increasingly since 1968, the CP leaderships have dissociated themselves from, and condemned the most notorious examples of repression in the USSR and the People's Democracies. They have been led to challenge publicly the Soviet bureaucracy's attempts to present "real socialism" as a model.

These West European CPs were not unaware of bureaucratic domination and Stalinist repression. They have been forced to adopt their present attitude for four reasons: First in the course of struggles, broad sections of the workers movement in West Europe have become more acutely sensitive to questions of democracy. In these battles, the masses have shown a desire to take over running the apparatus of production themselves, along

with a strong tendency to self-organization and a strong surge of opposition to all forms of hierarchy. They have demanded democracy in the unions. So, the leaderships of the CPs could not continue to cover up totally for bureaucratic dictatorship and the suppression of all workers democracy in the USSR and "East Europe" without running the risk of having to pay a heavy price. Secondly, their competition with the SPs also forced them to try to assume the mantle of "defenders of democratic rights," and not just in capitalist Europe. Thirdly, the CPs were anxious to increase their credibility as a possible government party in the eyes of the bourgeoisie and this obliged them to demonstrate a certain independence from the Kremlin. Fourthly, the bureaucracy of the West European CPs, which to a large extent has its own material base, is not ready to be ejected from its positions by a mere gesture from the Kremlin. Dubcek's fate confirmed their suspicions of the Kremlin masters.

- The strategic orientation of the CPs is rooted in the Stalinist revisions necessary to justify defending the bourgeois order and the Kremlin's diplomatic maneuvers. In this respect, the line of the "historic compromise" in Italy and the "union of the people of France" represent a continuity of the policy of "national unity" that was followed in both countries immediately following the second world war.

Nonetheless, the vacuum created by dropping references to the "socialism in the USSR" as the goal to be attained and the model to be followed is forcing the CP leaderships to take new steps forward in systematizing their revision of Marxism. They have to provide an ideological cover for their extreme forms of class collaboration. They have to consolidate their political identity. They have to forge cadres in a modified mold.

After going through the formality of removing the concept of the dictatorship of the proletariat from their platforms—which had long since become totally alien to their actual activity and line—they have launched a revisionist ideological offensive on other levels. In logical course, they have focused their attack on two points—the nature of the bourgeois state, which is supposed to have lost all class content; and the source of the capitalist crisis. The objective is obvious—to justify a "solution" to this crisis within the framework of the market economy. The Italian and Spanish CPs are doing the pioneer work in this area.

- Within the CPs, the wave of recruitment following 1968 and the turnover in membership have considerably reduced the relative weight of those members trained in the school of the resistance and later of the cold war. In the apparatus and the leaderships, the role of administrators has increased relative to the sectors that have come directly out of the workers movement. These administrators have gotten their training in city governments, regional authorities, or cooperatives and large public or semipublic enterprises. Activists coming from the intelligentsia occupy many more posts than in the past. Such changes tend to seriously increase the shakiness of the political education members receive, which consists of a mélange of references to the historical traditions of the party, the October revolution, the USSR, and the new positions. It is difficult to achieve ideological cohesion among the ranks.

31.2. The leaderships of the Eurocommunist CPs claim to have broken with Stalinism. However, they refuse to

consider doing away with the decisive elements that link them to the bureaucratic caste and the Stalinist "theoretical" legacy. Their determination to take more distance from the Soviet bureaucracy as well as from their past and their need to avoid a complete break with the USSR, the result of the October revolution, reflects the dilemma in which these parties have been trapped in the present period by the crisis of Stalinism.

- However extensive their criticisms of the bureaucracy's repressive system and their challenges to the universal validity of the "Soviet model," the leaderships of the CPs as such continue to characterize the USSR and the People's Democracies as "socialist states." Rejecting any conception of a workers state based on democratic workers councils, these leaders justify the existence of such a "variant of socialism" on the basis of the legacy of Czarist society, "cultural backwardness," and the "absence of an industrial revolution and an enlightened bourgeoisie." This sort of objectivist argumentation has two advantages from their point of view. It serves to justify a strategy of gradual transformation of the bourgeois parliamentary democracies. It enables them to combine rejection of the "Soviet model" with legitimizing Dubcek-style reformist schemes that are supported by factions of the bureaucratic caste.

- None of the Eurocommunist CPs has stopped supporting the theory of "socialism in one country" and its implications, notably peaceful coexistence. On this level, from the Moscow Conference in 1969 to the one in Berlin in 1976 continuity rather than change has remained characteristic. According to these CPs, the USSR and the "socialist camp" represent the key force among those fighting "against imperialism for independence and peace, for democracy and socialism." The Soviet bureaucracy and those of the CPs recognize a convergence of their interests with respect to the need for defending the international status quo. The Soviet bureaucracy fears seeing its base undermined by the effects of a revolutionary breakthrough in capitalist Europe. The CPs want to safeguard their apparatus and their innumerable ties to bourgeois society by trying to achieve a "historic compromise" with capital. Moreover, the leaderships of the Italian, French, and Spanish CPs, as well as of the Portuguese CP, understand very well their role in maintaining the international status quo. Their policy of a "national coalition" and pushing back the mass movement fits into this context. They are also aware of the importance of maintaining links with the bureaucracies in power in order to increase their leverage in negotiating with their own bourgeoisies in pursuit of their own interests. In order to increase their room for maneuver, they may diversify their links. Rather than rely on the Kremlin alone, they may open up avenues to Bucharest, Belgrade, Budapest, or even Peking. Nonetheless, they continue to maintain these political, ideological, and even material ties.

The agreement between the Kremlin bureaucracy and the leaderships of the CPs on the main options in international policy reflects this reality.

Nonetheless, conflicts between the Kremlin's international objectives and the choices made in national politics by the CPs in capitalist Europe may touch off open conflicts, even on international questions. Berlinguer's official pronouncements on NATO, especially the support expressed by one of the leading members of the Italian CP Political Bureau, Giancarlo Pajetta, for the Andreotti

government's policy in the Horn of Africa, testify to the acuteness of this problem.

- If the Eurocommunist CPs condemn the sort of relationship that the Soviet CP established with them, they are careful not to denounce publicly the internal regime of their sister party in the USSR. They continue to extoll the virtues of bureaucratic centralism, which they fraudulently present as democratic centralism.

These parties' criticisms in the area of internal norms are particularly superficial since they realize that any recognition of the right of tendencies and factions and of internal and public debate would constitute a threat to their political survival.

31.3. The tremors running through the West European CPs are of a different order from previous ones owing to the interaction of the general effects of the crisis of reformism and the specific ones of the new phase in the crisis of Stalinism.

The political cohesion of the Stalinist parties rested on an interlocking of three positions: affirmation of the role of the CP as the only leading party of the working class; as the party that rallied the people behind the banner of the national tradition and interests; and finally as the defender of the "fatherland of socialism."

Invoking this "socialist model," as well as the needs of "defending the USSR," made it possible to justify more easily compromises with the bourgeoisie at the same time as their claim to be the sole defenders of the interests of the working class.

- The necessity of dropping their identification with the "socialist model of the USSR" is shaking the whole edifice of the CPs. Thus a threat hangs over these leaderships that is made still clearer by the fundamental similarity between their class-collaborationist orientation and that of the SPs. The continual denials of any resemblance to Social Democracy by the Carrillos or Berlinguers represent in their way an admission of this danger.

In order to extricate themselves from this uncomfortable political position and preserve their specific bureaucratic interests, the CPs are adopting a more and more sectarian attitude. They are reiterating their claims to be the only party of the working class, especially at the factory level, and the true defender of the national interests. Moreover, aside from all the criticisms, the historic, political, ideological, and material ties of the CPs to the Soviet bureaucracy, even if they no longer involve total submission to the Kremlin, are still an important aspect of their specific identity as a bureaucracy in the workers movement, differentiating them from the Social Democratic parties.

- The sectarianism being displayed by the CPs argues against their professions of faith in pluralism and engenders conflicts in their own ranks.

The CPs' proclamation of their democratic principles is also contradicted by their sectarian and bureaucratic behavior in the mass organizations. They strangle any democracy in the unions they control and resort to all sorts of manipulation to maintain their hold on mass movements. In this area also they are beginning to pay a price, as is indicated by the debates in the French CGT before and after the 1978 elections. The same phenomenon is beginning to appear in the COs in Spain.

The leaderships of the CPs continually reaffirm their "attachment to the principles of independence for every party, noninterference in the internal affairs of other parties, and equal rights for every party." At the same

time, they proclaim the need for "strengthening and developing fraternal cooperation and mutual solidarity." This is what they have to dish out to their activists today as a substitute for internationalism. The Eurocommunist leaders use international meetings as an opportunity for bolstering each other in their delicate dealings with Moscow. They also use them as a way of projecting an image as working-class parties that differentiates them from the Social Democracy. However, the chauvinism of the CPs and their increasing tendency to line up behind the interests of their own bourgeoisies are causing sharp antagonisms among these parties. Despite their attempts at coordination, they find it impossible to avoid jarring discords in several areas (immigrant workers, elections to the European parliament, entry of certain countries into the Common Market).

In the eyes of the CP adherents who, in their trade-union work, feel the need for international coordination of their struggle, such public friction or outright wrangling can only undermine the credibility of the CPs' loudly proclaimed intentions of "collaborating on a Europe-wide scale."

- The possibility of getting into governments, which seemed within the grasp of more than one mass CP in the mid-1970s, has receded. For the moment, the bureaucracies of the CPs are being driven to resort to every possible means to preserve the electoral base they have. To this end, they are tightening their control of the unions and projecting a policy of "national unity coalitions," whose chances for success, however, do not seem great. A crisis of strategic perspectives is opening up in the CPs. The highly touted "new Eurocommunist strategy" is already beginning to sound like a dud, even in the Italian, Spanish, and French CPs.

In the unions, the CPs' line is running into opposition among their own worker activists. This resistance by the CPs' union activists does not immediately take the form of challenging the political orientation of the leaderships. However, it makes it more difficult for these leaderships to apply their line. It tends to challenge the suppression of all democracy in the unions, which is required in order to support an austerity policy or to maintain a posture blocking any serious counterattack against it. It promotes scattered but constant discussion about the effectiveness of the options taken by the leaderships. Finally, this opposition can lead to questioning the CPs' overall political strategy with regard to the crisis.

- In the recent period, critical movements led by feminist activists have sprung up in several CPs. The bureaucrats' reluctance to mount any effective struggle to win the demands of the women's movement, especially free abortion on demand, has provoked a rebellion by women activists and led them to take independent initiatives in the mass movement. (This has happened in the Italian, Spanish, and French CPs.) Such disputes are also caused by the status and rights accorded to these women activists, who often participate in the mobilizations of the women's movement despite the directives of the party, as well as by the most backward expressions of sexism inside the CPs themselves.

31.4. The taking of public stands by various CP members or groups of members against aspects of the party's line and internal regime are the most visible symptom of the crisis opening up in the CPs.

There are as yet no crystallized currents in the CPs. The

range of opinions is very wide. Some of the oppositionists obviously drew their inspiration from Bernsteinian gradualism. They question the usefulness of founding the Third International and advocate reunification of the CPs and SPs. Advocates of such views are to be found in the leading circles of the Italian and Spanish CPs. They openly support a process of Social Democratization.

Other oppositionists in the CPs seek to reconcile gradual transformation of the bourgeois state and direct intervention in the mass movement. To this end, they offer warmed-over dishes from the table of Austromarxism. Still others reject the elimination of the dictatorship of the proletariat and the theoretical innovations about the nature of the state. But they reject the conception of a state based on democratic workers councils and the right of more than one party to exist. At best, they are silent about these questions. This sometimes enables unreconstructed Stalinists to attach themselves to this current of opinion.

None of these opposition tendencies has any consistency. At most, they may challenge a point in the analysis of the bourgeois state or monopoly capitalism. They all endorse the strategy of the popular front. Even those who want to develop a left critique are reluctant to hark back to the norms of democratic centralism defended by Lenin and Trotsky. Moreover, they repeat the leadership's statements about a "single international center" being useless or even harmful. Under this cover, they deny the need for an international and espouse the theory of "socialism in one country."

The crisis of the CPs cannot be reduced to the appearance of these currents, which are still essentially confined to intellectual circles within the CPs. These currents are only the first manifestations of forces at work deep under the surface in the Eurocommunist parties, forces that may emerge in other forms and through other channels (notably, oppositions in the trade unions).

The existence of these currents of opinion, however, is stimulating a revival of discussion, and this is a favorable factor for the development of genuinely critical, leftward moving currents. Such tendencies now have a certain margin for maneuver. After all the pledges that it has made that it will not backslide into its old errors, the apparatus cannot revive the purges of yesteryear. So, the monolithic centralism is showing cracks. But it would be an illusion to think that the apparatus will not resort to any and every means to isolate, stifle, and expel opposition tendencies when the occasion arises.

31.5. The Soviet CP is intervening more or less openly in the present crisis of the CPs. What exasperates the bureaucrats in Moscow are the repeated condemnations by the leaderships of the CPs of repression in the USSR, the statements that socialism and democracy are inseparably linked and that the right to strike should be recognized, and the constant proclamation of the principle of "noninterference in the internal affairs of any party." All these declarations tend to put the authority of the West European workers movement behind the struggles and demands of the workers in the USSR and East Europe for independent trade unions and the right to strike. They also promote centrifugal processes within the bureaucracies in East Europe.

Despite these serious problems, which explain the sharpness of Moscow's attacks, the Soviet CP does not want to break with the Eurocommunist CPs. Its links with these parties, even though loose, enable it to enjoy a special

relationship with an important section of the workers movement in capitalist Europe. It can utilize this in its international policy, among other things, in the Third World.

The Soviet bureaucracy, thus, hesitates to promote splits, in which a favorable outcome would be more than dubious. It prefers to pursue a flexible course of action on two levels. First, it engages in public polemics with these parties and fans the discontent of those elements nostalgic for the period of Stalinist monolithism. Second, it strives for conciliation with those leaderships that "respect the general interests of the USSR."

The development of the crisis of the CPs will not proceed in a linear way. Since 1967-78, there have been a series of splits in many CPs—the Greek CP, the Austrian, Swiss, Norwegian, and recently the Swedish, Finnish, and British. Although these splits often do not involve large numbers of activists, they attest to the breakdown of monolithism in the CPs. This crisis will be a characteristic feature of the present period and will put its imprint on the process of political recomposition in the workers movement.

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### The Centrist and Mao-Stalinist Organizations

32. From 1968-69 on, favorable conditions existed for the appearance on the political scene of organizations that defined themselves as "antireformist forces." They were the result of the confluence of nuclei of activists who had come out of the Social Democratic or Communist parties in the 1960s and sections of radicalized youth.

For a period, a certain resonance developed between these groups and sections of the mass movement in which they were able to challenge the leadership of the reformist parties (that is, the student movement, the antimilitarist movement, the anti-imperialist movement, and some mobilizations over questions such as transportation and housing).

At the beginning of the 1970s, these groups sometimes played a significant role in supporting and even, on occasion, giving impetus to deepgoing workers struggles in individual plants. Generally their political orientation was dominated by ultraleft features, although this did not exclude opportunist positions vis-à-vis the policy of the traditional workers parties.

These organizations were to run up against strategy questions that were put on the agenda by the recession and its effects on the political plane. They were to experience a crisis rooted primarily in problems of program, which often resulted in an erosion of their organizational strength. The inability of the centrist and Mao-Stalinist organizations to respond to the policies of the bureaucratic apparatuses was the real source of the crisis that was to grip them.

32.1. In Italy, facing the PCI's strategy of "historic compromise," the centrist organizations (Lotta continua, Avanguardia operaia, and Manifesto-PDUP) for a whole period ignored the governmental question and the problem of a political solution. Then they advocated the formation of a "government of the left parties." This slogan masked a perspective of an alliance between workers parties (the PCI and PSI) and a bourgeois party representing signifi-



cant sectors of the capitalist class—the Partido Republicano. As an alternative of the policy of alliances with bourgeois forces advanced by the PCI, they offered in fact, another system of alliances with bourgeois forces. Their arguments were rooted in vulgar parliamentary arithmetic. Without the Partido Republicano, and even the left of the Christian Democracy, there was no way of putting together a majority in parliament! Here is the old possibilist gradualism raising its head again.

In Spain, the PT, ORT, and MCE joined coalitions embracing workers parties and bourgeois and bourgeois-nationalist forces. In some cases, they joined the Democratic Junta and in others Democratic Convergence. In the preceding period, these organizations joined all the regional blocs that foreshadowed these fronts—the Mesas democraticas [Democratic Roundtables] and the Assembly of Catalonia.

As an alternative to the PCE and PSOE's policy of national unity and Carrillo's proposals for "a government of democratic concentration," the PTE raised the slogan of a "government of democratic salvation." The ORT campaigned around the slogan of a "government of the working-class and people's forces." Finally, the MCE agitated for a "government of left unity." For the PTE and the ORT, these formulas justified combinations with bourgeois forces, especially among the minority nationalities. For the MCE, they left the door open to such combinations.

In France, the PSU joined the Union of the Left in 1976. The OCT, while characterizing the SP as a bourgeois party and the CP as being in the same category although maintaining "a different kind of relationship to the working class," called for voting for the Union of the Left in 1978. It made no distinction between the candidates of the CP, the SP, the Left Radicals, or the left Gaullists.

32.2. The attitude of these organizations to the reformist parties led most of them to political bankruptcy, and sometimes to organizational bankruptcy as well.

- These groups proved incapable of understanding the dialectical relationship between the uneven development of working-class consciousness and the traditional parties of the workers movement. Thus, they could not come to terms with the spectacular growth of the SPs in France, Portugal, and Spain; or with the fact that in the midst of an economic crisis, the Social Democracy maintained its hold over the working class in the northern European countries; or with the growth in the influence of the PCI in Italy.

In most cases, these groups showed a total lack of understanding of the nature of these parties. They called them bourgeois parties, thinking that in this way they could eliminate the problem. Sometimes, they even called them "social fascist" parties.

The Chinese bureaucracy's position on "Russian social imperialism" and its various analyses of "state capitalism" in the USSR naturally led the Maoist organizations to see the CPs as bourgeois or "social fascist" parties.

The failure of the Mao-Stalinist and centrist parties to understand the reasons for the extraordinary growth of the reformist parties and the nature of these parties logically led them to fail to see the need for a united-front policy. Their lack of any method or criteria for approaching the central problem of the grip held by the reformists led them to be buffeted back and forth between triumphalist sectarianism and adaptation, sometimes seeing the CPs

as having advantages over the SPs, sometimes the other way around.

- On various occasions, some of these organizations envisaged the possibility that the masses could spontaneously go around the traditional parties and remain outside the control of the apparatuses for an extended period. They also looked forward to an imminent collapse of the CPs. On the basis of this perspective, they did their bit to deepen division in the working class.

Promoting division and leaving the organized workers movement to the reformist leaderships were also consequences of the characterization the Maoists made of the traditional parties. For them, the SPs represented at best the democratic bourgeoisie, with which they might ally themselves against fascism and "social fascism." The CPs, as agents of Russian socialist imperialism, represented the main enemy. It was on such foundations that these organizations based their line for "rebuilding the workers movement" around themselves, in every case! The sectarianism flowing from such positions was all the greater because they had no substantial differences with a popular-front or national unity line such as advocated by the CPs. This led them often to split the trade-union movement (as for example, the PTE and ORT did in Spain, or the PCP-ml in Portugal), and to try to build "red unions," or what they called "class-struggle" unions.

- In the case of most of the organizations that appeared after 1968 and took Maoism, its mythology, and the "great proletarian cultural revolution" as their political framework, the foreign policy of the Chinese bureaucracy and the vicissitudes of its internal struggles were to cause a growing political crisis, or to accelerate their degeneration into Mao-Stalinist sects. The whole system of reference on which they based their view of the world has become still more disjointed as a result of the conflicts between Vietnam and Cambodia, Vietnam and China, and between China and Albania.

32.3. Since 1976-77, a political realignment has been taking form in the various centrist organizations and currents.

- One of the threads in this process comes from the analysis some of them make of the period that opened up in 1968. They tend to attribute the limitations encountered by the rising mass movement to the innate strength of bourgeois democracy and its institutions. In this way, they remove the problem of the role of the bureaucratic apparatuses in the development of the class struggle. But this position has a disastrous logic. If the analysis is correct, it is necessary to have a strategy aimed essentially at "introducing contradictions into the institutions of the bourgeois state" and to wage the struggle there.

Gradualism gets the upper hand, and they seek to subordinate the mass movement to this perspective. From this it is a short step to an orientation that involves paying more and more heed to the siren songs of Eurocommunism, even if in its left variants.

There is a danger that this tendency will become still stronger in the future. It is the culmination of the crisis of the centrist organizations. In order to cover their retreat, more than one of these organizations is mounting an offensive on the theme of the "crisis of Marxism." Some CPs that have understood this evolution have consciously chosen to mount an ideological attack on these organizations.

As a result of the disillusionment caused by November

25, 1975 in Portugal; the results of the June 1976 elections in Italy; and the electoral setback in March 1978 in France, another tendency is taking shape in or around the centrist organizations. It is expressed in a withdrawal from the field of politics and an inclination to fetishize mass movements on questions such as nuclear power plants or the environment.

Along with this attitude, there is a questioning of the objective possibility of building a revolutionary party in the present period.

In Italy, the breakup of Lotta continua in 1976 indicated how rapidly and widely these positions were catching on. The "1977 Movement" in Bologna, Rome, and other cities was another expression of this. In other countries, this trend had an impact on the internal life of several organizations.

- The Mao-Stalinist organizations accelerated their sectarian course. In a pattern that follows the lines of cleavage and the conflicts between China and Albania, they have undergone deep new splits and divisions all over Europe. Once again, the logic of socialism in one country can be seen operating.

In accordance with the needs of Peking's diplomacy, these organizations are calling for strengthening NATO and the national defense of the imperialist countries against "Russian social imperialism." As a result, they find themselves in the company of the most reactionary sectors of the bourgeoisie.

Some of these groups or factions within them may make startling revisions on the nature of the Chinese state, as well. It is going to become capitalist after the fall of the Gang of Four. There may even be some staggering revisions about the very possibility of socialism.

- Massive unemployment among the youth, including the student youth, and the resulting consignment of these layers to a marginal life, the breakup and loss of influence of the centrist organizations, and especially the austerity policy upheld by the bureaucratic apparatuses, have given rise to a current of so-called "autonomi." And a section of these have taken the road of "military action."

A component of this current of "autonomi" bears similarities to what Lenin described in *"Left-Wing" Communism: an Infantile Disorder*: "A petty bourgeois driven to frenzy by the horrors of capitalism . . . The instability of such revolutionism, its barrenness, and its tendency to turn rapidly into submission, apathy, phantasms . . . all this is common knowledge." Their prevailing characteristics are moving away from the workers movement, joining the anti-Communist chorus of the bourgeoisie, and fostering nihilism.

By their actions and their ideology, the "armed groups" emerging from the current of the "autonomi" tend to come into conflict openly and sometimes directly with the workers movement and its organizations.

This current is most widespread in Italy, but depending on the evolution of the social and political situation, it may assume a similar scope in other countries.

In the course of this crisis and in the shuffling going on in and among the centrist or Maoist organizations, all the major questions of strategy have been widely debated. In this context, we have seen a series of activists raise doubts about the whole past orientation and show an openness to the explanations and answers offered by the Trotskyists.

## The Union Movement

33. The growth of the trade unions, which now in general embrace a larger percentage of the proletariat than at any time in their past, also means that they now encompass workers at very different levels of consciousness and with highly uneven traditions.

In this regard, Trotsky pointed out: "The broader these [organized] masses, the closer is the trade union to accomplishing its task. But what the organization gains in breadth, it inevitably loses in depth. Opportunist, nationalist, religious tendencies in the trade unions and their leadership express the fact that the trade unions embrace not only the vanguard but also heavy reserves. The weak side of the unions thus comes from their strong side." ("The Economic Offensive of the Counterrevolution and the Unions," 1933.)

In the present period, the union movement thus forms the crucible in which very broad layers can go through their experiences in struggle and raise their level of consciousness. It is here that the masses can be drawn toward the vanguard. But the very breadth of the unions means that this process can only be a long and contradictory one.

Most of the bureaucrats initially viewed the economic crisis as something like a traffic accident. But they had to face the facts, the crisis was going to be lasting. So, then, in every country they tried to work out a deal, directly or indirectly, with the bosses and the government about how to administer it. Over and above the differences in ideology, this is the common feature that emerges from practice of the leaderships over the recent years. On this level, the parallel between the German DGB and the Italian CGIL is striking.

As a corollary to its participation in the plans of the bourgeoisie, the union bureaucracy has had to consolidate its own instruments for taming the union ranks and the most active sections of them. In all the unions, the leaderships have striven to restrict the decision-making powers of the rank-and-file bodies. They have sought to deprive these bodies of any possibility of playing a role in the rest of the union and they try to put control in the hands of the apparatus.

In other countries, the bureaucracy is trying to prevent the appearance of such rank-and-file bodies, offering as an alternative consultative bodies in which the bureaucracy wields the decisive weight. Finally, the union leaderships do not hesitate to take steps to expel critical activists.

33.1. The bureaucracy has not been able to pursue this orientation without arousing opposition and criticism within the unions and their bureaucracies.

In the first place, helping to "administer the crisis" runs counter to the experience accumulated in the recent past by the workers and to their most immediate needs. The bosses' determination not to make any significant concessions reveals the emptiness of formulas such as "structural reforms" and other "qualitative improvements" of the type that have filled the speeches of union leaders. Wages, jobs, and social benefits are a lot closer to the workers' hearts than schemes for codetermination and participation by their representatives in consultative bodies along with management.

Secondly, since 1968-69 in a series of countries (Italy, Spain, France, Portugal, Great Britain, Belgium, Denmark), a new generation of activists has risen to positions

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of union leadership at the plant and district levels, and even at the national level in individual unions. They are more sensitive to the needs of the masses, more receptive to the impetus from the ranks, and they often take the lead in counterattacks. A section of these leaders works in the local units of the union, in the plants. They thus form a close-knit network that tends not to coincide with the structure of the union apparatus (for example, the work-force delegates in France, shop delegates in Italy, and shop stewards in Great Britain).

This layer continually jams the gears of the bureaucratic apparatus and serves as a fulcrum for internal differentiation among union officials.

The fact that this layer remains embryonic in the German, Swedish, Dutch, Swiss and Austrian unions also explains why the bureaucracy has kept a firmer grip over the union movement in those countries.

Thirdly, the bureaucracy has to take into consideration other things besides just the pressure of the ranks. It is being subjected to a barrage of veritable provocations by the bosses and the government, which are forcing it to react, to mobilize the workers, in order to defend its influence and its base. We have seen this in West Germany, Belgium, and Denmark.

Fourthly, after decades of cooptation and "social peace," some union apparatuses are experiencing extreme ossification. This causes a crisis of leadership that can surface in wildcat strikes in response to heavy-handed attacks by the bosses. In such cases, the union apparatuses may find themselves outflanked by large sections of workers. But experience has shown, in West Germany, Switzerland, and Sweden, for example, that the union apparatuses have the capacity to adapt, and even to utilize left-wing sections of the union previously kept isolated, so as to regain their hold quite rapidly. Nonetheless, these movements can serve as an initial springboard for the emergence of new cadres, or even opposition groups among the paid union officials.

Fifthly, the new features that mark the recent evolution of the unions have created a series of dislocations. That is, their organization has widened, and their composition has changed, as a result of the organization of women and immigrants. They now play the central role in a context shaped by an austerity policy that affects all facets of social and political life. Thus, all of the problems that arise from the whole body of problems created by the generalized crisis of bourgeois society are reflected in the unions. Therefore, their platform has to cover an increasing number of subjects that are being discussed in these organizations. The division between economics and politics is tending to fade. This is another factor that serves as a catalyst in the emergence of major internal contradictions.

Under the impact of the crisis and the bosses' offensive, intermediate layers of the bureaucracy may play an important role in giving impetus to workers struggles (as in the case of the steel workers strike in West Germany in 1978) and oppose the more hardened sections of the central bureaucracy of the unions. They are capable of giving support to mobilizations on various themes (antinuclear, abortion) that can be key in preventing isolation of these actions and in linking them up with the organized workers movement.

In the political vacuum created by the reformist parties following a "national unity" orientation, a section of a

union or even an individual national union may at a certain moment become the active representative of working-class opposition to the strategy of the reformist leaderships. This is what happened in December 1977 in Italy, when the FLM organized a national strike of steelworkers, or in 1978 when it adopted a platform of demands conflicting with the austerity policy of the CP and the CGIL.

Pressure for trade-union unity appeared during the rise of workers struggles. It has been reinforced by the need to confront the capitalist offensive launched after the onset of the crisis. Everywhere there are several union confederations, this pressure has posed the question of unity in action or of unification of the trade-union movement (in France, Spain, Italy, and Belgium, for example). The united character and direct democracy of organs formed in the course of great struggles (the workers commissions in Portugal in 1975, the plant committees in Spain in 1976-77, councils of delegates in Italy in 1969-70) have given momentum to the demand for trade-union unification.

33.2. The international concentration and centralization of capital—of which the multinational companies are the expression—the growth of the Common Market, the intensification of migratory movements of labor power and the similarity of the policies followed by the governments and the bosses provide the objective basis for establishing closer links among the unions in capitalist Europe.

The European Confederation of Unions (CES) was formed in 1973. In 1978, it embraced unions in eighteen countries with forty million members. On April 5, 1978, the CES held a day of symbolic actions against unemployment.

This organization bears the full imprint of the bureaucratic character of the leaderships that make it up. It has a more formal than real existence.

The World Federation of Trade Unions, which along with the unions in East Europe includes those led by the CPs in capitalist Europe, has been hit by the rebound of the crisis of Stalinism. The only union confederation in a capitalist country that remains a member is the CGT in France. Since the last congress of the World Federation of Trade Unions in 1978, the CGT has been in the process of breaking with this Prague-based organization. The CGIL has only observer status. Moreover, it is a member of the CES, in which the CGT, the COs, and the CGTP are applying for membership.

Despite all its limitations, the CES testifies to the need and possibility of real coordination of workers struggles against austerity in Europe and against the maneuvers of the multinationals.

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### The Axes of a Revolutionary Strategy

34. In all of capitalist Europe, although with varying degrees of acuteness, the recession and its effects are making it clearer to the eyes of the working masses that the capitalist system cannot meet all their economic, social, and cultural needs. In more than one country, a sizable proportion of the population find that not even their most elementary needs are being met.

A growing number of wage workers are coming around to the idea that the only solution for satisfying their needs

lies in a rational organization of the economy, direct control of production by the working class, a workers government.

The capitalist offensive is showing the precariousness of the gains that the workers won in preceding years. The achievements of workers struggles are continually put in question as long as the bourgeoisie continues to control the means of production, labor power, and the state machine, the political power of capital.

The experience of the revolutionary upsurge in Portugal has shown also that the workers cannot upset the relationships of production at the plant level (through occupation and workers control) and leave intact the state power. The bourgeoisie quickly regained its footing, based on the state apparatus, and then went on to win back its positions in the factories and the countryside. The capitalist mode of production has a structure that inseparably links the relations of production with the state apparatus.

All this indicates the impasse into which the workers can be led by a strategy that limits its horizon to immediate demands, a strategy that does not foresee the need to prevent the bourgeoisie from taking back, and then some, with one hand what it was obliged to give with the other. All this indicates the blind alley into which the workers can be led by any strategy that reduces the conquest of power to a series of changes over a long period of time in the prerogatives of wage workers in their workplaces alone. All this points up the failure of a strategy that relies on gradually transforming the bourgeois state and its institutions.

The generalized crisis of bourgeois social relations and the mobilizations of oppressed layers attest to the ripeness of the objective conditions for reconstructing society along socialist lines. In fact, a distinctive sign of a society that has played out its historical role and is ripe for replacement is that not only the revolutionary class, the one that will play the decisive role in building a new social order, the proletariat, but other social layers can expect nothing progressive from the present society. It is up to the working class to offer answers to the needs of these strata. It is incumbent on the vanguard to point out ways making it possible to bring to bear the revolutionary potential of all the oppressed in a joint struggle with the proletariat for socialism. This course runs counter to the policy of the reformists, who propose alliances with the "middle layers" or the parties that claim to represent them, on the basis of preserving the existing social order.

The crisis of the relations of production does not manifest itself simply at the plant level (i.e., in a challenge to the capitalist organization of labor); it also affects the bourgeois nation-state in the imperialist countries. Long ago, the growth of the productive forces outstripped the narrow framework of the bourgeois nation-state. The concentration and centralization of capital are more and more international. The internationalization of the ownership of capital and of all economic life in turn is producing an internationalization of the class struggle.

All that needs to be done to show that any socialist strategy must be international is to point to the examples of the miners, steelworkers, petrochemical workers, or the immediate necessity for responding to the maneuvers of the bourgeoisie on the level of the Common Market.

The breadth and scope of workers struggles in a series of countries in capitalist Europe have laid the bases for reducing the gap between the ripeness of the internal

contradictions of the capitalist system and the level of consciousness of the working masses. But the disproportion existing between the objective factors and the subjective factor—the level of consciousness of the class, its organization, and its leadership—has made it possible for the bureaucratic apparatus to fragment or divert the upsurge of the mass movement. Nonetheless, the depth of the radicalization, the objective gains of past struggles, and the relationship of forces between the apparatuses and a layer of advanced workers have brought about a situation in which broader and broader sections of working-class activists are increasingly suspicious of the reformist leaderships.

This lack of confidence in the reformist leaders can lead these workers to join a revolutionary party if the organizations of the Fourth International appear capable of fighting effectively for a program corresponding to the main tasks that are objectively posed by the present stage of the class struggle.

Therefore, building up a Trotskyist vanguard in the factories, the plants, the workplaces, and in the unions and advancing its work is a top priority task. This must make it possible to win the respect and later the confidence of a growing number of workers and thereby to demonstrate the existence of an alternative in the workers movement to the reformist organizations and their strategy.

35. Whatever the conjunctural ups and downs, the decisive battles are yet to come. The working class has the strength to emerge victorious from these tests. In the present situation, what is called for is not a strategic retreat but the preparation of a strategic counteroffensive in struggles to defend and extend the gains of the working masses and support the demands of all the oppressed strata.

"The strategic task of the next period—a prerevolutionary period of agitation, propaganda, and organization—consists in overcoming the contradiction between the maturity of the objective revolutionary conditions and the immaturity of the proletariat and its vanguard. . . . It is necessary to help the masses in the process of the daily struggle to find the bridge between present demands and the socialist program of the revolution. This bridge should include a system of *transitional demands*, stemming from today's conditions and from today's consciousness of wide layers of the working class and unalterably leading to one final conclusion: the conquest of power by the proletariat." (The Transitional Program.)

Such a program must express the interests and the objective tasks of the working class in the period. It cannot be based on the mood of the class in a given period but must be founded on the needs the masses come up against as they confront the economic, social, and political crisis of capitalism.

These objective needs have been shaped by the three past decades of growth of the productive forces, with all their consequences on the social, economic, and cultural levels. These needs have not remained frozen for a half century. In the course of mass movements, many of them have been expressed in new forms (such as the demands raised by the women's liberation movement). In other cases, mass movements have developed around new needs, such as the movement against nuclear power plants and against the destruction of the environment.

The austerity policy has put the focus on the needs of the

workers as sellers of their labor power (jobs, wages, social security, freedom of action for the workers movement). But the form in which these demands present themselves today is the result of the social and economic conditions in the past period and the gains of the struggles that have taken place since 1968-69. This also reinforces the timeliness and impact of transitional demands.

35.1. In selecting what concrete demands to put forward in a specific context, how to formulate them, and what sort of actions are appropriate for fighting for them, it is necessary to take account of the level of consciousness of the masses and its evolution in the course of the struggles themselves. For example, the demand for a thirty-five-hour week with no cut in pay that has been raised in many union congresses can serve today as a basis for explaining the need for a sliding scale of wages and hours. On this footing, we can begin a fight to advance the fundamental idea of dividing up the available work among all, and this can make it possible for the consciousness of the working class to rise to the level needed to respond to the objective conditions. An effective struggle against unemployment calls for such a demand, which in turn prefigures the socialist organization of society.

Starting from the objective conditions, revolutionary organizations advance transitional demands. They test them in practice. They assess what support such demands can win among the masses in selecting which ones to put forward in organizing propaganda and agitational campaigns. They do not fail to put forward demands required by the situation, even if these may run up against the prejudices or backwardness of the working masses.

The struggle for these demands requires first of all mobilizing the workers and their allies directly. It cannot be subordinated to elections or parliamentary combinations, as it always is by the bureaucratic apparatuses. Only through their independent action can the masses establish a favorable relationship of forces, build confidence in their ability to contend for power, win to their side the hesitant sections of the proletariat and the oppressed layers, and, finally, neutralize sections of the petty bourgeoisie and win over its oppressed and impoverished strata.

On the basis of democratic demands and more immediate demands in defense of jobs, wages, and working conditions or other more immediate demands concerning political and social questions, it is necessary to move toward raising the level of organization of the working class, including the unions, and toward creating democratic structures (strike committees, factory committees, and so on) in order to enable the workers to fight more effectively and enrich the class-struggle methods of a growing number of workers.

From the same starting point, propaganda or even agitation can be carried on for workers control with a view toward showing how and to what extent the capitalist system is at the root of the difficulties the workers encounter and making it clear to the workers that such control is incompatible with the capitalists' directing production.

At their highest point, mobilizations around the demands in the Transitional Program lead to an understanding jointly of the need for organizing in trade unions, for organizing politically independent of the bourgeoisie, for establishing a workers government, for forming workers councils that consolidate the broadest possible unity of

workers in action and are incompatible with maintenance of the institutions of the bourgeois state, for overthrowing capitalism, and for the advent of socialism.

Intervention by a revolutionary party and the growth of its influence are indispensable factors in the political ripening of this process.

This strategy is in total contradiction to that of the reformist apparatuses, which seek to divert the mass movement and break its momentum in order to try to avoid confrontations. However, working class resistance to the attacks of the bosses and the government make such confrontations inevitable. The strategy based on the Transitional Program takes account of the inevitability of such a test of strength. It aims, in the course of the manifold battles that precede this confrontation to forge a leadership and prepare a broad layer of workers to take on the tasks related to the need for overthrowing this system and replacing the bourgeois state with a state based on democratically elected workers councils.

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### The Fight Against Austerity

36. In a context of economic crisis and the imposition of austerity, mass mobilizations can be based on immediate or democratic demands and move rapidly to raising transitional demands.

Therefore, it is necessary not only to seek to combine various demands but also to understand when some demands lose their force or when the stress should be put on others. The very nature of the period, with its sudden and abrupt shifts on the social and political levels makes it necessary to avoid routinism in determining slogans and forms of organization.

Furthermore, the method of the Transitional Program contrasts with the line that counterposes so-called revolutionary demands to "reformist" ones. Rather it counterposes a class-struggle orientation to a class-collaborationist one. In fact, in this epoch of the decay of bourgeois society, such a method makes it possible to seize on the most immediate and most elementary demands and on this basis offer an alternative to the ideas propagated by the bureaucratic apparatuses and to the style of fighting and organization that follows from a class-collaborationist line.

36.1. The working-class counterattack against the austerity policies of the governments, against the blows the bosses have dealt them, and the restrictions of democratic rights will be the pivot around which the class battle will be organized in the coming years.

• The sections of the Fourth International are carrying on consistent work to explain the falsity of all ideologies disseminated by the reformist political and union leaderships about the nature of the economic crisis. We will expose the arguments that the workers movement has to "make hard choices in managing the crisis," that the workers movement has to offer its own version of austerity, one that would make it possible to avert capitalist anarchy without breaking with the market economy and at the same time not doing severe damage to the interests of the workers. We will seize on all the facts of economic and social life to show that the crisis is rooted in the contradictions of capitalism and that only the overthrow

of the system offers the masses a road out.

- Along the same lines, it is necessary to systematically denounce all laws and schemes designed to consolidate or introduce joint management between the bosses and representatives of the workers or codetermination, or other forms of tying labor to management under the cover of establishing "industrial democracy." It can be proven on the basis of concrete examples that these "solutions" in no way offer an effective instrument for defending jobs, the workers' standard of living, or working conditions. In fact, they have the opposite result. In a market economy, co-management necessarily leads to tying the workers to the defense of the profitability of "their" plant, to introducing into the ranks of the workers a capitalist competition that stands in contradiction to the most elementary principles of class solidarity. It is therefore an instrument for dividing the workers and weakening the class as a whole against the bosses' attack.

It is necessary to oppose these schemes with a fighting strategy based on the immediate demands of the workers and a denunciation of the secrecy imposed on workers' representatives in joint labor-management boards and of the impotence of these bodies, a strategy that calls for mobilizing the workers and for winning workers control as more reliable levers for winning their demands and defending their gains.

- In order to deal with the divisions that have been sharpened by the austerity policy, with which the reformists have collaborated, it is essential to propose the sort of demands that unify the workers. This is a key element in rallying the workers for an effective counterattack.

A systematic campaign must be waged to get the organizations of the working class to take up the demands of those sections of the proletariat hardest hit by the capitalist attack and which have been subjected to multiple forms of discrimination (women workers, immigrant workers, unemployed, youth in precarious jobs, and apprentices). In order to advance this perspective, the Trotskyists support the mobilizations of these most exploited and oppressed layers for their specific interests, as well as the demands they raise related to their special problems.

The Trotskyists also fight to get the mass organizations of the proletariat to support mobilizations on such questions as schools, health, housing, transport, and opposition to nuclear power plants, or for the right of abortion, etc. The sections of the Fourth International strive to get the workers organizations to cooperate actively with the various mass social movements or with mobilizing committees fighting for objectives that favor the development of the anticapitalist struggle and raising the general level of consciousness of the proletariat. In fact, it is only by taking an active part in these struggles that the working class can overcome the divisions created by capitalism and mobilize all its forces.

- It is necessary, obviously, for the sections to utilize immediate demands and all struggles, no matter how limited, against austerity as a springboard for their work. It is nonetheless necessary to explain that these struggles cannot block the governments' measures unless they lead to real united mobilization on a national scale. On the basis of mass struggles, it is necessary to campaign for the extension and centralization of the struggles and for the workers organizations to adopt a plan of action for fighting the crisis. This is a way to raise concretely the

goal of a nationwide mobilization and a general strike.

Finally, the fight against austerity has to be put in the framework of political solutions that give direction to and offer a perspective for, national mobilizations. Only a workers government can provide a basis for introducing real changes and offering a way out of the crisis that is in the interest of all the workers. Focusing on these overall political answers also makes it possible to influence and convince those working-class activists who are losing their illusions in the orientation of the reformist leaderships. Otherwise, these activists might confine themselves to a syndicalist and economist agitation, or be attracted to the political solutions outlined by left reformist or centrist currents. Thus, by placing our fight against austerity in an overall political perspective we acquire the means for winning to our ranks workers who are looking for an alternative to the class-collaborationist policy of the apparatuses.

36.2. In the present situation, a working-class counterattack against austerity is taking shape around the following main interlocking themes. The list is obviously not an exhaustive one.

- A struggle against all forms of incomes policies, "social pacts," and "negotiated social peace" will be central for the coming period. Unless they reject all forms of class collaboration, the workers cannot free their hands to effectively defend their standard of living and to undertake a struggle to impose their solutions in place of those of the ruling class.

It flows from this that the workers must reject any ceiling on wage increases, any tying of raises to increases in productivity, the lengthening of the period of contracts, and the introduction of any "social peace" clause into their contracts.

- On this basis, it is possible to organize an effective struggle to defend and increase the buying power of the workers by fighting for the following demands: A guaranteed minimum wage on the basis of a standard family budget established by the unions. Equal raises for all. Equal pay for equal work, especially for women. A sliding scale of wages based on a price index established by the unions. Extending the sliding scale to social benefits (pensions, family allowances, unemployment insurance). Abolition of all indirect taxes on items of mass consumption. Establishing an indexing system to adjust income tax rates to compensate for inflation. A sharply progressive tax on income from capital and sources of income other than wages. Oppose the dismantling of the social welfare system and cutbacks of social spending.

- In view of the capitalists' determination to recreate a vast industrial reserve army, the fight against unemployment becomes an urgent task for the workers movement. There is no way to block the attack on the level of employment except by very determined mobilizations, utilizing the entire legacy of the experience in struggle of the workers movement on an international scale.

The fight against unemployment begins with the battle against the right of the bosses to fire workers. This means, for example, that the workers must have the right of veto over firings. There should be no layoffs unless workers can be transferred to other jobs at the same pay level and in the same region.

The absorption of unemployment demands a drastic reduction in the workweek. The call for a thirty-five-hour week with no cut in pay should take a central place in the

list of demands that have to be put forward. Such a reduction of the workweek, coupled with a reversal of the speedup and an increase in the workforce, would seriously reduce unemployment. Along with this slogan, a systematic campaign can be mounted to explain the importance of undertaking major public works to meet real needs of the working masses and the most deprived layers (community facilities, hospitals, housing, environmental protection projects, etc.).

At the same time as fighting unemployment, the greatest attention must be paid to finding the best ways of bringing the unemployed into the framework of the union movement. The lack of organizations of the unemployed leads in the long run to weakening the unions and can even offer openings for racist and fascist maneuvers. Specific demands for the unemployed should be put forward, such as free public transportation, a moratorium on debts (consumer credit and rent and housing loans), a presalary for youth and women looking for their first jobs equal to the minimum wage demanded by the unions, benefits for unemployed workers equal to their previous wage, vocational training with pay.

• Every specific demand for defending and increasing buying power and countering the attack on the level of employment can be directed toward workers control and organizing the workers to exercise it (factory committees, committees of worker-consumers, unemployed committees in the framework of the union movement, democratic union committees). For example, in order for the workers to be able to participate directly in working out a unified price index for the use of the union, the need arises immediately for workers control over the cost of production and prices to consumers. The same holds true for assuring observance of the principle of equal pay for equal work. In order to reverse the speedup, oppose all layoffs, enforce a thirty-five-hour week, get jobs for women, youth, and immigrants, and enforce the sliding scale of wages, there must be workers control over working conditions, over the volume and composition of hiring, over inventories and orders, over the productive capacity of the machines, over vocational training, and over the books. Every initiative taken to exercise workers control and organize the workers to carry it through represents a real beginning of the apprenticeship in workers democracy and workers management.

• In order to overcome the crisis and unemployment, a general counterattack is needed, a real plan of working-class solutions leading to planning of production, along with a reorganization of whole branches of the economy under workers control. To achieve this, the capitalists have to be expropriated. To oppose the maneuvers of the capitalists, speculators, bankers, and multinational corporations, it is necessary to abolish business and banking secrets and to establish a unified banking system as well as a monopoly of foreign trade.

One of the cornerstones of such a plan is the nationalization of the key industries without compensation (except for very small stockholders) and under workers control. In order to popularize this demand, we may, for example, base ourselves on the demands of workers who occupy a plant demanding job security. Or we might use the example of a decision by the bosses to lay off workers in a plant that has gotten various kinds of aid from the bourgeois state. Or we could use the example of a boss caught redhanded in falsifying the books or engaging in

sabotage in order to justify shutting down a plant. It is also possible to base ourselves on union demands calling for the nationalization of certain industries. But in order to break capitalist domination of the economy, it is necessary to strike at the foundations of a system based on the private appropriation of the major means of production and exchange and of the big banks. This means that our program calls for the nationalization of all those sectors that play a key role in social and economic life.

In the fight to achieve these nationalizations, workers control is the only effective way to block saboteurs, as the experience of the Portuguese revolution demonstrated in 1975. It is, moreover, an instrument for meeting the real needs for extending the nationalizations, cutting through the legal partitions that the trusts have built up between the various companies and subsidiaries. Finally, it is a useful tool for drawing up a balance sheet of the resources of a country and the needs of the working masses. When the workers organize to exercise workers control in the course of the class struggle, this leads them to take the first steps toward running public affairs.

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### Democratic Demands

36.3. Fighting in a united and nonexclusionist way in defense of democratic rights is a task of the highest importance.

When democratic rights are threatened or cut back, this hits the working class most directly. We fight relentlessly for the formation of a united front against repression and against all forms of special powers, because these are always aimed against working-class activists. That is, we fight against antistrike laws, political blacklisting, restrictions on free circulation of persons and ideas, censorship measures, attempts to eliminate the right of asylum, and military tribunals. We campaign for the dissolution of the repressive bodies or against the establishment of such bodies. More generally, we energetically defend and seek to extend the right of organization, expression, and assembly for the workers movement on the trade-union and political level, and we denounce capitalist domination of the mass media.

The development of the women's liberation movement has also highlighted the importance of mass mobilizations—which tend to take on an anticapitalist dynamic—against all forms of sexist oppression and for a series of democratic demands (abortion, contraception, divorce, equal rights for women before the law, ending the reactionary family legislation, etc.).

The sharpness of the bosses' offensive against the immigrant workers, the importance of integrating these workers into the struggles of the proletariat, the role that they can play in mobilizations, and the need for a counter-attack against antiforeigner and racist operations lend a particular importance to the demand for "equal union and political rights for all workers, including immigrants."

The mobilizations of youth have, likewise, highlighted the aspiration of a large sector of young people for doing away with a number of different kinds of persecution and discrimination that they suffer (denial of the right to vote, restricted legal rights, difficulty of access to contraception and abortion and to vocational training.)

The mobilizations of homosexuals against the various forms of repression and discrimination that they suffer in employment and other areas are an integral part of the struggle for democratic rights and against such reactionary manifestations of the dominant ideology.

In some countries, such as Italy, Spain, and Portugal, the question is still posed of achieving the complete separation of church and state or of clerical domination of the educational system. In these conditions, demands may arise directed against religious obscurantism, calling for the secularization of education. Such demands sometimes interlock with the demands for the right of abortion, sex education, and divorce.

• One of the most glaring expressions of the decline of capitalism and the decadence of bourgeois democracy is the use of torture as a means of repressing labor, anti-imperialist, or nationalist activists. The scientific methods used for this purpose by the British army in Ireland indicate how ready the bourgeoisie is, in order to safeguard its privileges, to trample on its own codes and resort to the "less civilized" methods.

This society, which exudes violence from all its pores, is stepping up its attacks on those it imprisons as "criminals" (reform schools and other guarded educational centers, prisons).

Reactionary campaigns, which are often orchestrated by governments, in favor of restoring the death penalty in their own way highlight the alternative facing all the exploited and oppressed—socialism or barbarism.

It is the duty of the sections of the Fourth International to consistently denounce all violations of human rights and to call on the union movement, the workers parties, and the professional associations (jurists' unions, groups of progressive doctors) to take concrete steps to expose the violations of the fundamental rights of persons and all complicity in such practices by members of the medical profession, the bar, and the police.

36.4. Extraparliamentary struggles around democratic slogans can be an avenue for taking parts of the Transitional Program to the working masses and, in accordance with the method of the Transitional Program, leading them to take on the bourgeois state and capitalist private property. Democratic slogans are thus instruments for mobilizing the masses in order to improve the relationship between the classes.

This conception is completely opposed to the orientation maintained by the CP and some centrist groups on the question of democratic demands. In their case, they limit themselves to advancing democratic demands, especially in the political arena, under the pretext that the struggle for socialism is not on the agenda. And they expect to achieve these demands by parliamentary maneuvers. However, in fact, they abdicate from waging any effective struggle for these democratic demands. Our conception also stands in contradiction to notions that parliamentary democratic illusions represent barriers to broad direct actions by the masses. In fact, extraparliamentary mobilizations for democratic objectives can lead to struggles going beyond anything that would seem possible at first glance, considering the illusions these masses have in bourgeois democracy as a result of past history and the policy of the reformists. This offers a classical example of the dialectical relationship between the objective situation, the experience of class battles, and the contradictory development of class consciousness.

We approach the fight for democratic rights from the angle of defending the political independence of the working class and its organizations, as well as of maintaining and extending all the rights won by the workers movement within the framework of bourgeois democracy. All attempts to equate democratic rights with the bourgeois democratic system must be combated. The task is not to keep alive a decadent imperialist bourgeois democracy and to protect its institutions, but to end the rule of the bourgeoisie in all its forms in order to replace it with a workers government and socialist democracy based on workers councils. (See the resolution of the United Secretariat, "Socialist Democracy and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat.")

While fighting for one or another such democratic demand, it is necessary to take care to expose all forms of democratic obfuscation. It is precisely because the workers attach great importance to democratic rights that it is necessary to expose all the limitations of bourgeois democracy.

In order for democratic slogans to serve on the political level as levers for mobilizing the masses, it is necessary not to isolate them from the body of transitional demands. They must be raised in combination with these demands. It is essential to use proletarian methods of struggle as much as possible in order to win such demands. Extraparliamentary mobilizations must not be subordinated to parliamentary maneuvers. In certain cases, such demands—as for example the demand for immediate elections to the Constituent Assembly in Portugal in April 1974—can be used to draw an immediate dividing line between a policy of coalition and national unity and a policy of class independence.

From this flows the algebraic character of democratic slogans at the central political level. In fact, they correspond to a moment in the activity of the masses as they react to an obstacle looming up on the road to their emancipation, when it is not yet clear what the final result of this mobilization will be. This is why, as a general rule, we leave open the exact conditions for establishing a Constituent Assembly. It is for this reason also that we combine democratic slogans and transitional demands that make it possible to go beyond the framework of capitalist society. The course of the class struggle itself will indicate the following stage.

36.5. In several countries of capitalist Europe, a growing role is being played by struggles linked to historic nationality questions, by various movements of a nationalist character. In these countries, the revolution is confronted with the democratic task of assuring national self-determination and of satisfying a series of demands specific to these various movements.

In approaching these questions, Trotskyists do not start from abstract and formal principles but first of all from a clear understanding of the historic, social, and economic circumstances in which each of these problems arose. Secondly, they make a clear distinction between the real interests of the working masses and so-called national interests, which mask those of the ruling class. Finally, they base themselves on the actual reality of the mobilization of the people.

The task of the sections of the Fourth International is to defend the right to self-determination of the national minorities. They support the struggle for all the concrete demands that are associated with the struggle for self-



determination on the political, cultural, and linguistic levels, including, under some circumstances, the demand for independence.

For example, the British section of the Fourth International stands for the reunification and independence of Ireland. It has declared its support for the right of Scotland to self-determination, against any limitation on the powers of the Scottish national assembly, for the right of the people of Scotland to determine the nature of their relations with the British state.

The section of the Fourth International in the Spanish state supports the right to self-determination of the oppressed nationalities, notably Euzkadi, Catalonia, Galicia, and the Canaries.

However, we explain to the workers that a unified economy, with extensive autonomy for the nationalities, would offer advantages on all levels, social, economic, as well as cultural. Thus, the Basque branch of the Spanish section (the LKI) proposes a federal republic that would make it possible to guarantee autonomy within the framework of economic unity.

Inasmuch as the economic and social basis for a number of these movements lies in the uneven development of the regions or in an acute regional economic crisis, it is of prime importance to include specific demands suited to the economic, social, and cultural needs of these areas in drawing up a working-class plan for a way out of the crisis.

In view of the weight of the proletariat in most of the regions where such national movements have arisen and the centralizing and repressive policy of the bourgeois state, a proletarian anticapitalist dynamic tends to become predominant in these movements. While we fight without any reservations for the democratic demands that are raised by the masses, these must be interlocked with a coherent body of transitional demands. By supporting these struggles and participating in them, putting the social questions to the fore—that is, who should own the means of production, what's going to happen to the land, who will determine the economic and political orientations—it is possible to combat petty-bourgeois nationalist illusions. Such illusions can constitute an obstacle to the political independence of the working class, they can divide the working class of a country into "national sectors" and thereby weaken it.

It follows from this that the sections of the Fourth International fight jointly for the right to self-determination, for the political independence of the working class, and for a united front of the workers parties against the bourgeois parties (for example, against the Conservatives and the SNP in Scotland, against the PNV and the UCD in Euzkadi). They promote working class solidarity in other parts of the country by building mobilizations for demands related to the right of self-determination. They likewise encourage every possible linkup between the workers and the small peasants in the course of these struggles in the regions that have been deprived and ruined by the policies of the capitalists.

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## Class Unity, the Working-Class United Front, and the Allies of the Proletariat

37. Unity of the proletariat, forged in action, must be at the heart of any strategy for a socialist revolution in the imperialist countries of Europe.

The unification of the key sectors of the proletariat—essentially, those in industry, transport, and communications—is the cornerstone of building such unity and of rallying the oppressed and exploited layers, those who have no objective interest in preserving private ownership of the major means of production, behind the cause of the working class.

An orientation calling for an alliance with the so-called middle classes on the basis of respecting private ownership of the means of production and the market economy, as is involved in a class-collaborationist policy, creates division in the ranks of the wage earners. A section of these are impelled, even to defend their elementary demands, such as halting layoffs, to want to do away with capitalist ownership here and now.

Such workers tend immediately to refuse to subordinate their interests to the needs of an alliance with "antimonopoly sectors" of the bourgeoisie, or even with the monopolist bourgeoisie itself, as is the case in the Italian "historic compromise." The orientation of the reformists thus dampens their spirits, may discourage them, and keep them from winning more backward layers to their cause.

Other sections of the working class, which are not confronted with the same difficulties, do not have the same experience in struggle, and have not yet been won over to independent working-class action, may wait and see what the results of such a class-collaborationist policy are. But their expectations will be disappointed, with the resulting risks of an erosion of their forces.

Thus, any strategy of alliances on a conservative basis with "middle layers," any class-collaborationist policy, introduces a dividing line into the working class itself. The unity of the workers is thus inextricably tied up with class independence.

37.1. Such strategies make the unity of the workers organizations and their leaderships a prior condition for any mobilization of the exploited and oppressed layers themselves for their demands. To the contrary, any real mass movement may serve as a catalyst in unifying the proletariat.

For example, if the unemployed are organized and led in struggle, this can inspire sections of the proletariat that are tending to be reduced to a precarious existence by the crisis with a confidence in their power. Along with this, such action can raise in the mass workers organizations the question of uniting the proletariat.

Moreover, if immigrant workers go into action in defense of their specific demands, this also provides a basis for raising the need for uniting the class, that is, for bringing the immigrants into a united battle line of the working class as a whole. In such mobilizations, we support demands and forms of action that facilitate a linkup with the workers movement.

37.2. Achieving an alliance with sections of the petty bourgeoisie—small shopkeepers, small farmers, and artisans—remains an important problem for the workers. An alliance with the small peasants is a strategic question first of all because of the social weight they wield in a series of countries (Ireland, Portugal, Greece, Spain, south-

ern Italy, and certain regions of France). But it is a vital question also as a result of the role they play in supplying food to the urban complexes in most European countries.

It is necessary to convince the small peasants, artisans, and shopkeepers, many of whom are being expropriated by big capital, that the expropriation of the expropriators is not aimed at confiscating small property. What needs to be done is to show that a working-class plan for solutions to the crisis offers the means for meeting their own special needs.

In Portugal, among sections of the peasantry in the north, of the small shopkeepers, and artisans, the hope of getting long-term credit at very low interest rates as a result of the nationalization of the banks created a favorable attitude toward the nascent revolution for a period. The same reaction could be seen when the Portuguese petrochemical trust (SACOR) was nationalized under workers control, and the possibility appeared of its supplying fertilizer on unprecedentedly favorable credit terms.

Every means possible has to be used to demonstrate to these petty-bourgeois layers that there is no antagonism between workers control over the banks and industry, a monopoly of foreign trade, and setting up a unified banking system, on the one hand, and what is favorable to their interests. They look for distribution of the land, getting what is necessary to cultivate it (fertilizer, machinery), and easy credit terms. It is necessary also to demonstrate to the peasants, artisans, and small merchants that there is no contradiction between these first steps in setting up a planned economy and their enjoying favorable conditions for buying raw materials and distributing their products. This can encourage them to organize in cooperatives on a voluntary basis.

A series of working-class demands may also answer the most pressing needs of such petty-bourgeois layers—improving or establishing a genuine social welfare system, developing social and collective infrastructures (hospitals, housing, nurseries, etc.), education and vocational training in all fields (crafts, industry, agriculture).

Decisiveness on the part of the workers movement in providing positive answers to crucial socio-economic problems, such as the destruction of the environment, capitalist squandering of energy potential, the anarchy in scientific research and its subordination to the narrow needs of monopolies such as the military-industrial complex, and the threadbare system of public health can attract to the side of the workers sections of the “new middle layers of wage earners” (engineers, scientists, university teachers, and house physicians in hospitals, etc.)

38. In order to forge the unity of the working class in action and advance the proletariat along the road of class independence, the united front tactic assumes an important role.

The strategy of uniting the proletariat for the conquest of power must not be reduced to this tactic alone. This strategy requires a complex combination of actions and methods and slogans to go along with them.

Nonetheless, the tactic of the workers united front assumes a special place today among the tasks to be pursued by the sections for the following reasons: The economic offensive of the bourgeoisie. The objective division that this offensive is creating in the working class, helped along by the bureaucratic apparatuses. Growing violations of democratic rights. The divisiveness engendered directly by the reformist leaderships on the trade-

union and political levels. The need for large-scale mobilizations to block the austerity policies of the governments and the bosses. The urgent need to offer a rallying point for the struggles of the various social movements. In the present phase, applying this tactic is the means for offering our alternative of working-class unity in anticapitalist action to the policy of unity or collaboration with the bourgeoisie.

The united front tactic cannot be focused exclusively on agreements between the major organizations in the working class. Nonetheless, such accords are often decisive in mobilizing the class, since the new layers of the working class that are going into action insist on unity, an attitude they take in response to the attacks of the capitalists. This aspect of the united front takes on its greatest importance in those countries where the workers movement is split from top to bottom along party lines (SP, CP).

The united front at the top must not be counterposed to unity in action in various forms at the rank-and-file level or in specific sectors. What is important is to start from the objective needs of the working masses and to combine this activity with an orientation to the workers organizations, both at the top and at the bottom.

The Trotskyists do not take a wait-and-see attitude, making their initiatives dependent on a prior agreement or understanding among the big workers organizations. By themselves, or together with other organizations, they can and must promote mobilizations. But in formulating slogans and selecting forms of action, they have to combine two objectives. One is to broaden the mobilization as much as possible by including, if feasible, activists and sections of the traditional organizations. The other is to maintain a united-front approach to these organizations, even when the chances of achieving any unity with them are slight.

Differentiations within the reformist parties, as well as changes in the relationship of forces between the apparatuses and the working-class vanguard may offer greater opportunities for the sections to formulate their proposals for unity in concrete terms on all the levels on which they raise them.

Depending on the relationship of forces and the concrete political situation, propaganda as well as agitation for a working-class united front may be focused primarily on a united front between the big organizations of the working class on the national level—for example, united actions of the SP and the CP and the trade-union organizations led by them against an austerity plan.

38.1. We campaign constantly to explain our entire program to as broad an audience as possible, posing it as an alternative to the program of the reformist leaderships.

But this is not enough to win broad layers of workers away from the influence of the reformists or even of the centrists. Only experience in action can raise the consciousness of major sections of the working class. This enables them to see in practice what an obstacle the reformist policy represents to the advancement of the movement in which they are involved.

Of course, we do not make acceptance of our program a condition for establishing a united front. We base our united-front initiatives on the tasks flowing from the needs of the masses, which are dictated by the objective situation. To this end, we put forward immediate, democratic, or transitional demands that offer a basis for the unity in action of the masses and the organizations of the workers

movement both in the plants and outside. At the same time, we campaign to get the workers organizations to break with the bourgeoisie. This can take different forms, depending on the country, the situation, and the moment. We may focus on the need to break with a bourgeois party, oppose restrictions on the right to strike, oppose participation (by the unions or workers parties) in labor-management boards, etc. Although such a break from the bourgeoisie cannot be complete except on the basis of the revolutionary program and although the Trotskyists explain this publicly, they do not make adopting the revolutionary program a precondition for movements going in this direction.

In the framework of this battle for unifying the working class and achieving its political independence, we maintain the need for building a revolutionary party to facilitate united action by the masses and to make it easier for them to take the initiative on the political level.

The united-front tactic is not an end in itself, but a means for mobilizing the masses, for winning influence over them, and wresting them away from the domination of the reformist leaderships. Our objective remains the advancement of united, broad, and militant mass mobilizations, democratically organized and led. This presupposes the setting up, extension, and coordination of councils and committees that represent the highest form of class unity. When this is achieved, the power of the ruling class on the governmental and state level will in fact be put in question.

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## The Governmental Question

39. The question of a workers government or a workers and farmers government stands in the forefront in the fight for the political independence of the proletariat.

In the present phase, this slogan has a dual function. In the first place, it offers a political perspective for the partial struggles and facilitates the task of raising the demands of the masses to the political level, of politicalizing economic and social demands, of educating the largest possible number of workers to think politically. It must foster the initiatives of the workers on the political level. It must lead the working masses in their struggle for the demands of the Transitional Program to break with the parties of the bourgeoisie, to defy its domination, to form their own government, to establish their own state. Secondly, it is an instrument for speeding up the masses' break with the reformist leaderships, to unmask the class-collaborationist policy of these leaderships.

A governmental slogan must be raised, based on concrete political, social, and economic questions. The workers mobilize for specific demands that have to do with their material living conditions, the defense of their democratic rights, and broad social questions. They may also hope to see their parties gain a majority in parliament. The Trotskyists state clearly that they fight together with the workers to win these demands, or, for example, that they will do everything to help them assure that their parties will get a majority in parliament. But in order to advance the working class, in order to improve the relationship of forces and thereby enable the working masses to achieve these objectives, they have to be offered a slogan that can

unify them and buttress their strength, a slogan calling for a workers government.

At the same time, we explain, on the basis of examples taken from the program and the present and past activity of the traditional workers parties, that we have no confidence either in the desire of the reformist leaderships to actually fight to win the demands of the masses, or in the effectiveness of parliamentary means to achieve these demands.

We are, nonetheless, ready, since the masses still place their confidence in these parties and leaderships, to go through the experience with them of having a government of these parties. But in order to assure the development of the mobilizations, we stress the need for the major workers parties to break all their ties with the bourgeoisie. We point out that these mobilizations represent the only reliable way of winning the economic and social demands of the masses, or of throwing the bourgeois government out of office and replacing it with a government of these parties through elections as well as direct action. They are the only guarantee that the workers will be able to press the government to meet their demands as well as to counterattack against the moves by the reactionaries.

The sections of the Fourth International do not make the adoption of their program a prerequisite or a prior condition for fighting for a government of one or more of the big workers parties. But at the same time they carry on a constant agitation around transitional demands, which in their opinion should form the program of a workers government that will pave the way to power for the workers. Moreover, the Trotskyists stress the importance of united, independent mass organization (committees, or councils) to achieve the demands of the masses and their aspirations, as well as for taking all the initiatives needed to defend the interests of the masses vis-à-vis the policy of the government.

39.1. A number of different specific forms might be adopted to project the general perspective of rallying the working class politically against the bourgeoisie and to expose in a pedagogical way the class-collaborationist policy of the CPs and SPs. The choice depends on the situation in the various countries, the relationship between the reformist parties and the class, and the level of consciousness and activity of the working class.

In countries where a major part of the proletariat remains tied to, or strongly influenced by, the bourgeois parties (Greece, the Netherlands, Belgium, Switzerland, and Ireland, for example), it is essential to mount a struggle on two fronts. On the one hand, it is necessary on various occasions (elections, referendums, parliamentary debates, social conflicts) to explain why, in order to conduct their struggle more effectively, the workers must withdraw their support for the bourgeois parties and vote for and back their own class parties. Such a call for working-class forces to withdraw their support to a bourgeois party may also be expressed concretely in a slogan calling for breaking the link between a union and a bourgeois party and for forming a workers party based on such unions (for example, the CSC [the Catholic union] in Belgium. Secondly, it is necessary to wage a campaign to get the workers parties to help bring about such a break from the bourgeois parties by actively taking up the demands of all the workers. Parallel to this, it is essential to couple this propaganda with agitation pointing out that a policy of class independence involves breaking from

“social peace” and pushing forward direct action.

In those countries where there is an all-SP government, it is necessary to raise the demand that this government meet the demands of the workers who put it in office and not serve the needs of capitalist profit.

At the same time, in answer to the arguments raised by the leaderships of the SPD or the British Labour Party about the threat of the Christian Democrats or the Conservatives returning to power, the Trotskyists explain that the workers must fight for their demands, because mobilizations are the best means of struggling against any return of the bourgeois parties to the government. This must be combined with a campaign presenting a series of demands that can serve as a basis for opposing the austerity policy of the capitalists and the government.

In situations such as those arising in Great Britain in 1977-78, Trotskyists start from the following considerations in order to determine their attitude on the governmental question. The bourgeoisie has not succeeded in changing the relationship of forces among the classes, but it has won some successes thanks to the collaboration of the bureaucratic leaderships. The strength of the bourgeoisie does not, thus, lie in the vitality of its own parties but in the limited politicalization of the working class as a whole and the relative weakness of the working-class vanguard. In these conditions, a defeat for Labour would in no way represent a step forward for the workers. To the contrary, a Conservative government would turn to a more reactionary policy, not only in the economic field but also in the social sphere and in the area of democratic rights. On this basis, new illusions would take form among the masses, including a part of the advanced workers, about the role and nature of a Labour government. Thus, the task of the Trotskyists in the elections is to call for a Labour government, from which the workers will demand satisfaction of their demands. They will take a similar course in Germany toward the SPD, at the same time stressing the need for this party to end its coalition with the Liberals.

In those countries where the SP and the CP hold a large majority in the working class (Italy, Spain, Portugal, and France), we will mount the following battle: To fight the austerity policy, it is necessary to build the unity of the workers and their organizations on the basis of demands corresponding to their needs, the need of the workers to throw the bourgeois government out of office and to force the installation of a government of the big workers parties, the SP and CP. In order to achieve such unity in action, the SP and CP must break politically from the bourgeoisie, from its parties, its institutions, and from any defense of its interests.

39.2. In accordance with the circumstances, the main function of putting forward a governmental slogan in our propaganda can be to prepare working-class cadres to confront the central political problems the masses are going to run up against as their struggle develops. In such conditions, this question has a place in our propaganda. But what has to be placed in the forefront are demands and slogans corresponding to the tasks of the workers in mounting their initial counterattack against the capitalist offensive.

On the other hand, at certain times propaganda and agitation around a governmental slogan and set of transitional demands may be given the main stress in our work. In the event of a governmental crisis, an election, or a

nationwide struggle, it is even possible that agitation around the governmental slogan may temporarily assume the central role. The call for breaking off alliances between working-class parties and bourgeois parties cannot by itself say everything that needs to be said about the question of the working class breaking with the bourgeoisie. Nonetheless, such a slogan should make it possible to explain concretely to the workers how such alliances between the reformist leaders and one or more bourgeois parties are means for applying a class-collaborationist policy, how they conflict with advancing working class demands and improving the relationship of forces for the workers.

Our approach in using the governmental slogan is guided by our desire to explain to the workers the need for breaking politically with the bourgeoisie. The way in which this slogan is put forward must be finely adjusted to the concrete political situation, the dynamic of the mass movement, and whether or not the workers are likely in the short term to set out on a course of extraparliamentary struggle against a government of the bourgeois parties or a coalition government.

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### Prerevolutionary Situation and Revolutionary Crisis

40. May 1968 in France, fall 1969 in Italy, and especially the summer and fall of 1975 in Portugal have shown that a prerevolutionary crisis cannot be reduced to a wave of strikes or a general strike. Rather such a crisis is the result of an interrelation between the direct action of the masses coming onto the political scene, and a crisis of the mechanisms of bourgeois rule, which cannot be equated simply with a governmental crisis.

As the masses themselves take the initiative more and more, experiments in self-organization multiply in the plants and localities. Along with this, there are more and more examples of workers controls going beyond the strict framework of the workplace. As this process develops, nascent workers power begins to be exercised in a wider and wider field. Then, conflicts sharpen not only with the repressive apparatus of the bourgeois state, which is used to drive back the mass movement, but also with the institutions of bourgeois representative democracy.

The bourgeoisie and reformist leaderships seek to counterpose the legitimacy of these bourgeois democratic institutions to the growing sovereignty of the committees or councils, in order to reduce the latter bodies' sphere of authority, stifle their development, and finally liquidate them. The opening up of such a situation leads inevitably to more or less general confrontations. These lead either to an ebb in the mass movement, which may be momentary, or to decisive steps forward toward real centralization of the organs of workers power and the emergence of a full-blown situation of dual power.

40.1. Thus, based on the degree of mass activity and the crisis of bourgeois society in every country, revolutionary Marxists will consciously prepare the advanced workers to confront the tasks posed by the emergence of a prerevolutionary situation.

In this work, they will focus on the following themes:

- Union democracy, the election of strike committees

responsible to general assemblies and subject to recall by these assemblies.

- The coordination and generalization of scattered workers struggles in order to overcome the lack of effectiveness of such dispersed actions and to make them into battlegrounds for mounting a struggle against the government's austerity policy.

- The possibility of coordinating on a local, sectoral, and regional level strike committees, struggle committees, and factory committees, and even of calling a national assembly of strike committees.

- Extending the tasks of the various committees (strike committees, factory committees, trade-union committees, etc.) beyond simply directing the struggle within the narrow confines of the enterprise toward functions that involve an aspect of challenging the state power (organizing public services during a general strike, organizing popular vigilance as was done in September 1974 and March 1975 in Portugal, organizing the distribution of supplies, etc.).

- The need to defend the struggles and organizations of the workers against the actions of armed gangs and the repressive forces of the bourgeoisie, which will not hesitate to resort to all forms of violence in order to maintain its rule.

- The vital importance of unstinting support by the organizations of the workers movement to the fight of the soldiers against the military hierarchy and for their democratic rights.

Beyond a certain threshold of development of the structures of self-organization (workers councils of various types) and extension of their range of activity, it becomes a major task to coordinate them and centralize them on a regional and national scale. They must be based on the objective needs of the workers—the extension and interlocking of workers control (liaison between the banking, industrial, and agricultural sectors), establishment of a plan for working-class solutions to the crisis, the organization of a counterattack against repression or reactionary intrigues, as well as economic sabotage, and so forth.

This must be coupled with a united-front orientation putting defense of the independence and unity in action of the class to the forefront. The call for a united front of the major political and trade-union organizations of the working class, which is vital for maintaining and consolidating the united action of the working masses, must be combined with taking advantage of every possibility to make such unity concrete in the form of committees or councils.

As this united-front campaign is extended, propaganda and agitation for a governmental slogan must popularize the need for the working class to envisage the solution to its problems in terms of power.

In order to assure the development of structures of self-organization, to guarantee the unity of the working class, the fight for strict respect of workers democracy in the committees and councils takes on a vital importance.

40.2. The appearance of a situation of dual power involves a combined process of the breakdown of bourgeois power—even if a central bourgeois authority may be able to maintain itself based on the repressive apparatus of the state—and the emergence of workers power, which must be centralized in order to be consolidated.

But in order for the state power of the bourgeoisie to be overthrown and the power of the councils established, the crisis of the legitimacy of the bourgeois institutions must

first have reached a breaking point in the eyes of the masses. The masses have to go through the practical experience of struggles and mobilizations in which they can test the limits that the bourgeois institutions place on their activity and in which the repressive character of the bourgeois system, the defender of private property, is bared. In their struggles, they must go through an apprenticeship in higher and new forms of democracy.

The very growth of the councils and of their sphere of activity produces a breakdown of the bourgeois state apparatus, narrowing the sphere in which the central power of the bourgeoisie exercises direct control (telecommunications, transport, the media, banking, etc.).

The process of the breakdown of the bourgeois state apparatus also spreads to the army. Under the impetus of working-class mobilizations, of antimilitarist work in the bourgeois army, and of the struggle for the democratic rights of the soldiers, soldiers committees may appear, posing a major obstacle to the functioning of the military apparatus and making it possible to win the soldiers to the cause of the workers.

In answer to the legal and extralegal violence that will be unleashed by the bourgeoisie, the masses must organize to defend their activities, the workers organizations, their headquarters, and their press. In the unions and councils, we will put forward the need for forming workers self-defense groups and may, at a certain moment, raise the slogan of forming workers militias.

A situation of dual power inevitably leads to a decisive confrontation between the classes. The fate of society depends on its outcome. The indispensable precondition to assure the possibility of establishing the power of the councils lies in the existence of a revolutionary party rooted in the industrial working class, capable of winning the political leadership of the overwhelming majority of the working class away from the reformist apparatuses.

41. The revolutionary Marxists' opposition to all bourgeois institutions in capitalist Europe is based on a class criterion. Attempts to reinforce and centralize the power of the capitalist class on a European level can only run counter to the interests of the working class, of advancing its struggle, and of the socialist revolution.

Our propaganda against the Europe of the monopolies and banks, against the European institutions of the capitalist class, must be carried forward on the basis of offering the perspective of a Socialist United States of Europe. Such an orientation is grounded both on the needs of the working masses and the historical need to go beyond the framework of the nation-state, which for decades has been an impediment to the development of the productive forces in Europe.

The fight for a Socialist United States of Europe immediately raises the question of the dialectical relationship between the socialist revolution in capitalist Europe and the political revolution in the bureaucratized workers states. The rise of workers struggles in the "people's democracies" today strikes a strong chord among the workers in Western Europe. It is helping to sharpen the crisis of the CPs, which in turn creates new possibilities for the workers in capitalist Europe to take steps to support the antibureaucratic struggle. What is more, the demands that have emerged in the course of mass mobilizations in Czechoslovakia, Poland, Rumania, and other countries have begun to give concrete form to certain aspects of the program of political revolution. These

struggles also make it possible to explain the fundamental links that exist between the historic objectives of the working class in the capitalist countries and those of the workers in the bureaucratized workers states. Likewise, the anticapitalist battles and the broad discussion developing in the Western workers movement on the relationship between democracy and socialism help to reinforce the antibureaucratic struggle. The political revolution and the social revolution are dialectically linked.

It is in Germany, which is divided between two states representing different social systems, the German Federal Republic and the German Democratic Republic, that this question is posed in the most tangible way. The division of Germany is a major factor in maintaining the status quo. It is a brake on the most powerful proletariat in Europe. But, on the other hand, any upsurge in mass mobilizations in one part of Germany will have an impact on the other, and more generally on Europe as a whole.

We link ending the division of the German nation with the socialist unification of Germany, based on the political revolution in the German Democratic Republic and on the social revolution in the German Federal Republic. We oppose any unification that involves dismantling the economic foundations of the workers state in the German Democratic Republic.

We support the demand for withdrawal of occupation troops from the German Federal Republic and the German Democratic Republic, respectively, allied troops—first of all the American forces—and those of the USSR. In fact, this double military occupation is designed to assure stabilization of the political and social situation on both sides of the line in this key area of confrontation between the imperialist camp and the bureaucratized workers states. In the long term, it is also aimed at blocking both the socialist revolution in the German Federal Republic and the political revolution in the German Democratic Republic.

The stationing of powerful armies equipped with gigantic nuclear arsenals in both parts of Germany poses a danger of nuclear war, with the catastrophic consequences that would flow from this for the future of humanity as a whole.

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### Building Sections of the Fourth International

42. Building sections of the Fourth International and defending their overall political orientation require that Trotskyists concentrate their forces on central campaigns. Rooting the sections in the working class, and systematic mass work do not conflict with this orientation. These long-term campaigns make it possible to combine dissemination of the general analyses and positions of Trotskyism with advocating demands and slogans that correspond to the needs of the workers, and whose adoption would favor raising their level of consciousness and activity. They focus the forces of the sections on the most important objectives. They offer the sections a framework for unifying their work. They facilitate recruitment.

These campaigns interlock on different levels.

- The sections should develop specific propaganda and

agitational campaigns around slogans or demands that epitomize their response to key political and social events. The press of the sections and the publication of special materials play an important role in launching and advancing such political campaigns. There are many examples—the campaign for dissolving the National Assembly and for a CP-SP government in France after the municipal elections in March 1977; the campaign for immediate elections and for a constituent assembly in Portugal after April 25, 1974; the campaign against the “historic compromise” line and for a SP-CP government in Italy after the 1975 regional elections; the campaign for a general strike organized by the Trade-Union United Front in Belgium at the beginning of 1977 in Belgium; the campaign for total amnesty for all political prisoners and dissolution of the repressive forces in Spain in 1975.

- The sections may take united-front initiatives directed at the big parties of the working class, trade-union organizations, and centrist groups in order to form united bodies or blocs to promote the struggle for certain slogans. They undertake this task together with all persons or organizations that declare their willingness to carry it through. They do not make the possibility of including the big workers parties a prior condition for launching such a campaign. Experience has demonstrated that once such united action is set in motion, it exercises a power of attraction on sectors organized or influenced by the reformist parties. This may force these parties or sections of them to join in such campaigns, if the sections couple these initiatives with sustained agitation for a united front of the organizations of the working class.

- The impact of these campaigns can be carried into the mass organizations and into the unions. For example, in the unions members of the sections try to get motions adopted and actions taken that will make it possible to bolster these mobilizations. These proposals must help to stimulate a discussion during which the Trotskyists can link explaining the validity of the proposed slogans with their overall political program.

42.1. Over and above the unevennesses, the common features exhibited by the class struggle in capitalist Europe point up the possibility for the sections to undertake campaigns around various themes.

The following may be mentioned by way of example:

- A campaign for a coordinated counterattack by wage earners on a European scale against the maneuvers of the multinational trusts and for ongoing coordination of the union delegates representing workers in the multinational companies.

- A campaign for a joint offensive by the trade-union organizations on a European scale for a thirty-five-hour week with no cut in pay, as an immediate step to fight unemployment.

- A campaign for the right of free access to abortion for all, including minors and immigrants, and for assuring the material conditions necessary to exercise this right. This should provide the basis for reactivating the women's movement and linking it up with the workers organizations. Such a campaign can give rise to broad united actions that can be coordinated on a Europe-wide scale.

- The development, beginning in 1974-1975, of a mass movement against the building and fueling of nuclear power plants or for halting those already in operation offers major opportunities for coordinated intervention by the sections.

In our intervention, we strive to build a mass movement, democratically organized with the backing of the working-class organizations, that can mobilize all the potentially active support such a struggle may attract. The modes of action must be subordinated to this objective.

We will also aim, by various tactical approaches (moratoria, referendums, etc.) to involve the organized workers movement, or sections of it, in these struggles, and to broaden the antinuclear movement. We combine our opposition to the building and fueling of nuclear power plants and our demand for shutting down those already in operation with a call for nationalizing the energy sector under workers control and redirecting it. We link these demands with every possible slogan that can expose the interlocking of private capitalist interests with the state's role in building these power plants (such as the call for opening the books). In turn, we couple all these demands with others designed to make it possible to maintain every sort of check useful in fighting to defend the safety of the workers and to advance the struggle against pollution.

- A campaign to expose the repressive role that the armies can play against the peoples' struggles in semicolonial countries and against the working class in the imperialist countries of Europe. We encourage the formation of soldiers committees, independent of the military hierarchy and formed on the basis of defending the right of expression and organization of the ranks of draftees. In the unions, we take every initiative that may promote the linkup of these committees with the union movement. We fight to get the workers movement to come to the defense of the soldiers fighting for their rights.

- In several European countries, the development of the crisis has given a certain renewed impetus to the far-right or fascist organizations. Whatever their present limitations, these organizations represent a real danger that must be continually combated by the sections of the Fourth International.

The approach of the Trotskyists to the fight against the far-right and fascist organizations will be based essentially on the need to mobilize the mass movement in a struggle against fascism. This line of mass action is totally foreign to any orientation that substitutes mobilizing some groups of activists for a broad campaign. It is also opposed to the line of the reformist parties, which as a general rule conceal their passivity behind blustery declarations calling on the bourgeois state to repress the fascists. Trotsky strongly condemned this approach in 1938 in his article "Freedom of the Press and the Working Class":

"... workers cannot let the repressive fist of the bourgeois state substitute for the struggle that they must wage through their own organizations and their own press. Today the state may appear to be 'kindly' disposed to the workers' organizations; tomorrow the government may fall, will inevitably fall, into the hands of the most reactionary elements of the bourgeoisie. In that case, whatever restrictive legislation that exists will be thrown at the workers. Only adventurers with no thought other than for the needs of the moment would fail to heed such a danger."

In the fight against the far-right and the fascists, we must not offer the bourgeoisie any pretext for restricting any right of expression or organization, even if it might be exploited by such groups. Any restriction of this kind would be used in fact as a club against the working class.

The struggle against the Brown Plague has to be the task of the workers organizations united in action and drawing the great masses of the people in behind them.

- A new step-up in the military and political activity of the European imperialists, especially in Africa, together with the explosive growth of mass movements in countries dominated by imperialism, as for example in Peru and Iran, highlight the importance of anti-imperialist mobilizations.

The sections of the Fourth International must keep up a steady propaganda campaign on anti-imperialist issues. Whenever necessary, they must work to build united-front anti-imperialist committees. Moreover, those sections in countries whose bourgeoisie is intervening militarily against the anti-imperialist liberation struggle of any people have a special responsibility to take initiatives to build mass organizations demanding the immediate withdrawal of imperialist troops and to defend the right of these peoples to self-determination. The responses to the military interventions in Zaire, Lebanon, Chad, and Mauritania offer examples of such internationalist work, in which the youth organizations linked to the Fourth International can also serve as a driving force. The fight for the withdrawal of British troops from Ireland is another example.

In the framework of our antimilitarist and anti-imperialist campaigns, we project the demand for every state to break its ties with NATO and with all inter-imperialist alliances within capitalist Europe itself.

A campaign in defense of democratic rights in the degenerated and deformed workers states is needed in order to support the workers, intellectuals, and especially the minority-nationality activists who are being victimized by Stalinist repression. In calling for the release of all victims of bureaucratic repression, we are particularly anxious to encourage the workers movement to organize in defense of the political prisoners who consider themselves socialists and communists (such as Rudolf Bahro in the GDR). We are building a special campaign directed at the CPs and the unions they control to get them to come out for the immediate release of these prisoners. We are also anxious to get the support of the workers organizations for actions in defense of the right to strike and of trade-union independence in the bureaucratized workers states.

- The number of imprisoned and tortured class-struggle victims is constantly growing. The work in defense of political prisoners that the sections of the Fourth International have carried on for long years in united-front committees must be given new impetus from time to time by campaigns around specially symbolic cases that can arouse broad sections of the workers movement to the need for such elementary class solidarity. The defense of the organizations of the Fourth International or their members obviously must take priority in the work of Trotskyist activists.

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## Election Campaigns

43. In the present period in the capitalist countries of Europe the elections clearly reflect the class polarization. They bring to the center of discussion all the political,

social, and economic questions—the question of the government, austerity policy, alliances between bourgeois and workers parties, etc.

As a general rule, we must take advantage of such situations, running candidates in order to make known our overall political answers, to reach a broader audience, and to build our sections.

Stress must be placed on presenting in a simple and educational way the decisive elements of program that offer answers to the social and economic crisis. Election campaigns must be an occasion for us to popularize an orientation of political independence for the working class. This should be done in particular by raising the perspective of a government of the big workers parties.

What is more, we will seize on all the examples of struggles, manifestations of oppression, and social and economic events that make it possible to illustrate the relevance of transitional demands.

Depending on the circumstances, it may prove useful to form electoral alliances with other organizations in the workers movement. Such a tactical decision must not lead to throwing out the key elements of our overall political solutions from a common electoral program. Still less should it lead to supporting an electoral program including political solutions that lend support to class-collaborationist formulas. Likewise, accepting a program that, for example, includes a wrong characterization of the big workers parties may prevent us from reaching the ranks of these parties and the masses in general with our program.

When sections do not run candidates, or do so only in certain districts, or in the first round in two-round elections, they generally call for a class vote for the workers parties. Such a call does not involve either approval or critical support of the program or orientation of these parties. It is based both on the need for upholding a policy of class independence, expressed in this case by a class vote; and on an assessment of the objective effects of a defeat of the bourgeois parties in the elections, or of a strengthening of the working-class parties in this arena as well. The directions we give for voting are a tactical question. Obviously the way they are formulated is linked to our analysis of the concrete political situation. The only principle is our absolute refusal to vote for bourgeois or petty-bourgeois formations, because that runs counter to the line of class independence.

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### Work in the Trade-Union Movement

44. The primary task of the sections of the Fourth International is to link themselves to the movement of hundreds of thousands and millions of working men and women, especially in the decisive sectors of industry, who look to the unions as instruments for defending their interests and fighting to protect and improve their standard of living against the offensive by the bosses and the government.

The objective of the Trotskyists in their trade-union work is to strengthen the organization of the union, improve the fighting spirit of the membership, and make the unions into effective instruments for conducting the ongoing, daily struggle of the workers against capitalist

exploitation. The objective of this is to prepare the broad masses of workers to take over the running of society by providing them experience in organizing and leading their struggles. The trade-union orientation of Trotskyist activists is based primarily on the work of political agitation, propaganda, and organization in the unions. Whatever the various tactics dictated by the specific conditions of the struggle, the perspective for this work is to raise the level of consciousness of the union members, arm them with a program and a leadership, until they see clearly for themselves the irreconcilable antagonism between their interests and their aspirations to put an end to exploitation and oppression, and the class-collaborationist policy of the bureaucratic apparatuses. Whatever the manifold ways in which this is translated into the concrete, on the union level as well, revolutionary Marxist activists proceed from the standpoint that only the socialist revolution can provide a solution for the fundamental needs of the toiling masses.

It is the combination of such an orientation and tenacious activity in the struggles in which the union movement is engaged that can win Trotskyist activists the respect of broad layers of organized workers as well as of the most advanced elements involved in the union. Union work is an essential element of building a working-class revolutionary party. The progress of this work makes it possible to measure the progress made in building such a party.

44.1. The axis of our trade-union strategy is determined defense of the independence of the union movement from the bourgeois state. This involves:

1. A fight to defend the right to strike against all the measures designed to restrict the freedom of action and freedom to negotiate of the unions, against the system that requires prior notice and compulsory arbitration before beginning a labor conflict, against fines levied for "abuse" of the right to strike, against compulsory arbitration imposed by law to determine whether or not a strike can be continued, against restrictions on the right to organize strike pickets, etc.

2. A fight for trade-union democracy on all levels, including the right of tendencies. This is necessary to mobilize all the power of the union ranks against the bosses and the government and to demonstrate the strength of the union organizations. We denounce all attempts by the union bureaucracy to limit the right to strike, which tend to lend legitimacy to the argument that the workers struggles are a source of the deepgoing crisis of the capitalist system. In this framework, the sections will give special attention to combating the attempts by the bureaucrats to expell revolutionary activists from the ranks of the unions.

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Unions must first of all become a real weapon for all working men and women. This is why we favor the union organizations taking up the demands raised by all the exploited and oppressed layers.

We fight for full and complete participation by women, immigrant workers, the unemployed, and young workers in the life of the unions, and we defend their right to have their own bodies in which they can discuss and formulate their specific demands so as to be able to mobilize the



maximum forces against the capitalist offensive. At the same time, we warn against the bureaucratic attempts to divert the demands of working women, immigrants, or youth into the ghetto of trade-union commissions outside the regular bodies of the union, since such commissions are impotent and are all the more easily subjected to the tutelage of the bureaucracy.

The instinctive thrust of the workers during an upsurge of struggles to close ranks in order to more effectively confront the capitalist assault poses with greater force the question of unity in action and of the unification of the union movement.

In countries where there are several national confederations, the Trotskyists fight in all the unions in which they work for unity in action on all levels. Likewise, they fight for transforming the professional associations that exist in some sectors of wage labor (nurses associations, employee associations) into unions and getting them affiliated to the union confederations.

In the same way, they put forward the perspective of forming a single independent and democratic confederation of labor. The union bureaucracies perpetuate the organizational division for the purpose of upholding the privileges enjoyed by the separate apparatuses and in order to hold back the organization of a general counterattack by all wage workers.

Revolutionary Marxist activists continually stress the need for democracy in the unions. However, they do not make accepting the right of tendencies a precondition for the fusion of the different labor organizations.

44.2. The very problems that the workers run up against in their mobilizations for immediate demands as well as the general orientation of the bureaucratic apparatuses point up the inadequacy of partial criticisms directed at one or another aspect of the line of these bureaucracies.

Moreover, the way in which general political questions find their reflection within the unions also highlights the need for an overall alternative to the class-collaborationist policy of the leaderships. Finally, the strength of the apparatuses rests on their capacity to keep the opposition to their policy fragmented.

All these factors point up the importance of a strategy for building a class-struggle left wing to win the leadership of the unions away from the SP and CP apparatuses, to insure their total independence from the bourgeois state, and to make them into instruments for emancipating the working class.

There is no class-struggle left wing now, not even an incipient one, in any European union. Nonetheless, broad layers of workers are seeking new answers to the problems with which they are confronted and can be won to such a perspective.

In many unions, groupings of activists have begun to form opposing the line of the apparatus. They have appeared on the local, regional, and national levels in various unions. Their degree of organization varies widely.

Such opposition groups have raised their heads at the time of union congresses. They have at times been given impetus by intermediary leaderships during the discussion prior to the conclusion of new contracts, or during the debates over what general line the unions should take toward the policy of austerity.

In Italy, for example, such opposition tendencies have been manifested in the form of assemblies of hundreds of factory delegates (for example, in Milan in 1977) to discuss

an alternative to the policy of the confederation leaderships. Likewise, broad assemblies of delegates adopted motions opposing the platform proposed by the three confederations during the regional conventions leading up to the national congress in January 1978, which was going to adopt a position openly favorable to austerity.

In France, such opposition groups came out into the open during the congress of the CFDT. They function on a more permanent basis in the various member unions of the CGT and CFDT.

In Portugal at the time of elections for the leadership of unions, opposition groupings have been formed around slates challenging the line of the reformist leaderships.

In Spain, in the congresses of the UGT and the CO in 1978, a large percentage of the delegates rallied around motions that more or less openly conflicted with the general orientation proposed by the bureaucracy. The potential for opposition among the factory union delegates or even the intermediary leaderships was revealed at the time of the discussions around the signing of the Moncloa Pact and those that preceded the renewal of the agreement.

In Great Britain, in Belgium, in Denmark, and even in West Germany, the same phenomenon has developed, although in these countries it has taken more limited and less politicalized forms.

The growth of such opposition currents cannot lead, through simple numerical accretion, to the formation of a real class-struggle left wing. Oppositions that appear now and again against a leadership, or a simple grouping of revolutionists in a union, cannot be confused with a class-struggle left wing. To have a class-struggle left wing, you have to have a class-struggle orientation and program offering an alternative to the class-collaborationist policy of the reformists, as well as a relatively high level of organization and leadership. Such a group would have to be the result of a process of internal differentiation, including in the union leaderships themselves, that would make it possible to regroup whole sectors of the union and to put forward in struggle a credible alternative revolutionary leadership. The advance of such a process depends on the interaction of the following factors: the rise in the level of consciousness of the vanguard workers over a period of sharpening class struggle, the relationship of forces between this vanguard and the bureaucratic apparatuses, the ability of the worker activists in our sections to win more and more workers for such an orientation. Nonetheless, the appearance of the opposition currents described above is an important step in the formation of a class-struggle left wing. In fact, these groupings propose demands that represent components of a class-struggle program. They show that it is both necessary and possible to organize to put forward alternatives to the class-collaborationist policy of the leaderships. They point up the key importance of the fight for trade-union democracy in the process of transforming the unions into an effective instrument of struggle for all workers. They have made it possible for significant layers of advanced workers to raise their level of consciousness and prove themselves as potential revolutionary leaders of the union.

In the present phase, our work in the unions must focus particularly on these various opposition groupings. While taking account of the various rates at which they may evolve, we have to fight for the following objectives: To clarify and round out the programmatic bases of these

groupings; to make it clear that a key part of fighting the bureaucratic apparatus is to outline a concrete alternative strategy for struggling against the policy of the capitalists and the government; to block any tendency to chronic oppositionism; and to uphold and defend our strategic aim, which is to provide the union movement with a revolutionary leadership. It flows from this that these currents must organize within the framework of the union structures, and, if the relationship of forces permits, win leadership positions. The class-struggle left wing that we are fighting to build will include people who are union leaders now and will be won to this perspective. It will fight to win the leadership of the unions at all levels so that they can mobilize all the power of these organizations in the fight against capitalism. In order to stimulate this process of differentiation and to advance the development of groupings offering elements of a class-struggle program, we may bloc with currents supporting progressive positions. Likewise, in the event of a clash within the union apparatus between a critical sector and the leaderships, we may offer support to the opposition, depending on our assessment of what is at stake in this conflict for the evolution of the union as a whole, as well as of the specific points around which the fight takes place. The essential thing in all these situations is not to downplay our propaganda for the answers required to meet the needs of the anticapitalist struggle and to maintain firmly our own fraction within the union.

We can also help to step up this process of differentiation and of challenging class-collaborationist orientations by promoting the actions around themes such as the fight for the right of abortion or the struggle against the building and fueling of nuclear power plants.

Whatever forms may be made necessary by bureaucratic persecution, the fight to promote the formation of a class-struggle left wing involves explaining politically our concept of trade-union democracy. This concept calls for currents based on different platforms for the union, not on allegiance to different parties. It calls for the union respecting the principles of workers democracy in the mass movement by accepting the democratic decisions of struggle committees, strike or factory committees, and sovereign assemblies of all the workers in the workplace. The unions must be the driving force in such democratic structures.

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The key role of union work in building sections of the Fourth International means that this activity must be placed under the direct supervision of those who lead the day-to-day work of the organization. This close relationship between the political leadership of a section and trade-union work must assist all the union activists in the task of carrying forward the overall political line of the organization in their work. This does not mean adopting an ultimatum or sectarian position. It means that we have to be able to popularize Trotskyist political analyses and orientations among our trade-union activists based on the concrete problems that arise in the life of the union.

Furthermore, in order to forestall adaptation to economist pressures or petty-bourgeois ideologies, it is important to extend systematic political education, and for our union activists to be organized in fractions, in which they will be able to work more effectively through acting collectively.

## Work Directed at the SPs and CPs

45. As a result of the duration and depth of the economic, social, and political crisis, as well as the need the masses feel for overall solutions, the positions of the traditional workers organizations—both political parties and unions—have become the reference points for the discussions and decisions marking the political life of the working class. Moreover, the crisis of bourgeois social relations is being reflected in the parties and unions, partly because of the impact of the social movements that have sprung up outside of their control. Finally, the gradual shift in the relationship between the bureaucracy and a layer of advanced workers is not only favoring class-struggle initiatives by sections of the proletariat but promoting differentiation and debate within the organized workers movement.

The above elements constitute the basis for an orientation on the part of the European sections of the Fourth International toward the masses influenced or organized by the reformist parties, and, consequently, toward these parties themselves. This orientation is designed fundamentally to offer an alternative strategy to that of the reformist leaderships.

In no way does this orientation conflict with working to build the mass movements in those arenas neglected or ignored by the reformists. To the contrary, the growth of such movements can facilitate the work we do directed at the reformist parties. It can increase the internal tensions and debates within these parties, resulting in increased possibilities for concrete application of a united-front line.

45.1. In those countries where a Social Democratic party holds a dominant or very influential position in the working class, shifts in the attitude of the workers and in the political climate will inevitably be reflected in the ranks of such a party itself. Debates and internal conflicts will arise. Currents may develop with a certain degree of organization nationally or locally. This gives still more importance to maintaining a firm united front orientation based on concrete proposals for unity in action in various areas.

The ways in which the Social Democratic Parties are organized make it easier to achieve such unity in action on the local or regional level. Likewise, the sort of relationship that exists between the Social Democratic youth organizations and parties favors the development of joint activities with the youth. It is on this basis that a discussion of orientation with opposition groups or critical currents can be most fruitful. In such discussions, the focus has to be on a critique of the line put forward by the leaderships, and this has to be coupled to a historic balance sheet of the Social Democracy and its role in bailing out capitalist society. It is necessary, therefore, to combat any illusions that these parties may correct their course or be regenerated.

It is essential in these debates with "left tendencies" in the Social Democracy to put forward all our strategic answers and our criticisms, with the aim of demonstrating the vital need of building a revolutionary party.

45.2. The new stage in the crisis of Stalinism is opening up very important possibilities for intervention and

growth by the sections of the Fourth International.

The debates in the CPs focus on the history of the Communist International, the way it and the CPs became Stalinized, the nature of "real socialism" in the USSR and in the "people's democracies," and the international policy of the Kremlin bureaucracy. They go hand in hand with growing questions about the current line and what the CP leaderships are doing with regard to the austerity policies of the various governments. Moreover, as soon as the attempts by the CP leading circles to gain a new legitimacy in the eyes of the membership lead to conflicts with the Soviet bureaucracy, these leaders find themselves obliged to revise the official history of their party, the CPSU, and of the Third International. They are led, as a result, to reevaluate the role of the various currents and tendencies in the CPSU, as well as to take up the problem of rehabilitating the leaders of the Bolshevik Party who were liquidated by Stalin. In this way, they become mired in new contradictions that can scarcely be concealed by their slippery formulations.

The united-front tactic should be used as a special tool in an offensive by the sections directed against the CPs. This must enable the sections to gain recognition as a current in the workers movement and create conditions favorable to a debate on the line of the CPs itself on the basis of experiences in united action on various levels.

We must mount a prolonged political campaign directed at the CPs, constantly explaining the connection between their present class-collaborationist policy and its origins in the thermidorian counterrevolution in the USSR and the rise of Stalinism.

The sections can take advantage of the self-critical declarations of the CP leaderships to bring out the contradictions in a course that consists of citing a series of successive "errors" whose causes are supposed to be accidental and to have nothing to do with any specific line. In this way, the CPs claim to have broken with Stalinism but without making any real critique of their own Stalinist "past." The spotlight has to be focused on this incoherency, from which they cannot extricate themselves.

Along the same lines, the sections must mount a sustained campaign for the rehabilitation of the Bolshevik "old guard," and Trotsky first of all. This campaign must be the occasion for demanding that the CP leaderships call publicly on the Soviet government and the CPSU to rehabilitate the leaders of the Bolshevik Party who were murdered by Stalin. It should offer a framework for understanding that real rehabilitation would involve explicitly recognizing the dichotomy between the party of Lenin and Trotsky and the one led by the Stalinist bureaucracy, that is, the discontinuity between Leninism and Stalinism. In it, we must call on the CP leaderships to shed light on the methods used in liquidating oppositionists in their own parties. Likewise, we must show the link between the elimination of the leaders who argued and fought against the bureaucratic usurpation of Stalinism and the liquidation of the democratic principles of revolutionary centralism in the Russian party and in the Third International.

At a time when voices are being raised in the CPs demanding more democracy, and these demands are sometimes being taken up for tactical reasons within the apparatus itself, the sections must warn against any illusions that a "democratization" of the CPs means that

they will be regenerated as revolutionary parties. The sections will stress the roots of the class-collaborationist policy of the CP leaderships and the link between their bureaucratic distrust of the mass movement and bureaucratic centralism. Parallel to this, they will defend democratic centralism, which involves the right of tendencies and factions, explaining the importance of political centralization nationally and internationally for a revolutionary strategy by which the workers can win power.

It has to be shown how theoretically incoherent the criticisms of the system in the USSR and the "people's democracies" made by the Eurocommunist CPs are. But it is important above all to show this in practice by carrying on a two-sided campaign. The first thing that has to be done is to demand that the CPs make it clear that they support the main demands that emerged in the incipient political revolutions in East Germany in 1953, Poland and Hungary in 1956, and Czechoslovakia in 1968. These demands are as follows: separation of the party and state, recognition of the right to strike, independence of the unions, ending censorship, dissolution of the political police, an end to the one-party system, full civil and democratic rights, rule by democratic workers councils, etc. Secondly, the CPs must be called on to respect workers democracy in their own countries, in the unions or strike committees, and to reject exclusionism against other currents in the workers movement.

With the critical currents that are arising in the CPs, the sections must undertake a debate on the basic strategic questions. In this, they will strive to show concretely the fundamental contradiction that exists between a revolutionary strategy and the past and present orientation of these bureaucratized parties. On this basis, they will explain the impossibility of rehabilitating these parties and the need for building a revolutionary party and a revolutionary International that can win the workers away from the influence of the reformist leaderships of the CPs. In cases of bureaucratic repression against oppositionists or critical currents, we must support the victims against these measures, without however making any political concession to them.

45.3. Such an orientation toward the workers organized or influenced by the big reformist parties must be seen as a long-term one. The nature of the period makes it possible for the sections to step up their independent work, to improve the relationship of forces between themselves and the traditional workers parties and thereby to increase the impact of their political views on sections of these parties. It is the task of the leaderships of the sections to accord the highest priority to politically educating the membership as a whole so as to prepare them for such systematic work. Moreover, doing this work requires adequate propaganda materials.

In certain conditions, fraction work may be started up in these parties or in their youth organizations. This requires tight organization and political preparation of the activists. Sometimes it may be undertaken with better chances for success in the youth organizations of the CPs and the SPs, and might be taken charge of by the youth organizations of the sections. In Great Britain, the nature of the Labour Party dictates doing long-term fraction work, combined with union work in the key industrial sectors, and reinforcement of the independent work of the Trotskyists.

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## Proletarianization and Party Building

46. The sections of the Fourth International now have important opportunities to take decisive steps in rooting themselves in the working class, especially the industrial proletariat. This is owing to the relationship of forces that now exists between the classes and between the bureaucratic apparatus and the advanced workers. It is also a result of a combination of actual experience in struggle with a rising political level.

In many countries, the majority of comrades are members of unions. But the task of building solid union fractions in industry remains to be done. The sections must centralize and plan their work in order to make a qualitative advance in rooting themselves in these key sectors of the working class. This also requires sending into industry members recruited in the previous period. The sections must be led into making this turn without delay. If the leaderships do not consciously organize the shift into this new stage, comrades will naturally tend to take jobs in nonindustrial sectors, often as a result of the kind of education they have received. They have to be motivated politically by stressing the vital contribution they can make today in qualitatively reinforcing our work in the working class, which is the perspective that led them to take part in building the revolutionary party.

Orienting toward increasing our base in the industrial working class flows from our general political perspective. If we do not harness ourselves to this task, we risk seeing our activity reduced to commentary from the sidelines of the great class battles that are coming.

Building strong fractions in the industrial unions will help our work in all areas, including in the other unions such as the bank workers, teachers or other white-collar unions, hospital workers, etc. The draft resolution entitled "The World Political Situation and the Tasks of the Fourth International" points out about building such fractions that:

"... participation in trade-union fraction work from the base of jobs in industry can perceptibly increase the rate of successes of the party's political campaigns—as Trotsky put it in discussing the Transitional Program—by showing the workers how to think socially and act politically. It will facilitate paying the necessary attention to building class-struggle left wings. It will improve the progress of similar work in the mass movement and among the allies of the proletariat. It will help develop links with the struggles of the superexploited—women, youth, and the oppressed nationalities or immigrant workers. It will also enhance sensitivity to the moods of the workers and give greater stability to the sections and their work."

Such proletarianization cannot be carried out at the same rate or by the same means in all the sections. The implementation of this orientation will depend on the social and political situation and on the level we have attained in the accumulation of forces. However, what has been said above means that we must begin now to do the work of conscious political and organizational preparation. A centralized and determined effort will be necessary to redirect our resources and our members in accordance with this perspective. Trade-union work must be given first

place in the work of the central leaderships. Comrades have to be helped to find jobs and do recruiting in the key sectors. An educational system has to be set up with internal and propaganda materials that can assure that our worker comrades are politically assimilated and made into working-class political cadres. A mode of functioning has to be established that will enable workers to participate fully in the normal activity of the organization.

The aim is to build parties of worker-Bolshevik cadres, representatives of all the oppressed, increasingly recognized by their fellow working people on the job and in the neighborhoods as the natural leaders of their class and its allies. These cadres must be able to offer general solutions to all aspects of the economic, social, and political crisis. They must be able to unite the proletariat and win over its potential allies. They have to be able to lead the masses toward the conquest of power.

47. Along with this systematic effort to root ourselves in the working class, we must carry forward mass work in the youth, where there is important potential for recruitment. In order to do this, the sections must devote a great deal of attention to assisting the existing youth organizations or to examining the possibilities for establishing such organizations. By the same token, work on the campuses and the mass student organizations must remain a major area of work in building the sections.

48. The basis for the work of the party is its program. It is the program that assures the cohesion of its ranks. The program provides a common strategic orientation on which the vanguard can organize. It is in this sense that the sections of the Fourth International represent the nucleus of the revolutionary party that is to be built. The program of the Fourth International constitutes the synthesis of the experiences of the working class on an international scale. The capacity of the sections of the International and the world party to enrich this synthesis in the light of developments in the class struggle is the confirmation of their close ties with the great mobilizations of the working class and the oppressed layers and of the validity of the method of the Transitional Program.

On the basis of this program, a leadership has to be built that is capable of applying it, of seizing all the opportunities to take steps forward in building the party, of understanding quickly the changes in the political situation, of carrying forward political and theoretical development. It flows from this that building a leadership can only be accomplished as the result of a conscious long-term effort.

The formation of such a leadership involves unity on the basis of program and not of a temporary tactical agreement. It must be a collective leadership with the function of increasing the number of leading cadres capable of directing the work of the organization as a whole. Therefore, one of the aspects of the work of a leadership is to pay constant attention to training a broader and broader team of cadres, to regularly bring comrades into responsible national and international assignments, giving priority to the development of women and worker cadres. In order to accomplish this, it is essential that the leaderships find a method, based on objective criteria, of working together.

The establishment of a leadership that can learn and function on this basis is the *sine qua non* for the party leading all the areas of its work, for it to maintain the central political direction necessary for increasing its effectiveness in action and at the same time develop its line through democratic internal discussion. This is the

only way of fighting sectoralism, which may lead a section of the organization to lose the overall revolutionary perspective and induce it to develop positions that come into conflict with the program and the general line of the organization.

Conscious building of leaderships is, basically, the other side of the process of proletarianization, which itself demands a greater concentration of energies and stronger central political direction.

Reinforcing the apparatus of the organizations under the direct political responsibility of the political leadership should help in increasing the aid given to day-to-day work in the unions, the factories, and in national political activities.

The sections must develop real plans for recruitment to go along with their political campaigns. Organizational cohesion and political homogeneity on the part of the sections will facilitate such recruitment and enable them to turn resolutely outward.

49. A revolutionary party cannot be built on the basis of a simple linear growth of its forces. The process necessarily involves regroupments and fusions. This reflects the different rates of development in the consciousness of the masses and the recomposition of the forces in the workers movement that results from it.

However, any fusion process carried out with a perspective for qualitatively strengthening the party on the basis of the program of the Fourth International requires firmly projecting the political line of the section as well as a political struggle. This in no way conflicts with seeking unity in action and flexibility in preparing for possible future fusions.

In this stage, unifications can facilitate our work directed at the workers parties by helping to build a pole of attraction for worker activists, including in these mass parties.

49.1 In various countries, the crisis of the centrist organizations and their political evolution may call for mounting regroupment offensives toward them.

In such cases, it is necessary to avoid an abstract approach that relies just on the statements and documents that these organizations may produce at a given moment. What is most important is to understand the history of their development and their direction of movement and to read their positions in the light of this. In addition, it is necessary to know how concretely to assess questions such

as the relationship of forces, the political and organizational homogeneity of such organizations, as well as the cohesion and political preparedness of the section. Not only the general political approach depends on this but the specific modes and rhythms of a regroupment or fusion offensive.

A condition for the success of such operations is a clear definition of intent from the outset. The approach cannot be to negotiate over fundamental aspects of program but to determine courses of common action and discussion that will accelerate the evolution in these centrist organizations, and, after a certain time, put the programmatic discussion on another basis. Thus, there are no ready-made recipes for fusions and regroupments. To forestall sectarianism, we have to begin by clearly putting forward our program, as well as assessing the political development of these organizations, and on this basis propose the appropriate common initiatives.

49.2. With regard to certain organizations that declare their allegiance to Trotskyism and claim to want to "reconstruct the Fourth International" (for example, the OCI and Lutte Ouvrière in France), we will follow an approach based on the fact that they state support for the founding program of the Fourth International. For this reason, we will seek to explore in debate and common action the possibilities of achieving a political agreement on three different levels: on the general program, on the overall tasks of the period, and on democratic centralist functioning nationally and internationally.

Sufficient agreement on these three levels would make fusion viable. We state clearly that the unified organization that would result from such a general agreement must be a section of the Fourth International, within which there are sufficient guarantees for being able to continue the discussion on points of disagreement as a tendency or even a faction. The sections therefore must explain to their memberships, if a real convergence with these organizations takes place on the three levels cited, that there is no reason for them to remain outside the ranks of the Fourth International.

Thus, both in the case of centrist organizations and organizations that declare allegiance to Trotskyism, we declare that fusions and regroupments must be carried out on the basis of the revolutionary Marxist program, one of whose central points is that national parties and the world party of the socialist revolution must be built simultaneously.

## Glossary of Initials Used in Text

**Europe-wide:** EEC—European Economic Community. Nine countries belonging to the EEC are: Britain, Belgium, Denmark, France, West Germany, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands.

### Belgium

CSC: Confederation of Christian Trade Unions  
RW: Party of Walloon Unity  
VU: National Unity

### Corsica

ANC: Alliance of Corsican Nationalists

### France

CFDT: French Democratic Confederation of Labor  
CGT: General Confederation of Labor  
OCT: Communist Workers Organization  
PSU: United Socialist Party  
RPR: Assembly for the Republic  
UDF: Union for French Democracy

### Italy

CGIL: Italian General Confederation of Labor  
CISL: Italian Confederation of Free Trade Unions  
FLM: Metalworkers Federation  
UIL: Italian Federation of Trade Unions

### Portugal

CDS: Social Democratic Center  
CGTP: General Confederation of Portuguese Workers  
MFA: Armed Forces Movement  
PCP-ML: Portuguese Communist Party (Marxist-Leninist)

### Scotland

SNP: Scottish National Party

### Spain

CO: workers commissions  
CDC: Democratic Convergence of Catalonia  
MCE: Communist Movement of Spain  
ORT: Revolutionary Workers Organization  
PDC: Christian Democratic Party  
PNV: Basque Nationalist Party  
PSOE: Spanish Socialist Workers Party  
PT: Labor Party [of Spain]  
UCD: Democratic Center Union  
UGT: General Workers Union

### West Germany

CDU: Christian Democratic Union  
CSU: Christian Social Union  
DGB: German Trade-Union Federation  
SPD: Social Democratic Party of Germany

## Corrections

The following corrections should be made in "The World Political Situation and the Tasks of the Fourth International," Draft Resolution for Fifth World Congress Since Reunification (11th World Congress), printed in the English-language International Internal Discussion Bulletin, Volume XV, No. 5, July 1978.

1. Page 12, first column, last sentence should read: The position of the white settler regime in Zimbabwe has become unviable, and imperialism has been forced to intensify its. . .
2. Page 14, second column, first paragraph. The final thirteen words of the paragraph should be deleted so that the paragraph ends with the sentence: These are the logical consequences of the Stalinist theory of building "socialism in one country."
3. Page 15, second column, under Section III, first paragraph, eighth line should read: militant mass strikes and demonstrations.
4. Page 16, second column, second paragraph. A sentence should be inserted before the last sentence of the paragraph. Insert: Against imperialism, the side of the workers states must be defended.
5. Page 20, first column, fifth line should read: they function as consultants and not as part of a ruling caste. . .
6. Page 25, second column, Section V, fourth paragraph, fourth line should read: or factions guaranteed as was the tradition in the Bolshevik Party in Lenin's time.
7. Page 27, first column, paragraph "f," third line should read: extending from the Maoris in New Zealand, the Basques and Catalans in. . .

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The following correction should be made in "Resolution on Latin America," Draft Resolution for Fifth World Congress Since Reunification (11th World Congress), printed in the English-language IIDB, Vol. XV, No. 6, December 1978.

Page 16, second column, point 24b. Last sentence should read: the report and resolution on "Armed Struggle in Latin America."