

# **INTERNAL INFORMATION BULLETIN**

November 1973

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## **The 1972 Debate in the Ligue Communiste**

**I. THE INTERNAL DEBATE IN THE LIGUE COMMUNISTE**

**II. ROUGE ARTICLES CONCERNING TERRORISM**

**III. THE LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS**

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**INTRODUCTORY NOTE**

Most of the material contained in this bulletin is translated from the written internal discussion that took place in the Ligue Communiste, the French Section of the Fourth International, prior to its third national convention in December 1972. Also included are a number of articles from *Rouge*, at that time the weekly paper of the Ligue Communiste.

On June 28, 1973, six months after the convention, the French government banned the Ligue for organizing an antifascist demonstration in Paris on June 21, 1973.

The articles reprinted here are not intended to be a summary of the entire debate that preceded the third convention of the Ligue. The discussion, which lasted six months, dealt with many questions including the trade union and factory work of the Ligue, student work, the character of *Rouge*, Indochina solidarity activities, the work of the teachers' fraction of the Ligue, the history and character of the French Socialist Party, organizational problems, and much more. Many of these topics are touched upon in the contributions translated for this information bulletin, but no attempt has been made to give a representative cross section of the views expressed on all these questions.

Most of this bulletin—Part I—is devoted to the internal discussion around one issue, the question of "minority violence" and its ramifications for party building in France. A debate on this question was touched off by the first article reprinted here, "Is the Question of Power Posed? Let's Pose It!," also referred to as "Bulletin No. 30."

The contributions to the discussion are arranged in chronological order so that comrades can follow the debate as it evolved and was eventually pushed aside.

Comrades Jebracq, Roger, Clélia, Sterne and Delphin were members of the Ligue's Political Bureau. Comrades Jebracq and Delphin were members of the International Executive Committee of the Fourth International, and Comrade Sterne a member of the International Control Commission. Comrades Antony, Arthur, Stéphane and Radot were members of the Ligue's Central Committee.

Included in Part I of this bulletin is the document "22

Theses on the Construction of the Party," adopted by the Ligue's third convention as its major perspectives resolution.

Also included in Part I are two excerpts from the resolutions of the Bolshevik-Leninist Tendency for Proletarianization, a tendency that announced its formation very early in the pre-convention discussion period. Some pre-convention discussion articles were printed in *Rouge* in the weeks prior to the convention, and the short items reprinted here are the positions of the Bolshevik-Leninist Tendency for Proletarianization as they appeared in *Rouge*. This tendency was also sharply critical of Document No. 30, characterizing it as militarist and leading toward the construction of a putschist organization, not a revolutionary vanguard of the working class. Their position on the elections is summarized in the article "What is a Class Vote?"

Part II reprints a number of articles published in *Rouge* during the same period as the internal debate was taking place. They deal with some of the same questions. Daniel Bensaid, the author of "Terrorism and Revolution" and "Terrorism and Class Struggle," was a member of the Political Bureau of the Ligue. As comrades read the internal debate they will find these *Rouge* articles referred to a number of times.

Part III includes the Political Resolution adopted by the convention and an article from *Rouge* dealing with the debate at the convention on the Ligue's policy in the March 1973 legislative elections. Additional articles from *Rouge* explaining the electoral policy of the Ligue can be found in *Intercontinental Press* during the first few months of 1973.

\* \* \*

A number of political organizations are referred to repeatedly, and in most cases only initials are used by the authors. To aid in identification, the following list of groups most commonly referred to may be helpful:

OCI—Organisation Communiste Internationaliste (Inter-

nationalist Communist Organization), also referred to as the "Lambertists," after one of the group's central leaders, Pierre Lambert

AJS—Alliance des Jeunes pour le Socialisme (Youth Alliance for Socialism), youth organization allied with the OCI

AMR—Alliance Marxiste Révolutionnaire (Revolutionary Marxist Alliance), also known as the "Pabloites," after one of the group's central leaders, Michel Pablo

LO—Lutte Ouvrière (Workers Struggle), an organization that considers itself to be Trotskyist. Its leaders split from the Fourth International in the early forties.

PSU—Parti Socialiste Unifié (Unified Socialist Party), a left-centrist split-off from the French Socialist Party

\* \* \*

Proper names (such as Jebrac-Jebracq-Gebracq) are

sometimes spelled several different ways, even within the same article. However, the translators take no responsibility. They did not try to improve on the original texts, only to translate them accurately.

\* \* \*

The documents from the internal discussion in the Ligue were of course written with the assumption that readers were thoroughly familiar with all aspects of French politics in general, and the activities of the Ligue Communiste in particular. Non-French readers will find numerous references and allusions that are unclear. Despite this handicap, the main lines of the political debate come through clearly.

M.A.W.  
October 1973

# PART I.

## THE INTERNAL DEBATE IN THE LIGUE COMMUNISTE

### Is the Question of Power Posed? Let's Pose It!

By Anthony, Arthur, Jebrac, and Stephane

#### EDITORIAL NOTE

The following article appeared in the June, 1972, issue (No. 30) of the internal bulletin of the Ligue Communiste, the French section of the Fourth International.

#### Introduction

The document proposed to open discussion leading up to the third congress clarifies and recapitulates our analysis of the political situation. It puts our work in a systematic framework, enabling us to clarify the tactical decisions that we have made on several occasions, such as May Day, June 7, Vietnam mobilizations, and strike interventions. And this is precisely what the congress will be able to decide on—defining the guidelines of our work.

But that should not be the only function of the congress. There are other questions that, although they cannot yet be settled, should be raised at this time in an attempt to probe the future. Marx did say somewhat jocularly that humanity only takes up the problems it can solve. But the vanguard must also broach the questions that it is not yet able to solve. This is part of its tasks as a vanguard.

To take one example: in the discussion on the youth question and the formation of an ORJ<sup>1</sup> there was a convergence of conflicting arguments. Some were against the ORJ because they considered it premature. Others, including us, were opposed to the ORJ on the basis of a certain concept of building the party. The real differences barely emerged. And they were not decisive at that time. Today it is likely that a rather wide agreement will materialize on the basis of the third part of the proposed document. But it is also possible that different comrades may define this document in not entirely the same way. We therefore take the responsibility of putting forward several still tentative working hypotheses so that we may begin to put our finger on problems we will someday have to face, instead of approaching them with our eyes dangerously blindfolded.

At the second congress, without any rhyme or reason, the little sentence "History is breathing down our necks!" stirred up a furor in the organization. So in this introduction, we should "wring the neck" of this hapless phrase. Some comrades saw this statement as the quintessence of petty-bourgeois impatience; others saw it as a return of revolutionary doom-saying quick to predict the coming crisis. None of that is true. We do not share the enthusiasm of Roger\*who is inclined to interpret the settling of accounts in the UDR (Union pour la Défense de la République—Union for the Defense of the Republic) as the

1. Organisation Révolutionnaire de la Jeunesse—Revolutionary Youth Organization. Designation used by the Communist League in discussing forming a Trotskyist youth group—Tr.

sign of a predestined crisis in the regime. No more do we share his interpretation of the revival of the SP (Socialist Party) (cf. Montargis cadre-school) as a "return to normalcy" in political life. The SP may be reborn, but it will never again be the party of notables, it will never be a stable expression of the new middle layers in a parliamentary game that is irremediably blocked. The logic of these two considerations would be to look forward to a transitory solution of the popular-front type and to take the corresponding steps.

When we said that history was breathing down our necks, we only reaffirmed, perhaps in a confused way, the celebrated preamble to the Transitional Program. Often we hear comrades ask for more refined, more precise definitions and demarcations of the objective facts of the monetary crisis, to measure the exact room for maneuver available to the bourgeoisie and the exact depth of the crisis in the CP. Such demands are wrong. In these matters we can only make approximations. *Because all these things depend to a small but decisive degree on the significance we give them through our own initiatives.*

It is therefore our job not to count the days the regime or system have left or to write any obituaries in advance. *We must stop saying all the time that the question of power has been posed (by whom? for whom?), and begin to pose it ourselves.* If we hope someday to resolve it.

## 1. Revolutionary Crisis and the Taking of Power

### 1. Neither '36 nor '68 in Improved Versions!

The document opening the discussion rejects the schemas of a successful June '36 or May '68. Let's look back. In June '36, an electoral triumph combined with a strike wave that swelled this victory out of parliamentary channels into a class confrontation. The context today has changed a great deal. The strong state has swept away parliamentary democracy, and we maintain that this is not a fortuitous form of government, but rather one corresponding to the needs of monopoly capitalism. This is confirmed negatively by the Italian parliamentary crisis and the inability of the Franco regime to liberalize itself. The majority party in the class is no longer the SP, rather a CP firmly anchored to the Soviet Union, whose economic and diplomatic support is an indispensable factor for the perspective of "peaceful roads." Finally the international context is not one characterized by the crushing of the German and Spanish proletariat. Rather it is marked by a pivotal test of strength in Vietnam occurring in the framework of a worldwide revolutionary ascent.

\*See Filoche's article in the *Fourth International*.

All of this makes it seem rather difficult to expect a repeat of a 1936-type situation—that is, an electoral triumph by the left touching off a mass movement overflowing the bounds of parliamentary politics, a process that we could carry to final victory just by lending a little push . . . That would assume that we were able to play such a role; namely, that our position within the class allowed it. In other words, that would take for granted that a strong revolutionary party had been built and had sunk solid roots. Thus it would be naive to think that the bourgeoisie, its guard up, its repressive arsenal perfected, is going to permit a really revolutionary organization to grow in its midst beyond a certain point. We will return to this point.

It would be even more illusory to conceive of a revolutionary crisis in France along the lines of a successful May '68. Because the bourgeoisie and the Stalinists have drawn their lessons from May. And a more deeply rooted and experienced revolutionary group will not be enough to carry the movement further. Even if we must place our hopes in the inventiveness and spontaneity of the masses in a period of crisis, it is not possible to rely totally on them. *You can't be a Leninist for the daily grind and a spontanément for times of crisis.* This is why the image of May '68 as "a dress rehearsal," if taken literally, is to a large extent misleading. On the whole it leads to the idea that all we need to do to settle accounts with the bourgeoisie, is to grow a little and wait for a new mass upsurge. It is not quite that easy.

Thinking in terms of the party growing regularly and developing gradually beyond a certain threshold can lead to dangerous oversights. *The double-lock system we are familiar with, the combination of a state differing greatly from the parliamentary type and a Stalinist reformist party differing from a Social-Democratic reformist party, makes it hard to conceive of slowly maturing working-class consciousness, of a long experience of workers' control during which a legal revolutionary organization could pull the chestnuts out of the fire.* In a period when the regime is in a crisis of adjustment, which goes hand in hand with the difficulties of the imperialist system (the monetary crisis, Vietnam), the government cannot tolerate a threatening expansion of the vanguard. If they wait too long they will have to deal with a vanguard already rooted in the class. It will become impossible for them to repress the advanced elements without encroaching on the organized workers' movement. And then no matter what pledges of objective complicity are offered by the CP, such as those it offered particularly on the occasion of the Overney affair, the government will not be able entirely to discount the self-defense reflexes of the old workers' parties. But, however alluring the idea of a crackdown might be to somebody like Marcellin, that isn't so simple either. Selective repression cannot always be applied. In France, the importance of the middle layers, intellectuals—inculcated with a democratic ideology—does not make it easy to isolate the far left. Where there are instances of specific repression, a large amount of support for the victims is forthcoming; despite the particular aberrations of the GP (Gauche Prolétarienne—Proletarian Left, the ultraleft Maoists), its case confirmed this tendency.

Thus, the most likely thing is still that we will see dissension arising within the bourgeoisie and the state ap-

paratus. In other words, rather than favoring a frontal attack against revolutionaries, *new tensions in the class struggle would tend to lead the champions of the tough approach to take their distance from the UDR [ruling party],* adopting an independent stance. So far these elements have more or less accepted the discipline of the Gaullist party, demonstrating, in a way, the confidence that this party continues to enjoy among the bourgeoisie. *Such a process would mark a very delicate, pivotal period for a revolutionary organization.* Still legal, still appearing publicly, and tempted to try to maintain this position as long as possible to draw the maximum profit from it, a revolutionary organization would find itself most vulnerable in such a period to parapolic repression (attacks on individuals, attacks on the headquarters).

That means for us that there is no absolute distinction between a period of legality and one of *clandestinity*. We have been given a respite. And it isn't true, either, as certain comrades sometimes say that we take advantage of legality as long as the bourgeoisie lets us. Things are not so simple. By increasing our political concessions we could extend our reprieve considerably. A moment comes when the dangers of legality outweigh its advantages. *This moment is up to us in part to determine. Provided that we have built an organization capable of taking the step. Unless we do this—since being determines consciousness—a completely legal existence will not fail to produce a legalistic consciousness.*

These are the ideas the organization must get used to if we want it to remain a revolutionary instrument and not fall asleep in a cocoon. And all the more so, since we must conceive of the revolution in France as immediately entering into a continental dynamic. This does not mean a continentwide revolutionary crisis, but that, as the fallout of May 1968 in Europe illustrated, a revolutionary victory in France or Spain would set off a process surpassing national boundaries. Class interests, class solidarity, and the repressive apparatuses interlock too tightly in this Europe that the capitalists are at great pains to build to imagine a revolution confined to precise limits. The dynamics, taking into account the unevenness of development, is one of a continental revolutionary war. Even imagining, therefore, that a mass revolutionary upsurge could break up the bourgeois state in one of these countries, the more enduring problem would then arise of the relationship of military forces vis-à-vis the reaction on a continental or subcontinental scale. It is not enough to mumble in front of the CPF (French Communist Party) that the peaceful road is in fact a bloody deathtrap; we must ourselves be capable of defining the practical consequences of our critique.

## 2. A Deceptively Reassuring Classical Approach

In beginning to open up this debate, the discussion has turned around reassuring concepts that have served as polemical points of reference but become inadequate once we look at things in a more practical light.

One thing is striking, for example, in the bulletins on Latin America: the reference (common to Germain, Maitan and Hansen) to the classical schema of the Russian

revolution. Maitan speaks, page 56, *"of the classical variant that took form in October 1917 in Russia."* Hansen, page 30, states the following with regard to Latin America: *"What we are watching is the resurgence of the key role of the cities; namely, the key role of the urban masses and in particular of the working class. This means that there are more and more possibilities of revolutions being carried out on the model of the Russian Revolution for which a party of the Leninist type is necessary. This is now becoming more and more probable."* Finally, Comrades Germain and Knoeller write, page 67, attempting to classify the variants of the process of revolutionary struggle "growing over" to armed struggle: *"There is the variant that can be called classical; the mass movement undergoes a rapid expansion after a long period of building up strength and experience and goes over into arming the proletariat and thus confronting the bourgeois army at the moment when the revolutionary crisis reaches its fullest flowering, that is, simultaneously with a general mass mobilization and emergence on a wide scale of organs of dual power. This is what happened, grosso modo, in Russia in 1917, in Germany in 1918-19, in Spain in 1936, in Vietnam in 1945."*

This common reference to the classical character of October 1917 appears to us to be quite mythical. And it is the last quotation that best expresses this myth. It outlines a rather idyllic picture of a mass upsurge accompanied simultaneously by the appearance of the organs of power and the arming of the proletariat. Now, in 1917, one of the preconditions for military victory of the proletariat was its alliance with the armed peasantry organized in the ranks of the Czarist army; Trotsky abundantly stressed the role of the peasant in uniform. The German crisis also broke out at the end of an inter-imperialist war. In 1945 in Vietnam, the battle was the extension of a long tradition, as well as one phase of liberation struggles. In other words, every case represents a specific military context in which the proletariat is either already armed, or supported militarily by other social forces.

And that is where an important aspect of the question lies. We stress the fact that the proletariat is economically exploited, politically oppressed, ideologically dominated. We forget to say that it is also militarily dominated, facing a centralized, exceptionally well-equipped army. The living and working conditions of the proletariat are subjected to rigorous discipline and strict restrictions on its use of time. The proletariat's military form of organization, born out of its struggles, is pickets or militias for collective self-defense. These are relatively sporadic defensive forms poorly suited to meeting the challenge of the state in the offensive field. The peasantry is more supple and has greater capacity for evasive action. Against feudalism it was capable of organizing itself in armed columns. The march of the Eight Route Army in China is the most celebrated example. But this experience goes way back, among others, to the celebrated peasant war in Germany. The urban middle-class layers, through their social mobility, their financial, material, and technical resources, are providing the essential social base for the urban guerrillas; at least this is what is indicated by the accounts of the Tupas about themselves and by the social base of the ERP [Ejército Revolucionario del Pueblo—Revo-

lutionary People's Army].

*If one thus conceives of the revolutionary crisis, not as the blessed moment when the masses enter the fray and arm themselves spontaneously, but as a moment when the thrust of the masses makes possible the victorious conclusion of a process of prolonged struggle, then the preparatory phase takes on all the greater importance for us inasmuch as we have to reintroduce the dimension of revolutionary violence against the weighty traditions of legality in the workers' movement.*

Contrary to what the conclusion of Hansen's document suggests, the Leninist party is not synonymous with the revolutionary party of the "classical schema," but of the proletarian revolution in general. And when Lenin spoke of militants who should be tribunes of the people and not secretaries of trade unions, he was affirming the unifying function of the party. Around and under the leadership of the proletariat, an alliance must be consolidated, uniting different social and class layers that can achieve their aspirations only by this means. This in particular enables the working class to benefit from the military capacities of the peasantry and the urban middle layers. To make it clear, if we intervene in the different social layers, it is not in order to gain forces to reconvert to industrial work as LO [Lutte Ouvrière—Workers Struggle] may conceive this; it is to offer these circles, rallied around the proletariat, their full role in the socialist revolution. The failure to understand this point goes hand in hand with an incomprehension of the nature of the Chinese revolution. For how could a party with a predominantly peasant social base, even if it claimed to be under the leadership of the proletariat, serve as the instrument of a socialist revolution?

## 2. On the Tactic of Unity of Action and Outflanking the Bureaucrats

To summarize: (1) We cannot hope to rebuild a real workers' movement piecemeal after a half century of Stalinism.

(2) The party will not be built before the process of struggle for power itself, but rather through this process.

(3) We cannot rely on the reassuring schema of an insurrectional general strike that would limit our own responsibilities for laying the groundwork and taking the initiative.

(4) The revolutionary organization must be the political and military vanguard of the class struggle. Unless it fills this role, propaganda for self-defense and forming militias remains hollow. On the basis of this, what are our present tactical responsibilities in the workers' movement?

## 1. The Question of the United Front

The workers' united front is not only a defensive front against the bourgeoisie. If Trotsky speaks of the soviet as "the highest form of the united front," that means it can also be an offensive formation. The united front is a tactic of unity of action used by revolutionists in dealing with the reformist workers' movement. Its use presupposes the establishment of a certain relationship of forces between revolutionists and reformists. In Spain, the relationship of forces between the CP and the LCR makes it possible to envisage using such a tactic.

What about using it here? Despite all our gains, we remain very small vis-à-vis the CP. The CPF is not an ordinary reformist party, but a Stalinist one. That means that it has a stronger capacity for resistance, and that our relationship of forces is linked also to the international relationship of forces with the Stalinist movement. During the period of entryism a series of things was clear. Because we were in the CPF, we addressed ourselves to the workers' movement through this organization. This meant raising slogans for running joint CP-SP candidates and for a CP-SP coalition government, which boiled down to an opportunist orientation.

As against this, the contortions of the AJS [Alliance des Jeunes pour le Socialisme—Alliance of Youth for Socialism] are not much better. The AJS raises the united-front slogan, but as they cannot aspire to play any direct role in this, the demand becomes merely propagandistic. This reduces the AJS-OCI [Organisation Communiste Internationaliste—Internationalist Communist Organization] to the role of matchmaker of the left, as demonstrated in 1969 when they lamented over the rivalry between Duclos and Deferre.

Finally the AMR [Alliance Marxiste Révolutionnaire—Revolutionary Marxist Alliance] is supposedly following the perspective of an FOU [Front Unique Ouvrière—workers' united front], which, to top it off, includes a governmental formula. But as they are far from having enough weight, they first have to promote a unity policy on the part of the far left so as to raise the role of the revolutionists in the FOU by a notch.

This FOU tactic has its logic at the level of demands: alliances, governmental formulas, election slogans. It also has its organizational logic—to assume in the workers' movement in practice the role of negotiator that you hope one day to play on the political level. Hence, the choice of the FO [Front Ouvrière—Workers' Front] as the trade union to work in; hence their insistence on representing the UNEF [Union Nationale des Etudiants de France—National Union of Students of France] as a union that should enter the FOU with full rights. Hence also the AMR's stubborn determination to reconstruct a student union. Is such an organization a union or not? The argument is ultimately rather pointless. And what can settle it is not a social characterization of the student milieu, but rather defining the function of the different structures from the standpoint of the political perspective underlying them. Approaching the debate from this angle would make it, among other things, possible to reduce the ambiguities about the FNCL [Fédération Nationale des Comités de

Lutte—National Federation of Struggle Committees].

## 2. Our Tactic

More or less clearly, we have placed ourselves in a radically different perspective—the dialectic between unity in action and outflanking the bureaucrats. This tactic is made possible because we are willing at the same time to grapple with the organized workers' movement and to compromise with the far left, even when they are more "ultra" than "far." For this ultraleftism proceeds from real social forces thwarted by the Stalinist bar on the door at the very time their situation is leading them into sharper and sharper conflicts with the bourgeoisie. This difficult tactic differentiates us from the AJS who refuse to see anything but the organized workers' movement and who only reluctantly went along with the Overney demonstration. It also differentiates us from the ultraleftists who abandon the big organized battalions of the working class to the bureaucrats and think that they can rebuild a completely new workers' movement through the sole means of actions that go over the head of the union leaderships.

In practice, this tactic becomes concrete in industrial work where systematic tendency activity in the unions is combined with promoting democratic forms of organizing the workers in struggles (e.g., strike committees, self-defense pickets) and of organizing support groups. But at the same time this is complemented by the independent intervention of Taupe [Mole] groups and the creation of ad-hoc committees for certain campaigns (army) or FSI [Front de Solidarité Indochine—Indochina Solidarity Front] committees.

In all centralized actions, this tactic has been applied concretely on the basis of painstaking evaluations that regularly give rise to heated debates. The most recent cases involved the May Day and June 7 actions. And it should be pointed out, moreover, that our attitude was determined by tactical considerations and not principles. This was shown by the different solutions adopted in different cities. For May Day in Montpellier we took part in a united trade-union demonstration, and in Toulouse, in a demonstration organized by the CGT alone, as well as in a demonstration of revolutionaries. On June 7, on the other hand, in Toulouse and Rouen we did not come out in our own name, since we had a union base enabling us to put up a fight within the labor movement itself. In Paris, despite the difficulties and at the cost of dissension within the BP [Bureau Politique—Political Bureau] we made our position felt on the political project the CPF was carrying out through the intermediary of the CGT, thereby strengthening our hand in working with the CFDT [Confédération Française et Démocratique du Travail—French Democratic Confederation of Labor].

In the anti-imperialist struggle, the FSI is a particularly appropriate instrument for carrying out this tactic inasmuch as it enjoys the endorsement of the Vietnamese. Through the FSI, we can force unity in action, as we have done in the case of demonstrations or in certain mass



meetings (e. g., Antibes, Condom) and retain the initiative to follow up the action (November 6).

Finally, on the level of demands, this tactic best illustrates the propagandistic way we have used the formula of a workers' government, especially in the Manifesto. Given what we ask of a workers' government, it is illusory to hope for a workers' government in which we are not active participants. This would, moreover, presuppose a united front between us and the reformists. This is why the formula holds an essentially propagandistic meaning. In practice, we may be led, on an electoral level, to back a SP-CP alliance, to support certain social measures. But that would not justify giving such a coalition the characterization of a workers' government. A victory of the left on the electoral field, a very hypothetical possibility, would speed up the onset of confrontations. Such a victory would, on the contrary, oblige us to reinforce the masses' distrust of the reformists. On the basis of this perspective, the electoral tactic must be given a subordinate function. With the existence of a strong state that has emptied the parliamentary game of its content, the role of elections has diminished. But the more effective we are in assuming a direct role in the class struggle itself, the more systematically we develop extralegal activities against militarism, fascism, and the private security forces of the bosses, the broader will be our margin for electoral maneuvers. In this context, for example, calling for a vote for a SP-CP bloc would not mean that we consider this coalition a class front, but that we made our decision on the basis of the meaning that such a vote would have for the workers. This is taking for granted that at the same time we would assert the fullest possible independence of action.

### 3. Consequences for the System of Organization

The tactic that we are following is not, in fact, without its implications for the organizational system we are building up.

We have already seen that in applying the tactic of the workers' united front [FUO] the getting hold of organizational labels (even gamy ones like FO), as well as defining the student movement as part of the trade-union movement—play a fundamental role. For our part, we are not committed to building a regenerated workers' movement in the shell of the old. In the course of our mass work we have been breaking off revolutionary currents, fronts that cannot cut away from Stalinism without being polarized around revolutionary positions.

This is the origin of the ambiguities of all our mass structures. The framework for our activity is the perspective of building tendencies in the unions. We are trying to do this concretely by fighting for limited proposals in

the context of trade-union congresses, trying to stimulate the appearance of a radicalized current around these slogans. Such currents are not stable. We can consolidate them only through repeated incisive actions, through a series of battles linked to our overall strategy. As we have already said, a tendency is not a permanent organizational reality—it emerges piecemeal through a series of battles. On the other hand, an active, semipermanent nucleus can coalesce within such a tendency, composed either of organized workers, or primarily of union members or political militants left without direction from their organizations who are willing to work with us in the union. This more or less stable regroupment formation represents more of a political current willing to work together in the union context than a tendency of the type we are projecting. This is the problem that is at the root of the difficulties in defining the character of the Mole groups, and the expanded fractions (which are sometimes exaggeratedly so). This situation also provides a lasting justification for the role of the GTs [Groupes Taupes—Mole groups].

Likewise if we wanted to set an FUO perspective for our current, it would be logical to constitute the FNCL, and the EE [Ecole Emancipée—Liberated School] as the counterparts on the campuses of these trade-union tendencies. Hence the temptation to establish the FNCL as a new UNEF, which explains the overture to SNESup [Syndicat National de l'Enseignement Supérieur—National Union of Higher Education]—inasmuch as the FNCL abstained from taking explicit political positions in the souk affair for example. Hence also the temptation to define the EE as an already constructed teachers' branch of a multitrade-union tendency reaching across the borders of the various federations. Whereas for historical reasons and because of the crisis of the educational system resulting from its relationship to the points of production, the EE has inevitably been an ambivalent structure. It has played the role of a tendency in the union, but maintained itself as a political current with full-time officers, an independent press, cadre schools, etc. It is accepting this dual nature of the EE that has made it possible to involve this organization in such operations as the Bertin affair.

This question was already looming up behind the debate over the ORJ. In fact we are not going to reconstruct the workers' movement by carefully putting in place the classical appendages of a revolutionary party. In contrast to the OCI the party that we are building does not amount simply to a central core of a network of unions or union tendencies, flanked by a youth organization, and anxious to achieve the growth required to aim for the FUO. We are building a nerve center whose function is to systematically organize movements breaking out of the bureaucratic channels of the traditional workers' movement by developing mass fronts inside, and outside, of the unions. This is a graphic and consequently schematic juxtaposition of the two views, but it is clear that there is an important difference. And this is why the debate over the ORJ was so lively; what was in question was the type of organization we should build, that would be suited to the tasks we have set for ourselves.

### 3. To Conclude—Several Guidelines for Building the Organization

We are not going to build the organization separate from a strategy, but on the basis of a strategy. For example, let's take Maitan's polemic against Hansen in the internal bulletin on Latin America. Maitan writes: *"Guerrilla warfare is one of the methods of struggle to use in a given context that aides in the construction or in the reinforcement of the party. Has Comrade Hansen ever thought of opposing, for example, the construction of the party and participation in a general strike?"* It seems evident that applying an armed-struggle orientation does not in principle conflict with building a party of the Leninist type. This said, Comrade Maitan seems to have posed the question badly and evaded the real problem. In reality, a general strike is the culmination of mass work, an extension of this work at a given moment in a particular context. The same revolutionary organization that has developed systematic mass work, union work in particular, should be able to act within a general strike without radically modifying its own structures. On the other hand, if we are talking about an orientation of armed struggle, and more precisely guerrilla struggle in the case under consideration in Latin America, then this fact affects the whole process of constructing the party. The relationship between party construction, armed struggle, and mass work assumes a particular, complex character. In the main, the problem is what kind of mass work, legal or semilegal, in the labor movement and in intellectual circles, can be done by a clandestine party engaged in armed struggle? How do democratic demands and armed struggle fit together? What organizational structures are capable of tying the two fronts together?

Given this example, what guideline must we follow in building the organization, based on the perspectives that we set for ourselves?

#### 1. Role of the Organizational Framework

Let's go back to the case of the OCI. Its blind consistency is almost perfect. The perspective is the F.U.O. In order to establish the F.U.O. the OCI sets up a whole trade-union phalanx, including the FO and the UNEF-Unité. To develop this phalanx, the essential organizational motive force is national fractions in different unions, different branches, with cells playing only a very small role.

We have seen, on the other hand, when the CPF went on the offensive pushing its program, what dangers lay in wait for us in the working class. Certain comrades, who were politically poorly prepared, and in particular lacked the organizational support to face up to this offensive, tended to back away from a fight. These comrades

argued, like the document by Antonin-Ménard, that the question of power was not posed, and that in this context a certain kind of political debate becomes a diversion from the struggle. The result of this attitude is to rely more on the CFDT than on the Ligue as an instrument of struggle in the working class against the Stalinists, because the CFDT has more credibility and more of a role in day-to-day struggles. The other temptation, felt notably by the comrades working in the CGT, was to respond to the Stalinist offensive with a confrontation of line against line, fraction against fraction, abandoning in fact the educational perspective of building a tendency and undertaking a move that could only have isolated us. In both cases, by taking refuge in the CFDT and by carrying the whole political debate into the CGT, comrades were trying to compensate for our lack of independent political weight vis-à-vis the Stalinists.

We do not think that the solution lies in this direction, but rather in strengthening our own forces and in asserting our own answers. This was the significance of the campaign around the Manifesto. And in this case, the same comrades often expressed reservations on the theme of "it's a gimmick!" On the organizational level, this also means that our main effort must be devoted to building up a political skeleton of our organization—the national leadership bodies, the city leaderships, the cell executive committees, the cells, and the Mole groups. The organization will not be built over the head of its leadership bodies. Industrial work cannot be developed through fraction, national branches, and intervening in struggles, unless political units are built at the city and cell level that can serve as anchors for this activity. The Lambertists can only organize workers in fractions; this is consistent with their line. Experience has taught us that we can make a breakthrough in local struggle, but if we do not at the same time firm up the city organization and its DV [direction de ville—city leadership], this work is lost. The commissions, fractions, branches are valuable auxiliaries, and they must definitely remain subordinated to the central leaderships. Likewise the Mole groups must not, as is sometimes the case, limit themselves to working as a trade-union fraction, or as a minitendency, but try to function as political cells, while respecting the uneven levels of understanding and rates of development of the comrades who are active within them.

#### 2. Conceiving the Range of Our Intervention

At the cadre school for the DVs in the south of France, we said that the range of our union activity almost systematically passed over the important struggles. This is not by chance. When we started building our base, in order to hold our own against the Stalinists, get the benefit of support from the national branches, and avoid dispersing our forces, we generally focused our activity on the big bastions of the working class in the areas. (In Toulouse and Montpellier, this was Sud-A, ONIA, PTT [Telephone and Telegraph Service], SNCF [French State

Railroad Co.), Sécurité Sociale [Social Security] . . .) This work enabled us to carry out some operations in connection with national initiatives (outflanking the bureaucratic organizers of the public employees' demonstration on June 4, 1971, in Toulouse). But it kept us away from whatever struggles broke out in the more marginal and more turbulent sectors (Hachette in Toulouse, Mamouth and CROUS in Montpellier, Crédit Agricole in Albi, Samex in Millau) and away from the young workers.

The problem that arises concerns the dialectical relationship between our intervening in the old working-class bastions and in the combative enterprises, working with experienced union cadres and the combative young proletarians, between work in the CGT and in the CFDT (it being understood that the CGT does not necessarily hold all the bastions and experienced cadres, anymore than the CFDT is synonymous with the young and combative sectors).

Comrades see simply that after an initial phase of consolidation, the Ligue is beginning to show signs of marking time. Certain comrades may believe that in order to take another small step forward we should carry out a series of elementary measures such as improve the *Taupes* [factory intervention papers], rationalize our work, simplify our language . . . All of that is indispensable, but clearly insufficient. We must make more radical changes in the range of our local and regional activity so as to transform the base and general image of the organization. This is the precondition for new steps forward.

For example, in Toulouse, on the fringes of our traditional arenas of activity, a series of contacts are beginning to appear in the new electronics shops, in the building industry, in the new hospitals, in Job, etc. . . We will not be able to increase the number of cells and Mole groups in the same proportion. On the other hand, we can organize these contacts in the *Comités Rouges* [Red Committees] and back up their union work by distributing a special monthly issue of the *Taupe* alternatively with a printed *Midi-Rouge* (southern edition of *Rouge*), also monthly. We must also start up in connection with union activity that has already been consolidated, systematic intervention in the large working-class neighborhoods. All of this presupposes the relocation of the student activists in particular. They must get out of the old university centers and make their homes in these neighborhoods. This is even more true when the decentralization of the university system facilitates moving back into the neighborhoods.

Likewise in Montpellier which is not an especially working-class city (and maybe in Rennes), new expansion requires broadening the range of regional activity. In particular this involves beginning to establish a base in the peasant sector and an attempt to get a footing in the municipal bastions of the CP—e.g., Sète, Nîmes, Alès, Beaucaire . . .

Finally, after we reach a certain threshold in our growth, the dialectic of our work in the CGT and the CFDT must be rethought and analyzed more precisely. During an early period, our weakness or the difficulty of getting the political lay of the land (especially in Paris), made union work seem to have just two contrasting sides, CGT work and CFDT work. But ultimately, we must be able to combine activity in both organizations. Thus in ac-

cordance with this perspective, at Renault we began working in the CFDT. Thus also in Toulouse our great weakness in the CFDT and the weakness of the CFDT itself constituted a real handicap. But our weakness in the CFDT is not unrelated to the type of priorities we have correctly set up to the present.

### 3. A Strategy for Developing a National Base

Up to the present the organization has grown in accordance with natural laws. That is, in reality its expansion has been determined by random contacts and comrades moving here and there because of their jobs. The result is that we have the widest geographical spread of any of the groups on the far left. For some time this expansion has played a positive role in giving us a national status alongside the CPF. But we are quickly going to reach a point where this spontaneous growth is no longer profitable and may even result in a waste of energies.

In fact we are coming to a point, after an initial propagandistic phase that could pass off smoothly, where rationalizing our allocation of forces will require a more precise analysis of the social forces we are addressing ourselves to. To summarize: We can no longer assign our forces purely according to where the CPF has activists, slavishly copying the lines of its deployment. Instead we must apply the law of uneven and combined development to our own national reality.

The problem is clear concerning the southern region (Toulouse-Montpellier). Either we accept a subordinate position on the national scale and sit back and do follow-up work on our past successes, waiting for new advances nationally to have an impact on our region. Or else we forge ahead. And in that case we must take account as we grow of the social reality on which we can base ourselves. This means, in particular, taking account of the importance of the peasant movement (its mass character, the way it has been almost the only bearer of social violence for nearly a century, and the way it interlocks with the workers' movement). Thus in the Montpellier region the reciprocal influence of the forms of struggle utilized by the peasants on the working class (Perrier, Millau) and of the working class on the peasant movement (e.g., the reverberations of Mamouth) assumes a crucial importance. This doesn't mean going on a long march, but rather helping to break the dam that the CP and the Social Democracy have built to confine peasant struggles within narrow economic and sectoral limits. So undertaking such work doesn't mean adding a supplementary sector to the organization, but redefining the dynamic of our regional work, conceiving of whole organic unified areas of work in which the explosive factors represented by social contrasts can be utilized to the fullest. From this point of view, a region like the Midi can play a revolutionary role at least as important as the traditional workers' regions whose political life has been shaped by the CP and the Social Democracy. Analogous problems arise especially in Brittany.

If we try to systematize this approach, aiming to combine uneven development, two essential problems will arise.

(a) We will have to give regions other than the Paris area alone national priorities in allocating forces. This holds in particular for the Marseilles region, the Lyon-Grenoble-St. Etienne region, the Nantes region, the southern part of the Provençal-speaking area, and Lorraine. This doesn't mean making a list of the geographic targets, but of starting now to persuade activists to try to relocate themselves to these areas and concentrate their efforts on these objectives.

(b) We will have to begin taking up the problem of the relationships linking the organization of urban middle layers, the channels of our intervention in the peasantry (peasant unions, regionalist movements) and our industrial work.

Choosing candidates for the legislative elections will give us a concrete opportunity to clarify the axes of our expansion—the sectors where we want to root ourselves, where we want to examine the social reality under a microscope, guidelines for trailblazing and colonizing cities on which we are concentrating a special effort in hopes of making significant breakthroughs.

#### 4. The Question of Violence

The perspectives that we are able to point out likewise imply a certain type of organization with regard to utilizing violence. Let us once again turn to the negative example we have already utilized several times, the OCI: At the time of the Nogrette affair the AJS leadership revealed clearly to us their conception excluding minority violence in principle. The only kind of violence they will contemplate is the mass violence that might take form through the achievement of the united front.

For us on the contrary, the reintroduction of violence into the class struggle involves an aspect of deliberate, somewhat voluntaristic initiative by the vanguard. Thus, at the same time as conducting systematic propaganda work for self-defense as a form of organization by struggling masses, we have not hesitated to resort to violent actions when their relationship to mass work could be clearly established, as in the case of Burgos and Indochina.

Within this overall framework, it is necessary to understand and to systematize the dialectics of mass violence and minority violence. In particular, we must draw the connection between the actions against scab unions (e.g., the CFT), the antifascist activities (the Palais des Sports rally, etc.), and resuming antimilitarist activities (the Masu campaign, etc.) on a more systematic basis.

But saying that we must conceive of these actions as a whole not as spectacular sidelights, but as a permanent, essential axis of our activity, entails a series of organizational consequences.

In general, this means that we must begin to build from the top down, within the present framework, the skeletal structures of tomorrow's organization—intelligence services and intervention groups. And in particular, as

the pre-congress document points out, we must try to prevent a division from arising spontaneously between proletarian activists doing union work and the student activists who might be in the SO [Service d'Ordre—marshalling squads]. Instead the greatest care must be taken to integrate the worker activists into the SOs by specific procedures.

Finally, in dealing with this problem in particular, the greatest attention must be devoted to the role of the central leadership bodies. Just as these organs must be able to synthesize and centralize our activities so as to overcome dislocations that might arise between the dynamic of our youth work and of our union work, likewise they must be able to direct the organization's mass work and its preparations for future tasks. Otherwise we will find "military cliques" beginning to operate independently and departing further and further from the general context of our work.

#### 5. The Organizational Forms for Intervening in the Working Class

To repeat once again, class tensions are not such that radicalized workers feel the need for a revolutionary party in an immediate way. Likewise, our role in the unions does not always permit us to demonstrate convincingly to activists disgusted at the bureaucracy that we have the capacity to help them in a prolonged battle within the unions.

This is why, while we adhere to an organizational scheme of plant cells, fractions, and tendencies, such a blueprint is not immediately applicable. We are required for an extended period to reconcile ourselves to more ambiguous forms of organization. And the possibility of defining these forms more clearly does not depend solely on our progress but also on major changes occurring in the objective situation, on a heating up of class confrontations.

This is why the real scheme today is rather one of mixed cells-Mole groups-expanded fractions. This picture could be further complicated by a combination between the GTRs [Groupes Taupes Rouges—Red Mole groups] in the individual plants and red committees including workers from several unions, such as the one in Toulouse run by the cell in the ONIA. Likewise an expanded fraction that does the preparatory work for struggles at the plant level may sometimes bring together activists otherwise organized, but who get little backing from their organizations (SP, PSU, CIC . . . [Socialist Party, Unified Socialist Party, Communist Information Center]), to such a degree that the formation might occupy an intermediary position between a multiunion tendency and the type of political grouping we accept so long as the activists participating collaborate in a clearly defined framework of union struggle.

It is essential to understand the discrepancy between the organizational system that we are trying to achieve and the one we are actually working with. It was such an understanding that was lacking in the comrades from Carcassonne who left the Ligue.

Once the guidelines are established, the question of whether we should call a national conference of the Mole groups or whether we should give them a general name (such as the Red Mole Front), becomes secondary discussion.

Here we have a series of problems that it seemed to us should be raised in the pre-congress discussion. There is nothing in them that would revolutionize the work we are doing now, just an attempt to expand our horizon. The formulations are perhaps hasty and therefore dangerous. The point of view too much marked by regional experience and therefore one-sided. But these deficiencies also only reflect the weakness of our national perspective for building the organization. We prefer to accept these drawbacks and raise the questions that arise for us.

Comrades must in fact begin to look a little beyond their *Taupes* and the social rubric of *Le Monde*, and beyond

our accumulated historical experience. This is true first of all because as our work progresses it raises new problems for which the Fourth International's fund of experience offers only embryonic answers. Secondly, unless we enrich this arsenal through practical work, the Fourth International itself will quickly find itself disarmed in the face of experiences that cannot be carried forward by simply drawing on past solutions preserved at the propagandistic level. In particular, we will have a lot of trouble answering the questions raised by certain Latin American sections or the Spanish comrades, if we close our eyes to our own future while holding forth on the whole range of international problems. It would be particularly dangerous to pose questions for other sections that we have not formulated for ourselves, when our situation offers us the privilege of being able to approach this task on the basis of a richer organizational experience than the Trotskyist movement has known for a long time.

Montpellier, June 21, 1972

# Contribution to the Debate After Document No. 30

By Roger

## Editorial Note

The following article appeared in the July, 1972, issue (No. 33) of the internal bulletin of the Ligue Communiste, the French section of the Fourth International.

The comrades who signed contribution No. 30 in the *Internal Bulletin* conclude by saying that their formulations are "perhaps hasty and therefore dangerous. The point of view too much marked by regional experience and therefore one-sided." They justify themselves by saying that "these deficiencies also only reflect the weakness of our national perspective for building the organization."

That is undoubtedly the first ambiguity in the document, for among the signers there is a national leader of the organization and a rather important one at that. The result is that the so-called Political Bureau document (*Internal Bulletin* No. 28) is either incoherent or insufficient, a document that few of its authors stand behind, and everyone seems dissatisfied with. The reason for this is that the discussion—as was possible—has not been channeled to any extent through the constituted national leadership bodies, but is springing up outside of them. It is not at all surprising, therefore, that hasty formulations have been made, based on a one-sided regional point of view. Moreover, this way of approaching the discussion runs counter to the goal sought by all—to find ways to revitalize and reinforce the central leadership bodies of the League.

Having said this, responsibility must be taken for pushing the discussion a little faster, and perhaps getting somewhat diverted by these "hasty formulations." This poses a danger of distorting the exchange of views. Document No. 30 is quite suggestive, saying either too much or too little on many subjects. This is why we have to ask the authors of the document some questions so that the comrades won't object about false imputations or misunderstandings. The answers they give in the course of the debate will make up for the ambiguities in the document and doubtless forestall any tilting at windmills in the future.

## 1. The Working Class, the Only Revolutionary Class

The first question we must take up with the comrades is raised by the "summary" of their view of the coming revolutionary crisis (*Internal Bulletin* No. 30, page 5, chapter 2). It begins with this statement:

*"We cannot hope to rebuild a real workers' movement*

*piecemeal after half a century of Stalinism."*

Since this statement is offered as a final summary, it is worth lingering on it a moment. How much is being given up? How far does the statement go? What is a "real workers' movement," and what analysis of the crisis of Stalinism leads us to lose hope of reconstructing a workers' party "piecemeal"?

We understand the pains the comrades take to warn against "classical schemas"; such scrupulousness always evokes a lot of sympathy. But in the context of the *Internal Bulletin* this statement can raise quite a few questions.

For in *Internal Bulletin* No. 30 there is something of a common thread running through the discussion of the working class. The authors refer to it as "economically exploited, politically oppressed, ideologically dominated," and note that "We forget to say that it is also militarily dominated," its living conditions being subjected to "rigorous discipline and strict restrictions on its use of time." The comrades specify that the only types of military organization built by this class are "defensive (!)," "relatively sporadic," and "poorly suited to meeting the challenge of the state in the offensive field."

On the one hand, each time the working class is mentioned it's to underline the limits of its activity, of its organized forms, of our work in it, of its "capacity for violence." On the other hand, there is continual eulogizing of the "more supple" middle urban and rural layers that have "a greater capacity for evasive action," that are "capable of organizing itself in armed columns." Their "social mobility," their "financial, material and technical resources." And the role of the peasants in 1917, the Tupamaros, and the ERP (continual references are made throughout to Latin America and Spain) as well as the march of the Chinese Eighth Route Army are cited as examples. Likewise, they stress that "a party with a predominantly peasant social base, even if it claimed to be under the leadership of the proletariat, serve(d) as the instrument of a socialist revolution." The case in point is the Chinese Communist Party.

While the Chinese Communist Party claimed to represent the leadership of the working class, it was more under the leadership of the bureaucratized Third International, and then of a leading group trained in the school of Stalinism. Moreover, we know more particularly that this party did not correctly analyze the question of the socialist revolution or refrain from opportunism in the class alliances formed under its aegis.

In battling "a deceptively reassuring classical approach," the authors of this document risk tumbling blithely into an opportunism that is really disturbing. It is true that the comrades speak of class alliances "with, and under the leadership of, the proletariat," even if it's just as a prelude to saying "this in particular enables the working class to benefit from the military capacities of the peasantry and the urban middle layers."

This is manifest error. It is completely false to claim that the middle urban and rural layers are more "capable of violence" than the working class. What does this notion of "capacity for violence" mean? What kind of violence? This question is determined by our objectives. Not only does the "suppleness" of the peasantry make its impulsive outbursts of militancy febrile and pointless; this class is as unstable as the urban middle layers. While these strata are capable of flareups, of abrupt leaps that could provide a spark, the furnace lies elsewhere, within the organized workers' movement. Although reformist and pacifist during normal times, it alone, by harnessing petty-bourgeois or peasant impulsiveness to its own objectives, can give such flareups the dimensions of a challenge to the system.

It is false to say in the advanced capitalist countries of Europe, and particularly in France where the traditions and weight of the proletariat are very great, that "the preparatory phase takes on all the greater importance for us inasmuch as we have to reintroduce the dimension of revolutionary violence against the weighty traditions of legality in the workers' movement." *There will be no phase preparatory to a revolutionary crisis until at least major sectors of the working class have entered into struggle.*

*For in no way can all the "benefit" gained from the exemplary violence of the intermediate strata replace the indispensable experiences of large sections of the proletarian masses themselves.*

This erroneous "slip" by the authors of document No. 30, moreover, carries them further. They explain that we must reject the notion of a "slowly maturing working-class consciousness, of a long experience of workers' control." Deducing from this, naturally, that our organization should adopt the perspective of short-term extralegal activity, and they openly advocate a militarist course. This not only proposes a course inescapably doomed to failure, involving as it does an attempt to bypass the working class, but puts in question our present analysis of the French working class movement and of the crisis of Stalinism.

Paradoxically, document No. 30 is the product of an overestimation of the weight of the Stalinist party in France. By failing to see the phenomenal contradictions that are developing today in the PCF [French Communist Party] as well as in the CGT [General Confederation of Labor], document No. 30 searches for a shortcut to somehow get around the pacifist and reformist tradition to which the working class movement seems unalterably attached. Hence, it gives up on rebuilding a real workers' movement, tending to generalize this into a theory, and jumps impatiently toward "continental war,"<sup>1</sup> the peasantry, youth workers, the middle strata, and a new conception of the revolutionary party as a military organization with the role of making up for lack of violent

1. This naturally does not mean we should not resort to violent actions by small groups but rather that we should continue using this method as defined up till now — get the support and understanding of a mass movement, as in the instances of the Burgos case when Spanish missions to Paris were attacked, and as in the case of Indochina. Just our criticism of the Nogrette kidnapping, and our opposition to the NRP-GP was correct.

mass initiatives by the working class (cf. points 3 and 4 of the summary, page 5, chapter 2):

"(3) We cannot rely on the reassuring schema of an insurrectional general strike that would limit our own responsibilities for laying the groundwork and taking initiative.

"(4) The revolutionary organization must be the political and military vanguard in the class struggle. Unless it fills this role, propaganda for self-defense and forming militias remains hollow."

This complete change in orientation, this conception of the revolutionary party is furthermore systematized by the comrades. In attempting to be consistent they themselves go on to explain in this way their positions during the discussion of youth work and their refusal to support the formation of the ORJ [Organisation Révolutionnaire de la Jeunesse—Revolutionary Youth Organization]. This gives us a better idea of the role of the FCR and the FNCR that some of the authors supported. *So at last some real light has been shed on the youth discussion we had.* At bottom, this line of argument calling for the organization to play an *explicitly* substitutionist role rests on the analysis of the "military domination of the proletariat." This is a far-reaching revision that cannot have simply a conjunctural bearing. The examples cited, from October 1917 to the Chinese Eighth Route Army, are used to support broad historical generalizations. But, on the one hand, even these examples are false. The Russian peasantry was by no means suited to playing a military role. It was only through being organized in the ranks of the Czarist army by the officers, and then in the revolutionary army by the proletariat, that they attained a minimum organizational structure.

On the other hand, yet another gross error is committed when this "military domination of the proletariat" is explained by referring to a "half century of Stalinism." The domination of Stalinism did not at all weaken the workers to the point where they were "no longer capable of violence." On the contrary, the working class is capable of rising spontaneously and rapidly to a level of military organization immediately and directly threatening the state power.

The organizational forms born out of the working-class struggles are not "defensive." Even a strike picket has the double character of being both defensive and offensive. As for the claim that these organizational forms are "relatively sporadic," this is again untrue. The big working-class centers are the crucibles of might, sustained upsurges that quickly attain a very high level of organization (incomparably higher than the highest levels of peasant organization). Above all, such upsurges quickly achieve an organizational level decisive for taking over manufacturing and services.

Let's take the example of Saviem in Caen before May 1968. At that time the level of violence was higher than any peasant demonstration has reached since that time. The weapons devised by the workers testify eloquently to this — ax handles with razor blades imbedded in them. The street fighting lasted several hours. These angry workers owed their capacity for collectively organizing and carrying out violent actions to the concentration of forces in a large enterprise. It was the factory life that made that possible. But, on the other hand, these were young workers from a rural background, and this was

the source in the next stage of their biggest weakness. Factory life had enabled them to achieve a level of organization and collective consciousness surpassing that attainable by dispersed young peasants. But, against this, these rural workers' youth and lack of traditions hindered full organizational development and unionization. Political work in this area was difficult and limited. It was here that one of our comrades let himself get carried away by an impressive commando group. It undoubtedly included some of the same "combative" workers, but they were members of the reactionary union (cf. a recent *Rouge*).

When the Renault-Cléon workers occupied their factory on the evening of May 14, 1968, they immediately and "spontaneously" took defensive measures (in the tradition of the working class). They set up strike pickets, armed themselves with iron bars, screw-bolts, flame-throwers, and camped all night around fires placed at every door of the large factory. Patrols and the whole required system of surveillance and self-defense measures were instituted in anticipation of the CRS (special forces). It was only *afterwards* that the Stalinists were able to demobilize this system—ironically, a system that they had themselves, in the last analysis and in the historical sense taught the workers to set up.

It may seem astonishing to have to repeat examples that our experience with the French working-class movement has allowed us to verify frequently and on a grand scale. But this is necessary in our organization when a document can so lightly write off with the stroke of a pen the "reassuring schema of an insurrectional general strike" and condemn "schemas" of new June '36s and May '68s.

The present contradictions of the Fifth Republic are all analyzed in the first part of document No. 28—the crisis of the presidential system, the breakup of the majority party, the arduous attempts of the bourgeoisie and the bosses to build a conservative party, the threats that the new union of the left conjure up for the present system, the high level of working-class combativity, the presence of a stronger revolutionary far-left in the shadow of the workers' movement and capable of setting in motion processes that the bureaucrats can't control. All of these facts completely refute speculative forecasts of a revolutionary crisis conceived as a continental revolutionary war (sic). What will be the nature of this revolutionary crisis? Crystal-ball gazing is bad practice, and, above all, trying to draw from speculation of this kind such specific strategic conclusions as to affect organizational questions smacks of adventurism.

Now from a completely different standpoint—a tactical one—creating situations where the working class ultimately "benefits" from the violence of the urban middle layers is nothing new! The May '68 barricades erected by the student movement already played this role of detonator. But once again this instance enables us not only to put the role played by the student movement into perspective (before the French, the German student movement also fought . . . but without evoking the same response from the workers' movement). The example of the French may measure the capacity of the workers' movement for mobilizing and resuming the offensive both in spite of, and because of, the existence of the PCF.

It is plausible to say that there will be no more May '68s without thoroughgoing shifts in the relationship of

forces between the "left" and the "farleft," as well as within these two blocs. But we must immediately recognize the contradictions within the PCF and realize that they will not be able to give a repeat performance of their role in the Overney operation. Conditions will prevent them from wriggling off the hook in the next class confrontations. At that time our steps to combine promoting unity in action with setting in motion processes the bureaucrats can't control will play their full role. They should enable us to "benefit" from the support and protection of important sectors of the working class in phases of confrontation with the state.

To enter into a confrontation without this support is not only an adventure (as others before us have experienced, i. e., the GP [Proletarian Left]), but it has the effect of completely miseducating the workers. The use of force is not taught by examples alone. How many times have we seen cases of neighboring factories where the workers movement in one has experienced battles with the CRS and where in another one very nearby, the workers only "discover" violence the moment it reaches them.

In contrast to the urban and rural intermediate strata, the workers' movement employs organized violence only in exceptional *political* situations and in the context of overall *political* perspectives. And such perspectives have an exactness, seriousness, and critical spirit corresponding to the level of organization of the workers and the richness of their traditions. These conditions must be created, and we must help to bring them about without falling into substitutionism.

Finally, it is quite correct to say that the bourgeoisie is perfecting its repressive arsenal and will not allow us to grow. But it still has to be able to get at us! It is only a step—one often too quickly taken—from describing illegal armed bands (SAC [Service d'Action Civique—Civil Action Service], CDR, CFT, ON [Ordre Nouveau—New Order, a neofascist organization], etc. . . .) to equating the formation and constant maintenance of these groups by factions of rightists and employers with the deliberate and conscious policy today of the vast majority of the bourgeoisie and the bosses. This contradiction must not be forgotten, as it dovetails with another contradiction peculiar to the French bourgeoisie. They are faced with an enemy that they would also like to cut down, the PCF. The Stalinized workers' movement is a protective screen for the development of revolutionary organizations. It is difficult to strike out at revolutionists without also hitting the Communist Party (e. g., the 1970 Lois scélérats [Infamous laws] or the assassination of Michel Labroche). This explains the two complementary aspects of the bosses' policy—a liberal orientation, a "democratic game" for all the major political forces, PCF included, *plus* illegal bands, which are more useful, more efficient and more discreet for use against revolutionists.

We cannot respond to these combined tactics of repression and cooption without distinguishing the forms that our response must take. Our answer must be twofold. It would be aberrant to direct the entire organization into extralegal activity. Being determines consciousness, even for revolutionists. If they decided to anticipate things, to plan for and organize future illegal work, this can be done only by a very small minority (which, moreover, as we already know, makes many mistakes). It cannot be the political orientation for some thousands of activists!



It is true that there are no absolute distinctions between a period of legality and one of illegality. This is not where the distinction lies; it lies rather in the type of illegal tasks that can be carried out in a period of legality (by taking full advantage of legal conditions) as well as in the extent of the human, technical, and financial resources devoted to this sort of work. Not only should the whole organization not be thrown into this, but we should dole out the forces devoted to it. There should be no general confusion between the political orientation of the illegal work and the consequences of this work. The two must be carefully and explicitly separated, while the same time seeing to it that they complement each other fundamentally. It is here that the central leadership bodies must more than ever assert their weight and responsibility in order to achieve such a synthesis. These bodies must *democratically* discuss what forces should be doled out to this work on the basis of the political situation.

Building central leadership bodies and an apparatus capable of preparing the party to take state power is indispensable even though we believe that the most important step forward will be made in the very context of taking power. It would be profoundly disruptive organizationally and would constitute a complete change in our line and orientation since the Second Congress to let it be thought that the primitive accumulation of worker cadres, the education of party members in Marxism, and the slow and patient construction of an apparatus are secondary and unachievable tasks (because of the supposition that we are heading into a period of illegality). We have to be able to give a double-edged answer to a two-sided government policy. Each aspect must be distinguished from the other and the dividing line readjusted according to the political situation. This is the conception we have to get across to the organization if we want to keep it from overlooking the political importance of this question and prevent the formation of "military" cliques *diverging more and more from the general context of our work*.

Thus, this first part argues against the "few hasty formulas" of the comrades from Toulouse and Montpellier.

Document No. 30 opens a real discussion by systematically laying out an alternative that appears only hinted at or in fragmentary form in document No. 28. But document No. 30 lacks the least appraisal of the specific forms of the crisis of Stalinism. The historical and current particularities of the workers' movement in the south—the respective roles played there by the CP, the SP, union and peasant organizations—cannot be generalized on a national scale. Quite the contrary.

## 2. Labor Periphery and Organizational Cadres of the Working Class

Document No. 28 explains that "fundamentally, it is the young workers whom we must win over because they

are the most capable of undertaking our projected tasks of building the party, developing workers' self-defense, and outflanking the PCF." Further on, the statement is repeated: "finally, our base for building the party is primarily the youth."

This theme is common to documents No. 28 and No. 30 and to a certain number of discussions that took place in the organization (e.g., at the April CC). It corresponds to real problems in industrial work.

Document No. 28 lists what according to the authors comprises "the broad working-class vanguard," including "a few organizational cadres of the class," a certain number of intermediary cadres, and especially the young workers.

Here we have a basis for discussing the dialectical relationship between "organizational cadres of the class" and the young workers, and between big bastions of the working class and sectors peripheral to the class.

In reality it would be dangerous to think that the situation is still "unripe" for approaching "organizational cadres of the class" and to abandon the kind of work we direct toward them. And conversely it would be illusory to orient toward these cadres without basing ourselves on the young workers' fighting experience and without utilizing the dynamic and militant example of the peripheral sectors.

Here we must decide *what degree* of importance should be assigned to activity aimed at the big working-class strongholds and the solid union cadres that we find there, and *what share* of our forces should be allotted to working in the undeveloped and traditionless sectors and among the inexperienced youth. While *everyone* agrees that there is a dialectical interrelationship between work directed at the periphery and at the big bastions of the working class (although in some discussions that took place at the Central Committee meeting in April 1972, there was a complete lack of interest in the "old strongholds"), there might be a tendency to differ on the problem of how to make the division. And this raises from another point of view the question of bypassing the PCF, of the analysis of the crisis of Stalinism that we touched on in the first part of this document. No one will be surprised to find in document No. 30 what follows from the views we have criticized.

This document goes further than No. 28, which hesitated to take up the "range of our activity." I quote:

"At the cadre schools for the DVs [directions de ville—city leaderships] in the south of France, we said that the range of our union activity almost systematically passed over the important struggles. This is not by chance. When we started building our base, in order to hold our own against the Stalinists, get the benefit of support from the national branches, and avoid dispersing our forces, we generally focused our activity on the big bastions of the working class in the areas. (In Toulouse and Montpellier this was: Sud-A, ONIA, PTT [Telephone and Telegraph Service], SNCF [French State Railroad Co.], Sécurité Sociale [Social Security] . . .). This work enabled us to carry out some operations in connection with national initiatives (outflanking the bureaucratic organizers of the public employees' demonstration on June 4, 1971, in Toulouse). But it kept us away from whatever struggles broke out in the more marginal and more turbulent sec-

tors (Hachette in Toulouse, Mamouth, CROUS in Montpellier, Crédit Agricole in Albi, Samex in Millau) and away from the young workers. . . .

"We must make more radical changes in the range of our local and regional activity so as to transform the base and general image of the organization. This is the precondition for a new step forward."

The approach becomes clear when the comrades transpose this course also into a "strategy for developing a national base," conceived as a dialectical interrelationship between geographic zones like the South and traditional working-class regions.

We must oppose any such slipping into overgeneralizations, especially since our organization has always had a tendency to "forget" orientations of this type and since our own activity in these last three months (since the Joint Français) has led us to give a predominant place in the columns of *Rouge* to struggles like the ones in Thionville, SCPC, Girosteel, Pennaroya, etc. . . . It is important to resist slipping into this approach since generalizing about such strikes and popularizing their example threatens to nourish illusions about a "breakthrough in the working class" and a "working-class left" (a common expression in all the far-left press, which is spreading dangerously among our ranks). Such carelessness could result in failing to see the links between the PCF and the labor movement today.

The Joint Français strike made a profound impact on our activity and our organization, but we must not think that we can keep on endlessly looking for the same sort of experience. We have to utilize this type of strike, yes, but in order to restore our confidence in the working-class fortresses.

Not only did the union elections in Girosteel in St. Laurent-du-Var, in Paris-SA Nantes, in the SCPC, in Thionville, and Dunkirk deal major setbacks to the CFDT, as well as register gains for the reactionary autonomous unions, but in addition, our intervention in these strikes did not strengthen us one iota at the local level. During the DV cadre school in Brittany on July 14, 1972, the report from Rennes explained that we should not harbor the kind of illusions about the Joint Français that we did about Batignoles. It pointed out that a Red Mole group had not been built or stabilized in St. Brieuc any more than in Nantes, and that consequently "we have got to stop all this talking about a new crisis of Stalinism and raving about the Joint Français 'breakthrough.'"

We must not confuse *national* interventions in strikes such as the Joint Français or Thionville—which are correct, specific actions, *carried out by traveling teams*<sup>2</sup> "a

2. Creating "traveling teams" is the proper organizational solution. Such teams should be set up under the control of workers' commissions in several large centers (Rouen, Toulouse, Aix-Marseille, Dijon, Lyon, Rennes, etc. . .) and in Paris. These traveling groups should be set up parallel to cells (like the SO [Service d'Ordre—marshalling squads]), be composed of specially trained comrades equipped for impromptu interventions (mimeos, silk screening materials), and be ready to relocate either to reinforce weak groups of the League—first of all avoiding substituting themselves for the local comrades—or to go where we have no base. These teams could be useful in investigating new areas, in reporting for *Rouge*, and they

radical change in our range of activity," which would be a false and schematic generalization of this practice. Not only should we not abandon the large working-class strongholds, but this is where we should popularize strikes like Joint Français, Girosteel, Pennaroya<sup>3</sup> . . . Yet we have to do this correctly so as not to leave an opening for people like Detraz, who said that "the leftists are asking us to create a thousand Joint Français just as they were asking us yesterday to create a thousand Vietnams . . ." This is especially true after the examples of Thionville and SCPC, where we should have been more cautious in drawing our conclusions.

Our interventions in current radical struggles should *above all* take into account the impact that they have on the large working-class strongholds. Is it absolutely necessary to win the struggle? No. But any failure of a strike that we have played up is seized on immediately and effectively used by the CGT (cf. "Vie Ouvrière—"Workers' Life") to combat this kind of struggle. In Thionville the PCF fraction in the CGT successfully "scored" and with a lasting effect. What we must emphasize are demands, organizational forms for the movement, the struggle against the CRS, scabs, the CFT and community solidarity, etc. . . . We must also save our general, propagandistic explanations for factories where we expect to make progress in building a communist nucleus. We must also take into account the fact that the workers don't want to be either "manipulated," or "used" and watch out for a "backlash" that could result from the ebb of a strike and the demobilization that follows.

We must combat the notion that there is a "revolutionary sector" of the working class outside of the organized union movement in the big strongholds, but we must not give up using and taking advantage continually of the peripheral sectors *in order to accomplish our objectives at the center*. In the same way we have to take advantage of the impact of worker struggles on the peasantry (the dairy producers' strike in Brittany; likewise the comrades in Brittany envisage a regionwide struggle against the closing of the electric plants between Nantes and Brest, scheduled for 1975). *The most important thing in all of this is to have a compass, a compass that points North! That is, clearly and plainly towards the decisive strongholds of the labor movement*. Watch out for evasions, abdications, or shortcuts!

This has specific organizational implications:

— Consistently reinforcing on a national basis the workers' commissions, the leadership of industrial work, the industrial sector *in* the organization, and our base in \_\_\_\_\_ could have connections with the film and publications commissions in order to get out material rapidly.

3. While we were busy working in Thionville, *as we had to be*, we overlooked a strike of several thousand workers at Fos-sur-Mer that won a 13-percent salary increase, an action which we should *also* have said something about. Obviously, the two strikes did not have the same impact and the same importance for our activity. From *this* point of view Thionville was more *useful*, but we must be all the more careful about letting distorted views of the working class develop (which is already happening) in our organization as a result of this approach.

the big industrial sectors with strong working class traditions.<sup>4</sup>

— Organizing a system of traveling teams.

Moreover, we must understand how to talk to the big working-class strongholds and their characteristic component—the organizational cadres of the class.

First of all a correction. The comrades in document No. 30 risk introducing (or spreading?) one more confusion by equating the "marginal and more turbulent sectors" with "young workers." *The greatest number of young workers among those most interested in our activity are found in the large traditional strongholds!* Their activity is often strongly imbued with the influence of the traditional trade-union leaders just as this activity in return influences and often compels these so-called traditional leaders to change their positions. Within these big strongholds you must develop a clear dialectical vision of intervention based on the different layers of activists.

Regarding the "organizational cadres of the class" there is some "revisionism" in the air. We openly hear it said "that it is better to train a young working-class cadre than to retrain an old one." If things were so simplistic that would go without saying. The problem is that it is difficult for us to sufficiently develop young cadres without at the same time having to get them to profit from the experience and tradition of the older workers. This is very easy to say, but the problem of bringing together the generations of militants in the union is one of the most complex.

The number of organizational cadres of the working class do not amount to "two" at Renault-Billancourt and a few dozen in all of France. Quite the contrary—and we have to agree about how we define them—they number in the tens of thousands. These are all trade-union leaders, paid and unpaid officials, elected shop stewards who are given time off for union work, members of the staffs of sections of local, departmental, and regional unions, leaders at various levels of the federations—all those who enjoy the status of a union official in the plants. These organizational cadres include at least four generations:

— The first one comprises the militants who came out of the 1936 experience but most of all out of the resistance movement. They have the most acute class consciousness. (When they are members of the PCF they may even oppose their leadership on the question of Czechoslovakia and approve the Soviet Union's intervention.) They are also the most "deformed" by Stalinism, but we can win them over when the betrayals of the leadership are too big to swallow. They are already often the most shaken, but won't show it until the last moment, until they reach "their wit's end." When they are won over, on the other hand, they can bring whole regions with them.

— The second was produced by the period of isolation of the PCF from the onset of the cold war through the

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4. This problem requires a high degree of centralization in the work by a reinforced CNO able to organize and take charge of *workers'* schools, cadre schools for workers on a national and local level, regular internal workers' bulletins, a consistent leadership in all activities of the branches, ad-hoc publishing, etc. . . . This entails a policy of investing party members in industry, as well as a policy of bringing industrial cadres into regular leadership bodies of the League (for example, the Rouen DV).

Gaullist coup d'etat on May 13 until the resurgence of the struggles in the mid-'60s. This generation is strongly influenced and marked by the preceding one that educated it more "by the memory of victorious struggles" than by an apprenticeship in such battles. And there is a good reason for this; their time was a period of defeat not likely to fortify the morale of fighters to wage struggles on new fronts.

— The third was formed in the shadow of the rising struggles from 1963 to 1968. This is a blind generation with no breadth, dazzled by "advanced democracy," and by the FGDS, Mitterand and the first version of the union of the left. It does not make any comparison between what it is taught and what it is preparing itself unconsciously to do. For certain people, May '68 arrived like a beneficent lightning bolt, a harbinger, and for others, as the token of greater confusion.

Each one of these generations is worse than the one that went before it. May '68 and Czechoslovakia not only renewed the vanguard, but posed very considerable problems for all of these militants.

— The fourth "generation" since May '68 is thus very heterogeneous and unstable. The ones who are moving up in the apparatuses and whom Krasuki in particular intends to win over so as to solve the *terrible* problems of getting new blood into the CGT are often worse bureaucrats than others and not respected. But the bulk of this generation, both in the CGT and in the CFDT, is experiencing the impact of struggles. They are unstable and could be temporarily repelled by the blunders of the young revolutionary vanguard, just as they may be adopting a "wait and see" attitude toward us. This sector is decisive, but they are tied to the framework of their unions, where—for lack of a sufficiently attractive revolutionary pole—they are getting their "education." Before we win them over they will have to experience a series of shocks, which will originate and resonate within the factories. It is only possible to reach them through work closely linked to their activity in the places where they are rooted. This mass of young leaders (not necessarily young in age) is still being seduced by the union leadership, because the *only* union education available is still taking place under its aegis, and these young cadres know the value of this training for winning victories.

We must make a careful study of these layers of militants who constitute both the "lock" on the door leading to revolutionary struggles and the real "broad vanguard" of the working class. All groups are defined by reference to three big struggles—1936, 1945, and 1968. We must detail region by region, branch by branch, factory by factory, the history of the struggles, the weight of the traditions, the contradictory factors. *Today the CGT is essentially heterogeneous* in spite of the efforts of the PCF fraction. If we begin from this principle we will discover, through hard work, that the weak base we have today hasn't been enough to give us an inkling of some gigantic fissures that exist.

This is the direction contributions to the discussion for our third congress should take, just as they should be directed toward developing workers' control slogans that can best promote a real ripening of political consciousness in the great strongholds of the working class.

We must force or break this "lock" represented by the organizational cadres of the class. In order to do this

we have to raise the level of our intervention, particularly of our "Taupes Rouges," and we have to improve our socialist propaganda (the kind in the Manifesto campaign). Finally, in economic struggles we have to use other components of the working class as a lever, notably the youth.

We must likewise fight a hard political battle within the far left to point the way toward the organized workers' movement. This is the meaning of the position we took on June 7, 1972, the meaning of our participation in demonstrations. And the importance of these tactical and pedagogical positions we took vis-à-vis the CGT marches and demonstrations like the ones on June 7 and May 1, must be discussed in terms of the urgency of educating and directing the far left in this direction.

This general work of penetrating into the working class, developing a process of differentiation, and separating out the vital forces of the organized movement of the working working class must be our main preoccupation, our axis; the dynamic of all our sectors of intervention must be subordinated to this.

An organization like "Révolution!" explains that you can't combine fire and water, or reformists and revolutionists. Thus, that everything must be staked on developing a vanguard outside all the reformist-led union and political organizations and in opposition to them. They also explain the Communist League should be left to get entangled in its contradictions trying to tie the two ends together (the far left and the PCF) and "stick to the tail of the PCF." Here is a consistent position that could lead to work among the immigrants, work among social strata peripheral to the working class, as well as to ignoring union work, and one that dismisses all discussion on the organizational cadres of the class. But here at the same time we have an authentic ultraleftist position.

Certainly differences are developing in the working class, just as the gaps between the generations are widening and the class is becoming more heterogeneous; and our own expansion within the working class can only speed up this process. Forms of spontanéism and ultraleftism may arise among the workers themselves. But it is not our job to develop such a policy of dividing the class front. It is not our job to relax our effort to achieve unity in action of the working class. For it is in this way that we can expose the bureaucratic leadership and in this way that we can address ourselves to the large working-class strongholds (a large-scale campaign for a merger of the separate unions into one big confederation recognizing the right of tendencies should be a priority in our industrial work).

Our orientation of "unity in action plus outflanking the PCF" thus boils down to means for reaching *the center, the heart of the working-class movement, the sole prerequisite* for the future revolutionary crisis taking on new dimensions.

### 3. A Vacuum That Should Not Be Filled

"A young and revolutionary force—the Communist League" now exists.

The PSU (United Socialist Party) can no longer claim

to be the synthesis, the center, the mirror of the far left's ambiguity and heterogeneity, its unifier, or the largest revolutionary party in Western Europe. Losing ground on the right, losing ground on the left, its image is quite tarnished, at least for the time being.

A vacuum exists. Whether we like it or not, politics—which abhors a vacuum—is tending to push us into this opening. Here lies a great danger. It is better to sound the alarm too early or give a false alarm than to sound one too late or not at all!

A number of people are going to turn toward us since we have become a "pole of attraction." Already we have seen a number of party activists from the PSU and other groups moving in our direction. In this way we can win recognition as unifier as we undertake the restructuring of the far left.

Reality is very powerful. Our numerical growth, our geographic expansion, our growing penetration of different social layers, our political position in relation to the far left on the one hand, and to the union of the left on the other, constitute four reasons to be cautious of centrist temptations.

#### A. On the Geographical Level

We have expanded and built ourselves on a national level. This has political consequences that are beginning to take on importance with regard to our centralized functioning. We are confronted with the problem of regions. We are encountering diverse political realities. Our reaching out into the reality of the society is opening a very wide field of political activity for us.

A number of our branches in different cities have been built in the image of the national organization and have no history of specifically local discussions bearing on the national orientation or capable of bringing about any changes in it. The local problems are provincial questions and as such are virtually excluded from reaching Paris and altering the outlook of the national leadership bodies. Little by little that is in the process of changing.

The comrades from the South who are situated in a special social and political situation have written a document and are proposing a different orientation. The comrades from Brittany might be tempted to do the same. This is true also for Paris and the Paris region. If the comrades from Rouen, who are situated in a special political and social situation (a considerable working-class concentration all along the lower Seine, long traditions of working-class organization with 90,000 unionized in the CGT in the Seine Maritime alone, etc. . .) were to generalize their regional outlook into theory they would end up with results opposite to those of the comrades in the South. The Rouen comrades have achieved the League's strongest working-class base anywhere in the country. They have developed a significant level of work in the CFDT. Their student work has given them total hegemony on the campuses. And all of this has been accomplished without losing sight of the "center," the PCF and the CGT, where, as a result of systematic work, they are able to see growing conflicts. They have effectively

reconciled work among young workers and among organized worker cadres. But if it is clear that this situation in Rouen is exceptional, conversely, we must realize that the one in Toulouse and Montpellier is as well. It is interesting, by the way, to compare the base and traditions of the respective groups in the light of the base and traditions of the labor movement in these different regions. Here is the range we read about. We are threatened by these different pressures, this diversity of experiences (as we previously were by the "domination" of Paris over the provinces, notably in the area of student work and through the newspaper *Rouge*. . .). *National axes* are necessary for us to develop a base in the working class. These are selected on the basis of the national crisis of the PCF and not on the basis of the local peculiarities of this party. With our present growth, the job of formulating policy becomes even more complex. Unless centralization is achieved, we risk seeing the development of local diversity such as that experienced by the PSU in its period of growth after May '68.

## B. By Penetrating a Number of Social Layers

We criticize the PSU in *Internal Bulletin* No. 28 for being "a sum total of areas of work." This might happen to us. We are under pressure from objective needs that must be met in every area—whether it be the women's movement, movements against pollution, a campaign on ORTF, TOM-DOM [department of foreign territories], immigrant workers, peasantry, work in a front of revolutionary intellectuals, etc. . . . We risk getting caught up in *community work, outside of the plants*. Of course to prevent this from happening we must not close ourselves off from all these fields of struggle in a sectarian and dogmatic way. However, we still need an organizational system strong enough and sufficiently centralized to regulate the level of our investments and responses in meeting these objective needs. In the first third of 1972 we already have a snowballing of mobilizations—TOM-DOM, Spain, Ireland, Indochina, CFPM [Professional Teacher Training Center], high schoolers, etc. . . . This activism "kills" students and doesn't win workers for long.

The symptoms of such difficulties have already surfaced in numerous local crises. The worst tensions have existed between the industrial sector and student youth. What distinguishes us from the rest of the far left (that is, our working in different areas of activity) can also be our main source of problems. In these various areas, we are recruiting on the basis of different kinds and rates of activity; and, as a result it is difficult to integrate these sectors organizationally. The central leadership bodies that do not succeed in achieving such integration get swamped by problems and let "crises" get out of hand (Marseilles, for example).

If we fail here also to take stock of things by strengthening our central apparatus and keeping a strict account of the forces allotted to each sector, we may obscure the clarity of our analysis of what we are *and encourage the birth of workerist tendencies* anxious to put an end to this mess and to devote all of our forces to the cru-

cial workers sectors.<sup>5</sup>

## Our Numerical Growth

Our growth poses some new problems in recruitment, educating party members, and training cadres. But the central apparatus is the key question.

Initially, we were a small organization built out of the proletariat and, in the last analysis, politically defined by this class origin, the heirs of the experience of the Fourth International. We have mainly grown in the student milieu which leads us to pose the problem of our "growing over" into a working-class organization by voluntaristically orienting to the workers. We believed that it was necessary to take students in our ranks and "extract" them en masse from their areas of work to send them into the plants to win "organizational cadres of the working class capable of forging the revolutionary party."

In reality, this amateurish casting of the net "drowned" many of our students, but did not get us what was absolutely essential—the kind of method and an organization suited to the kind of work we envisaged.

The proof that we had adopted an unsuitable organizational system (and at the start no organization at all) was that we lost the few worker militants that we had won. The temptations were great to look for shortcuts to overcome this deficiency, and we nearly weighed down the League with a youth organization inside it. The decision against forming the ORJ was not simply a matter of delay, but rather the expression of our need to throw the youthful dynamism in our organization directly into the work of building a base in the working class, through centralized actions and forming new cells and new branches for intervening in the plants.

Even after making a decision not to form the ORJ we were not in a position to achieve adequate organizational solutions. We opted in favor of reinforcing the national workers' commission before we sufficiently reinforced the central political leadership (Political Bureau). Then we made an about-face. That is, we tried to reinforce the central political leadership bodies of the organization before strengthening the leadership of the "industrial work" fractions themselves (January to May 1972; six months of discussion on this subject in the Political Bureau after Joël left).

These organizational variations testify to our lack of method in this area. The final solution adopted is unquestionably the correct one (strengthening all the central political bodies—BP, then DP [Direction Parisienne—Paris leadership]; the DVs and DSs).

It is because we did not solve the problems of leading and educating the organization that we were unable to arm ourselves for activity directed at the center of the working class.

In reality, an organizational fogginess has prevailed, obscuring our political vision and preventing us from

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5. These tendencies already exist. Not able to grasp a view of all the areas of work, they scratch about on the left and on the right for anything that can feed their sectoral perspective of industrial work. Moreover, their outlook has a very narrow local focus.

drawing sound balance sheets of our industrial work (between the BP and CNO [Commission Nationale Ouvrière—National Workers' Commission] as well as certain DVs where this backing and filling led to tensions between the youth and industrial sectors). It is therefore correct to strengthen the central political bodies (BP, DP, DS, DV), but not with just any political orientation, or for any task, or as a substitute for some postponed industrial work. On the contrary, we must reinforce these bodies precisely so that they can take charge of the industrial sector, giving it a place in the organization, its own structure, a strongly centralized orientation, subordinating the development of other sectors (i.e., youth, students and teachers) to it.

Eclecticism and disorganization await the League if a new offensive is not promptly conducted on "the home front" to reinforce the "apparatus."

When we take a look at what we have been able to accomplish as a result of the modest battle we have waged on the "home front" since the second congress, we can calculate how effective new organizational efforts could be in multiplying the striking power of the League, stepping up production in our press and publications . . . but such new efforts are especially vital to prevent the growth of our responsibilities from resulting in an eruption of contradictions and tensions. These points could be demonstrated by several examples. This should be done in the appropriate documents, because all comrades should be fully and concretely informed about how their organization works and functions. There are just a very few comrades today who know how many full-timers there are in the organization and in particular what their specific tasks are. The same *ignorance* exists about all the other components of the organization. This is an extremely serious deficiency and will become the main obstacle to strengthening our organizational structures unless we employ new methods, first of all spending enough time and money to keep *all* party members informed.

We must increase the number of comrades working full-time for the organization in all areas (streamlining our operations, running the headquarters, mimeographing, bookstore, administration, accounting, *Rouge*, layout). This is required because of our own growth. We will make this addition to the staff before long; but the essential problem is not this.

1. Material resources are vital for the regular leadership bodies to carry out their work, especially for the BP, DP and CNO. Each of these three levels of leadership should have a regular technical, administrative and political staff.

The BP must function entirely on the basis of written documents and be prepared to give detailed accounts of the political discussions it has, enabling the CC and the organization as a whole to maintain surveillance over it. This would require a three-fold increase in staff and equipment. The job of the BP must include making collective reports, liaison with the provinces, and contacts with the press.<sup>6</sup> The CNO should also have its own staff. Because

6. It is quite possible that this apparatus will not be sufficient and that it will be necessary to set up a *Central Committee secretariat* to prepare each of this organization's meetings. This would be necessary if even the reinforced BP still has too much work.

of the extent of coordinating work and correspondence, the increased number of circulars, and the discussions being carried on in the internal bulletin of the industrial section, a full-time secretary is needed here.<sup>7</sup> Finally, the DP has been operating up till now in an unprofessional way—one functionary for 1,500 members (this is against one per 200 members in Rouen), that is stupefying. We should have at least five functionaries in the Paris office, but that's not all. We also need a technical staff and equipment to run the nerve center of the 18 Paris sections. The least that could be asked is a secretariat of three comrades, as large as the BP staff. These measures are indispensable to enable the leadership bodies to function efficiently and without mixing up their tasks, to establish working relationships among themselves. This will give rise to a Paris Federation of the Communist League, that will be the organizer of mobilizations *in Paris*, responsible for organizational contacts *in Paris*, and will be the leadership of our organization *in Paris*. Whenever the need arises, discussions could take place between the staffs of the DP and the BP to judge the relative importance of an action that is taking place and decide whether the national office should take charge or not. Such a procedure is indispensable, on the other hand, to prevent the provinces from being subordinated to a BP that has only a "Paris view" of things.

These are the first steps, but it is clear that we should, when we are able to, duplicate this approach in our main areas of intervention. Thus, as soon as possible we must set up a leadership of our work in the teachers' unions with a technical staff enabling it to function. (We would assign one of the leading teacher comrades to a position as a full-time political functionary of the League for teachers' work in order to fully reintegrate this sector into the dialectical framework of our activity.)

And just as we assigned cadres to the FSI and got this organization to pay a functionary, we should do the same with other mass organizations that we help to run—FNCL [Front National des Comités de Lutte—National Front of Struggle Committees], high school organizations and CET [Colleges d'Enseignement Techniques—Technical High Schools].

*All of this requires taking our battle on the home front to a higher level, that is, waging a fight against mixing up responsibilities and tasks.* Paradoxically, the best way to fight against narrow sectoral views is by correctly defining each sector and giving it maximum means for functioning "autonomously." This is also the best way to promote genuine (and not false) centralism, to make possible concrete discussions on the exact forces to be invested in each sector and the best way to maintain a proper dialectical relationship among our different areas of intervention without spreading ourselves too thin.

2. The second direction our organizational effort should take is toward reinforcing the DVs and bringing the provincial cities into line with the national pattern. Several examples have shown us that without discussion, education, and centralization, grave errors could be committed, de-

7. The apparatus of the CNO should be attached directly to the apparatus of the BP. Its specific purpose should be to allow the BP to devote itself to the work of leading the workers' sector in a centralized way.

pending on the level and strength of our provincial groups. A "prison campaign" in Poitiers or a campaign around Chad in La Ciotat, or in some cities failure to observe the dialectical plan of activity (neglect of campus and high-school work).

In the student milieu, our work in coordinating the strike against CFPM [Centre de formation professionnelle—Professional Teacher Training Center] gave us an opportunity to confirm the fact that because they had not followed the national slogans several provincial cities had gotten into a blind alley in their local work, while a well-centralized campaign was becoming a formidable weapon against all our political opponents in the student milieu.

Not only are we going to have to continue setting up national (and not Paris) leaderships of sectors, but we will also have to devote more effort and resources to helping reinforce the small cities (cadre schools, trips, extended visits by comrades in the BP and CC).

*Within the framework of the League*, we have decided to make a unique synthesis of all our areas of work, a synthesis between activity in the factories and centralized political actions, between industrial work and youth work, between geographic expansion and centralization, between activism and education, and between the petty bourgeoisie and traditions of the workers' movement. But on the other hand, this will require us to make, *within the framework of the League*, a fantastic effort to achieve an effective division of labor and an effective check on the functioning of the organization.

Unlike the PSU, we do not idealize the "political movement of the masses." Unlike LO [Lutte Ouvrière—Workers Struggle] we are not satisfied with "piecemeal industrial work." Unlike the AJS [Alliance des Jeunes pour le Socialisme—Alliance of Youth for Socialism] we are not satisfied to demand "the united front as a principle." Unlike all the Maoist groupings we take on union work. And unlike the PCF we want to build a democratic organization foreshadowing the socialist world we are fighting for. But it is evident that such aspirations will not exempt us from the constant danger of falling into the errors we combat on the part of the other "left" and "far-left" forces in France. This tendency will be expressed in a constant temptation to sidestep difficult situations by organizational shortcuts (ORJ, creation of periphery organizations—especially in the industrial milieu—giving up working through mass organizations . . . ).

In addition, the present social character and base of the League will always automatically make us tend to balk at following the only road that will achieve our objectives—organization. However, before talking about the "new world" at the beginning of our Manifesto, there is an area where we can and must put what we say to the test—in the League or at least in its apparatus.

The precondition for all further progress in building the revolutionary party consists in changing our habits and creating an exemplary mode of functioning. And achieving this, among other things, will keep us from slipping into the vacuum left by the PSU.

Finally, strengthening the organization in this way is the key to being able to throw ourselves unhesitatingly into leading the work of organizing the masses. It is first of all through building leaderships of the League fractions that the conditions can be created for smooth

functioning inside the organizations we direct or work in.

## 4. Record of the Debate Concerning Electoral Tactics

The fourth reason that should put us on guard against "PSU-centrist temptations" threatens to take on substance in the proposal to vote CP-SP, if this recommendation is maintained.

One point common to documents No. 28 and No. 30 is the proposal to call for an SP-CP vote on the second round.

If one might agree with the premises in document No. 28 concerning "revolutionists and the elections," it is impossible to accept calling for an SP vote as proposed.

### What Tactics for the 1973 Legislative Elections?

As the Union of the Left comes to the fore after the 1972 vacation season, general political questions are going to take the center of the stage to the detriment of workers' struggles. How broad a mass appeal the common program achieves will depend on the SP and CP leaderships and their initiatives. Will they conduct a full campaign? What framework will the CP and SP adopt? Will popular unity committees be set up bureaucratically "by decree" (as the National Action Committees in support of the victory of the Vietnamese people were in 1968)? Will there be no committees at all? This remains in question.

The fact remains that an initial position of calling for no vote at all on the second round is *absolutely indefensible*. It is impossible to raise a slogan of abstention putting the PCF and the UDR [Union pour la Défense de la République—Union for the Defense of the Republic, ruling party] *in the same basket*. They are not "Tweedledum and Tweedledee," and it is not a matter of indifference to us which one wins out over the other. The consequence of considerable gains by the PCF would be a stimulus to workers' struggles, a defeat for the UDR would mean a sharpening of the crisis of the regime. The growth of our influence has put us in too responsible a position for us to be able to put forward an abstract and vaguely propagandistic slogan. We must be precise. The slogan that we must choose should be educational and express in the best possible way the specific theme we want to push in the immediate period. Raising conditions that the PCF must accept before we will call for voting for them is childish. Who will understand, who will know the sense of such an approach, except the same restricted milieus that we can reach by other means? We must indicate our understanding of the dynamic of left-wing unity by voting positively for it, thus prodding the candidates for power to carry out their program, while at the same time expressing the strongest possible reservations about them.

## We Cannot Endorse the SP by Voting for It

The proposal that involves rejecting abstention but goes over to the other extreme by calling for a vote for the CP-SP is profoundly opportunistic.

This kind of opportunism can very easily be reconciled with ultraleftist positions in other respects, with a larger involvement in all the middle strata—which feel more at home in the SP than in the PCF—and with militarist tendencies:

"... the more systematically we develop extralegal activities in activities against militarism, fascism and the private security forces of the bosses, the broader will be our margin for electoral maneuvers." (*Internal Bulletin* No. 30, p. 6, first column.)

This opportunist position puts us almost on the same line with the PSU vis-à-vis the Union of the Left. Thus, not only would we endorse the type of alliance that the PCF is making with the SP, but we would deprive ourselves of the means of criticizing it—that is, raising a slogan that could bring about a break with the Union of the Left that could educate the vanguard as well as the broad masses.

The greatest distrust prevails among the workers toward the SP and Mitterrand. Not only did the Socialists betray in 1936, 1945, and 1958 every time the PCF called on the workers to vote for them, but the SP has kept in its ranks the hangmen of the working class (Moch) and the Algerian torturers (Lacoste, Lejeune). Mitterrand's past has never appealed to the working class, and but for the opportunism of the PCF, he would never have been able to mount the pedestal we find him on today.

This same SP, party of the middle classes, can try to catch every anti-Communist vote, the votes of everyone opposed to the PCF, and the votes of the PCF members themselves (cf. Mitterrand's statement in Vienna in front of Golda Meir, Harold Wilson and Willy Brandt). Mitterrand is little by little making a longer spoon so that he can sup with the devil. The bourgeoisie is soon going to help him out by raising a hue and cry about the Communist peril and warning the SP not to tie its fortunes to it. Mitterrand is going to turn a face to the right (the minority of the Radical Party) and another face to the left (leftist demagoguery will continue, and Mitterrand knows that there are a few votes to be picked up in this quarter). Mitterrand's entire hope is to make his party a catchall with a "more renovated" face of opposition to "the Soviet tanks."

The CP has once again capitulated, putting over a kind of alliance and agreement that once again ties the working class to a bourgeois party. The class-collaborationist common program is a victory for the SP, a victory on the question of the Common Market (and so soon after the referendum!), a victory on the question of the Atlantic Alliance, on the question of governmental succession, the office of president, on nationalizations, etc. . . .

To endorse such a deal by voting for the two organizations—one bourgeois and the other working class—that are responsible for it means sanctioning a monstrous combination made at the expense of the workers. Sooner or later, Mitterrand, the bulwark of the bourgeoisie, will take on the role of hangman of the working class.

Moreover, the logic of voting for the two organizations presenting the joint program leads down an endless road. *It is impossible to justify voting for the SP without at the same time giving your votes to the minority Radicals* [the historic petty-bourgeois liberal tendency].

In practice, voting for the SP-CP means equating our slogan of a "workers' government" with an SP-CP government. This would undermine our ability later on to expose this class-collaborationist government and call for a genuine workers' government.

It is this multiclass alliance at the expense of the workers represented by the SP-CP coalition that we absolutely must expose.

As for the SP, we denounce these people who are the best of the last defenders of capitalism.

In the case of the CP we reproach them for having made unprincipled agreements, and we call on them to put into practice the program that they have made so much noise about, and stop letting the SP walk all over them.

For our part, we support the slogan of a workers' government specifying two or three of the ten points that we identify with it in the Manifesto. In advancing these few points, we chose the issues that could cause a rupture between the SP and the CP and could best touch the sensibilities aroused by the Union of the Left.

By calling for a vote for the PCF we will show that we do not have a sectarian attitude toward the Union of the Left and the reformist illusions it carries with it. We will show that we do not underestimate the strength of the links between the reformist Stalinist party and the working class. By calling for no vote for the SP we will show that we maintain our autonomy and our independence vis-à-vis an opportunist alliance that we feel represents a class-collaborationist policy.

Such a clarification is absolutely necessary for our present social base. It is more inclined to take a compromising attitude toward the SP (which signs agreements with us, made a call for supporting the demonstration at Overney's funeral, has a "more open" facade and can "capture" the CFDT) than toward the Stalinist CP that is exclusionary toward us. A slogan supporting a vote for the PCF has about the same tactical significance—from the standpoint of its function—as our participating in a procession like the one on June 7, for example.

A slogan supporting a vote for the PCF fits in with our goal of reaching the center of the organized working class, with our orientation of working from the periphery toward the large working-class strongholds. It also fits in with deploying our forces in ways that will enable us to direct the dynamic of our various areas of work toward building a bridgehead in the working class, toward winning the revolutionary workers.

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## 5. Conclusion

● Let's bring the dynamic of all our areas of work to bear behind our basic axis of winning a foothold in the proletariat, the only revolutionary class.



- Let's not reduce our intervention in peripheral layers except to gain better means of reaching the center of the working class.

- Let's sharpen the contradictions and growing heterogeneity of the reformist Stalinist organizations by harassing them with a systematic policy combining unity of action and going over the heads of the bureaucrats.

- Let's equip ourselves with strong organizational means to:

- Centralize our activity and our response to the next class confrontations.

- Build a homogeneous party in control of its own development.

- Measure out on a political basis our investments of forces in the different areas of work.

- Let's prepare for a large-scale propaganda campaign along the following lines: "The Union of the Left is a Utopian scheme that will not win power for the workers; what the revolutionists want is the only realistic road to achieve socialism."

- Let's make a vigorous effort to resume distributing the Manifesto, "For a workers' government!" That should be the title of our next campaign.

- Let's select key campaigns that directly pose the question of the state. Launching a well-prepared campaign in the army once again could help us in practice to undermine the Union of the Left and the common program.

- Not a single vote for the bourgeois candidates. Not a single vote for the best of the last defenders of capitalism — the party of the Jules Mochs, the Lacostes, Lejeunes and Mitterrands.

- The UDR and PCF are not "Tweedledum and Tweedledee." We are not neutral between them. We call for voting for the PCF while criticizing its program and its opportunism in entering into a class-collaborationist alliance with the SP.

- Strengthening the Communist League is the way to hasten the construction of the revolutionary party.

# A Contribution to the Debate

By Clelia, Radot, Sterne

[The following contribution has been translated from Internal Bulletin No. 34 (September 1972) of the Ligue Communiste.]

\* \* \*

## Introduction

This document was distributed to the Central Committee as a contribution with an introduction specifying a certain number of things.

Therefore, we must specify a number of points, as we did at the time of the debate in the Central Committee.

1. We have intentionally systematized the positions held by Jebracq-Tony-Stéphane-Arthur, because it is apparent to us that the references in their document to revolutionary war and especially to the military role of the peasantry and of the urban petty bourgeoisie allow for very dangerous interpretations at both the national and international levels.

2. Our document is not a centrist "compromise" between Roger's and Jebracq's positions. Before the emergence of a revolutionary crisis, we think it quite probable that there will be a prolonged prerevolutionary period where we will have to combine legal interventions (in particular in the unions) and clandestine intervention (notably through our political propaganda). We wish to stress the fact that a revolutionary organization must consider legality as an exception and not as a rule in its development.

3. The call for a vote for the CP on the second round has been motivated in much too brief a manner although we realize that our vote must be determined by the dynamic that is or is not unleashed by the unity of the left.

We did not submit the document to the internal bulletin for the whole organization precisely because of these imprecisions. The new transcript of the debates in the Central Committee and the urgency involved in the preparations for the congress lead us to submit the document now without the alterations projected at the Central Committee. At any rate, the Central Committee has advanced the debate.

C. R. S.

Paris, September 1, 1972

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The document submitted by Jebracq, Tony, Arthur, and Stéphane has the merit of posing a real question—that of the coming revolutionary crisis and of the kind of party capable of leading it to a victorious conclusion. It is not

a matter of intellectual speculation foreign to the preoccupations of the organization. Today, we must indeed move to a new stage in the development of the Ligue—cease to grow simply at the mercy of circumstances, in order to establish control of the ongoing process of uneven and combined development (selection and allocation of full-timers, assignment of militants to certain workplaces, etc.). These organizational choices must result from a political debate on the construction of the revolutionary party of the working class. But none of the documents submitted to the discussion up to now appears satisfactory to us.

The JTSA document, in emphasizing the role of the middle layers in the revolutionary process, could serve as a justification for our present, almost total concentration on the petty-bourgeois intelligentsia, and even worse, a renunciation of our implantation in the working class.

Roger's document, if it seems to dissipate the fears engendered by the JTSA document with regard to our future implantation in the working class, risks leading us into the impasse of not preparing the organization and most importantly its militant workers for confrontation with the bourgeois state in the course of struggles where a section of the working class will go beyond Stalinism without however initiating an insurrectional general strike.

As for the document submitted by Valentine and Michelet [Bolshevik-Leninist Tendency], it scorns all of these preoccupations to discover in the impatience of the leadership the source of all our problems and in mass work the remedy for all our troubles, separate from the strategic questions that we must deal with today.

## I. The Bourgeois Dictatorship is Not Functioning 'Normally'

A. No one in the organization believes that we are on the eve of a revolutionary crisis (which does not mean that we cannot be mistaken), because no one believes that the working class in its entirety is ready for a repeat of May 1968 without much firmer political guarantees. But it is not any the less important to accurately evaluate the crisis of the bourgeoisie.

The decline of imperialism, along with the impossibility of secondary imperialist powers (German or Japanese) taking first place, establishes the worldwide political and economic crisis. For lack of a revolutionary leadership this crisis has remained without issue. Imperialism has understood this. That is why they combine peaceful coexistence with the degenerated or deformed workers states with the most savage aggression against the revolutionary

movements. Likewise the European bourgeoisies combine attempts to coopt the organized workers movement with repression of "illegal" struggles. The strong state provides an adequate framework for this policy. At the same time the struggles of the middle layers (like those of the proletariat) in confronting the strong state, easily become politicized. It would be erroneous to conclude from this that these layers are becoming revolutionary. On the contrary, this means more than ever that only the revolutionary workers party is capable of effectively leading the struggles of these layers.

B. Unless a major reversal should occur (the defeat of the Indochinese revolution for example), the imperialist crisis can only worsen and fall upon all of the other bourgeoisies, and the class struggle can only become more intense. However, it seems premature to predict a generalized economic crisis which would precipitate political consequences and drive the bourgeoisie to extreme measures.

Under these conditions it is hardly reasonable to speculate on dissolution and fierce repression of the organization in the short run; it would be catastrophic to precipitate it by a "militarist" line, while the workers movement has not yet reached a high level of confrontation with the bourgeois state. On the other hand, it is reasonable to count on an increase in selective repression, striking simultaneously at the most courageous struggles and the far-left, particularly through the vehicle of police provocation, goon squads, etc. . .

Without falling prey to provocation, and without throwing ourselves into a suicidal operation to liquidate the fascist gangs, it is indispensable that we be capable of defending the organization and participate directly in the defense of struggles; it would be irresponsible to content ourselves with propaganda on self-defense without being able to put it into practice.<sup>1</sup>

It would also be very dangerous to entrust these tasks of self-defense exclusively to "specialists," owing to the danger of their possible transformation into "military cliques," while allowing the organization to glide through its daily legal work, with the inevitable deviations of legalism which flow from this. On the contrary, it should make self-defense the task of the entire organization: a permanent political task through the campaign of self-defense proposed by the Political Bureau's document, linked to a revolutionary antimilitarist campaign, and a practical task through the participation of worker militants in certain marshaling tasks, and the training of the militants of the organization.

C. And if the Left took power?

Valentine and Michelet try to deepen the analysis, but they do not understand why the bourgeoisie, whose class power is solid, would allow itself to be peacefully unseated by the Stalinists. It is clear that unless the bourgeoisie is driven to it by a revolutionary crisis, it will not give up its power, even temporarily, to the Stalinists. On the other hand, it can put up with a Mitterand government which bestows a few unimportant positions on the CP. The CP's sense of responsibilities would lead it to likewise accommodate itself to the situation.

Certainly such a situation would be eminently favorable for the development of the mass movement and for our

implantation. But it is also probable that the fascist gangs, free from the political apparatus which holds them back somewhat today, would multiply their provocations; moreover Mitterand would not allow himself to be surpassed on his right and would lead the repression against the working class and the far-left. The Bonapartist style of the gentleman, and his whole past, provide every guarantee in this respect.

Whatever the situation, nothing permits us to have a wait-and-see attitude toward the problem of violence; it would be the worst form of spontanéism to ask the masses instead of ourselves to take up the question.

## II. The Crisis of Stalinism and the Revolutionary Crisis

A. How do we formulate the problem?

A classical schema of the revolutionary crisis exists, the one that we teach in cadre schools, the one that seemed to foreshadow May '68. In the course of a process of general strike, workers councils emerge which put the factories back to work for the benefit of the workers. The middle layers join the proletariat *en masse*, the military and police apparatus breaks up. The revolutionary party, followed by the workers vanguard, makes the final thrust in launching the insurrection. JSAT observe, with just cause, that no revolution—including the Russian Revolution—has followed this traditional schema. But no revolution has taken place in an advanced capitalist country. The historical argument thus is not persuasive. Valentine and Michelet think that it is only nonsense, and Roger refuses to read tea leaves.

However, this problem is posed by the radicalization of the masses on a national level and even more so on the international level. Our Bolivian comrades were the first victims of it, despite a correct political understanding of the necessity of arming the working class and the poor peasants, commencing at a certain stage in the radicalization of the masses and not just on the day of the final push. It is not a question of simply making a Bolivian self-criticism, but a self-criticism of the Fourth International, which did not reveal itself as being organizationally equal to its task.

The popular saying, "We'll see," may be well suited to *Lutte Ouvrière*. But it has no place in our ranks; because to refuse to choose is to make a choice, even if one is blind. Roger chooses when he sees our development taking place in the shadow of the CP, when he stresses the thousands of organizational cadres of the class influenced by the CP, cadres that we must win over by sharpening the cleavages within the CGT and the CP, and when he asks himself: "What analysis of the crisis of Stalinism leads us to lose hope in rebuilding 'piece by piece' a workers party?" Let's outline this: Roger thinks that it is possible to build a mass revolutionary party in the shelter of the CP; so it is logical to think that once again the spark will set the prairie on fire and that the revolutionary party which was patiently built could lead a new May '68 (at the proper time) to its conclusion.

Valentine and Michelet also make their choice: according to them there is a new generation of politically naive workers whom we must mature patiently. "The crisis of Stalinism, which is not over and will not be concluded before

there exists a revolutionary organization based in the class, having proven itself at the head of workers struggles and capable of giving revolutionary answers to the question of power . . . when this is posed."

B. The crisis of Stalinism.

This is the crux of the debate with JSAT, Valentine and Michelet, and Roger.

The crisis of Stalinism is evident in two aspects.

The first is the break of the intellectual sectors with the CP, but equally the appearance of middle layers (peasants, small shopkeepers) radicalized by their growing oppression, by the capitalist rationalization under the crook of the strong state, and becoming apparent in violent struggles, in scattered revolts, without coherent strategy, lacking ties with the struggles of the workers movement nationally controlled by the CP. The problem is indeed different in Brittany or in Occitania, where the relative weakness of the CP and the ties of regionalism permit a closer relationship between the workers and peasants movement.

The second aspect is partially described in the document presented by the Political Bureau: the heterogeneity, the differentiation of the working-class vanguard.

First we must agree on what we mean when we speak of the workers vanguard and of organizer cadres.

By vanguard we mean that part of the working class which places itself at the head of the class combat against the boss, the 200 to 300 workers at Renault-Billancourt who effectively occupied the factory in May '71, the 30 or 50 Joint Francais strikers who made the picket line of the strike effective. The level of political consciousness, the traditions of this vanguard are completely heterogeneous, and the fundamental reason for his heterogeneity is that understandably, after twenty years of passivity and parliamentary inanity, the organizer cadres have become scarce. It is not sufficient to be a full-timer for the union, or to have a "credit of hours," to be an organizer cadre, as Roger believes. These organizer cadres are the handful of members or sympathizers of the CP on the Executive Committee of the CGT at Renault, who have the confidence of dozens of workers and whom the CP apparatus must respect; it is Le Faucheur, CFDT leader of the strike at Joint (a rare example for the CFDT, as the strike at Thionville revealed). The organizer cadres in the "Trotskyist" organizations (OCI, LO, the Ligue) are just a handful. The conditions for building the party are thus entirely different than were those facing the CP, which could, from the start, count on the organizer cadres coming from a union movement characterized by revolutionary unionism, facing a heterogeneous Social-Democratic apparatus.

What is opportunist, whether it be "from the left" or "from the right," is emphasizing one of the aspects of the crisis of Stalinism and wanting to adapt it to the construction of the party.

Based upon local experience, JTSA emphasized the break of the intellectual sectors and the peasant revolts to the point of developing a "theory" of strategic role of these sectors in the conquest of power. The "military" capacities of these sectors are not presented as a point of tactical support (even if it might be decisive) for the proletariat, but on the contrary as the spearhead of the revolutionary process. Inversely, the struggles of the proletariat are presented as being defensive by nature, with-

out mobility, because of the very condition of the working class, "militarily dominated" in capitalist society. The comrades forget that at the time of the revolutionary crisis the proletariat for good reason no longer finds itself in the state of domination that it was in yesterday, even if it is not yet the dominant class (in contrast to the middle sectors which do not acquire qualitatively different offensive capacities during the crisis). They easily pass over the history of the workers movement which, from the Paris Commune to the Hungarian and Polish upheavals, and passing through the French Resistance and the German revolution, has taught us that the workers vanguard has not lacked "offensive capacities" as much as a revolutionary party.

The opportunism of comrades JTSA is evident in their reference to the Tupamaros separately from the social and economic conditions of a dominated country where the anti-imperialist struggle plays a decisive role, where the numerical and political importance of the middle layers has an exceptional bearing. Furthermore, they do not take into account the self-criticism of the Tupamaros themselves in their inability to transform a revolutionary situation into a revolutionary crisis, because of their deficiencies in the mass organizations, in particular in the working class (deficiencies created by their lack of understanding of Stalinism in the face of one of the most powerful Communist parties in Latin America, and that the socio-economic situation of Uruguay makes the possibility of a revolutionary victory more doubtful outside the context of a continental strategy).

Comrades JTSA have a static view of the Stalinist domination of the working class (it's been going on for fifty years, so there is no reason for this to change!); including during a prerevolutionary situation and at the time of a revolutionary crisis. This opportunism can lead to an attempt to sidetrack the workers movement either by a "militarist" line, or above all by a left version of the PSU practice of scattering our forces outside of the workplace.

Valentine and Michelet emphasized the breakaway of the working class youth whom they idealize. This youth would exist as though Stalinism never existed or rather was only like a wart on the workers movement. This new generation, they say, is "politically naive" and in the same breath, it has no interest in our criticisms of the CP, because it isn't familiar with the CP. Thus all opportunist possibilities are allowed: what's the use of a Manifesto, since it won't be read by this youth who want to know "how to struggle" and don't give a damn about the rest, and what's the use of presenting candidates, elections? That doesn't interest them, says Ménard to the Central Committee. This could lead to ultraleftism of the Maoist variety with this theme: the working-class youth do not see their identity in the unions, so let's create mass committees of struggle for the new "workers left" (with all the fallaciousness that goes with this call, confusing the level of consciousness with combativity): if Joel wrote,<sup>2</sup> "it would be clumsy and strategically incorrect to force the workers towards the unions," it seems to us that this would indeed be clumsy, although strategically correct.

Furthermore, the same position can reduce itself to a syndicalist opportunism: the working-class youth attends

its classes in the CFDT, where the future organizer cadres are formed, where we too must be (hasn't the CFDT undertaken the organization of elementary classes in Marxism? . . . where one learns that the working class does not define itself in relation to its position in the productive process, but that all those who struggle for socialism are part of the working class. . .).

In spite of having made his previous positions more flexible, Roger embellishes the crisis of the CP's apparatus and of the CGT leaders. There the Center is to be found, the heart, he repeats, suggesting that we might soon be able to ally ourselves with the "good" organizer cadres of the CGT against the rotten bureaucrats. Here he is mistaken concerning the crisis that is shaking the apparatus of the CGT (reference to internal document No. 27). The less narrow and the most "advanced democrats" of the union leadership struggle against the brutality of the intermediary bureaucrats, hardly troubled to respect the minimum forms of workers and union democracy, claiming a solid past acquired on the job. These contradictions are very favorable to our work, but the former and the latter march hand in hand against us. Nothing allows us to assert, as does Roger, that the CP will not be able to "repeat Overney" because of these contradictions. These bureaucratic antagonisms in the CGT are the result of different understandings of "how to preserve the apparatus" in the present period, and not the result of a split away of a left wing.

Roger's opportunism with regard to the CP is evident in several places in his document; when he recalls that "historically" it was the Stalinists who taught the workers of Renault-Cléon the use of violence (historically why not Baboeuf!), implying that the theme of workers self-defense is consistent with the memory of numerous members of the CP; when among the lessons that he proposes to draw in our propaganda within the workers' strongholds on the recent "peripheral" struggles, he forgets one detail: the surrender, more accurately, the betrayal, of the CP: "What we must emphasize are the demands, the forms of the organization of the movement, the struggle against the CRS [riot police], the scabs, the CFT [French Confederation of Workers—a company-type "union" under the aegis of which fascist goon squads operate], and the forms of local solidarity, etc. . . ." He adds, "Every strike failure that we reveal is immediately and effectively used by the CGT to fight this type of struggle." This is true, but it in no way justifies moderation like that of *Lutte Ouvrière*. On the contrary, these strikes reveal the capitulation of the Stalinists, who, from the start, deny them the most elementary support (collections, motions, etc. . . .), thus showing concretely how they subordinate the mass movement to their political ends. This is true of not only the so-called peripheral strikes, but also for the Neyrpic strike, bus workers strike at Renault, etc. . . . We were right to give full support to all of these struggles, to report on and analyze them in *Rouge*, because they sharpened the crisis of Stalinism in the workers' strongholds and stimulated combativity there.

Roger notes that at Girosteel, at the SCPC, at Thionville, the CFDT has at times lost votes in the professional elections and that independent unions took root. Again it is necessary to distinguish the first assertion from the

second. The CFDT has at times lost votes (likewise the CGT: the results of the professional elections are extremely differentiated, contradictory, reflecting the process of uneven development of class consciousness among the workers—we cannot draw schematic conclusions from this), because the CFDT was often incapable of democratically organizing the movement through assemblies of strikers, through support committees. It has had a tendency to substitute itself for the strikers, and further to leave the essential support work to the militants of the far-left; in addition to having an often hesitant, indeed incoherent and ineffective, political line (Thionville), the CFDT does not hesitate to defend its own narrow interests by intensifying the union divisions in a number of cases, and indirectly intensifying the demobilization of the workers, demoralized by the union quarrels that they view with good reason as being detrimental to victory (at Girosteel during the strike the CFDT called for: "Stop CGT imperialism").

But the penetration of the CFT is not due to the adventurism of the CFDT, as Krasucki says. At Girosteel, the CFT penetrated the factory even though the strike had been an important victory, and at Thionville the CFT penetrated among the nonstrikers well before the end of the strike.

The penetration of the CFT is explained by the heterogeneity of the workers vanguard today, the extraordinary diversity of the levels of consciousness, and the generation gaps. Crisscrossed by political currents that it does not delimit with clarity, the workers vanguard is formed in the agitation and effervescence of ideas that it does not master. It is this vanguard that often goes on the offensive in these struggles without worrying about whether the swamp and the rearguard follow, even though it finds itself alone and in the minority in front of the boss, dropped by the most hesitant workers whom it could not bring along and who very quickly abandoned the struggle when they were not turned—for lack of perspectives—against their "irresponsible" comrades. So it is that the bosses' propaganda can be the most effective, the CP often having prepared the groundwork beforehand.

It is the weakness of the workers vanguard in the workplaces, the presence of barely politicized workers, without traditions in struggle, that allows for the extreme division between strikers and non-strikers (saleswomen at the Neouvelles Galeries, the emigrants at Girosteel).

These workers were not able to profit from the experience of the CGT, says Krasucki; more exactly they were not able to profit from it because of the passivity of the organized workers movement, stifled by the CP. In the middle of the strike at Girosteel, the CGT leadership tried to create a section to negotiate unilaterally with the boss (it did the same thing at the time of the Foyers des Jeunes Travailleurs [Dormitories for Young Workers] strike by creating the ADIR). At Thionville, the demonstration of the CGT youth passed by the occupied shops without even chanting a slogan of support.

Also, when the workers go beyond the CP, they take a risk: of course there is the possibility of winning through unity as they did at the Joint Français or at Pennaroya, but there is also the possibility of being divided as at Thionville, at the SCPC, and at Girosteel, and finally

the possibility of being defeated or making possible the penetration of an autonomous union.

The risk is great in the workplaces where the workers vanguard is weak, but it exists also in the workers' strongholds (some autonomous or FO [Force Ouvrière] unions have been strengthened in the RATP [Parisian public transport network], in SNIAS, and to a lesser extent at Renault, after the Stalinist betrayals).

We must support without reserve, unconditionally, these workers in struggle at the time of these strikes, which doesn't mean without criticism; again it is necessary to educate, to be understood by those in struggle, and not to criticize for the pleasure of being the first to be right.

But we must be lucid. These strikes are vulnerable, threatened by bourgeois repression. In committing ourselves to the strikers, we must also realize that together with them we will suffer the consequences of their errors, and above all the consequences of their isolation.

### C. What answer do we give?

We must struggle against this explosion of the workers vanguard and so avoid any illusions. This explains our apparently contradictory attitude from one May Day to the next, from May Day 1972 to June 7, 1972.

On May Day 1972, following the isolation of the CP at the time of the assassination of Overney and after the referendum, we wanted to call to attention the relationship of forces between the morning procession at the head of which were the strikers at Joint, and the afternoon procession where, for the first time, the absence of certain "historical" unions like that of the railway workers of Villeneuve Saint Georges was apparent. But at the same time it is clear that we entertained illusions with regard to the Front of Revolutionaries and the so-called new "workers left" symbolized by the youth at Joint. On June 7 the purpose of our extremely small presence, as a political group and not as a revolutionary union tendency, was not to intensify the cleavages between the organizer cadres of the CGT and the Bureaucrats, as Roger suggests, but to concretize by our presence the battle against the opportunism of the CFDT and the ultralefts who refused to participate in a national strike in behalf of local strikes, who refused to struggle on the terrain chosen by the Stalinists in making this day a national day of support to strikes in progress. We adopted this position at the risk of being misunderstood by a part of this workers vanguard sensitive to the bureaucratic character of this national initiative. The differences in the organization on what position to take at the time of such demonstrations reveal in the last analysis the pressure of the disunity of the workers vanguard on our comrades. Some, wanting to make of each case a question of principle, see in it the capitulation of the leadership of the organization to petty-bourgeois pressures, whether it be a capitulation in the face of Stalinism, or a substitute for union work, or both at the same time, which would reveal oscillations in a centrist direction.

But if we are attempting to unite the class, beginning with its vanguard, we cannot, on the other hand, entertain any illusions. It is among the working class youth, particularly in the "strongholds," that we will first find the militants who are today ready to build the revolutionary workers party with us (which isn't a reason to turn our backs on the organizer cadres).

The intervention in the CET [technical high schools] and in the residences for young workers, is from this point of view an indispensable complement to our work in the factories, for which we must provide ourselves with the necessary resources (but it is only a complement). This means the organization has considerable tasks in matters regarding political education and developing the framework of our work among workers.

Today the weakening of Stalinism does not automatically mean a corresponding strengthening of the revolutionary vanguard. The bourgeoisie has well understood this when it tolerates us to a certain extent, knowing that if we are capable of weakening the CP, we can only partially take advantage of the consequence of such a weakening. We must take advantage of this respite that is conceded to us to attempt to bridge this gap by forming working-class cadres capable of homogenizing the workers vanguard. But political clarity compels us to foresee the probable eventuality where parts of the working class, even regions, will oppose the bourgeois state with an extreme violence, while the CP will still be able to control, to contain the rest of the working class, and the process of building the party will not be completed. Then the bourgeoisie will no longer tolerate our legal existence; it is getting ready for this eventuality, regardless of what Roger thinks; we must prepare ourselves for it.

In reality our participation in such movements will be indispensable to building the party, but our participation will lead us out of the semi-darkness in which we grow, and we will find ourselves in broad daylight face to face with the bourgeois state as in May 1968.

The experience of May '68 only earned us a dissolution, because the workers movement remained well controlled by the CP. We will no longer be able to count on such a "lenient" attitude on the part of the bourgeoisie, something that would be much too dangerous for it. This is what appears to us the most likely hypothesis of the unfolding of the prerevolutionary process.

The error of JTSA is to imply that there is a shortcut when in reality we must go forward step by step to insure our implantation in the working class and the development of revolutionary working-class cadres. But while having the same concern as Roger for our implantation in the working class, we have neither the same analysis nor the same perspectives as he.

This said, what form will the crisis of the CP take during this prerevolutionary process? It is difficult to be sure of this, but it is likely that the present process of disintegration will rapidly intensify, without the splitting off of an "intact" workers vanguard that joins the ranks of the revolutionary Marxist party. We can only count on ourselves!

Even if we project the most favorable variant of the seizure of power following an insurrectional general strike of the May '68 type that "succeeds," it is unthinkable that the process of permanent revolution would be a process simultaneously tying the hands of imperialism and the Soviet bureaucracy. On the contrary, it is probable to expect the first to react with the worst violence and the second with the worst cynicism. The Indochinese war is a lesson that we cannot underestimate on the pretext of national peculiarities. Indeed the debate before the congress in fact poses the debate on building the Fourth.

### III. And the Elections?

The positions taken concerning the elections are actually a good political gauge. Ménard intervened in the Central Committee against the presentation of candidates, explaining that the electoral nonsense did not interest the workers and particularly the young vanguard who want to know how to struggle but want nothing to do with our quarrels with the Communist Party and even less with the AJS [Alliance of Socialist Youth]: this is consistent.

Roger's position on the second round is equally consistent when he writes, "concerning the CP, we reproach it for having made accords without principle, we call for it to apply its *own* program for which it has created such an uproar and to refuse to serve as a carpet for the Socialist Party." Thus the critique is concerned less with the program of the CP than with its "unnatural" alliance with the SP. This flows from the tactic of the Workers United Front: break with the bourgeoisie, say the revolutionaries to the reformists, and struggle together for a "genuine workers government"! The bourgeoisie is the SP, the reformists the CP, the revolutionaries are ourselves! But in order for this tactic to be worthwhile, there must already be a revolutionary party with roots in the masses, capable not only of verbal denunciation but of putting into practice the alternative that it proposes—if not, this tactic of the Workers United Front becomes an opportunist approach to the reformists (the AJS has offered a caricature of this). This opportunism appears elsewhere in Roger's document, which proposes to limit the ten points which we define as the immediate tasks of a workers government to two, three, or four, because in "putting these few points forward, we choose those which can create this rupture between the SP and the CP." When we examine this more closely, the alternative that Roger is proposing to the government of the SP-CP is that of the genuine "workers government of tomorrow, the CP-Ligue, purged of bourgeois elements." Roger writes, "it is impossible to call for abstention, and so leave the CP and the UDR back to back. It is not simply "six of one and half a dozen of the other." We do not remain indifferent to which one gains at the expense of the other—the consequences of a considerable gain by the CP would be a stimulus for workers' struggles, a defeat for the UDR would be an aggravation of the regime's crisis. But to hope for the electoral success of the CP, because its electoral victory would push forward the class struggle, is to hope for the victory of the "popular unity," which is itself the condition for the electoral success of the CP. It even suggests a fight for a single candidate of the left for the first round, something the AJS did not forget to do. Now this marriage between the CP and SP today is not a marriage between two reformist parties implanted in the working class where we ask the Stalinist reformist workers party to go beyond the bourgeois reformist workers party and to apply its program, as could have been the case in '36. It is a marriage between a reformist party, the CP, and a bourgeois party which is reinvigorated only as a function of the CP's strategy and which is indispensable to this strategy. In these conditions to ask the CP to apply its program and not its Common Program—that is, to ask it to apply its strategy without its cornerstone, the alliance

with the SP—can only have a feeble credibility for the militants and the sympathizers of the CP who will explain that they prefer 25 nationalizations to 13, but prefer 13 to nothing at all! On the other hand, such an opportunist position can only serve to disorient militant workers rejecting or at least regarding with circumspection not only Mitterand but the strategy of the CP's program which leads into the arms of Mitterand.

On the contrary we think we must directly attack the strategy of the CP and its inevitable consequences: unity with the SP. For us it is not a question of presenting ourselves as the interlocutor in uniting the left as the PSU proposes. It is a question of preparing openings for another strategy in the arena of the class struggle. That is, our campaign must of course allow for our local implantation but it must also be marked by some national initiatives breaking with the legalism and national chauvinism of the CP. In these conditions, as Jebrac, Tony, Stephane, and Arthur write, "The more effective we are in assuming a direct role in the class struggle itself, the more systematically we develop extralegal activities against militarism, fascism, and the private security forces of the bosses, the broader will be our margin for electoral maneuvers. In this context, for example, calling for a vote for a SP-CP bloc would not mean that we consider this coalition a class front but that we made our decision on the basis of the meaning that such a vote would have for the workers." The comrades call for a conditional SP-CP vote . . . Whatever the situation, we think that we must call for a vote only for the CP and not for the SP, or the Left Radicals, because, lacking a sufficient presence in the arena of class struggle to appear as an alternative, the SP-CP vote would in fact be understood as opportunist. We take advantage of this vote not to ask the CP to apply its program but to condemn the capitulationist, reformist strategy of the CP even more. At a more advanced stage in our development, where we would be in a position, by our presence in the arena of the class struggle, to bear upon the national political life at the time of national electoral campaigns, we would well be able to call for a vote for the "unity of the left" without this being an opportunist position. Such an attitude would only mean to say to the CP, "We do not believe in your strategy. We will fight it and will call on workers to be distrustful. Having said this we are still too weak to offer an alternative for power. The majority of the working class still has confidence in you. Shoulder your responsibilities. Take the bourgeois government with the SP, we go our own way in preparing to go beyond you in the arena of the class struggle." Inversely in a period of intense struggle where the CP will have demonstrated its capitulation to the vanguard, we would call for abstention just as we did with good reason in June 1968.

Certain comrades believe that on the second round, revolutionaries on principle vote for the "workers" candidates and refuse to vote for the bourgeois reformist candidates. These firm principles may hide an opportunist practice if one calls for a vote for the "workers" candidates without taking into account the manner in which the workers vanguard has lived through and understood their betrayal and if one is content to denounce by word and ballot the bourgeois reformist candidates while forgetting

that the essential point is what one does in the arena of the class struggle and the revolutionists' campaign itself. At a time when the Trotskyists were reduced to being a small propaganda group, it was difficult to ask them to account for their work in the arena of class struggle. Today our development means that our strength is judged not only by our speeches on revolutionary strategy, but also and above all by our concrete activity in the class struggle. It is there that we must be firm and unshakable. This will allow us to treat tactically that which is only a tactical question — like the second round of the elections.

#### **IV. What Kind of Organization Do We Need and What Kinds of Mass Organizations Should We Build?**

##### **A. What kind of organization do we need?**

1. We formed the organization more or less empirically, starting from a certain understanding of the crisis of Stalinism and of its uneven rate of development among student youth and the working class. From the time of the breakthroughs of the JCR [Revolutionary Communist Youth] in the student and high school milieu, we have wanted to develop our implantation in the working class through, on the one hand, mixed cells [workers and students], and on the other, centralized actions.

a. The mixed cells had as their goal the creation of a pole of reference of a political break with reformism, a living pole discussing with sympathizers and engaging with them in publishing a weekly factory newsletter. We affirmed by this that we thought that it was not just a question of regrouping an opposition in the unions while avoiding "petty-bourgeois" contacts and while distributing every three months a tract from the Political Bureau solemnly addressing the working class, as did the AJS. We affirmed that neither was it a question of making contacts and finding readers, providing news and distributing an "economist" leaflet by students who were seen as simple distributors of proletarian papers, as LO does. On the contrary we wanted to fuse the vanguard that came from the student struggles and the workers vanguard that emerged from May 1968, to make militant workers not only militants in their union or revolutionary contacts, but revolutionary militant workers undertaking without reservation the enormous task of the construction of the party.

b. Centralized action had the function of making the weight of the organization felt through central campaigns (the army campaign) or through central actions (meetings, demonstrations, etc. . .). It was neither a gadget to restore the morale of the militants, nor a bluff to get space in the bourgeois press, nor a tranquilizer for the problems of the daily work of implantation in the factories, but rather a decisive factor in the struggle against Stalinism, attempting to provide each time according to our means the beginning of an alternative to reformism not only factory by factory, but also centrally.

2. Such audacity, such an undertaking to build a Leninist organization from student forces and in the face of a workers movement dominated by fifty years of Stalinism involved numerous contradictions. The first danger that we encountered and rectified was to withdraw students from

the university to have them intervene almost exclusively at the factory gates, which presented a double risk. On the one hand, the abandonment of mass work in the universities and, as a consequence, the deformation of our student members into simple dogmatic propagandists, and on the other hand, the disorientation of student members, i.e., remaining without a grasp of the reality of the workplace. Today, faced with the development of our work in the working class, comrades are regularly tempted to repeat the same error.

The principal contradiction is linked to the absorption of the best developed militants for the central tasks, leaving little relief for the intermediary leadership and finally for the cells themselves. This has a double consequence:

- Because of the weak framework of the mixed cells, the appearance of an actual separation between "those inside" entrusted with the mass work and "those outside" entrusted with the politics . . . with those inevitable tensions (those who talk and those who don't talk, those who do the mimeographing and those who don't . . .).

- Because of the weakness of the intermediary leadership, which tends to weigh on the central leadership, the central leadership is relatively cut-off not sufficiently understanding the realities of building the organization, and runs the risk of leading the organization into activism or of not adapting a central action to the level of development of the organization (it would be a gross mistake to view a legislative campaign like the Krivine campaign).

3. Confronted with these contradictions, the temptation is great to question again our tactic for building the organization, to explain for example that the problem lies with the mixed cells, that it is necessary to build purely workers cells, that the time for central actions is passed, etc. . . This leads again either to an overestimation of our forces as was done in certain small towns where, after an initial breakthrough, the city leadership had a tendency to see itself as a little revolutionary party, or to underestimate the weight of Stalinism, which is the case with Valentine, Michelet, Ménard. The key to the problem is elsewhere.

a. To make of the organization a center of political elaboration and not just an instrument of action.

We are an organization where political debate is weak. That is, debate around our gains and our practice. The debate turned in the direction of our attitude towards May Day, June 7, and June 23. But many cells did not discuss them or only discussed them a month later! The central leadership did not sufficiently encourage the debate arising out of these occasions. This suggests applying the brakes to the activism, knowing how to make pauses notably for the preparation of the Third Congress, giving a preponderant place to the theoretical education of the militants and maintaining strict criteria for membership, above all yielding first place to the education of the leaderships of the sections and the cities (DS/DV), the executive committees of the cells. Not one section leadership or one city leadership must miss the discussion of the reports of the Central Committee. The section leaderships and the city leaderships must take particular care in the development of the executive committees of the cells (regular exchanges of reports between the section leadership-city leadership and executive committees of the cells — control



and regular discussions of the Mole groups . . .). The city and the region that is behind in development must profit from the advanced position of the rest of the organization through the transfer of cadres and militants. The priority to fill in this respect is Marseilles.

b. To strengthen the leadership of our work among workers while avoiding a break between the central leadership and the leadership of our work among workers.

Strengthening of the CNO [National Workers Commission] by three or four additional full-timers. The majority of the comrades of the CNO must be members of the leadership elected from the organization (which is the case). It is not a question of creating a "fraction" of specialists or specialists on "peripheral struggles." These tasks of developing a central framework of workers' work are in fact tasks which must be assumed by the organization and become part of its regular functioning. The substitutionism of leaders replacing the regular leadership in the organization of the daily work of the militants or replacing the entire organization in the workers struggles is to be ended. But the strengthening of the central leadership is indispensable to pursue and develop what has already been undertaken:

- regular correspondence with the provinces;
- an improvement of coverage of workers' struggles in Rouge;
- a workers' bulletin;
- aid in the struggles (Sovirel, St. Briec, Thionville, SCPC, FJT);
- creation of national committees for the CGT, CFDT, and for the "fractions";
- discussions with the cells concerning their intervention;
- participation in the regional or city cadre schools.

Along with the strengthening of the section leadership and the city leadership, workers commissions must be established in the section or city.

Finally we must progressively aid in our implantation and development in the large workers' centers in the provinces—Nantes, Lyon, Lorraine, Lille, Dunkerque, Fos sur Mer; and decide upon the employment of students in certain factories.

4. Comrades Valentine and Michelet warn against "declassified" students who are put on full time, "the social base for the bureaucratization of the organization," and propose as a solution that these students learn a trade. Unfortunately this does not resolve the problem of the need for full-timers. At this stage in the construction of the organization, it is illusory to think that we will have full-timers of working-class origin (besides, this is not in any way a guarantee against bureaucratization), or full-timers having an important vocational past, or even full-timers having great experience in mass work. The fundamental criterion thus must always be a political criterion, including the technical full-timers. It happens that this criterion in large measure is respected because a number of technical full-timers are members of the section leaderships.

Basically it is not the Ligue that forms declassified students (because of the unrestrained activism, a result of the political impatience of the leadership, as Valentine and Michelet believe), but the crisis of bourgeois society. That is, moreover, the reason there is not a revolutionary group in the world which does not have "declassified" students in its ranks.

The problem is just the inverse: not to force the students to "reclass" themselves, but to avoid having the natural vicissitudes of the petty-bourgeois intelligentsia affect the political line and "standards" of the organization: adventurism, activism, demoralization, working within circles, club, clan, or clique, in a word, amateurism. Once again, the principal remedy is the politicization of the intermediary leadership of the organization, linked to a determination on the part of the national leadership, in particular Paris.

It is only in this way that a more systematic employment of students in workplaces can become the conscious choice of the organization rather than the individual uprooting of militants.

#### B. Mass Work and Mass Organization

1. First of all and above all, it is indispensable that precise balance sheets be drawn up—city by city, branch by branch, sector by sector—on our work in the unions and the different structures that we have given life to: Rouge committees, committees of struggle, Mole groups, FSI [Indochina Solidarity Front] groups, red circles.

Right now it is possible to say that the growth of the organization is considerable, that the Mole groups are a living reality. This balance sheet is indispensable. It will keep one or another comrade, one or another cell from taking itself as the epicenter of the organization, the advanced point among the masses. It will keep Comrades Valentine and Michelet from feeling that they address the organization "in the name of their real mass intervention in the workplace" and, even more, from believing "for a long time along with others inside and outside of the Ligue in the incapacity of our organization to do mass work."

2. It is evident that on the whole the Ligue has made important progress in mass work and this poses the problem of building mass organizations in different sectors of our intervention. The debate on the character of the mass organizations that we lead or are building is part of the debate on our relationship with the working-class movement and our tactic of building the party.

a. Valentine and Michelet, who do not pose either the problem of the CP or the problem of power, do not even pose the problem of construction of mass organizations. They reduce the problem to the creation of ad-hoc committees or to individual work in the unions, which leads them to speak at length, but in an apolitical manner, of mass work. "What distinguishes a militant doing mass work . . . is that he has the personal confidence of those who have learned to know him," they say, but that which distinguishes the militant doing mass work belonging to a revolutionary organization, the Ligue Communiste . . . go find out for yourself!

b. A Workers United Front tactic with the CP suggests the construction of mass organizations conforming to this central plan. A FNCL [National Federation of Struggle Committees] of high-school and other students conceived of as a union seeking representation in the FEN [teachers union] and in the CFDT to make its influence felt before the CP and its organizations, and so contribute to the Workers United Front which the League alone is too small to impose. One is forced to recognize that Roger has a certain penchant for this tactic, at least in his conception of the FNCL.

c. If, on the contrary, we understand that the revolu-

tionary party will not grow in the shadow of the CP, that it will not easily build national tendencies in the CGT and the CFDT and finally its interunion FEN-CGT-CFDT tendency, then we cease forcing upon ourselves, in the name of the future "class struggle" tendency in the unions, a purely unionist orientation to the university FNCL and to the high school FNCR [National Federation of Rouge Committees]. On the contrary we understand that these struggles play a double role, at the same time syndicalist and political, bringing together the broad current in agreement with the practice of the Ligue in the milieu (from the struggle against the CFPM, to the support activity for Indochina, and including support to workers struggles).

The FSI likewise cannot be conceived of as a mass organization like the American antiwar movement, bringing together all those who are in agreement with the immediate withdrawal of all U. S. troops from Indochina, but as an organization bringing together the militants supporting the Indochinese revolution in distinction from the attitude of the Russian and Chinese bureaucrats. Thus the committees of the FSI must be linked up with the Rouge committees or the developing red circles (without there being any confusion whatsoever between these two structures). This is the best guarantee that the FSI does not bend to the slightest change in the situation like the antiwar movement in the U. S.! A Workers United Front line whose central purpose would be an acceptance of the FSI by the workers bureaucracies would involve a step backward "to water down" our slogans and our tasks so as to be accepted by the coalition of the 44, and would be in fact an opportunist move in relation to the CP. On the contrary we insist upon the united front for Indochina without giving an inch on our slogans and independent initiatives.

A special problem is posed by the EE [Emancipated School] tendency of a reformist union, the FEN, which in the face of the Stalinists and the Social Democrats has been able historically to establish itself as a politico-syndicalist revolutionary current. Given the union framework, our understanding of party-union relations and its application in our intervention in the workers movement suggests for our militants a battle to make the EE a "class struggle" union tendency and not a politico-syndicalist regrouping, a little confused party. This battle must take shape through, on the one hand, an emphasis on autonomous political action of the Ligue in the teacher milieu, on the other hand, by initiatives of the Bertin type, capable of demonstrating practically that the tendency is not a parasitic instrument of the union leadership (Workers United Front type tendency), but a tendency conscious of the need to take independent initiatives to the limit of breaking union discipline. The worst situation would be to push a split in the EE in order to have a union tendency that corresponded to our dreams, forgetting that if the EE is not as we would like it to be, this is also because the revolutionary party of our dreams does not exist (and that the existence of a rump class-struggle EE would not hasten either the [sentence left out]).

d. Do we reject the union tendency in the CFDT or in the CGT? We maintain the perspective of a tendency with a class-struggle platform, but it is

impossible to think of being able to bypass the CP through the vehicle of a union tendency. Without a qualitative change in the relationship of forces between the Ligue and the CP, this would only be possible in the CFDT (see the Political Bureau's document) (the Carcassonne comrades who left the Ligue intended to build a tendency, but not a fraction or Mole groups which they considered as brakes on mass work). The embryos of tendencies are beginning to appear and exist in this or that local union. We must provide them whenever possible with a national echo (notable through the vehicle of the "class-struggle" pamphlet), but it is unthinkable to organize, in the short or medium run, a permanent national tendency in the CFDT or the CGT.

e. This explains the permanence and heterogeneous character of the Mole groups, where developed and deformed militants arrive, militants with union experience and others without any, and where indeed future militants of the Ligue are found, the "fellow travelers," and others who will find their place in a class-struggle union tendency: it is necessary to "homogenize" say Valentine and Michelet! Of course, and that's why we have decided to build Mole groups, militant organizations and not just "union groupings" or individual meetings with contacts. But it is very important to understand the underlying reasons for this heterogeneity and take care that this homogenization is not centered upon the least developed politically, even if they are the ones with the most experience. When there are developed militants of the Ligue in the workplace, the problem is relatively simple. These militants are the known leadership of the Mole group that follows in their footsteps. But when the entire cell is on the outside or when the League militants are young militants, any deviation in the Mole group is possible.

It is not a question of dogmatically fighting them by bureaucratically imposing the domination of the cell on the Mole group (one cell for example thought that in baptizing the Mole group as a Rouge committee this would solve the problem and would impose the paternity of the cell upon it!). On the one hand it is a question of making the political weight of the Ligue and the cell felt (for example the Manifesto campaign); on the other hand of sorting out the militants from the Mole group through special meetings, cadre schools, giving certain among them material tasks . . . That is, to form the "revolutionary Marxist nucleus" of the Mole group, the future nucleus of the workers cell of the Ligue. And contrary to what Valentine and Michelet say between the lines, there is a fundamental difference between a Mole militant and a militant who belongs to the Ligue. It is the difference between a militant who works with the Ligue and a militant who builds the party by discussing the orientation, by applying the decisions. To give the Mole groups the same rights as the cells, without having the same responsibilities, would signify renouncing democratic centralism on the pretext that we are weakly implanted in the working class. On the contrary, the weakness of our implantation makes it essential for us to apply democratic centralism with firmness. Without it we risk falling into the same practice as the PSU of workers and peasants assemblies which, behind the mask of a "rank-and-file" demagogy, allow the existence of a bureaucratic leadership that es-

capable of the control of the militants.<sup>3</sup>

### 3. Mass work and the building of the organization.

The very conditions of building the party mean that we cannot talk about mass work without talking at the same time about economy and the return on the investment of our forces, about weak points and strong points in our penetration . . .

So it is that in Paris, in one branch, we have militants and close sympathizers in ten centers but only two cells and three Mole groups. Every month we distribute four pages edited by Ligue militants covering a dozen centers, and local sheets edited by the Mole groups. We organize central meetings of Ligue militants and sympathizers, etc. . . That means that we have an organizational concern allowing us to use our forces to the maximum, and to fight the "localist" deformations that are naturally associated with those who spend all their time "in their own backyards."

If the goal is still the creation of factory cells, it is perhaps necessary, even indispensable, to begin with work in the neighborhood, to link the factory work with intervention in a working class area or a center for young workers, as is the case at the SNCF [national railways]. This involves, especially in Paris, a review of the links between the FJT and the factory intervention.

In the small cities the accumulation of forces in the teaching and high-school milieus is often decisive before the establishment of the first workers cells (see Jebracq's document on the small cities).

By watching out for this, we assert that the revolutionary organization is not the simple sum of militants doing mass work, but is an autonomous instrument in the class struggle, whose building process is not subsumed by mass work, even if it is dialectically linked to it.

### 4. Mass work and political work.

The ever greater extent to which Ligue members are faced with mass union work and with participation, indeed leadership of struggles, sharply poses the problem of understanding the relationship of the vanguard to the mass and applying it. Among others, the strike of the FJTs revealed on several occasions serious misunderstandings in this realm (an internal bulletin should draw the lessons from this). In spite of these errors, the fact that there were strike committees, a central strike committee, strikers' assemblies, that is, that on the whole workers democracy was respected, was the fundamental condition for the resounding blow to the Stalinist maneuvers, and for the surprising growth in consciousness of the FJT vanguard.

In this regard, the manner in which Valentine and Michelet envision worker members making their political affiliation known is only an example of their lack of understanding. It is the ultraleft complement of positions which are otherwise economist. For Valentine and Michelet, we intervene in the Mole groups to explain "how to struggle." That means that we reduce our intervention to the level of economism; but, on principle, we never hide our political character! Of course "we must not pose the problem of coming out publicly only in relation to the Stalinists, but in relation to all the workers." For us this means that having reached a certain stage in our mass work where we have the ear of and have gathered around us

some workers, it is indispensable to pose the problem of identifying ourselves politically. If not, we find ourselves limited to an opportunist position in relation to the Stalinists. We risk not being understood by the workers whose sympathy we have won and whom we have been able to group around us and who can perhaps be demoralized. Further, they may perhaps be pushed to leave the CGT for the CFDT, or even be tempted by ultraleftism. So it happened that after consistent mass work (unionization of twenty of the thirty monthlies at Delle-Alsthom, a large audience for our Mole group), in the face of Stalinist attacks our comrades at Delle decided to appear politically in broad daylight through distributing the Mole themselves. Contrary to what Valentine and Michelet claim, we do not pose the problem of appearing publicly according to the alternative "either directly against the Stalinists, or else remaining under the carpet," but in terms of the mass base, an indispensable condition for appearing publicly, the tactical forms of which must be discussed. In these conditions, it is ridiculous to expose one's political affiliation immediately, as Valentine and Michelet propose. "The Stalinist off in the corner will be totally off-balance in such a case. He has learned that this guy is in the Ligue because 'it becomes obvious.' But this guy does not talk in the union and does good work. Impossible to throw out a guy like that!" But this Stalinist in the corner, not so stupid, and organized in a fraction, will try to isolate the comrade to prevent him from building a mass base. If this Stalinist is even a little intelligent, he will invite the comrade to come and explain himself before the Executive Committee: "We have learned that you are in the Ligue. You see, in the CGT everyone has a right to his political opinion, but your organization criticizes the CGT . . . wants to organize fractions . . . So, we want to know if you agree with what your organization says or if you agree with your union . . . You have to choose . . . etc. . ." And so it will be necessary for the comrade to take the Stalinists head-on, without any mass base whatsoever. If he follows the advice of Valentine and Michelet, he will explain that he is in the Ligue, just like there are others in the union "who are Protestants or who have five children"!

In reality Valentine and Michelet believe that we cannot take on union responsibilities until we have a mass base. But, most often, in order to create a mass base, it is necessary to be active in the union, or even better to be a shop steward (which does not mean to climb into the union apparatus)—that is, to have the means to prove that one is the best defender of the workers and to win their personal confidence. It was in accordance with Valentine and Michelet's principles that Comrade Antoine explained, when our comrades in the CGT youth commission from cell X were accidentally discovered by the Stalinists, that they should have allowed themselves to be removed from their post in the Executive Committee because they were not elected by a critical mass base (in some way having fooled the workers!), and, the logical conclusion of this, proposed not to struggle in the union around the theme "It is our right to be in a political organization; does the union support us, yes or no? Do we respect workers democracy, yes or no?"; but to retreat in the union and to fight in the Mole groups!

It's just the opposite of what the comrades from Alsthom did when one of them was dismissed by the Stalinists from the Executive Committee. They immediately organized a petition of those in the union asking that he be immediately returned to his position, and, even better, that he run in the elections for shop steward!

When one has decided, after building a minimum base,

to appear publicly, it is still necessary to discuss the tactical forms. Should we reveal one or several militants? Which militant taking into account his capacity to defend the sum of the positions of the Ligue, his union—CGT or CFDT—his union responsibilities, etc. . . ? All of these concrete conditions must be viewed tactically. Only dogmatists see it as a question of principle!

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1. This is not without its contradictions. If we abided solely by the demands of replying to the U.S. escalation in Vietnam, we ought to do much more than we have been doing. But the legalism permeating the working class, and its corollary, the vulnerability of the Ligue, blocks us. Thus we have to measure the escalation of our reply by the necessity of being understood by the vanguard of the working class; that is, situate ourselves at the edge of what is possible illegally.

2. As V. and M. remind us.

3. Valentine and Michelet's practice, consisting of distributing a "throw-away leaflet" in the Ligue headquarters protesting the so-called bureaucratic suppression of V and M's document, smacks of practices belonging to the PSU. We think that one cannot resort to such practices unless it is held that we are in an irretrievably bureaucratic organization. In that case, a different document is required.

# Excerpts from the Resolutions of the Bolshevik-Leninist Tendency for Proletarianization

[Translated from the November 11, 1972, issue of *Rouge*.]

## *Our Choices*

We can play a decisive role in the crisis of the PCF [Parti Communiste Français—French Communist Party] only if we succeed in winning organizer cadres. Except in rare instances, we will be able to recruit such cadres only by proving our capacity to organize working-class struggles.

Priority should be given to orienting toward young militant workers in order to constitute mainly from their ranks the base of the revolutionary party, without, however, making any concessions to their spontanéist, localist, or antipolitical deviations (. . .)

The dialectic of intervening in sectors entailed using our capacity to mobilize key groupings of student youth so as to appear as a credible revolutionary pole in the eyes of the organizer cadres of the working class and thus to recruit them.

## *Let Us Draw the Balance Sheet on the Dialectic of Intervening in Sectors.*

— The dialectic of intervening in sectors has not drawn around us any appreciable number of organizer cadres from the working class.

— The dialectic of intervening in sectors has led to recruitment of privileged elements from peripheral layers.

— Even if the dialectic of intervening in sectors has enabled us to construct a nationally known organization, in no case has it enabled us to become rooted in the working class. Moreover, it has introduced a number of serious deformations:

- Pressure from the radicalized petty bourgeoisie (petty-bourgeois impatience, bypassing the working class).

- Miseducation of activists little suited for mass work. (The Ligue Communiste has not trained agitators *among* the masses, but propagandists addressing themselves *to* the masses.)

- Development of a significant proportion of activists outside of any sector of intervention.

- Lack of organizational seriousness.

- Difficulty in integrating worker activists.

If the Ligue Communiste continues to follow the logic of intervening in sectors, it may still grow numerically and become the *biggest* "revolutionary" organization on the fringe of the working class. In no case will it root itself significantly—an indispensable stage in the process of constructing a revolutionary party.

We must make a sharp break with the past:

— in our political line,

— in our political practice,

Thus in our *type* of organization.

We must construct another strategy for building the party.

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[Translated from the November 18, 1972, issue of *Rouge*.]

To begin with it is necessary to define what we mean by "mass work." As we see it, to speak of the mass work of organized revolutionary militants means posing the problem of the relationship between the vanguard and the masses.

We denounce the way the leadership of the organization mechanically interprets Lenin's *What is to be Done*. They tend to conceive of the organization as a vanguard apart from the masses and as a provider of lessons. All the deviations of substitutionalism and vanguardism are possible in the Ligue Communiste today.

In view of this we say: The most fruitful relationship to the masses from the angle of implanting ourselves and forming a conscious, organized revolutionary vanguard is made possible by the militant action of organized activists in the circles where we are intervening (the schools for students, the plants for workers). To us, mass work is the *organization of people* (workers in the plants, people in the community, students . . .) *for struggle*. Thus let's

not confuse *mass work* (which presupposes our presence where we are intervening) with *mass propaganda* (which is directed to a mass *audience*). Our implantation, principally in the working class, will not be developed merely through political propaganda *at the plant gates*, but principally by our capacity to lead mass struggles *in* the plants.

To accomplish this, we propose for our factory work:

1. Setting a conscious policy of establishing groups of activists in the plants (i.e., "proletarianization").

2. Pressing for the establishment of *Mole groups* in the plants, broad regroupment of the basis of anticapitalist and antireformist struggle, led by Ligue Communiste cells, which will *actively* take the political initiative in an open way on the job.

3. Providing ourselves with the means for a real policy of theoretical training, closely tied in with the practical training on the job permitted by our proposals one and two.

This supposes putting an end to the unbridled activism that involves us in one key action after another (demonstrations, meetings. . .) which entails depoliticization and tailendism.

# Introduction to Internal Bulletin #36

This internal bulletin [#36] is devoted to reporting the September 16-17 [1972] Central Committee meeting. Two or three draft resolutions for the congress (the third being the resolution on organization of the congress) were presented to the meeting. After the CC cadre school following the summer vacation period and the cadre schools of the DV-DS (city and Parisian section leaderships), the issues in dispute evolved. The theses on building the organization ["22 Theses on the Construction of the Party"] were first discussed and amended in the Political Bureau, and subsequently in the Central Committee. At the end of the discussions, the Political Bureau was unanimous on the draft of the theses, and in the Central Committee there was only one vote (Ménard [Bolshevik-Leninist Tendency]) against them and five motivated abstentions.

In order for comrades to be able to understand the evolution of the positions in the course of the debate, the Central Committee asked comrades Jebracq and Roger,

around whose contributions the debate had polarized up to the Central Committee meeting following the summer vacation period, to furnish the written explanations of their votes. These appear in this bulletin.

The documents thus presented have the effect of focusing the debate. Most of the coming contributions should end by proposing amendments in order to avoid having questions raised without order and without practical consequence. Should comrades have such fundamental differences that they find it impossible to propose amendments to the resolution, it would be logical for them to form a tendency around an alternative resolution. It is in the framework thus defined that the resolution on organization of the congress limits the volume of contributions. It is a question of avoiding a flood of paper and of compelling comrades to intervene in the discussion in a summary way on the points that seem most important to them.

## 22 Theses on the Construction of the Party

[The "22 Theses on the Construction of the Party" were originally discussed and voted on at the September 16-17 Central Committee meeting of the Ligue Communiste and published in Internal Bulletin #36. The version printed here (which contains 24 theses) is a translation of the document as adopted by the Third National Convention of the Ligue on December 10, 1972. It was published in *Quatrième Internationale*, March-April 1973.]

### I. Political Tasks in the Present Period

1. After a long period of accelerated economic expansion, which followed the postwar revolutionary crisis in Western Europe, the international imperialist system finds itself in a deep crisis. The economic growth of the imperialist countries is experiencing a general slowdown. The international monetary system established at Bretton Woods on the basis of the relationship of forces issuing from the war, no longer corresponds to the present relationship of forces within the imperialist camp. The crisis of the international monetary system today threatens to halt the expansion of world trade. The social contradictions are deepening and a massive social crisis is appearing in several European countries.

2. The long economic expansion has, since the 1960s, reduced the industrial reserve army of the developed capitalist countries and has created a massive, diversified proletariat, at the same time that it has had to call in a large number of harshly exploited immigrant workers.

Under these conditions, the bourgeoisie cannot hope

that the workers will accept its attempts to increase the rate of exploitation without reacting. Neither can it hope to inflict a rapid and crushing defeat on a working class that has extensive resources at its disposal and which, in France, has just gone through an experience of generalized struggle in May 1968.

On the other hand, the French bourgeoisie is already reaching the limits of a policy of integrating the workers movement into the state, combining it with selective repression. The various attempts at a policy of wage controls, of participation, of profit-sharing, run up against the combativity and independence of a workers movement within which the Stalinist party, aligned with the USSR, retains complete hegemony. As for selective repression, it always runs the risk of going beyond its objectives and provoking, to the extent that the vanguard is not isolated from the traditional workers movement, mass response. The responses to the *anti-casseurs law* [a witch-hunt law against "disrupters"], to the assassination of Pierre Overney have shown the difficulty of this problem for the bourgeoisie.

In this situation, the most probable variant is prolonged political instability. In the short run, this instability will aid the rooting of revolutionaries in the working class. But if it is prolonged, without a central political solution appearing, it will also have the contrary result of wearing down the combativity of the masses. In this context, the appearance and development of revolutionary organizations capable of impelling and leading the workers movement beyond its reformist apparatuses is going to become

a real danger for the bourgeoisie.

3. The capitalist system's need for ever greater accumulation, and its need to restructure itself, especially through the concentration of capital, has sharpened the contradictions it is experiencing, thus itself furnishing the objective basis for a resurgence of the combativity of the workers.

From the Belgian strikes of 1961 to those of the English miners and longshoremen, from the rebellions of the workers in Spain, the French general strike, to the Italian "creeping May," a new generation of workers has served its apprenticeship in the class struggle. Moreover, the recent period has seen the super-exploited layers of the working class — youth, women, and immigrant workers — enter into struggle.

In parallel fashion, the major changes in the division of labor have led to an explosion in the number of university students, resulting in the 1960s in the appearance of a mass, militant, student movement which the structures of the traditional workers movement, Social Democratic and Stalinist, were not set up to contain.

This new wave of radicalization arose at a time when Stalinism's hold was breaking up: the Sino-Soviet conflict opened a first breach, which was considerably enlarged by the development of the Indochinese revolution and the rise of struggles against the bureaucracies in the workers states.

4. All these factors, objective and subjective, led to the appearance of a new vanguard of a mass character that is free from the control of the traditional organizations. From the point of view of building the party, this is the most important fact.

But this does not by itself suffice to provide a healthy and firm basis for the building of the party. In fact, the way the international crisis of Stalinism developed produced a great unevenness of consciousness within this vanguard: the break with Stalinism does not spontaneously and directly work in favor of revolutionary Marxism.

The sharp crisis of the bourgeoisie and the rejection of Stalinism engender ultraleft currents that could temporarily, under the influence of the Cultural Revolution, take the form of Mao-spontaneism. On the other hand, the transformation of the relations between the masses and the bureaucratic apparatuses, the deep evolution of realignment of the workers movement brings to the surface council or revolutionary-syndicalist currents.

The crisis of Stalinism is thus not solely to be seen as an internal crisis of the Stalinist organizations per se, but as an overall phenomenon of the period, affecting the structure of the workers movement as a whole: transformations within the union movement, relations between all the social classes and the proletariat, changes in the political forces facing the strong state. It is within this general framework that the relations between the student movement and the workers movement, between the far left and the traditional workers movement, between the CGT and the CFDT, between the CP and the SP, must be defined.

5. The joint crisis of imperialism and Stalinism is expressed in particular by a dual phenomenon of radicalization in the student youth and in the working class.

The political currents emerging in the student youth correspond to different levels of consciousness, expressing different answers to the central question of the link with the

working class and the organized workers movement.

Within the working class itself, the process of differentiation within the vanguard is slower. It appears en masse in struggles with quite varied levels of consciousness: from the nonunionized working-class youth, to the active members of the CGT, to a certain number of the cadres of the CFDT. The recourse to forms of radical struggle does not by itself suffice to define the vanguard since one of the key problems is the gap between the high level of combativity and the low general level of consciousness.

The French Communist Party, at the same time that it developed the class consciousness of the proletariat (deforming it in the process), crushed generations of activists. It constitutes a powerful brake on the development of working-class cadres who, during hard and prolonged struggles or in a prerevolutionary crisis, are capable of giving an impulse to the self-organization of the class. This is a specific feature of the Stalinist domination of the French workers movement that differs from the situation in the Italian or Spanish workers movements.

Our aim is to organize and recruit this heterogeneous vanguard, which appears in the course of struggles, in order to form real organizer cadres of the class out of it.

6. The law of uneven and combined development, characteristic of the process of accumulation of capital, gives rise within the French social structure to the existence of regions that suffer from an isolation from the large centers of production. This leads to chronic underemployment and the massive forced exodus of labor. These regions also suffer from a cultural stifling that benefits the dominant bourgeois culture. These phenomena are today expressed on the political level owing to the fact that the strong state has liquidated the buffer political institutions of the parliamentary republic.

In these regions, class relations take on a special physiognomy. In certain cases, especially in Brittany, the working class of the traditional industries is seeing a new working class arise beside it that is tied to the growth of services and to the penetration of industries during the 1960s. This new layer is characterized by its recent peasant origins, by a virtual absence of organizational traditions, and by the weakness of the reformist bureaucracies' control over it. This new generation of workers, subjected to superexploitation due to permanent underemployment, moves from prostration to radical mobilizations that shake up the traditional workers leaderships. The peasants, condemned by the capitalist reorganization of agriculture (plan Vedel), or already prey to disillusionment in face of the capitalist reorganization of agriculture that is, in certain areas, making them all into wage workers, is seeing the development of a large vanguard in its ranks which can find no solution except through the socialist transformation of society, and which actively seeks to get together with the working class, to the point that it shakes the screen erected by the reformist leaderships.

Finally, the youth, lacking any outlets, undergoes a massive studentization. It acutely resents the underemployment, the inescapability of migration, and the cultural oppressiveness. It is therefore prone to hard and prolonged mobilizations against the university policy of the power structure, and it easily and massively allies itself with the struggles of the working class.

These facts as a whole make it possible to envision a combined soaring of the radicalization of different social strata around the proletariat. From this point on in the building of the party we try to bring the conditions in these regions, which can make a special contribution, to bear in the development and unfolding of the revolutionary crisis. We attempt to differentiate our intervention among workers in order to win influence in the recently formed layers of the working class. We combat, within the ranks of the worker and peasant vanguard tied to the regional radicalization, the temptation to fall into regionalism or nationalism.

In the Basque territory, the problem is not limited to the question of regionalism. Because of the traditions of struggle in Spain and the present political situation, a radicalization is under way that poses the problem of the oppression of the Basque people as a national minority. We must therefore clearly assert our support for the demand of the "right to self-determination"; at the same time we must assert, contrary to interclass illusions, that only the proletariat can resolve the problem of minorities, and its national aspect, within the context of the Socialist United States of Europe.

We view it as our task to demonstrate to them in struggle the necessity to link up with the struggle of the proletariat on a national scale. This task may, in the very near future, require special organizational forms determined by the extent of our roots in the working class and by the relationship of forces within the far left.

7. The development since 1967 of women's movements against their oppression, both in North America and in the various countries of Europe, and the mass impact of the points they raise, reflect a deep crisis in the capitalist system, its institutions, and its traditional values. They reflect a qualitative rise in the aspirations of large segments of female intellectuals and workers for a radical transformation of society—the development of science and technology and the growth in the education of women contrast with the role they are still forced to play in the family and in production. This opens the possibility to win these radicalized women to the cause of a socialist society which would see the socialization of domestic tasks and the education of children, the liberation of sexual relations from the oppressive framework of bourgeois marriage, and a real social equality between man and woman. From now on, a struggle around these themes must lead to an accentuation of the contradictions in the capitalist system, to a corrosive critique of its values, but also to the opening of a conscious struggle by the vanguard against the deepest manifestations of the alienation that class society imprints on people through sexual differentiations.

The broad women's liberation movements are, of necessity, marked by considerable political variation which can lead to their being swept away: they have presently developed outside, in fact against, the traditional workers organizations that are incapable of taking up their most radical anticapitalist aspirations; but these movements are likewise affected by the present situation of newly emerging vanguards and the early stage of the building of revolutionary parties in the advanced capitalist countries; i.e., in a context of weak revolutionary Marxist organizations that are still insufficiently developed as organizations

rooted in the working class. The women's liberation movements were thus born outside the influence of these organizations if not in hostility to them (hostility often tied to the limitations and shortcomings of the revolutionary Marxist organizations concerning these problems). The revolutionary Marxists will therefore be faced with multiple currents: from the various petty-bourgeois manifestations and their anti-Marxist and antimale feminist variations; to bourgeois reformist currents, strong or weak depending on the dynamism and traditions of the different sectors of the bourgeoisie themselves; all the way to the workerist elements.

In France, the MLF [Mouvement pour la Libération des Femmes—Women's Liberation Movement] developed more or less outside the workers movement and at a time when the revolutionary Marxist organization is not solidly rooted in the working class; this is why great political differentiations have appeared within it, mainly petty-bourgeois tendencies of the sexist sort (counterposition of the struggle of the sexes to the class struggle), but also currents that are open to discussions with the revolutionary Marxists. The impact of the initiatives taken by the MLF, as well as those of such movements as "Choisir" [an abortion-rights organization] testify to the immense potential for militant pressure (which we have neglected up until now) that can be brought to bear around the slogans of the struggle against the specific oppression of women, with an authentic revolutionary dynamic, if it is given direction by the intervention of revolutionary Marxists.

8. The numerical importance of immigrant workers, the necessity of uniting the working class, and the repercussions on the level of building the International determine the present importance of an intervention toward the immigrant workers.

The immigrant's recent struggles over their conditions of work and housing, and against racism, create a favorable climate for such an intervention.

9. For us, the central problem is the political and organizational link-up of the Fourth International and the new revolutionary generations now in the process of emerging. Despite the decisive progress made in the last ten years, this task still determines the character of our mass work at the present time.

On the international level, the Reunification Congress of the Fourth International in 1963 also marked a decisive step in this sense, rejecting both the conservative sectarianism of the Lambertist type and the opportunist adaptation of the Pabloist type. In sanctioning the break with the entrism strategy of party building, in adopting an orientation of armed struggle for the Latin American sections, the Ninth World Congress in 1969 marked a new step forward in linking up the International with the new revolutionary forces.

Today, in the face of diverse currents engendered by the crisis of Stalinism, the basic task is to win hegemony within the new vanguard and to lead sectors of the workers mass struggles that will enable broader layers of workers to verify our programmatic orientations in practice.

10. Our work in the present period aims to rid the workers vanguard of the reformist education that Stalinism has instilled in the workers movement. What this specifically



means is:

(a) To develop transitional demands, to broaden and popularize the forms of class self-organization which are linked to them: decision-making assemblies of strikers, democratically-elected strike committees, shop delegates and councils of delegates. In this perspective workers control is not just one theme among others. It is the actual link between immediate demands and calling into question the right of the bosses to make the decisions in the plant. By necessity it involves self-organization. In France the CP's orientation and strength constitute major obstacles to experiences of workers control and to the building of organs of dual power. That is why, in our battle for the Transitional Program, we must give an ever more prominent place to propaganda in favor of all organized forms of workers democracy.

(b) To systematically educate the new worker vanguard and the advanced workers in a nonelectoral and non-parliamentary perspective for the conquest of power. Our propaganda on the subject of the workers' government will be developed in this light. To give this the concrete form of a government of workers' organizations resulting from a simple maturing of the electoral process would only nourish and strengthen the electoral illusions of the workers. That is why it is inconceivable to give it a concrete form outside of three possibilities: (1) a transformation of the relationship of forces between reformists and revolutionists that would make the government formula the crowning of a policy of united front of the class; (2) a prerevolutionary crisis of the May 1968 type where we would be able to call on the workers organizations to take power; or (3) a revolutionary crisis marked by the formation of organs of dual power for which we would demand all the power.

(c) To systematically reeducate the workers vanguard, including by setting the example, on the need for revolutionary violence and for armed self-defense against the legalized or extralegal violence of capitalism. It is this concern in particular that explains the agitational campaign we have carried out in defense of workers' struggles, our antifascist policy, the pursuit of radical minority propaganda actions around themes that do not isolate the vanguard, the perspective of reintroducing mass violence in the movement supporting the Indochinese revolution.

(d) To restore to the working-class vanguard a clearly internationalist consciousness of the role the proletariat must play in the face of the forces of international reaction.

● by organizing support for workers' struggles in other European countries and by popularizing the slogan of the Socialist United States of Europe;

● by organizing solidarity with revolutionary struggles underway in the world. Here as well, the massive campaign in support of the Indochinese revolution—like the Ligue's own political intervention on the question of permanent revolution, Stalinism, and peaceful coexistence—plays a role that is today irreplaceable;

● by organizing solidarity with the struggles led by workers in the bureaucratic workers states, and by organizing the defense of imprisoned socialist militants.

(e) To unceasingly counterpose our concept of socialism to its Stalinist caricature.

Through accomplishing these tasks we will be able to close the gap between the high level of worker combativity and the low level of consciousness. In this way the next prerevolutionary crisis will find, if only on a small scale, a rooted and educated vanguard in the workers movement that can point the struggle toward the central objective of the conquest of power.

11. To build the revolutionary organization, the variegated processes of radicalization must be dealt with. Modifications in the relationship of forces between the working class and the bourgeoisie, between the masses and the bureaucratic leaders of the workers movement, between the vanguard and the traditional workers movement, must all be taken into account. The very complexity of the task can lead to oversimplifications.

The first oversimplification consists of bypassing the traditional workers movement under the illusion of being able to build a new workers movement outside and against it. The ultraleft variation of this attempt consists of pushing all kinds of regroupments outside the unions in hope of stabilizing them into an alternative to the unions. The centrist variation consists of supporting certain forms of realignment in the union movement in order to present them as a major alternative to bureaucratic unionism: this would be the logic of a position of orienting toward the CFDT over and above the CGT. A third variant consists of rejecting a framework of national union work, envisioning instead that the party will be built through local groupings, inside and outside the unions.

The second oversimplification consists, on the contrary, of verbally dismissing the variegated forms that clothe the new vanguard, including ultraleft forms. It rests on a fallacious interpretation of the Workers United Front as a strategy and method of party building; an interpretation that leads to condemning the far left as a petty-bourgeois phenomenon and to minimizing the political radicalization of the student movement.

12. The currents within the radicalization and the far-left organizations expressing them, especially among the student youth, are a structural attribute of this period. They are not passing phenomena linked to the ebb of May 1968. The components of the far left (ultralefts, centrists, or right sectarians) will exist for a long time, until such time as a revolutionary organization based in the working class can assert its hegemony in their midst.

The bureaucratized union movement is not a creation of the bourgeoisie, or of a handful of bureaucrats, designed to subdue and keep a grip on the working class. It has its social base in the working masses whom capitalist exploitation makes vulnerable to all sorts of mystifications. But within the ranks of the bureaucratized union movement thousands of advanced workers are organized, advanced workers who have the confidence of their shopmates, and without whom the revolutionary conquest of power and its consolidation are impossible. It is necessary to develop systematic work in the unions and in the workers movement as a whole in order to win their confidence in practice. In accomplishing this task, the young combative workers will become organizer cadres fully able to fulfill their vanguard role.

Moreover, one of the principal dangers in this period would be to see the break between the levels of consciousness of the new vanguard and the traditional workers

movement get still worse, and to see the gap between them widen. The bourgeoisie would then be able to repress the vanguard, counting on the passivity of the organized workers movement. This will be one of the important problems to watch out for in the coming period. We must do everything to close this gap and to strengthen the vanguard's roots in the organized workers movement.

13. The process of radicalization in France is taking place mainly outside the CP, although it has important repercussions within it, which can become more pronounced in periods of intense struggles.

Our strategic aim in the face of the bourgeoisie is to unify the working class. The slogans we put forward (sliding scale, equal raises for all, for example), as well as the forms of struggle we advocate (elected strike committees, support committees), point toward this unification. The pursuit of this goal is translated into a systematic quest for unity in action. This likewise motivates both our work in the unions and our propaganda for trade-union unity with the right of tendencies to exist.

But to the extent that the working class is already organized in reformist parties, it is not only necessary to unify the class, but also to break the reformist hold. The tactic of the Workers United Front is designed to answer this need. This tactic, in order to accomplish its goal, presupposes a certain relationship of forces between reformists and revolutionists, without which the Workers United Front is reduced to a reformist front of the labor movement or to the subordination of the revolutionary organizations to the reformist parties.

We are today too strong to content ourselves with general propaganda in favor of a United Workers Front from which we would not benefit. That would be equivalent to capitulation before the reformist apparatuses. We have not yet gathered together the broad vanguard, and won the hegemony in its midst that would allow us to impose the united front on the reformist organizations. That is why, taking into account the characteristics of the period and the relationship of forces within the workers movement, we apply a specific tactic that is linked to our state of development: a tactic of unity in action and outflanking the reformist apparatuses.

14. This tactic especially expresses itself in the field of unitary relations. We don't seek an exclusive alliance with the traditional workers movement. We develop the initiative of the far left on the proper bases to force the organized workers movement into united action from which we gain. But the vulnerability of the relationship of forces in the far left forces upon us a prolonged tactical battle around the question of unitary relations. That is why our alliances vary. In certain strikes, or in the response to Pierre Overney's assassination, the very character of the struggle can lead to an alliance with ultraleft currents on a basis that is understandable to at least a portion of the workers movement. On the other hand, in certain struggles of a democratic character, like the struggles against the anti-wreckers law, we address ourselves to the whole workers movement while the ultraleft turns its back, causing a shift in the axis of alliances.

## II. What Kind of Mass Work?

15. To build the revolutionary party we cannot basically count on reforming the cadres educated by the CP. We

must bring together the uneven pace of radicalization between the workers and student movements, between young, combative workers and experienced cadres, between CGT and CFDT. The dialectic of the sectors of intervention answers this problem. Similarly, we must be able to grasp the social transformations and the specific phenomena of radicalization that the law of uneven and combined development produces on the national level, in particular, the overlapping of regional problems with the class struggle.

To ignore these differentiations would mean to leave aside the concrete forms that the birth of the vanguard takes. Doing this would result in a dispersion of our forces. We must, then, consider these factors as a whole, while keeping our rudder firmly directed toward the main goal of our intervention: the worker vanguard. We are not, like an already built party, in a position to provide an organizational framework for the most elementary levels of consciousness, to provide an alternative perspective to those of the reformist leaderships. We can no longer content ourselves, like a marginal propaganda group, with simple fractional activity in the mass organizations dominated by the CP. We are at the point where our central task is to bring together the whole vanguard while educating it to real mass work. From this flows the ambiguity of the structures we develop for this work. They must be both instruments for mass work and frameworks for rigorous politicization (struggle against reformism and ultraleftism).

The character of the mass organizations we build depends in part on the state of the Ligue's development and on its relations with the organized workers movement, and in part on the areas we intervene in and their specific forms of organization. Thus in the colleges and high schools, the absence of mass organizations and the character of the radicalization leads us to build mass currents where the activists are organized in agreement with the Ligue's activity in their area. On the other hand, in the workers movement we defend the perspective of mass class struggle tendencies.

The uneven pace of the radicalization today makes it formalist and inadequate to try to develop a uniform organizational response which we force all our mass structures for changing the leadership within the traditional workers movement to conform to.

The link between these structures can only be achieved conjuncturally in the course of struggle, or in the Ligue itself, through the dialectic of sectors of intervention.

16. In the workers movement we struggle to build an interunion tendency with a perspective of trade-union unification with rights for tendencies. This is the best way to educate a large segment of workers on real workers democracy and to educate the vanguard itself on the need for mass work within the workers movement.

But our concrete intervention well illustrates the permanent tension between the plan we aim for and the form our present tie with the workers vanguard takes. Thus, we are moving toward an organizational system based on factory cells and on tendency work in the unions. But for a whole period yet, the structural basis of the organization will remain, in its majority, the mixed cell (i.e., not solely composed of members in a plant) which enables us to present an important, independent identity

in the face of the Stalinist domination in the workers movement.

Regarding the union tendency, especially in the CFDT, in the near future it can only exist on the local scale. We fight against the CFDT leadership's plan to transform the union into a union-party, which can only lead to isolation. Thus we refuse to take part in battles between CFDT and CGT unions. Instead we confront the bureaucrats with a platform of class struggle.

In another respect, in the CFDT we participate in left politico-syndical groupings which oppose the leadership, with the view toward carrying the debate and active clarification into them, especially regarding party-union relations. In the CGT, we try to build specific groupings of far left activists around a number of precise points which conform to our class struggle platform.

The Mole groups bring together advanced workers who may, depending on the specific case, be young nonunion workers or union workers who have broken with the reformist leaderships. It is through political development and militant practice that we can reduce this disparity and form the future communist nucleus in the plant.

Further, when possible, we push specific organizations formed around well-defined issues, such as committees for work directed toward the army or FSI committees.

The FJT [dormitories housing young workers] have become a favorite gathering-place for young workers. Consequently, work directed toward these dormitories must be systematized within the dialectic of our work in the working class, our youth work, and our neighborhood work.

17. (a) The "Emancipated School," the revolutionary union tendency within the FEN [national teachers union], plays the role of a mass union tendency because of its systematic presence and the battle it carries out in all areas of the FEN. But since such a tendency must counterpose the embryo of an alternative revolutionary strategy to the reformist strategies, it must of necessity have a dual character, which it would be incorrect to try to fuse, of a mass trade-union tendency that includes revolutionary militants of differing political outlooks.

(b) The specific character of the period (the crisis of Stalinism and the absence of a revolutionary party) has led us to reject building a tendency on the basis of our entire program, in order to participate instead in the development and strengthening of the Emancipated School tendency.

This implies a high-priority alliance with certain currents of the far-left, so long as they accept the political constraint represented by the struggle against reformism within the FEN: thus for us the fundamental dividing line in the Emancipated School tendency is the acceptance of the trade-union arena as the arena for a permanent struggle against the reformists and the Stalinists. The development of a revolutionary tendency can only take place through the political combat we must organize against all attempts to pull the Emancipated School tendency out of the union in order to use it as the focus for an attempt to build a centrist political organization, or to reject its focus on union affairs.

Through this combat we consciously assume the dual character of the Emancipated School tendency, under the

condition that it contradicts neither our plan to utilize the presence of the FEN in the workers movement to foster trade-union unity, nor, even more, our presence in the union. We must not, however, think that in the present period we can decisively reduce this ambiguity within the Emancipated School tendency.

(c) Outflanking the trade-union leaderships locally, regionally, and nationally permits us (under strictly defined circumstances) to concretely validate the trade-union orientation we are proposing. In conjunctural formations that encompass non-union teachers (struggle committees, M.A. committees, etc.) we can take advantage of revolutionary currents that are at present outside the Emancipated School tendency (e.g., the militants of Renovation Syndicale and SGEN-CFDT), even outside the union. This implies a development of the rank-and-file base of the trade union, which alone will permit us to capitalize on this struggle within the trade-union context, including vis-à-vis the Stalinists.

(d) Situated at the point where industrial unionism and teacher unionism come together, CET [vocational school] teachers who are members of the Ligue work first and foremost in the CGT, and also in the CFDT, and the FEN, orienting toward building an interunion tendency based on the perspective of trade-union unity with the right to form tendencies.

(e) Along with our mass work, it is necessary to develop the Ligue's independent intervention in teaching circles and to systematize our recruitment policy. Not only because it is correct to publicize the organization as such, but also because it is the indispensable guard-rail against syndicalist, opportunist, or sectarian deviations.

The Ligue's independent intervention flows through three channels:

- spreading communist ideas on the totality of political problems on the one hand, and on the specific problems of the schools on the other;

- a systematic policy of public forums to analyze the educational institutions and their crisis, to criticize the different strategies that have been offered in this area, to discuss what kind of a school is necessary for a society in transition;

- organizing teachers who are sympathetic to the Ligue in Red Committees. These Red Committees may or may not be composed strictly of teachers. This depends on local conditions of our implantation and development.

But in every case the basic outlines of the Red Committees are the structure for contact work and integration into the Ligue, and must not in any way substitute themselves for the tendency, under pain of a catastrophic narrowing of our mass work.

18. In the university, we gather and centralize our political current within the FNCL [National Federation of Struggle Committees]. In periods of struggle, marked by the appearance of temporary united bodies that we lead, our current plays the role of a mass tendency. Outside these periods of massive mobilization, our current carries out general education and revolutionary propaganda, ranging from a critique of the institution to polemics against the reformist and ultraleft orientations. Our mass front at the university swings between playing the role of a tendency within the movement and the role of a po-

litical faction, depending on the fluctuations of the student movement itself. All other conceptions of the FNCL could lead only to forming either a student-body organization, a centrist group, or an organization of close sympathizers of the Ligue.

In the high schools we organize our active sympathizers in a front of Red committees tied to the Ligue. These committees are conceived as vehicles for intervention in the milieu and, when conditions warrant, are transformed episodically into larger groups. When the struggle or mobilization of the milieu permits, we push or participate in the creation of larger bodies — strike committees or struggle committees — which can be temporarily centralized. But these larger bodies cannot be permanently centralized on a national scale since their character is fundamentally determined by the local relationship of forces.

In the CETs [vocational schools] we gather our active sympathizers into Red committees or "Chained Apprentices" groups where the ties with the Ligue are clear. These committees are organized around local or regional newsletters of the Ligue. When the struggle or the mobilization of this milieu permits, we lead, or participate in, the creation of broader formations, strike committees or struggle committees that can be centralized conjuncturally, but in no case centralized permanently on a national scale.

19. (1) With the FSI (Front Solidarité Indochine) we enable a radical current to carry out its actions in relation to the needs of the Indochinese revolution without having its hands tied by the practice of peaceful coexistence. Gathered around this current are various political forces, who, faced with the passivity of the traditional workers movement and convinced of the necessity for support actions, are first of all differentiated by the criteria of real and effective activities (radicalized Christians, pacifists, etc. . .).

(2) To insure the development of the FSI's mass activity, we have fought against a concept that both looks toward dissolving the FSI into a general anti-imperialist movement and rejects unity in action with the Stalinist movement. On the other hand, we have fought to go beyond the concept of an FSI that is reduced to a center for more or less conjunctural initiatives. The FSI Conference established the independent existence of an organization based on rank-and-file membership committees and ruled according to democratic procedures.

(3) The FSI's specific character as a mass formation is based on the Indochinese revolution's importance and weight for the class struggle on a world scale. It is this weight that permits the FSI to bring about permanent unity in action among many components of the far-left around the question of support actions. It is this weight that permits us to fight to extend this unity to all the components of the far-left, and beyond them. It is this weight that permits us to act as the moving force in the radicalization and the broadening of the whole support movement.

(4) Accordingly, the FSI, apart from its objective role of support for the Indochinese revolution, also plays a role of political clarification within the far-left. It is a favorable and specific terrain for applying our tactic of unity-outflanking, and permits us to propose the framework of a credible united-front policy.

(5) Similar to the kind of response evoked by a mur-

derous U.S. escalation, the evolution of the situation on-the-spot in Indochina and internationally, and the signing of an accord like the one proposed in October [1972], which would open a period of "armed peace" and intense, mass political struggle in South Vietnam, require a political deepening of the FSI and an intensification of its activity. It is more necessary than ever, as the Indochinese Revolutionaries' repeated appeals to and support for the FSI underscore.

20. In the present conjuncture, which is marked by an increase in social tensions and the development of a growing disgust with military conscription among broad layers of the youth, the Ligue Communiste puts the beginning of permanent antimilitary work on the agenda.

The work is organized along two axes. On the one hand, the Ligue Communiste is popularizing and trying to concretize its revolutionary Marxist positions on antimilitarism: namely, by a permanent effort to spread revolutionary ideas among draftees in order to create a favorable climate for their massive refusal to fire on their fellow workers in revolutionary situations. Militants of the Ligue Communiste who are drafted thus play the role of politically leading the draftees, spreading revolutionary Marxist analyses of bourgeois militarism, and taking a place at the head of struggles for the demands of draftees when these struggles break out.

On the other hand, the Ligue Communiste foresees the possibility of developing a mass movement among civilians in support of the struggles of draftees, and of a mobilization against the army of capitalism.

### III. What Organization?

21. The kind of tasks we must carry out, and the character of the mass work we can develop, make clear the key role of the central leadership on all levels in the building of the organization. Our very ability to overcome the dangers of the separation between the far left and the traditional workers movement, between a sectarian response and an attempt to carry out mass work beyond our means, depends on their capacity for political centralization and synthesis.

The strengthening of the central leadership's capacity to direct the day-to-day work among workers will take place by strengthening the Central Committee with comrades responsible for work in the working class and by the Political Bureau's taking charge over this sector, as well as by the strengthening of the National Workers Commission.

In a period when clarification in the far left can also turn into nonselective and poorly controlled recruitment, these leadership bodies will have to be acutely alert to developing a system of education capable of coping with our present recruitment possibilities. Finally, they will have to prevent any relaxation whatsoever of the revolutionary discipline which is more indispensable than ever to a democratically centralized organization.

Some regional leaderships may be set up, functioning under the Central Committee's control, with first priority given to regions which now make up a single area of political intervention. These regional leaderships will be responsible for developing a tactic for rooting the organiza-

tion in the working class, for taking political initiatives, and for establishing a system of publications adapted to the specific characteristics of the radicalization and mobilization in their field of intervention.

22. *Rouge* is the central organ of the Ligue. Put out by the editorial committee and the National Commission responsible to the Central Committee and the Political Bureau, *Rouge* is linked to the organization insofar as it serves as a vehicle for its strategic projections. Strengthening *Rouge* and increasing its influence are necessary tasks for rooting the organization.

Our press system is directly tied to our system of organization. *Rouge* is addressed to various levels of consciousness since it has a diverse readership. It has to take this phenomenon into account while defining a central target: in addressing ourselves primarily to the worker vanguard, we will be understood by the other components of the vanguard as well. This does not, however, mean a standardization of our central press.

An organization like the Ligue does not maintain the same relations with its central organ that a clandestine organization does. The backbone of the organization is the central leadership and its instructions for work. *Rouge* is the hub of our press system: it must be backed up by publications directed toward the sectors (high school, college students), by a workers bulletin, by brochures, by the regular publication of *Quatrième Internationale*.

Our first experience with a mass press will not take place through the central organ, which must take the unevenness of our penetration in various arenas into account. It will first be attempted on the city or regional scale, as a result of the uniformity and effectiveness of the local base, which are indispensable preconditions for a militant mass press.

23. The period which is opening up is particularly favorable for the development of our roots in the working class and for the education of a revolutionary workers vanguard. The bourgeoisie is well aware that from the moment it shakes up the reformist workers movement our growth is going to become an objective fact with the potential of upsetting their plans and checkmating their mechanisms for integrating the working class into the strong state.

That is why the problem will be posed for the bourgeoisie to smash the vanguard before it has consolidated its ties with the class. But, because of this, legal repression, for example the dissolution of our group, has every chance of remaining ineffective as long as the political scene as a whole is not changed in a fundamental way and as long as a mass, legal workers movement remains.

The most likely variant is that we will see the bourgeoisie combine legalized repression, notably by strengthening its judicial and police apparatus, with the carrying out of extralegal repression entrusted to parallel police groups, bosses' armed groups, and semifascist bands.

The recourse to extralegal repression will be even more rapid as the political erosion of bourgeois power is accentuated and as recourse to the repressive apparatus proves inadequate to stop the rise of struggles and their vanguard. Therefore we must prepare ourselves, from this moment on, to face methods of "controlled terror" such as those already quite widespread in Latin America, for example.

Against these dangers, the most effective response is the revival, through propaganda and example, of self-defense groups of the mass of workers and mutual defense of workers organizations, the preparation of workers militias through strike pickets, and workers combat detachments. But these tasks require that the activity of the vanguard itself set an important example. From an organizational point of view, the danger rests in the growth of an organization that remains a prisoner of its framework of legal growth. In the face of the development of parallel repression, for example, it is indispensable that the revolutionary organization be in position to choose its rejoinder, including through partially clandestine measures. From now on it is important to assign more material and human resources to the establishment of an apparatus at all levels.

It is also on this basis that we will be able, from now on, to develop our antimilitarist work beyond just propaganda and democratic campaigns.

24. If we are convinced that the revolutionary party is not built in one country any more than socialism is, we will be led by the growth of the International itself to invest more material and human resources in its development.

The present tasks of the anti-imperialist struggle—support to the struggle of colonial and semicolonial peoples (while specifying, in a nonsectarian way, our positions vis-à-vis their leaderships), especially support for the people of Indochina as well as support for the political revolution in the bureaucratically degenerated or deformed workers states—do not permit us to defer these decisions.

To understand and to take on these activities in full consciousness, and to accept the sacrifices we will have to make at times, we must do everything to insure that all the members have assimilated, to the highest degree possible, the idea that they are building a world party of the revolution.

# Explanations of Votes

[The following two contributions have been translated from Internal Bulletin No. 36, September 1972, of the Ligue Communiste. They are explanations by Comrades Roger and Jebracq on why they voted for the "22 Theses" while holding positions in opposition to each other.]

## By Roger

The key problem in the pre-Congress debate is not the problem of mass work.

In fact it would be at least confusing, if not in vain, to reopen the discussion simply on the plane of sectoral work, dealing with high school, college, or teacher work. That would be looking at the controversy opened up in the organization (after the publication of document No. 30) "through the wrong end of the binoculars."

In order to avoid any false debate on the question we have to go back to document No. 24, which opened the "youth" debate after the Second Congress. This document, seen in the light of recent discussions, is insufficient and thus *useless*. In trying to deal with the difficulties of activism in the student milieu and in the national education, it posed the problems only from a *sectoral approach*. Only in the course of the discussion—which we are now at the crossroads of—did an alternative slowly appear, bringing with it different ways of looking at the work of building the revolutionary party and developing roots in the working class. *The key to the discussion is found here* and not on the question of a high-school MNCL [National Movement of Struggle Committees] "*versus*" a Federation of High School Rouge Committees, or their equivalents in the debate on the college student milieu. *One thing should be clear*: at the *present* stage of the discussion, it no longer seems to make sense to propose a cohesive system of mass work in all our sectors of intervention, and *it no longer does make sense*. "A uniform organizational response which we force all our mass structures for changing the leadership '*within*' the traditional workers movement to conform to" makes no more sense than a response that would aim, in the guise of mass work, to "stamp" revolutionary currents out of a mold conceived as an arrangement of Rouge fronts completely outside the workers' movement, its traditions and the mass organizations it influences.

It is clear that in the proposals for a high-school Rouge front, for a college Rouge front . . . for a front of Red Mole groups, for "preserving" and "maintaining" the dual nature of the Emancipated School, all of which merge together—though having different origins—there is an organizational system in them that is quite as "*uniform*" as the other "which we force all our mass structures for changing the leadership within the traditional workers movement to conform to." Document No. 30 is the umbrella for plans of this type because it represents—as the

answer by the CRS [Clélia, Radot, Sterne] points out—"*opportunism tending to lead to an attempt to bypass the workers movement, perhaps through a 'militarist' line, perhaps above all through left-PSU type activity, scattering our forces outside the plant,*" and because it affirms a totally substitutionist dynamic with respect to the working class and its present organizations. Document No. 30 is not a "provocation" to "create difficulties in the discussion." It is a reflection that *develops a system* (despite the total absence of an essential element, the analysis of the crisis of Stalinism) and that was why it was necessary to combat it.

The discussion has developed the positions: in recognizing that "the uneven pace of the radicalization *today* makes it formalist and inadequate to try to develop a uniform organizational response" (Emancipated School, college FNCL, high school MNCL type) there is a restatement, accepted and explicit, of the proposals in document No. 24, all as a quite strong condemnation of an orientation of the "moving toward a system of Rouge fronts in all areas" type. The Orientation Resolution (the 22 Theses), unanimously adopted by the Political Bureau and then by the Central Committee, circumscribed a *present* common framework of work.

The logic of document No. 30 is broken and rendered incompatible with the 22 adopted theses. Document No. 33 achieves its goal.

In the tenth thesis [now No. 12] it is written correctly: "*one of the principal dangers in this period would be to see the break between the levels of consciousness of the new vanguard and the traditional workers' movement get still worse and to see the gap between them widen. The bourgeoisie would then be able to repress the vanguard, counting on the passivity of the organized workers movement. This will be one of the important problems to watch for in the coming period. We must do everything possible to close this gap and to strengthen the vanguard's roots in the organized workers movement.*"

In the present state of the relationship of forces between the revolutionary Marxist vanguard and the Stalinist workers movement in France, our favoring a Workers United Front tactic has no meaning; and the formula "unity of action—outflanking" conforms perfectly to the stage we are now at in the building of our organization. It is also clear that there is no possible strategy of building the party through the Workers United Front: the OCI and the AJS only present a perverted picture of the Workers United Front. They make it a method of building the revolutionary party, whereas it can only be a tactic to apply in relation to the development of the relationship of forces between the revolutionary organizations and the reformist organizations.

For a long time it has been clear that the period has refuted every entryist "strategy" of building the revolutionary party. And it has been clear that revolutionists must not work "in the shadow" of the CPF, but entirely *against* it, to increase the contradictions within it, to unmask it, to smash it or break it up, to make it pay ever greater prices for its betrayals: that is what a tactic of "unity of action—outflanking" must make possible, while educating and bringing together in the struggle for power those people who, whether members of the CPF or various far-left organizations, seek a road that the reformists, Stalinists and ultralefts don't offer them.

This objective will not be achieved—quite the contrary—by turning away from, going around, or ignoring the traditional workers movement. Such an orientation can only be developed by people who overestimate the weight of Stalinism on the French workers movement and who cannot see the deep outlines of fissures and cracks within it. Such an orientation would imply an analysis of the CPF and its ties with the working class that differs from those which, up to now, have constituted our common base. . . . Taking examples from the present discussions: it is wrong to maintain that there are only two or three "organizer cadres of the class" among the 35,000 workers at Renault-Billancourt; that kind of definition of organizer cadres implies that the French working class has been smothered, broken up, "destructured," and lacks traditions of initiative and self-organization to the point of producing so few leaders and of staying so comfortably submissive to them; it implies, as some comrades explain, viewing the British working class, for example, as more "apt to mobilize itself, to struggle" and as better endowed with cadres for ad hoc mobilization while the French working class must be "stimulated" because it has lost its offensive capabilities, its aptitude for violence, due to the Stalinist chains and the reformist and pacifist yoke. This only stresses the results of the counterrevolutionary policy of the CPF without seeing why and how, through what bonds, the CPF maintains its domination over the class.

One of the main reasons making it necessary for us to view the CPF, the Stalinist party tied to the USSR, differently from all other parties (like the SP), is that the CPF organizes the working class materially, concretely, in day-to-day struggles in defense of its immediate interests, as in national struggles over demands or for the installation of an "advanced democracy." Even while carrying out this defense of the working class's immediate interests poorly, even while having only a bureaucratic version of socialism as its perspective, even while repudiating every confrontation with the power structure, even while hardening its rightist positions under the pressure of the organized revolutionists, this party can only maintain its bureaucratic apparatus through conserving its ties in the working class (and its ties with the Soviet bureaucracy, which create a supplementary distorting factor). Therefore it cannot do just anything it wants, because it has to build itself in view of the traditions of struggle in the class that militate against it: these traditions "do not go back to Babeuf." They are always present, deformed but embodied in the apparatus, carried by it and by tens of thousands of organizer cadres of the class. The present heterogeneity of the working class, the extraordinary evolution of its restructuring and differentiation, the re-

newal of its traditions of struggle, the accumulation of experiences, the maintenance of its combativity, have all penetrated and affected the Stalinist apparatus since 1968. Our bypassing, going around, or ignoring the Stalinist workers movement would, *in the present period*, be tantamount to desertion of the struggle with the result of retarding the explosion of the contradictions accumulating within its midst. It would be letting the prey go into the shadows, involving ourselves in a field "outside the factory." It would be isolating ourselves, "widening the gap" between the new forces of the vanguard, still petty-bourgeois in their majority, and the working class.

How do we exploit these contradictions? How do we avoid subordinating our activity to "expectations" of its difficulties? The tactic of unity of action—outflanking proposed in the resolution should make it possible.

If it is not a question of building the revolutionary party "in the shadow of the CPF," neither is it a question of building it by electric light in a closed room. If it is not a question of, at present, preaching about the Workers United Front, neither is it a question of building a leadership, party, and revolutionary fronts from pieces independent of mass work and without taking the forms of organization of the French workers movement into account. If it is not a question of directing all our forces toward the factories, neither is it a question in our organization of weakening the role of work in the working class . . . in order to increase work around the "framework of life" for example. The danger of "PSUization" can be real. There are tendencies—still verbal—to theorize a bit too rapidly on the role of the "new strata," and why not on the new "historic bloc"? This theorizing is generally accompanied by pessimistic reflections on the impossibility of winning and holding on to worker activists in our ranks. Our present "social base" can lead us to readily blame the working class for things that result from our own weakness and from objective facts we are subject to today. Herein lies *the greatest danger*, of believing in "shortcuts," of a *substitutionism* with respect to the working class. Such backsliding would lead to a dissipation of our activity without a center of gravity, without a compass.

We are too strong to be content with simply gathering together our sympathizers in the peripheral structures. We are too weak to lead true mass organizations. We must innovate in order to create and build forms of organization adapted to the level of mass work our present strength lets us engage in; but we must also take into account the traditions and forms of mass organization that the Stalinist leadership has anchored deep in the French workers movement. Complete homogenization of our intervention in various sectors will only become possible through a change in the relationship of forces between the CPF and ourselves. All our activity must move toward giving us levers which will make this change in the relationship of forces inside and outside the organized workers movement possible.

*The text of the Orientation Resolution in 22 theses defines this framework of work. It contains the necessary guard rails with respect to the opposing and incorrect system presented in document No. 30. We thus have a compass for our work, even if many tactical questions still remain to be discussed.*

This is the explanation of the vote that it was agreed would be furnished two months before the Congress in order to go beyond the discussion in June and July around documents No. 30 and No. 33. The "22 theses" do not involve any concession on the question of our relations with the organized workers movement: the tactical question of carrying out mass work, once this common framework is well defined, does not lend itself to a debate between tendencies at the Congress, but rather to discussion in the sectors concerned and to drawing up a balance sheet.

## By Jebracq

I don't like Roger's explanatory document, issued after the last Central Committee meeting. He jumps from one leaden idea to another. While dealing heavy, unproven blows ("the logic of document No. 30 is broken, document No. 33 achieved its goal") he creates a stupid situation: should one keep quiet and seem to agree, or answer at the risk of descending into vulgarity and personalizing a debate that has already seen too much of that?

The comrades may have the impression that a debate has been conjured away, and it is on this point that one must explain oneself. Roger lifts some sentences, which underline the need to be linked to the organized workers movement, out of the 22 Theses. The "guard rails," he says, are laid down. And for that reason he votes for the document with both hands. But guard rails, as far as I can tell, are not enough (they are shared by both directions on a highway!). The real question is to know what side of the guard rail the road is on!

I thought that it would be interesting to try to show the logic in Roger's position since there is a system to it. From the very first, in Internal Bulletin No. 24, a certain interpretation can be found of the ebb after May '68, in which it is maintained that "the game rules of French politics are back in force" with the resulting tendency for the ultraleft, which is seen as the foam of May rather than as a structural phenomenon, to disappear. Then, in the same IB No. 24, appears the formulation of a system of mass work consisting of a harmonized system of tendencies in the worker, teacher, college and high school movements. Then comes concentration on building the party around the signs of crisis in the CPF (and not of Stalinism as a global phenomenon): "national axes are needed for us to develop national roots: that is achieved through the national crisis of the CPF. . . ." (IB No. 33.) There is a notion that the radicalization of workers will take place in stages, making the CP cadres our first target; from which flows voting for the CP in the second round of elections as the first stage of radicalization marked by defiance toward the SP. Then there is a concept of the SP as returning to the old SP since "the game rules of French politics are back in force," and not as an organization in transition, tied to the post-May conditions. From this flows the characterization of the SP-CP agreement as an unnatural agreement with a bourgeois party, as a capitulation by the CP before the SP. From this also flows the call to the CPF to "put your own program into practice." Finally there is

a vaguely spontaneist perspective of the revolutionary crisis: "the working class can *spontaneously and rapidly* reach a *degree of military organization directly and immediately raising the question of power.*"

As far as I am concerned, I am sorry that the debate on IB No. 30 was largely centered on the first part while there are three parts to the document. This first part tried to pose problems that are often dodged in advancing certain hypotheses. And it is true that this part requires partial self-criticism. In particular on the generalizations concerning the peasantry and violence. There are dangerous things there which should be withdrawn. Let anyone who wants try to make something out of it. It is also necessary, since some had understood the document in this way, to underline that we don't question the notion of revolutionary crisis, anymore than we exclude the possibility of an insurrectional strike. We wanted to destroy a *mythical* image of the revolutionary crisis which, abstracted in time, serves as an alibi for the vanguard's waiting attitude.

We have since found a document by Trotsky that posed the same question with much greater clarity: "It must be recognized that the question of the timing of the insurrection in many cases has the character of litmus paper with which to test the revolutionary consciousness of very many western communists who have still not rid themselves of their fatalistic and passive manner of dealing with the principal problems of revolution. Rosa Luxemburg remains the most profound and talented example. Psychologically, this is fully understandable. She was formed, so to speak, in the struggle against the bureaucratic apparatus of the German Social Democracy and trade unions. Untiringly, she showed that this apparatus was stifling the initiative of the masses and she saw no alternative but that a spontaneous uprising of the masses would sweep away all the barriers and defenses built by the Social Democratic bureaucracy. The revolutionary general strike, overflowing all the dikes of bourgeois society, became for Rosa Luxemburg synonymous with the proletarian revolution.

"However, whatever its power and mass character, the general strike does not settle the problem of power; it only poses it."\* This sin of "revolutionary fatalism" is lying in wait for us. It is inscribed in our history.

For the rest, I feel, until someone proves differently to my satisfaction, that the portion of the 22 Theses on the tactic of party building is written in the same vein as the second part of IB No. 30. I also feel that the portions of the theses on mass work and the organization are in the same spirit as part 3 of IB No. 30. And this continuity is seen closer at hand as well: in the document I drafted for the Central Committee's March meeting, which the Central Committee still has, and in the explanations in IB No. 25 on the ORJ [revolutionary youth organization]. Thus, the logic does not appear to me to be "broken," and I don't see how I would be able to draft theses on an orientation completely foreign to my views.

What is involved is not simply personal justification, but an explanation of the vote in the Central Committee so that the comrades won't believe that there is some kind of ministerial solidarity that dictates putting forward a unanimous facade. I remain, in fact, convinced that



there are differences developing, but I don't have to make a caricature of my own positions in order to smoke out the differences.

sage is from Trotsky's *Problems of Civil War*, pp. 10-11. It was checked against the Russian in 1970, according to Pathfinder Press, the publishers of the pamphlet. The French translation used by Comrade Jebracq contains some inaccuracies which I have not indicated. He does not cite the source of the quotation — *Translator*.

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\*The English translation I have provided of this pas-

# One Point, That's All!

By Jebracq, Anthony, Stephane, Arthur

[The following article is translated from Internal Bulletin No. 38 (October 1972) of the Ligue Communiste.]

Bulletin 30 has already given rise to a number of false debates, often because of its imprecise formulations. Therefore, the Political Bureau has asked the four Central Committee members who signed it to prepare a self-criticism to distinguish between what stems from political error and what stems from false interpretations. After an attentive rereading of all the documents, we would prefer to speak in terms of clarification rather than self-criticism. Not from a reflex of vanity but because we stand by the problematic we initially raised, with two important exceptions.

To begin, let's return to the thread of Bulletin 30:

1. The uniqueness of the political situation we are experiencing flows from a double obstacle: the strong state and the fact that a Stalinist party has hegemony in the working class.

2. In the years to come the most likely variant is not a frontal attack by the forces of repression but instead an intensification of their oblique attack against the vanguard.

3. In this period we must build an organization capable of choosing its own field of battle rather than one that purely and simply survives the strain of its own growth.

4. This concern prepares us equally for the more distant future insofar as, considering a rapid seizure of power in a European country as a possibility, such an event would most likely set off civil war on a subcontinental scale.

5. In this regard, we must not be duped by historical simplifications that isolate the moment of revolutionary crisis from the struggles that paved the way for it and in the course tempered a certain kind of vanguard.

6. In this phase the problem of working-class alliances holds an important place insofar as they make it possible to weaken the bourgeoisie politically and link the tactical resources of other social classes to the strategic support of the proletariat.

7. As the core of this alliance "around and under the leadership of the proletariat," the party of the Leninist type exercises its full role.

Such was the chain of reasoning in the first part of the document, which was the focus of almost every response and polemic.

## 1. General Criticisms

1. It is true that Bulletin 30 is unbalanced and disjointed. We should have begun by going back over certain points we took for granted in our limited contribution. Bring-

ing them up, however, would have barred the way to certain manifestations of distrust, which today can only serve as a diversion. In particular, concerning the leading role of the proletariat and the necessity for patient and long-term mass work within the working class. We point out, however, for the benefit of the skeptics, that the "orthodox" articles that appeared in *Rouge* on the Baader Group, or the response to the militants of the PSU [Parti Socialist Unifié—Unified Socialist Party] concerning our intervention among workers, came out at the same time or after Bulletin 30 [see "terrorism and Revolution" by Daniel Bensaid, *Rouge*, June 10, 1972, reprinted in this bulletin]. By the same token, we should also have avoided the disjointedness of the document: the first part touches on questions of strategy from the point of view of international experiences; on the other hand, the second part poses, on the national level, the question of the F.U.O. [Front Unique Ouvrière—workers united front] and building the party; and finally the third part sets forth a series of organizational proposals that flow from regional experience.

2. Parts two and three, which have hardly come up during the discussions, are nevertheless essential from the point of view of our immediate tasks. In the organizational sphere, they express and condense an analysis of the crisis of Stalinism that is scarcely taken up again as such in the document. Particular aspects of it, however, have been referred to several times (Bulletin 25). We were wrong for not returning to it explicitly because its absence permits hostile interpretations that come close to polemical dishonesty. Thus, in Bulletin 33 Roger says our document "rejects rebuilding a *workers party* piecemeal." But what we spoke of was the impossibility of rebuilding a *workers movement* based on the model of the reformist movement with its system of unions and tendencies. Our remark concerned what type of mass work should be carried out; Roger deduces from this a pure-and-simple refusal to build a party. That is an important difference. The same Roger emphasizes that the working class is downgraded *each time* in our document while there is "*a constant eulogy*" of the petty bourgeoisie. This is a very liberal interpretation that appeals to comrades' moral indignation instead of going to the trouble of arguing a point and proving it. Roger ranges far and wide in his distorted quotations and pretends that in Bulletin 30 the Eighth Route Chinese army and the Tupamaros are "*taken as examples*," when in fact they are merely *cited as an illustration* of a particular problem: namely the relations between certain social forces and the military forms the class struggle takes. It is not a slender nuance. Roger ends up characterizing as a "*com-*

plete change in orientation" the two statements according to which "we cannot rely on the schema of the insurrectional general strike," and that the organization must be the "political and military vanguard of the proletariat." It seems to us that this is evidence it would be well to remember. If such evidence testifies to a complete change in orientation, the previous orientation he is referring to is sufficient to be disquieting. Unless, of course, it merely existed in the heads of some comrades.

3. On the whole, we agree with the political content of Document 34 by Clélia, Radot, and Sterne. But not with its method of approach. These comrades take as their vantage point the balance arm of an imaginary scale. In the first place, such a position supposes that you are flanked by identical weighing pans, equidistant from the center. If this pretty symmetry does not exist, CRS do not hesitate to invent it. Thus, they distinguish two components in the crisis of Stalinism: the youth radicalization and the differentiation within the working class. A left deviation would result from an overestimation of the first factor, and a right deviation from an interpretation of the second that insisted on the role of the old organizational cadres. This happy discovery has the flaw of being a pure invention, false to the core. If there is a disagreement with Roger, it concerns in general the analysis of the youth radicalization (Bulletins 24 and 25) and the analysis of the differentiation within the working class (Bulletin 33). The clarification that CRS purport to thus offer actually obscures the problems and pushes them to adopt faulty reasoning. They too speak of our "reference to the Tupamaros," forgetting that the articles in *Rouge* on terrorism and communism cited the Tupas' self-criticism and even set forth an interpretation of the tendencies toward urban social banditry that earned it a number of accusations of sectarianism. On the other hand, it would have been more correct and worthwhile if CRS had directed their criticism at the role Bulletin 30 can play in the organization, serving as a pole for all who give high priority to "any sign of motion around the workers movement." It would have been more serious than to analyze pedagogic pretensions to construct caricatures. Having said this, we continue to hold that CRS's positions concerning the differentiations in the workers vanguard, the analysis of the organizational cadres, and the criticisms of Roger's concepts in this matter share a common ground with our positions.

## 2. On the Question of Violence

1. It seems to us that the essential thing about this point is to systematically attack "the revolutionary fatalism" Trotsky denounced in his book on the problems of civil war (the passage cited in the explanation of Jebraq's vote, Bulletin 36). Also, to finish for once and for all with those ideologies that consider revolution more as a moral attitude than a practical task, as well as with those that continue to see it through the intermediary of the PCF [Parti Communiste Française—French Communist Party].

2. We have not closed the door to any strategic hypothesis. We have above all emphasized that a certain clas-

sical image, or one that pretends to be, of the revolutionary crisis passes over in silence the essential aspects of the revolutionary process that paves the way: the Bolsheviks' permanent military work against the wishes of the Menshevik majority following 1905, the social development of terrorism, and the preparation of militias and partial insurrections in Spain before 1936.

3. We have not, as the document of the Michelet tendency falsely states, spoken of prolonged revolutionary war. The term itself does not even figure in our document. We are aware that the strategic schema of prolonged revolutionary war assumes a rural social base permitting the construction of dual power beginning from the liberated zones. *Apart from the revolutionary crisis itself, urban armed struggle cannot lead to the construction of liberated zones that would give an economic, social, and military base to a popular army of the masses.* It can take the role of either tactical support to rural guerrillas or tactical support to the party's mass work in the working class. This being the case, there can be no question of developing a popular army of the masses. This is why the ERP can only with difficulty pretend to become something other than the armed wing of the party. From the beginning the absence of clarity on this point has weighed negatively on the practice and theory of the PRT. The role of conscious revolutionary violence having been reestablished insofar as it concerns the pre-revolutionary process, it seems to us important to reaffirm that the schema of the insurrectional strike as the specific form of the crisis in the industrialized countries remains correct.

4. On the other hand, if we do not present a prolonged revolutionary war as prerequisite to the conquest of power, *we do insist on the improbability of seeing a rapid revolutionary victory (by a general strike, for example) being consolidated without passing through a phase of civil war.* This is not a matter of reading tea leaves but of really penetrating into the proper role of the party at different moments of the revolutionary process, the moment of the insurrection as well as that of the following period. Especially since the tradition of legality is incomparably better anchored in France than in Russia of 1917 or Spain of 1936. We disagree on this point with the document of the Michelet tendency, which reduces Stalinism to an ordinary reformist presence in the working class, thus making an abstraction of the historical and international characteristics that give it its force.

5. The point in Document 30 that is most dangerous in its imprecision concerns the peasantry and the new urban layers. It is true that the problem was approached from a "militarist" angle. The aptitude toward violence of these layers is not historically specified and in consequence appears as a natural given that lends itself to extrapolations. We should have begun, however, from the place of these layers in the crisis of Stalinism and specified the dangers they are prey to as well as their place in building the party. Thus, the problem of a new urban banditry should have been cited as an example. Moreover, for us it is not a question of according to the peasantry in principle an offensive capacity superior to that of the proletariat and decisive in a period of revolutionary crisis. No more so than it is a question of wishing to give a seal of approval from here on out,

independently of building the party, of our own organizational capacities, to class alliances solely on the basis of categories of struggle. In short, we are not for opening up a "new front" with the peasants, which would only extend the Ligue's worker and youth intervention.

When we speak of the peasantry and its role in a developed country, we are not alluding to the economic position it occupies and to the differentiations within this position. What we are referring to is the historically dated and geographically circumscribed phenomenon that it today expresses. The despair that marks the peasantry is certainly dictated by the capitalist modernization of agriculture. But in the regions depressed by the development of capitalism, this despair takes more and more often violent forms that fascinate other social layers and have an effect on the level of consciousness of the working class. Some comrades have been quick to say that this potential violence is limited to the somersaults of peasant uprisings or to the traditional expression of the petty bourgeoisie. They don't see that it very often accompanies a history and political education of peasant movements that have complex objective roots (type of culture, forms of organization, social cohesion around exploitation and production . . . ). These roots will continue to ignore the statistics on the numerical decrease of peasant layers in the social composition of France. It is this reality we must stick to vis-à-vis the revolutionary settling of accounts and the concrete capacities of the organization to face up to it.

If there is an area for self-criticism it should be directed toward this point and toward the imprecision in the notions used: armed struggle, prolonged revolutionary war, and civil war.

### 3. On the Question of Stalinism

1. We explained above why the question of Stalinism wasn't taken up directly in Document 30. We maintain, however, that the organizational considerations in parts two and three boil down to an implicit conception of the crisis of Stalinism.

2. It is a matter of an overall conception of Stalinism. In this respect we adhere to the continuity of the theses of the First Congress on the dialectic of the sectors of intervention, or again in the continuity of the *2ème Souffle* [*Second Breath*, a pamphlet published by the Ligue Communiste], where the crisis of Stalinism was analyzed in the complexity of its social consequences. We said that in an epoch in which the bourgeoisie has exhausted its progressive historical role the weakness of the revolutionary leadership conditions the whole of the social processes and the configuration of the political arena. This is a function of the reformist parties, the relationship between the state and the unions, the role of the student movement. When Clélia, Radot, and Sterne state that we have "*a static vision of the domination of Stalinism over the working class*," they aim poorly. On the contrary, we have a rather comprehensive vision of the crisis of Stalinism, and we think we have proved this in practice several times. We think the crisis of Stalinism reveals itself more at the present time by its effects on the youth radicalization in general and on young workers in particular: more by the relations that can link together in struggle

and on the organizational level different social layers and the workers movement than by its effects on the ranks themselves of the Stalinist organizations. *On the other hand, we think Roger has a tendency to interpret the crisis of Stalinism in a narrow way, reducing it to a crisis of the Stalinist organizations. What CRS could have reproached us for is not a static vision of Stalinism but an underestimation of the differentiations with the Stalinist organizations, something altogether different.* This difference of analysis crops up again in the idea, shared by CRS, of the probable limits of an experience of workers' control in France and of the necessity of a voluntaristic reintroduction of the experience of self-defense. Whereas Roger repeats, apart from any historical considerations: "The workers' control slogans that can best promote a real ripening of political consciousness in the great strongholds of the working class."

3. Starting from this implicit analysis in our document, a great deal has been said about our abandoning the working class, or about our renouncing long-term mass work in the organized workers movement. Accusations of this sort are too serious, even if scarcely substantiated, to wash one's hands of them. And considering everything, it seems to us that on this point too the greatest responsibility for the confusion belongs to readers who were not attentive enough. Recall page 5: "this tactic . . . differentiates us from the ultraleftists who abandon the big organized battalions of the working class to the bureaucrats and think they can rebuild a completely new workers movement through the sole means of actions that go over the heads of the union leaderships." Further on, page 7: "The problem that arises concerns the dialectical relationship between our intervening in the old working-class bastions and the combative enterprises, working with experienced union cadres and combative young proletarians, between work in the CGT and the CFDT. . . ." Finally, on page 9: it is not a question of abandoning our traditional intervention in the big strongholds but of "*modifying*" or "*enlarging*" our framework of intervention. It is even specified "that we will not be able to increase the number of cells and Mole groups in the same proportion (as the new possibilities demand)," and that neighborhood work can only be envisioned in relation to "union activity that has already been consolidated."

4. On the other hand, we do not want the real debates to become buried under an exchange of reciprocal clarifications. It seems to us, for example, that several times in Bulletin 33 Roger poses the question of building the organization in a piecemeal fashion. Thus on the question of clandestine work, he writes that it must be the task "of a very small minority and not the political orientation of several thousand militants." Here again a formulation that is too confused. If at the moment it is really a matter of directly assigning a limited number of forces, it is still an orientation chosen by thousands of militants, one that must also have consequences for their own consciousness as well as for the total process of building the organization. The same is true regarding difficult strikes. Roger preaches an intervention by flying squads that can be called up from within the big strongholds, but that is not the question we are posing. What we are posing is the indispensable differentiation of our activities (type of workplace etc.) within a territorial political unity conceived of as a unity for intervention (city, section,

region), hence the importance of political leaderships to direct the process.

5. Finally, on mass work. In explaining his vote at the last CC Roger holds that the link between the question of youth work and the general question of building the party appeared only little by little. We think this link has been clear since the Second Congress. He attacks this conception of building the party as being that "of red fronts from all angles," "completely external in relation to the workers movement." Blindness or dishonesty? No one has proposed a system of homogeneous red fronts, built strictly around the organization to the detriment of the organizational forms suitable to the milieu in which we intervene (the unions in particular). But what we did define was the question of mass work, which was outlined in Document 30. ("We are not committed to building a regenerated workers movement in the shell of the old. In the course of our mass work we have been breaking off revolutionary currents, fronts that cannot break away from Stalinism without being polarized around revolutionary positions.") This same problematique is, to our way of thinking, taken up in Point 14 of the draft theses [Point 15 in the final version], which were edited along the lines of an amendment by Anthony accepted by the CC.

It takes into account that for us it is not a question of building the party in the shadow of the PC or in the footsteps of its organizational crisis. In this regard it is well to recall that to our knowledge no workers party has ever developed in the place of the reformist party that preceded it. From 1917 to 1923, the German Communist Party developed its mass base in a generation of workers different from that of the Social Democracy. The hege-

mony of the Social Democrats, however, was much more fragile than the hegemony of the Stalinists today, and left currents existed in the Social Democracy *before* 1914. This explains how the German Communist Party, while finding its base in the young workers of the postwar generation, was able to gain a substantial number of old cadres, qualitatively more than we can expect from the PCF. In the same way the PCF was not built in the footsteps of the French Social Democracy, any more than the Spanish Communist Party was built in the footsteps of the CNT [Confederación Nacional del Trabajo—National Labor Confederation].

So here are the broad outlines of the clarification Document 30 may need. In other words, the most important criticisms, to our way of thinking, will bear on the timeliness of the document and the way in which it was published, taking into account the state of the organization. In short, it is more dangerous because of the interpretations it might give rise to and because of the alibis it could thus furnish to potential petty-bourgeois deviations than because of anything literally contained in it.

Regarding the content itself, we are aware of its unfortunately compressed character, which is aggravated by its disjointedness. We understand that its imprecision in referring to the strategic forms of armed struggle could give rise to legitimate qualms. We recognize that overly generalized passages referring to the small peasantry and the urban petty bourgeoisie open the door to dangerous extrapolations. On these points the discussion has served to advance and clarify the debate.

But we hope that these points being "clarified," they will not serve as a pretext for avoiding other real debates, genuine debates, that are on the agenda.

# Delphin's Document

By Delphin

[The following article is translated from Internal Bulletin No. 41-42 (October 1972) of the Ligue Communiste.]

## Refocus the Debate

Two weeks before the congress is to begin there is a certain uneasiness in the organization. Following the publication of the documents by Jebracq and Roger, quite a number of comrades felt that the fundamental questions had been evaded by the Political Bureau's timorous desire for unanimity, concealing differences from the membership that seemed interesting. Many sections in Paris are demanding that the differences be reported on at the congress. As a result there has not been much discussion on the theses, considered to be documents smacking of compromise, and they have not been amended. Tendencies whose political cohesiveness and alternative proposals remain obscure have appeared. In such a situation it is indispensable to understand the nature of this uneasiness.

## A Poor Debate

The publication of document No. 28, then Jebracq's contribution, created quite a stir. Questions were raised as to the purpose of the former, whose level of generality and vagueness raised doubts as to the possibility of a fruitful discussion. Jebracq's document broke with the preceding unanimity and in a provocative way broached themes that were completely new to the organization. After Roger's answer appeared, one thing became clear—that a debate was unfolding although it no longer had much to do with document No. 28; hence, the sensible dual question: "What will be discussed at the congress?" and "What is the role of the leadership in all this?" This is what must be explained so as to avoid any misunderstandings.

In May the Political Bureau discussed the axis of the congress. The confusion was immense and at that time it appeared impossible to single out the most important points in the flood of political problems we were confronted with, in some cases for the first time. This was a direct consequence of the kind of tasks we have had to take on since the Ligue was formed.

It does not suffice to reiterate that we are building an organization without precedent in history, without an operational model to refer to outside of the general principles of Leninism that serve as our principled basis. That is, for the first time in the history of the Fourth International we are trying to build a revolutionary party that is rooted in a working class dominated by a Stalinism in crisis during a period of resurgent struggles and in which important, although not yet decisive, breaks with

the French Communist Party are occurring.

Within such a framework, the leadership of the Ligue has had to build an organization armed only with political and theoretical knowledge, past experiences hardly resembling the new tasks on the agenda, and with a lot of empiricism and mere sense of smell. This was inevitable even if we had been better equipped to handle the situation. But the organization has changed in the last three years; it is not only growing, but expanding its fields of intervention and as a result its responsibilities. New political demands have come up, and a mass of still unanswered political problems has piled up as new roots have been sunk. Overburdened with activity, with leading and building the party, the Political Bureau only began to collectively grasp hold of this new situation when the time came to put down everything in black and white in preparation for the congress. This has not prevented each individual member of the Political Bureau from elaborating on certain questions based on their insight or sector of work.

Document No. 28 was aimed at overcoming this first stage of paralysis; it only reflected the actual situation. A first part, sufficiently elaborated insofar as its purpose was to describe our "background"; a skimpy and incongruous final section reflecting the absence of any real collective elaboration. This should have been the most interesting part.

When the fundamental problems began to be treated in such a way and in this context, subtle differences came up in the Political Bureau, but no one was able to determine their scope or their nature, even though Jebracq's draft—voted down at the March meeting of the Central Committee—already gave a glimpse of the divisions. It was in an attempt to make some headway in this situation, as he said, that Jebracq undertook to write document No. 30 with several members of the CC. This is not the place to evaluate the merits of such an initiative one way or the other, the most important thing being to understand in detail how the Political Bureau reached this stage of political paralysis.\* At any rate, the debate was launched with Roger's answer, but under unfavorable circumstances, for which we are paying the consequences.

In reality, two types of questions were intermingled in Jebracq's document: one type flowing directly from the pre-congress discussion in sections 2 and 3; and the other type, more appropriate in cadre school discussions, which it is absurd to ask a congress to take positions on (cf. aspects in the first section on the hypotheses of a revolutionary period in a country such as France). The lack of interest in document No. 28 made it easy for all the comrades to take up the Roger-Jebracq debate. The differences were clear but unfortunately the impasse was

*all the greater*, since after a thorough collective discussion in the CC, it was evident that the two positions had evolved, that they indicated *certain different angles*, but that it was indispensable in addition to leave aside everything that was not relevant to the congress debate and to refocus the discussion, hoping that this would in no way wash out the differences.

In the meantime E. Mandel had just completed the draft of the European document for the world congress, which everyone considered to be a contribution that made it possible to clarify certain confused and mistaken positions. If Zorro didn't suddenly arrive, at least some false arguments were cleared up. This was the situation in which Jebracq, following the discussion in the Political Bureau, was assigned to draw up the draft theses that were amended and passed by a nearly unanimous decision in the CC. This came as a second surprise for Roger, for Jebracq and for the comrades interested in the discussion in progress who saw it as a second attempt by the leadership to close ranks behind a facade of unanimity. Currently there is not much discussion on the theses, not because of their content, but because everyone voted for them and everyone is waiting in vain for the Political Bureau to divide into tendencies. Certain comrades think that by delaying the congress the situation could be clarified. There is a simple reason why this is wrong: no one wants to hide his differences, but no one in the Political Bureau thinks that the disagreements can be clarified soon. This situation is perhaps regrettable, but it results from what has already been described.

## The Role of the Congress

It doesn't have to be restated once again that we are talking about a decision-making congress, since either that doesn't mean anything or it's a platitude for any nonbureaucratic congress. But as against the first congress, the founding congress that had to take up all the major questions so as to clearly define the new organization, this congress like those that will follow ought only to take up several questions, purposely leaving aside sectoral problems that don't have a place in a congress, but tackling several fundamental political problems that will later lead to providing a framework and perspectives for our different interventions. For the third congress, the decision-making bears on the problem of building a revolutionary party under the current circumstances. After three years of feeling our way to a certain extent, it seemed necessary for us to bring out the overall design in which all our interventions are taking place. This was the purpose of the theses, which we will return to later. In light of these statements, a month-long postponement, in view of the current state of the discussion, could only add to the confusion, even if the comrades were ready to absorb fifteen additional Internal Bulletins all at once, having however, just as little time as always to read them. It is now possible to hold an interesting congress if one stops asking Jebracq and Roger for their personal interpretations of the theses, but if the actual content of the thesis is discussed and if they are amended in a relevant way

where there are any ambiguities. In reality it is clear that basic disagreements probably exist; at present they appear only in regard to the political resolution and perhaps on the kind of mass structures to be built. This is the present state of the discussion. One can't force it artificially. It must be made as explicit as possible at the level it now appears at, and wait until it possibly gives way at a much later stage to politically differentiated documents. This is a possibility but not a certainty. The role of the congress is to take account of this situation and to decide on an orientation in accordance with the outcome of the debate; the theses enable us to do this.

## What the Theses Imply

This is not the place to take up the content of the theses, but it seems important to briefly show in what respect the document involves analyses different from those we held in the past, so as to prevent an orientation from being smuggled in before the organization has fully understood all the details and implications, especially since they involve an aspect of the international discussion. To do this we will take up only three themes: the organizer cadres of the working class, the workers united front, and mass structures.

### *a. The Organizer Cadres of the Working Class*

In this field as in the other two, the document represents the first theoretical break with entryism, which at the time it was elaborated was only a tactic, but which little by little came to be conceived as a strategy for building the party. For many years we believed that the crisis of Stalinism was going to give rise to an internal crisis in the CP, leading to "entire divisions" connecting up with revolutionary Marxism. The future party could not be conceived of without the adherence of these thousands of "organizer cadres" of the working class, i.e., members of the PCF with several years trade union experience who were active in the "great strongholds" of the working class. Now this wise old reassuring analysis was shown to be incorrect through experiences in the last few years. In many struggles, in both the so-called "peripheral" workers sectors and the traditional centers, we have seen these famous organizer cadres totally left behind by a new generation of organizers, whether in the CFDT [Confédération Française Démocratique de Travail—French Democratic Confederation of Labor] or the CGT [Confédération Générale de Travail—General Confederation of Labor]. In the last analysis, we underestimated the weight of Stalinism and past defeats, which often turned the old cadres into paralyzed elements, incapable of adapting to the new combativity of the workers. This has now led in actuality to distinguishing two types of organizer cadres of the working class. The old implanted militants, who are in many cases now recognized as only day-to-day organizers of the working class, and other militants, who during struggles are seen as the cadres organizing the struggle. Of course this distinction cannot be generalized for all cases, and we know how following a struggle the leadership of the PCF is often again able to grab hold of the reins on the working class—with the help of its traditional cadre. The danger of the first analysis

was to blind us to new developments in the working class, to hinder taking advantage of this new CGT or CFDT generation as a lever with respect to traditional working-class elements. With this policy we risked fixing our eyes only on the layers that were the last to move into action, with our only target being the PCF militants and not the broad periphery that they do not control a hundred percent or all the time. Thus our work currently lies in transforming the organizer cadres of the struggles into true worker cadres, recognized as such by the workers on a day-to-day basis. It is in this sense that while we have broken with entryism in practice, it is now necessary to break away from an "entryist" conception of building a revolutionary party. Our realistic goal is thus not to win over hundreds of old Communist worker militants, but to educate hundreds of worker militants and change them into cadres.

#### *b. The Workers United Front*

The theses on this theme are much more explicit, but they represent to no lesser extent the initial stages of formulating a theory for a new F.U.O. [Front Unique Ouvrier—workers united front] practice. We abandoned our old governmental formula, "For a PS-PC government," which in any case did not represent the true F.U.O. as envisaged by the Third International in its early days, since the force of the revolutionary party was missing from this formula. At the time this formula could only be propagandistic given our weakness, and whether we liked it or not, it corresponded to an entryist perspective. As thesis No. 12 explains [No. 13 in the final version], today we are too strong to be satisfied only with propaganda on the F.U.O. which we could not participate in, which would only result in us becoming appendages of the reformist parties, incapable of organizing the new vanguard. The example of the O.C.I. [Organization Communiste Internationaliste—Internationalist Communist Organization] is an adequate indication of this. Having elevated this type of united front into a strategy, the O.C.I.—because of its anti-Stalinism—is suddenly no more than a critical appendage of the Social Democracy. But we are too weak to be able to impose the F.U.O. on other forces. The tactic of unity in action—outflanking fits in with this temporary situation, allowing us to carry out unity in action or to create the means for it by utilizing our own forces or those that are brought together from revolutionary groups to do the outflanking, which in turn could create a more favorable relationship of forces for unity in action. In this sense the Overney demonstration was a form of outflanking the traditional organizations, its scope helping us to impose unity of action in sectoral fights.

The refusal to now put forth a political governmental formula takes into account the character of the period in which there is currently no mass struggle that is directly posing the question of power. Thus any PC-PS type governmental formula that does not rest on the revolutionary mobilization of the workers can only be co-opted by these parties in a reformist and electoral sense. The only credible way this could happen, apart from an extraparliamentary movement, is through what these parties propose: the elections. The O.C.I., for all its calling for a PS-PC government "on a working class basis," was unable to escape the Union of the Left operation, in spite

of its desire to do so. It is only in the context of a struggle in which the workers are posing the question of power by using the method of their class (strikes, occupations, etc.) that a governmental formula should be advanced, with consideration given to the political relationship of forces in the working class and the type of links existing between workers organizations and the working class itself. Thus the formula has propagandistic and agitational value at the same time that it serves as an adequate indicator of the nature of the reformist leaderships. Thus the formulas could be for types of government such as PC-trade union, PC-PS, PC-LC-base committees, if the latter exist, etc. This was our weakness in '68,—we were satisfied with the simple formula "For a workers government."

On the other hand, during the current period this general formula makes it possible for us to address the crisis of the regime in terms of demands that have to be met before "things change," as the PC says. The struggles for these demands necessarily create a new period in which the real crisis of power will necessitate a response in terms of a governmental formula.

#### *c. Mass Structures*

The value of Jebracq's document, aside from its errors, is to have put the organization on guard against the sort of reassuring drift that was beginning to get the better of us in our perspectives. The continuous growth of the Ligue, without any significant snags after the long trip through the desert of the difficult years, led us almost naturally to conceive our growth as that of a small Communist Party, progressively swelling its ranks in forms that resembled the PCF, but with a revolutionary line!

The analysis of the consequences of the crisis of Stalinism, in a period of rising struggles and strengthening of the repressive arsenal, provides the theses with a common framework of understanding of our various mass interventions. It removes any illusions about the possibility that we would have to have more or less equivalent, genuine mass organizations siding with us and under our hegemony. It clearly differentiates between mass organizations of the workers and the Ligue's "mass" fronts and the interventions of the Ligue and its fronts in the mass organizations. Finally, the theses enable the LC, within the framework of a common understanding of its system of intervention, to provide diversified organizational solutions to areas where the radicalization is still very uneven.

On this subject the discussion on the FNCL [Front National des Comités de Lutte—National Front of Struggle Committees] was a condensation of a more general debate that is only beginning with this document.

Frankly speaking, the definition given to the FNCL by the theses is not the same as the one attributed to it by its founders. As a result, the FNCL-FNCR discussion is nothing more than an uninteresting question of initials. To say that "our *political* current" organized in the FNCL plays the role of a mass tendency during a period of struggle and the role of a "political faction" in a period of "calm" effectively removes any illusion about the possibility that we are leading a permanent mass student organization.



Thus, at least on these three points the theses carry a new orientation even if it has already been applied empirically, and one can only regret the lack of amendments or countertheses up to now. There is a real debate, but it is swamped by a deluge of documents that do not address themselves to one another. The Political Bureau should not conceal its share of responsibility in the matter, but it is still completely possible to have a congress that

meets our expectations, if the debate is refocused, which the theses makes possible.

October 24, 1972

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\* Which it is impossible to explain in the framework of this document.

# Build the Party! What Party?

By J.F. Dumas

[The following contribution is translated from Internal Bulletin No. 43 (November 1972) of the Ligue Communiste.]

*"The preparation for civil war begins with the elaboration of a program."*—Trotsky<sup>1</sup>

## Introduction

The Second Congress of the Ligue [May-June 1971] was not at all what it should have been: the "congress of decisions." It had so little chance of affecting our history—not to speak of the history of others—that we did not take the trouble to publish the preparatory documents and/or those that were issued by the congress. Hence the importance of the preparatory period for the Third Congress and the uneasiness that could be aroused by the current debate in view of the internal situation in the Ligue Communiste in which the discussion of the documents that have appeared to date is taking place—or not taking place. It is significant that the contributions to the discussion, aside from those of the national leadership of the LC (the Political Bureau/Central Committee), are rare and are—probably—likely to stay that way. It means that the organization is not prepared to conduct this discussion (and just because it has begun, that doesn't mean that it will actually be conducted); it also means—and this is more serious—that the questions and possible answers are being exchanged above all on the level of the leadership, or of parts of the leadership, and in terms that make it difficult to see the emergence of one—or several—*orientations* that could be discussed with a minimum of necessary clarity. Hardly had the members received Bulletin No. 30, and the following ones, than the debate was "superseded," according to the "generally well-informed circles," by the work of the last Central Committee. . . . So, what can be done? Wait until other comrades, or maybe the congress, throws some light on the subject? Is it necessary to be silent, at least out of prudence or modesty, when in addition to a certain number of internal documents that I disagree with, there are several articles in *Rouge*, a public position taken by the Political Bureau, and a general behavior of the organization—or at least of its most vocal elements: the "organizer cadres"—all of which confirm, if not the breadth, at least the origin and the nature of the disagreements. Moreover, the reservations that I can express and the questions that are posed are certainly not likely to set our crowd on fire. . . . I am not in the least ashamed to admit that I hesitated a long time before I took up this question.

## I. Political Leadership and the Debate Over Orientation

1. The way in which our political leadership launched the current debate in the LC is distinguished neither by its clarity, nor by its simplicity, nor even undoubtedly by its "rectification." Document 28, in fact, is certainly an honest summary of what an average Trotskyist cadre should know about the evolution of the political situation in France in the past four years. *It is not at all a line document* opening a pre-congress discussion, on the basis of which it would be possible to determine perspectives and elect a leadership. So little is it that, that the two subsequent documents polarized both the discussion and emotions, Bulletins No. 30 and No. 33, signed by A.A.J.S. and by Roger, all members of the national leadership. While the cells, sections, and cities were preparing their initial discussion on the basis of these documents, the Central Committee met; and it worked so well, so productively, that it was able to produce a document—twenty-two theses "On the Construction of the Party"—that—Oh marvel of (quasi)unanimity rediscovered!—bears the signature of two major protagonists of the preceding stage: Jebracq and Roger. Well, things certainly "work themselves out," "clarify themselves," don't they? But wait a moment! The same Bulletin No. 36 contains the "explanations of the vote" (?) by . . . Roger and Jebracq! Both these comrades explain to us that the interesting thing about the "22 theses" is that they represent a "present common framework of work" . . . strictly incompatible with the preceding document of the other . . . !! Why not continue this sort of delightful working at cross purposes? A bulletin No. 40 or more could contain a new "joint" document which would be closely "commented" on by the two Political Bureau comrades in question at a still later time . . . And each one would wonder with anguish: (a) if the other members of the leadership have nothing to say on the matter (aside from C, R and S who have shown the merit of expressing themselves); (b) where the leadership as a whole stands on this; (c) *what our comrades in the Political Bureau think of the problem of tendencies nowadays*: keeping in mind that once upon a time it reproached the "former TTT group" for not having *formally* constituted itself as a tendency. . . !

2. It would be perfectly absurd and profoundly naive to reproach the Political Bureau of the LC for not having been able to produce on short notice *the* strategy for building *the* revolutionary party; it is perfectly legitimate to be nervous about the absence of strategic conceptions for intervention, and above all about the fact that they are satisfied with such a situation, that they try to ra-

tionalize it, to make us believe that it is "right" and "natural."<sup>2</sup> Since the creation of the Ligue, each of the "sectors of intervention," in spite of the dialectic of the same name [the dialectic of sectors of intervention], concretely and on a day-to-day basis goes its merry way, especially in regard to the construction of mass organizations, taking into account the "specific conditions" that are well known. . . .

What difference does it make that for three years, each of the three sectors of National Education—high school students, college students, and teachers—has had a different, if not contradictory, policy from the other two? What does it matter that the exhausting and sterile battle for/within the E.E. ["Emancipated School" tendency in the teachers union, the FEN] doesn't help at all to build the proletarian tendency<sup>3</sup> since we are told that the merger of the unions [CGT-CFDT-FEN] constitutes "a propagandistic and educational perspective (is that all?) whose realization presupposes a radical change in the relationship of forces and in the political situation, but which *does not at all imply an arbitrary balance today* (??) between the different interventions: it is not by modeling our intervention in the teachers' union on our workers' work that we will advance this perspective."<sup>4</sup> Of course! But neither will we advance by letting each sector follow its own dynamic—or that of its leaders—and relying on the blessings of a dialectic of sectors henceforth entrusted to the care of recently promoted "secondary leaders."

Some of the leadership's lack of clarity in strategic matters is particularly felt by the whole organization, as in the case of the workers' demonstrations of last spring [Mayday, June 7]; none of the arguments put forth by the Political Bureau and the DP [Parisian leadership] have succeeded in convincing the Ligue that we had a "line" on even such an unmarginal question as how to publicly concretize our analysis of the traditional workers' movement with regard to our building the revolutionary party. Same thing with the sudden changes of November 15. As for the "self-criticism" of the Political Bureau that appeared in *Rouge* no. 172 on "Black September" . . . I will be sure to return to that subject further on.

3. Can we see or begin to *elaborate a "strategy for building the revolutionary party" in view of the analysis of the period*, to which each of us (merely) alludes abundantly, but without supplying details. . . . And for good reason! At the risk of being accused of being hopelessly blind, I declare that *we do not have*—at "the moment"—an analysis of the "period." Now that is the whole problem; or almost. We know that we are living in the "era" of wars and revolutions, ever since Lenin and the First World War; Internal Bulletin No. 28 furnished us with an analysis of the "conjuncture"; but there it is: what about the period? Why is this "middle time" important? It is because the entire discussion between Jebraq and Roger, for example, deals with it; or rather with the mental picture of it that we carry around with us, since we have never met the thing. In other words, we have been taught until now that the elaboration of the strategy for building the revolutionary party depended—I am safe enough in saying "flowed from"—the analysis of the period, for *the latter is fraught with the* ("classically") *decisive revolutionary crisis*. . . . Now, isn't it a fact that Jebraq and Roger begin to oppose divergent plans for building the revolutionary party, which rest on *implicit* analyses of the period

and on descriptive outlines of the crisis, which they present respectively more or less precisely, without, however, being able to furnish us with some *arguments* that it would be possible to discuss. And that is partly why the present debate is baffling and difficult. There is at least one way of extricating ourselves from this awkward situation: to accuse the present course of "mechanistic and paralyzing objectivism," to acknowledge that it is ridiculous—and futile!—to "wait for" an analysis of the period to arise, and that it is necessary to proceed . . . In what direction? (Wasn't it Bernstein who asserted that the movement was everything?) Bulletin No. 30 insists in its own way on the importance of determining the date when the IOU's fall due on understanding what the *imminence* of the revolution concretely implies for building the party. *The question of tempos cannot remain abstract*; the type of party we can build depends partially on the appraisal that we make with regard to the immediacy of the foreseeable crisis in the advanced capitalist countries—and especially in Western Europe: if you have forty years you don't forge the same kind of instrument that you forge if you have ten.<sup>5</sup> It is because the analysis of the context—which is indispensable—remains much to implicit that the initial discussions have only dealt with the first part of Bulletin No. 30, a state of affairs that Jebraq "regrets."<sup>6</sup> They say that the purpose of the article was to "provoke some discussion": maybe so. But that makes it no less dangerous given the present state of the organization.

## II. A Dangerous Document

4. It is necessary to distinguish between what the document says explicitly and what is permissible, even today, to discuss (?), and what, independently of the authors' wishes, a part of the organization will not fail to retain from it: a certain more implicit, and therefore more dangerous, general political approach. In order to keep to the basics, and without repeating Roger (Bulletin No. 33), I would like to emphasize the following points:

First is the question of the revolutionary crisis. Not so long ago, two excellent authors reminded us of the criteria that permit revolutionary Marxists, specifically as opposed to all other tendencies, whether they be bourgeois, Social Democratic, Stalinist, spontanéist, or ultraleft, to recognize a revolutionary crisis.<sup>7</sup> It is certainly possible today for A, A, J, and S to relegate Bensaïd and Weber to the museum of "falsely reassuring classicisms," but for the purpose of replacing this "classicism" by what modernism? For the purpose of telling us that "the hope of seeing a repetition of a situation like the one in 1936 is quite problematical," that "it would be even more illusory to conceive of a revolutionary crisis in France along the lines of a successful May '68. Because the bourgeoisie and the Stalinists have drawn their lessons from May."<sup>8</sup> Really? Take note of such formulations: they would tend to give credence to the idea—which in the given circumstances is obviously foreign to the comrades—that it is under the control of the bourgeoisie—and the Stalinists—to prevent the future explosion of social conflicts which, given the qualitative (and not simply accumulated) growth of the interlocking framework of the pronounced crisis of the bourgeoisie and the seemingly endless impasse of the reformists, culminate in a revolutionary crisis or series of revolutionary crisis. All the objective conditions are

moving in this direction: the fact that the bourgeoisie has absolutely nothing left to say, to propose, to accomplish, is becoming increasingly clear; that is, moreover, what makes it possible for the pitiful demagogy of the common program of the left to get a hearing. But that does not make it obvious why we should conceive of "the revolutionary crisis not as a moment in which the thrust of the masses (?) makes possible the victorious conclusion (and otherwise?) of a process of prolonged struggle. . . ." The idea that underlies this conception is that comrades A, A, J, and S exclude any "revolutionary crisis"—classical or otherwise—from cropping up before the vanguard is ready to bring it to a successful conclusion, and hence the urgency of the tasks, the emphasis on tempos already mentioned, and also the layers envisioned for building the party. It is because "we cannot hope to rebuild a real workers movement piecemeal after half a century of Stalinism," that the working class will have to "benefit from the military capacities of the peasantry and the urban middle layers." And to assert that "the party will not be built before the process of struggle for power itself, but rather through this process" does not mean that we are able to make the next due-date for the payment of our debts decisive maybe it will be necessary for us to pass through the fire of one or two other (pre)revolutionary crises to have forged the decisive organizational weapon. To top it off, the final element of confusion is the tiresome watering down of the concept of "revolutionary crisis," which is introduced by the expression "real workers' movement." Let's leave this curious qualifier aside, and discuss the basic problem: wouldn't it be paradoxical to emphasize the probable strength of the counterrevolution organized by the bourgeoisie and by the Stalinists while seemingly renouncing the possibility of winning over the massive battalions of the working class to the revolutionary party? The importance of the discussion of the "organizer cadres of the class" is real: who are they and how can we win them over?

5. On the peasantry: It is on this point that Bulletin No. 30 seems weakest to me. For four reasons:

a. The more or less clear references, the more or less explicit comparisons with the rural guerrillas of China, Latin America, or elsewhere seem suspicious to me, without a more profound examination of the respective contexts;

b. As for the traditions of struggle, of violence of the French peasantry, is it necessary to "put on record" that the peasants have always been "restless" since capitalism began to "eat away at feudalism" (in the 15th century), that after the *frondes* [insurrections] (in the 17th century), they carried out 1789 by burning the manor houses, and that after their long silence of the 19th century, as the social base of Bonapartism, raised once again to the level of struggles by the nascent proletariat and the radicalized petty bourgeoisie, they can still occasionally cordon off the roads, threaten Jean Gabin, and defend the Larzac, including by violence?

c. Is it necessary to affirm that we must prepare to intervene in the countryside? All right! But how? To do what? Because here a problem of method touching on the program is posed. The "Transitional Program" clearly stipulates that "the brother-in-arms and counterpart of the worker in the country is the agricultural worker. . . . The industrial workers' program of transitional demands,

with changes here and there, is likewise the program of the agricultural proletariat. . . . The sections of the Fourth International should work out with all possible concreteness a program of transitional demands concerning the peasants (farmers). . . . *Committees elected by small farmers* should make their appearance on the national scene and jointly with workers' committees and committees of bank employees take into their hands control of transport, credit, and mercantile operations affecting agriculture."<sup>9</sup>

And this too: we are against the capitalist modernization currently in progress in the countryside, because it operates to the benefit of the bourgeoisie; we are against the reactionary/familial demagogy of the Communist Party; we are not at all against the gathering together of land or the intensive mechanization of agriculture, that is, the decrease in the number of workers on the land. But "the program for *nationalization of the land and collectivization of agriculture* should be so drawn that from its very basis it should exclude the possibility of expropriation of small farmers and their compulsory collectivization. The farmer will remain owner of his plot of land as long as he himself believes it possible or necessary."<sup>10</sup> How much propaganda and agitational work is within sight! But debt-payment dates, tempos? . . .

d. Should we, while waiting for the peasant to no longer find it "necessary and possible" to remain the owner of his plot of land, rely upon his "military capacities," on his traditions of violence, not taking into account that what is involved is precisely building the mass revolutionary workers' party, which alone is capable of channeling this violence into a progressive direction? Should we ignore the fact that, even recently, this actual violence was revealed to be completely reactionary?<sup>11</sup> Let's draw up a balance sheet of the currents that have worked in the countryside, the Christians, the Stalinists, the "leftists" (PSU and Maoists); let's analyze the evolution of agricultural syndicalism and the path of a *Debatisse* before attributing to the peasantry virtues that it doesn't have, which amounts to . . . putting the cart before the horse!

6. The principal danger of this document is in giving an overly simplistic and distorted picture of the construction of the party. "Ah! It's only that!" will be, and perhaps already is, a logical reaction to reading Internal Bulletin 30, which implicitly urges skimping on building the mass revolutionary Marxist workers' party; it encourages posing the question of what use there is in:

- increasing our audience, developing the Ligue's written propaganda;

- selling *ROUGE*;

- writing and publishing a theoretical magazine;

- firmly establishing an educational policy (more likely bad than good);

- having finances, a budget, managing activities, etc. . . . if all that might be illegal, suppressed, slowed down, and considerably reduced in X (the solution is found in . . . an analysis of the period) amount of time? It is true that the article does not come like a "clap of thunder out of a clear blue sky." It starts from if not a political orientation that has already been elaborated and systematized, at least a whole conception, certain of whose most conspicuous elements seem to me important and urgent to examine.

### III. Prepare for the Armed Struggle of the Proletariat, or Give Opportunist—and Gratuitous—Support to Terrorism?

7. The self-criticism of the Political Bureau on "Black September": A public self-criticism by the national leadership of the Ligue Communiste/French section of the Fourth International is a sufficiently exceptional thing to warrant devoting all necessary attention to it. (Especially since the communique that appeared in *Le Monde* of September 7 was quite moderate in its "disapproval!") [The *Le Monde* communique and the political bureau's self-criticism are reprinted in this bulletin.] The most unfortunate thing about the inopportune step of the Political Bureau is that it muddles everything up and makes the subject quite difficult by mixing together all sorts of different levels. The lines that follow are an initial attempt to emphasize certain criteria for evaluation. From the start, I am rejecting a type of absurd discussion in which there is no way to avoid being trapped: for or against VIOLENCE, by a tiny minority or by a somewhat less tiny minority, individual TERRORISM or not-so-individual terrorism, etc. . . . And I prefer to restrict myself to precisely three arguments that are in black and white in the "resolution" of the Political Bureau.<sup>12</sup> The first of these arguments which I take issue with is already found in the *Rouge* article on "the Baader gang" . . . and in a number of little articles in the paper on repression and on class justice; it consists of:

a. describing, while occasionally prettifying, acts of "revolutionary" violence;

b. placing the responsibility for them on capitalist society;

c. then carrying out precisely the political SLIDING that I am pointing to here, which consists of asserting "UNCONDITIONAL support" to x, y, or z as a victim, to one degree or another, of the common class enemy. No! As opposed to the Stalinists and the neo-Stalinist Maoists, we are NEVER unconditional toward anyone, not even toward ourselves! We provide specific aid—material, financial, even military—to those who struggle against capitalism and imperialism, whatever political disagreements we have with them, if they request it and if we can do it. This is elementary and does not need to be discussed. But to the same extent we clearly and loudly assert at all times our own political position, which can flow from our traditions and our experiences, from our political line, which is decided collectively and adopted officially at the time of our conventions and which, according to the rules, the national leadership of the organization has the duty to apply.

And we do not take refuge behind arguments of this type: "We do not howl with the wolves"; first of all, and above all, because what is involved is not "howling" (!) but:

a. knowing whether or not we have a position on the problem in question;

b. knowing whether or not that general position is different—and on what level—from the positions of others;

c. in all cases making known not only our position on the conjunctural point that has arisen, but also reit-

erating how this fits into our full line on the question as a whole. I am going to return to this less abstractly with respect to Munich.

Secondly, since the wolves may well go on howling for a while,<sup>13</sup> that argument would amount to lending support to every action that rightly or wrongly claims to advance the revolution, or even socialism, until the final victory . . . even if it is, paradoxically, the product of false strategies and tactics . . . which in the interests of "solidarity" we would not have criticized—publicly of course, since it is the masses we want to win over. . . .

The second argument borders on the shocking and the absurd. It is—and I am carefully weighing my words—STALINIST: "First of all, therefore, one must choose sides."! This terrible banality was never particularly part of our arsenal, even of polemical arguments, since we know what it opened the door to in the past: how many thousands of honest Communist militants succumbed to the pressures of the Stalinist bureaucrats and "chose the side" of "building socialism" by accepting the Moscow trials and the extermination of the Trotskyists! Aren't there today hundreds of young people attracted by China and the cultural revolution, who don't understand that we do not "choose sides" by "UNCONDITIONALLY defending" Red China against imperialism and revisionism. Our line of arguments up to now seemed sound and correct. It is particularly disquieting to note that it is an initiative of the Political Bureau, which doubtless had an "educational" intention, that points the way to a retreat in this domain.

But the explanation is perhaps found in the threefold argument presented by the resolution. Let's give it: "It is therefore from within the revolutionary camp and FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF REVOLUTIONARY EFFECTIVENESS (?) that we criticize the action of Black September. Its commandos have succeeded in drawing the attention of international public opinion to the fate of the Palestinian people, something the public has tended to lose interest in. They have largely cancelled out the wheeling and dealing in progress between the Arab bourgeoisies and the Zionist state, fostered by U.S. imperialism and the Stalinist bureaucracy. FROM THIS VERY POINT OF VIEW, their action cannot be considered irrational. . . . But . . . it is clear that if the Palestinian resistance is to move forward, it will have to resolve two fundamental questions:

"a) it will have to link its fate to that of the Arab socialist revolution. . . .

"b) it will have to (all the subtlety is in the future) shatter the Zionist bloc, and prove the class character of its struggle. . . . THESE ARE THE DETERMINING elements of the struggle; they can throw an ENTIRELY DIFFERENT LIGHT on all the armed actions of the Palestinian resistance."

Let's try to clear away some of the underbrush: either we note "the effectiveness" of the actions of Black September, in which case we must ask ourselves:

a. why we do not use such effective means;

b. why, if Black September is "effective," would we have to build sections of the Fourth International in the Middle East;<sup>14</sup> —or else one sets forth the broad outlines of a correct political strategy for the Middle East, one's

own political strategy, our political strategy, which until proven otherwise is not that of Black September; but the resolution of the Political Bureau combines all the drawbacks; for what purpose, in upholding the "effective action" of Black September, does it set forth the two conditions necessary to "throw an entirely different light" on this type of action? It is precisely necessary to emphasize the ABSENCE of these "determining elements" throwing the light in question; unless that is done one is not only an opportunist but also that much less "effective," showing that one is visibly in a state of complete internal incoherence.

It is clear that the discussion needed is not about being "for" or "against" the terrorism of Black September, but:

a. a balance sheet and perspectives of the Palestinian resistance;

b. a balance sheet and perspectives of the Fourth International in the Middle East.

That is the only way of approaching the problem in all its complexity. And I am ready for the comrades who will label this sectarianism and/or "old Trotskyism," because there is another type of "old Trotskyism" that could fall into leftist opportunism (not so paradoxically as all that). It is "substitutionism,"—"Pabloism" as the Lambertists would say—consisting in this case of awarding a certificate of effectiveness to Black September while waiting until we are in a position to do . . . better (?).

8. *The article in ROUGE on "terrorism and the class struggle."* [reprinted in this bulletin]<sup>15</sup>

a. A first point consists of asking ourselves if it is correct for this article to have appeared in our magazine and not in the Internal Bulletin, because:

● It is obviously conceived in the same framework as Internal Bulletin No. 30.

● It obviously "ANSWERS" some comrades in the organization, those of the SWP as well as comrades who are still less clearly designated in the ranks of the Ligue.<sup>16</sup> Then, while waiting for Clovis and Krasny's plan for making *Rouge* into something more and better than an "organizational journal" to materialize<sup>17</sup> the meaning of this article was not apparent from the facts: does it bind anyone other than its lone signer? And in this case, would we be relieved of the obligations of democratic centralism? May I spread the news of my total disagreement with the letter and the spirit of this article outside the Fourth International—something I have not at all done as yet? And in any case, how can it be explained that one point of view should have the honor of being printed in the national press of the Ligue—a point of view which, unless I am mistaken, does not in any way represent, at present, the official line of the organization, a line discussed and adopted by the national convention, never even having been the subject of a discussion and resolution of the Central Committee—to the exclusion of another individual contradictory point of view? Isn't this practice the least bit dangerous because of the dynamic that it implies from the point of view of the internal relationship of forces within the organization? Here we meet again, from another angle—a quite special one—the problem of the absence of tendencies on the leadership level.

b. The second factor that reinforces the opinion that this article belonged more properly in an Internal Bulletin than in the newspaper is its tone, moralizing in the

extreme, and its apparent desire to overwhelm, in advance, anyone from "among the people" who might possibly disagree, so that they won't dare utter a word. Thus: the passage on "the fastidious opportunists, even in the far left"—even in the Ligue, comrade! No? In which poor Lenin, who only went so far as to say "the very growth of the party (we're not at that point, alas!) can engender bureaucratism and conservatism, which are the basis of reformism," is made to draw the totally stupid and sententious conclusion that "you don't build a party without taking risks, and it is necessary to take them!"

How honest and convincing that is! Or perhaps I am one of these "fastidious opportunists" (?), or perhaps I accept as good coin and without discussion the scattered fragments by Lenin on Russia in 1905 and by Trotsky on Nazi-occupied Europe in 1938, which Daniel Bensaid serves us to round out his statements with the help of "falsely reassuring classicisms"!

It would also be possible to multiply the quotes from *Terrorism and Communism* by not specifying the exact opponent attacked by Trotsky, and therefore permit ourselves to lump together under the infamous label of "Kautskyism," of Social Democratic revisionism, all those who do not share the enthusiasm of the editors of *Rouge* for the various armed actions that continually feed current events; all those who do not think it proper to place an equal sign between terrorism and revolution, even conjuncturally.

This article is certainly misplaced; either reformists are hiding in our Bolshevik organization—God knows why—in which case it is a crime to use nothing but the very meager sum total of an article in the newspaper to flush them out. Or on the quite limited subject of terrorism the discussion remains open—in which case what explains this tone and these arguments? Especially since this type of "argumentation" can only too easily come into general use and poison the entire life of the whole organization by putting a stop to the development of all healthy discussion. No one is permitted—and it's a good thing—to suggest the idea that one of the significant differences between supporters of Bulletins 30 and 33 in the Central Committee might well be their different degrees of rooting in the working class, their more or less direct petty-bourgeois or proletarian ties. . . ! It can be seen where the adoption of such methods would lead us. . . .

Finally, a last word on the choice of arguments used especially by the editors of the newspaper, "recognizing the courage (?) and the sacrifice of these militants"<sup>18</sup>: these arguments would also be totally absurd if they were not preceded by a display of blind allegiance, for since when have we adopted those values which the bourgeoisie doesn't monopolize? The Three Musketeers, the Kamikazis, not to mention the fascists, also had a sense of courage and sacrifice! In short, it is a deplorable "education" that this provides to the militants of the Ligue, that allows them to believe that we are always and "unconditionally" with "those who struggle," and that all violence that is not counterrevolutionary is revolutionary. That's how the French Maoists supported "Fatah," because these fedayeen were struggling, because they were involved in military work on a massive scale, because, in a word, "they had it"; without understanding the nature

of Fatah or its traitorous politics. The same Maoists—who have learned nothing and forgotten nothing—claim to express the revolutionary violence of the masses—for whom they substitute themselves with remarkable ease—while, at Bruay-en-Artois, for example, reducing class hatred to a disgusting and completely arbitrary populism.

Let's stop conjuring up at random the Russian terrorism of eighty years ago, the Chinese Eighth Army, the "TUPAS" (sic), and even Che, without beforehand submitting ourselves to the basics, that is to say, drawing up a political balance sheet of the fifteen years of guerrillaism in Latin America, of the Palestinian resistance, taking into account the evolution of the objective situation and of our own perspectives in the part of the world under consideration. Let's not search for proof of blind "archeo-Trotskyist" sectarianism, or of "cautious opportunism"—or at least separate out that debate—if it is still desirable and possible to discuss.

9) The revolutionary violence of the masses, which is indispensable for destroying the state apparatus of the bourgeoisie, cannot be boiled down to terrorism. The education of the revolutionary Marxist vanguard and the advanced workers whom it influences and recruits cannot be boiled down to a belated, opportunist, and gratuitous support to terrorism (what do a few extra lines in the newspaper cost, and who has to pay? And what does Black September gain from this?). Let's not substitute this unprincipled support to terrorism for our real tasks in the question of preparation of the armed struggle, which we are all convinced is indispensable (the question is precisely one of defining the time), and which we are all ready to prepare for—"to prepare for" in no way meaning to put off.

I am not aware of any disagreement with the Transitional Program where it declares that "only armed workers' detachments, who can feel the support of tens of millions of toilers behind them, can successfully prevail against the fascist bands. . . . In connection with every strike and street demonstration, it is imperative to propagate the necessity of creating *workers' groups for self-defense*. It is necessary to write this slogan into the program of the revolutionary wing of the trade unions. It is imperative wherever possible, beginning with the youth groups, to organize groups for self-defense, to drill and acquaint them with the use of arms. . . . Only with the help of such systematic, persistent, indefatigable, courageous organizational and agitational work, ALWAYS ON THE BASIS OF THE EXPERIENCE OF THE MASSES THEMSELVES [emphasis added], is it possible to root out from their consciousness the traditions of submissiveness and passivity. . . . When the proletariat wills it, it will find the road and the means to arming. In this field, also, THE LEADERSHIP [emphasis added] falls naturally to the sections of the Fourth International."<sup>19</sup>

YES, I WOULD BE IN AGREEMENT WITH A STRATEGIC ORIENTATION THAT THE LEADERSHIP OF THE LIGUE WOULD PRESENT US WITH, COMPATIBLE WITH THE ABOVE LINES AND TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THE UNIQUE ASPECTS OF THE PRESENT POLITICAL SITUATION. The sooner the better;

and I do not believe that in saying that I am dodging the problem of violence, if indeed there is such a problem!

I will even go so far as to permit myself three humble suggestions by means of which our organization might be able to embark with less trouble on the course that has just been outlined; they deal with SECURITY, which—paradoxically, no doubt—is astonishingly neglected, at least in Paris: headquarters; Internal Bulletins are left lying about; pseudonyms in restaurants, and on the telephone; city branches and members who cannot be reached by telephone rapidly and surely.

Aside from the specific tasks of the SOC, it behooves the leadership of the city branches not to neglect to maintain the physical fitness of the members as a whole, male and female; to see to it that the members keep up or acquire some profitable training from military service; not to forget the arsenals and army work in the scheme of industrial work in their region, . . . etc.

#### IV. The Origin of the Differences: Our Relations with the Ultraleft

10. Here it is a matter of a "working hypothesis," already outlined in an article on our work among teachers.<sup>20</sup> This hypothesis seems to me to be confirmed as much by Jebracq's report on the Fourth International during the cadre school of the Paris DS [section leadership] last September [see SWP Internal Information Bulletin No. 3 in 1973], as by the singular illumination provided by the article already cited in *Rouge* on terrorism.

a. We said, with regard to our work among teachers in general and the EE ["Emancipated School" union caucus] in particular, that we were prisoners of the history of EE, of its antiquated traditions, of its paralyzing bureaucratic customs; that we were wearing ourselves out trying to build something there—in vain—and we got nothing but trouble for our pains, under the prevailing circumstances. Why is that so? Because we have inherited intact, without changing them in any way, the internal relationship of forces on the far left from the past period, which no doubt required the Trotskyists to make an alliance with the revolutionary syndicalists and the anarcho-syndicalists against the double repression of the bourgeoisie and the Stalinists. But this relationship of forces has changed; these tendencies, the ones that still exist, are in decline and alternate more or less directly with the spontanéists, with whom it is impossible and unthinkable to build anything at all. It is a real abuse of language current in our teachers' sector to say that our opponents in the EE have an alternative plan for building the revolutionary party, in which the EE would be one of the constituent nuclei along with the Teachers' CA [Action Committee] in Marseilles and the Railwayworkers Committee in Tours. They do not want to build anything at all, and they think that they have decades in which to peaceably carry out their district work! We asserted that it was possible and necessary in the present period to cut loose of these conservative tendencies with respect to building our mass organization in the teachers' milieu. We are even more convinced now than ever before that we have nothing to gain by treading water as we have been

doing, by multiplying the concessions we are making to the spontanéists, who are strong due to the weakness which our erroneous policy implies, whose dynamic, which was made clear in the "Marseilles affair," is to sacrifice the building of our fraction to the vegetative and parasitic survival of an outmoded movement.

b. The report by Jebracq on the Fourth International was centered on the key problem of the link up of the Fourth International, equipped with its experiences, and the "new vanguards." Taking cognizance of the fact that the crisis of Stalinism does not directly produce revolutionary Marxist vanguards, it seemed to him to follow that to get beyond the stage of propaganda group it would be necessary to build the party and the international with these new "vanguards." Jebracq used the example of Europe and the student movement; of Latin America and Castroism; of the countries of the East and the radicalized intelligentsia; of Africa and the first armed movements. Two remarks: the expression "new vanguard" is devilishly ambiguous; if only because it allows the problem of ultraleftism to be avoided by engulfing it? Just like the expression "linking up," which doesn't specify how we will prevent a two-way exchange, at least on the theoretical, political, strategic level, rather than winning militant support for our line, which is somewhat different without exactly being the height of sectarianism!

But it is necessary to return to the last paragraph already mentioned, signed by Daniel, in *Rouge* no. 173; its title is evocative enough to provide an important, significant element of comprehension: "*Build the party with living forces*"; had he gone a little further, it would be the living forces to which we had a right! Let us recall that this paragraph is exactly the one that waxes ironic over the "fastidious ones," who are not "fans" of terrorism and with whom he takes the responsibility of contrasting the "living forces" in question, who begin by being the terrorists and who can just as well, at a certain conjuncture or period, become the most "living" elements—of the lumpen, why not? It is perfectly true that "they" are in motion—and that in addition certain of them were in motion, on our side, at the time of the barricades of May 10, 1968. . . . It would actually be easier if we could rely on the worldwide radicalization, which affects above all the youth and all sorts of peripheral milieus, in order to build the party more rapidly. But there are two relatively separate matters involved here: to recognize the positive consequences of this radicalization so as not to remain isolated from it like the sects, is not the same thing as concluding from it that it can change the essential premises of the strategy of party-building.

11. The youth radicalization, the joint crisis of Stalinism and imperialism, have created what we have agreed to call for the sake of convenience a "broad vanguard." We are increasingly interested in this "broad vanguard" because it is no longer limited to the petty-bourgeois milieus, which include the majority of the student youth; rather, it is becoming possible for this vanguard to be recruited from or at least gain influence in the workers' milieu as well. The fact that this "new vanguard" did not experience the degeneration of the international Com-

munist movement or the defeats of the 1930s and has escaped the stranglehold of various reformist tendencies, does not mean at all that those who make it up are generally revolutionaries, or are moving in a straight line toward becoming revolutionaries, much less revolutionary Marxists. The old reactionary ideologies of the French workers' movement cannot fail to wreak much havoc within this "broad vanguard," which we cannot depend on for speeding up our work, but which we must partially win over to our side in successfully carrying out the double task of winning the hegemony of revolutionary Marxism on the political and organizational plane, and of building mass organizations in which the members of the "new vanguard" will certainly have their place.

*It is wrong, illusory, and dangerous to believe and to let others believe that the construction of the mass revolutionary workers party will not have to go through an organizational break with ultraleftism. We will not have thousands of Overney demonstrations; and besides, they would not take the place of a strategy.*

## By Way of Conclusion (Provisional)

1. It is not very interesting to pose the problem of violence without taking into account the problem of program and strategy. The discussion in preparation for the Third Congress of the Ligue Communiste does not seem to show that we are very advanced on that score; in spite of the evolution between the "draft program" of spring 1971 and the "Manifesto" of spring 1972.

2. The education that we are giving our members and our sympathizers with respect to the question of violence cannot be completely unrelated to the "socialism that we want."

3. Meanwhile, *the discussion that we are conducting should no longer be on the subject of "how to build the party," but on "what party are we building?"*

4. This discussion will not remain the eminent domain of the Ligue Communiste. We will unquestionably find it throughout our entire International. Even if they express it clumsily, our comrades in the SWP said nothing else in attacking the "leftism" of the European sections with respect to the discussion on Latin America. It would be quite paradoxical if the principal danger lying in wait for the "new vanguards" was from the right; everything leads us to believe that, on the contrary, it is ultraleftism. And we would doubtless have gained time by not concealing our own problems, especially that one, by inventing bizarre "ephemeral concepts" like that of "triumphalism." We will assuredly return to this question with respect to the construction of our mass organizations.

But after the LC's Congress, the important stage of this discussion is the Tenth World Congress of the Fourth International. It deserves better preparation than our Second and Third Congresses.

October 1972

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1. In "Letter to the members of the G.B.L. (Bolshevik-Leninist Group of the SFIO), December 16, 1935.

2. Discussion Bulletin No. 28, page 33 (BP/CC).



3. Here it is a question of work in the EE as such, and not of the activity of the teachers' and workers' sectors in the LC. See the Lesage-Dumas article in a forthcoming Discussion Bulletin containing the contributions of the teachers' sector.

4. Discussion Bulletin No. 28, p. 33.

5. In our case, the second hypothesis seems more likely. But that does not imply agreement with the way Bulletin 30 approaches the question of tempos: "slow maturation of the working class"; "long experience of workers' control" which the "twofold straightjacket" (combined?) of Stalinism and the strong state will not permit.

6. Discussion Bulletin No. 36.

7. "To judge the character of the situation more calmly, it is useful, at the risk of being thought of as an old-style Marxist, to refer in this matter to Lenin and to the famous criteria listed in the "Bankruptcy of the Second International." There a situation is called revolutionary when four criteria are fulfilled:

— "when those above are no longer able to rule as before;

— "when those below no longer want to live as before;

— "when those in the middle lean to the side of the proletariat;

— "when there exists an organized force capable of resolving the crisis, in the sense of a revolution."

And the authors added as a note: "It is to be noted that these criteria are the same as those advanced by Trotsky in the *History of the Russian Revolution*, and permit only a descriptive approach to the notion of the revolutionary crisis, and not the development of that concept."

Henri Weber and Daniel Bensaid, *Mai 68, une répétition général* [May 68: A Dress Rehearsal], (Maspero), p. 166.

8. Discussion Bulletin No. 30, page 4.

9. *Transitional Program*, (Pathfinder Press, 1972), pp. 19-20.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 20.

11. See for example the mass demonstrations of the vineyard workers in Languedoc-Roussillon against the importing of Algerian wines.

12. *Rouge*, No. 172, September 22, 1972.

13. And may no one accuse me of not believing in the revolution for this!

14. The problem is also posed for Cuba, China, Indochina . . . at least in the heads of certain comrades.

15. *Rouge*, No. 173, September 30, 1972.

16. *The Militant*, No. 35, September 29, 1972: "Trotskyism and Terrorism."

17. Discussion Bulletin No. 31.

18. Editorial in *Rouge*, No. 170, September 9, 1972.

19. *Transitional Program*, pp. 18-19.

20. Lesage and Dumas, "Teachers' work and proletarian work—the EE is in crisis, but where are we?" in a forthcoming Discussion Bulletin.

## PART II. ROUGE ARTICLES CONCERNING TERRORISM

### Terrorism and Revolution: after the attempt at Lod and the arrest of Andreas Baader

By Daniel Bensaid

[The following article has been translated from the June 10, 1972, issue of *Rouge*.]

*Le Monde* of May 26 [1972] entitled its editorial "Bombs in Europe." Since then, the attack on the airport at Lod, the arrest in Germany of Andréas Baader, one of the principal leaders of the Red Army Faction, has been front-page news. The bourgeois press and the press of the reformist workers' movement yelp in unison and denounce the specter of terrorism. The label is handy. Through the classic procedure of the amalgam, they are able to get around the fundamental problem of revolutionary violence, which is posed with new acuteness at a time when imperialist genocide is being unleashed in Vietnam, when torture is systematized by the government in Brazil, and when even the French bourgeoisie begins to arm its hired killers of the SAC [Service d'Action Civique—Civic Action Service] and CDRs [Comités de Défense de la République—Committees for the Defense of the Republic]

#### Banditry Yesterday and Today

Minority, even individual, action cannot be judged outside its social context. In a small book recently published by Maspéro, Hobsbawm sets forth the essential characteristics of social agrarian banditry. Bandits of peasant origin, who acted for honor, expressed profound popular resistance to the development of feudalism, later to the penetration of capitalism in the countryside. Representatives of a small peasantry, incapable of smashing the system which strangled them, these bandits were condemned to a certain isolation. Their action was a desperate protest. The masses were able to identify with it, as is attested by the success that popular literature accords to Robin Hood as well as the *haidoucs* of Roumania, sketched by Panait Istrati. But they cannot directly participate in it.

On the other hand, it is not unusual to see these bandits join in the revolutionary struggle when the proletariat manages to come to the head of a national or social struggle of emancipation. During the long march, Mao Tse-tung attracted and reeducated a not insignificant number of them. In Russia, the collaboration between the Bolsheviks and groups of outlaws in the Caucasus in the big expropriations from 1905 to 1914 is well known. This is also true for the participation of the celebrated bandits of the Aurès in the Algerian revolution

and the role played by Pancho Villa in the Mexican revolution.

The working class has not expressed its resistance to capitalism in the form of an urban banditry, analogous to agrarian banditry. While a certain sort of anarchism, that of the band at Bonnot, appears to follow in this tradition, it is much more a part of a political current that expresses something beyond a confrontation with the existing social order: the idea of its destruction, even if this plan borders on utopia. Rather than a workers' banditry, ascendant capitalism developed gangsterism in the cities, which, far from challenging capitalist society, is installed in its midst, the better to subsist on it. Agrarian banditry constituted resistance to oppression; gangsterism is only a form of parasitism on capital, without popular sympathy.

What is emerging today, beyond the limited case of the Baader band, is a new form of social confrontation which already in part constitutes an international phenomenon. A series of social layers made up of technicians, intellectuals and students find themselves on the warpath on the line of division between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. The workers' movement, dominated by Stalinist or Social-Democratic reformism, does not permit them to express their radical break with the decaying society, with its hypocritical values and its legalized violence. This makes up a part of the despair which has developed into urban terrorism. The groups that embark on this type of action constitute microsocieties, living apart from official society, justifying their action by a revolutionary plan which they do not have the forces to bring to realization for lack of real connections with the masses. The only link is that of encouragement by exemplary action and not organized resistance to capitalist exploitation.

If it's genuine, the document of the Tupamaros (MLN) [Movimiento de Liberación Nacional—National Liberation Movement] published by the Uruguayan police confirms this hypothesis. "The MLN remains a subversive but nonrevolutionary organization," declared this document of self-criticism. In other words, what is involved is a movement of violent confrontation, assured of broad sympathy among the masses, but up to now incapable of organizing them for a decisive assault upon the bourgeois state power.

It is clear to us that instead of howling against terrorism, the role of revolutionists is first of all to show the responsibility of capitalist society, a society of legal and

organized violence, as well as the responsibility of a workers' movement that capitulates before its historical tasks.

## Minority Violence and Mass Violence

But the problem does not stop there. If the denunciation of terrorism takes so prominent a place in the bourgeois press, it is because the minority violence of some groups demonstrates the vulnerability of a system that wants to be immune. The workers demonstrate this every day: by showing that a strike-stoppage in a workshop can paralyze a highly automated factory. The Vietnamese give a like example on a very different scale by holding at bay the most formidable apparatus of destruction equipped with computers, giant bombers, electronic apparatuses. Kidnappings, skyjackings of airplanes also help to demonstrate that the more the capitalist system is centralized, organized and automated, the more it is at the mercy of a grain of sand.

For revolutionists, the problem posed by the action of the Baader band is not one for moralizing judgment, but of the links that can be established between mass violence and minority violence. A first and particularly enlightening example is provided by factory struggles. It is clear in fact that the occupation of a factory that mobilizes a mass of workers to control the means of production and that may pass over to active administration has a far greater significance than the kidnapping of a supervisor or a boss. The occupation attacks the boss's power at its roots, the ownership of the means of production. Kidnapping only attacks the physical person of an easily replaceable oppressor. But if the kidnapping expresses a genuine anger, if it is not presented as an end in itself, a pure revolt, but rather as a means of breaking up the passivity and resignation of the masses, beginning with the overthrow of its hierarchical idols, then kidnapping can be a correct initiative that the workers ought to defend and even, in certain cases, to promote.

One of the latest actions attributed by the police to the Baader band is an explosion of a bomb at the headquarters of the American forces in Europe in which three American soldiers were killed. The question is not one of principle but of tactics. So far as we're concerned, we have not hesitated to resort to violent minority actions when these actions were tied up with mass activity.

In December 1970, the Ligue Communiste supported, at the time of the Burgos verdict, the attack of a group of militants against the Bank of Spain, but that was parallel with the mass campaign conducted on behalf of the Basques threatened with death. We also led actions against General Ky when he visited Paris, against the U.S. consulate (an action that led to the indictment of Alain Krivine), and supported the actions led by militants against the American firms profiting from the war. But this was parallel with systematic mass work within the framework of the FSI [Front Solidarité Indochine] in particular, on behalf of the Indochinese revolution. We have taken responsibility for the direct attack against the meeting of the New Order, March 9, 1971, at the Sports Palace, physically imposed our presence upon the hirelings of the CFT [Confédération Française du Travail—French Confederation of Labor (a "union" dominated by fascist goons)] at Rennes, and revealed the anti-crisis plans of the Ministry of the Interior. But that was parallel with a campaign of systematic propaganda against the armed bands of capital, particularly in the trade unions where we are active, particularly through the army committees created in 1970 for the defense of imprisoned conscripts.

As we see it, revolutionists ought not to await the insurgence of the masses to oppose their own violence to the daily violence of Capital. In strikes, we propose to workers who have learned from the assassinations of Overney and Labroche, to organize workers' self-defense against the threats of the CRS [riot police]. To prove it is possible, we provided an example to the extent of our capabilities. In the same way, our Spanish comrades of the LCR (Revolutionary Communist League) have popularized the idea of worker self-defense but they now pay particular attention to themselves ensuring protection for the mass demonstrations, as they did on May Day at Madrid with chains and Molotov cocktails.

We do not think that the way chosen by Baader and his comrades is one that leads to revolution. But we understand that they could think so, hard-pressed by the unleashing of imperialist violence and made desperate by the inertia of the reformist workers movement. That is why we defend them, first against their bourgeois judges, but against the slanders of the frightened bureaucrats as well.

# The Olympic 'Masquerade'

[The following press communiqué has been translated from the September 7, 1972, issue of *Le Monde*.]

The Ligue Communiste, French section of the Trotskyist Fourth International, declares that "the so-called Olympic peace is nothing but a masquerade aimed at diverting the popular masses from the imperialist crimes committed without respite throughout the world, particularly in Vietnam. Today's hypocritical holy alliance is using the des-

perate act of some Palestinian militants as a pretext. The Ligue Communiste takes this opportunity to reaffirm its solidarity with the Palestinian people, victims of Zionist aggression. While disapproving the action of the Black September commandos as detrimental to the cause of the Palestinian people, we condemn the hysterical press campaign conducted by those who have never been concerned over the fate of the Palestinians, in particular at the time they were massacred in September 1970."

## After Munich and the Israeli Reprisals: Resolution of the Ligue Communiste Political Bureau

[The following resolution has been translated from the September 23, 1972, issue of *Rouge*.]

1. Who will history hold responsible for what the international bourgeoisie euphemistically calls "the tragedy of Munich?"

Those responsible are first of all the imperialist powers who took advantage of the ordeal of the Nazi persecutions to make the state of Israel a counterrevolutionary barricade against the first stirrings of the Arab revolution.

Those responsible are the bourgeois Arab regimes, who in September 1970 physically wiped out the Palestinian resistance, or with a feeling of relief allowed it to be wiped out. The bloodbath provoked no outburst of well-meaning bourgeois public opinion comparable to the one at present.

Those responsible are the imperialist regimes and the Stalinist bureaucracy, who are negotiating with the Zionist state and the bourgeois Arab regimes to establish a status quo on the mutilated corpse of the Palestinian resistance.

Those responsible are the reactionary leaders of the Zionist state, who are seeking, through a nationalist mobilization, to sidetrack the development of the class struggle within Israel itself.

The direct responsibility for Munich also lies with the Zionist leaders who deliberately sacrificed their athletes by refusing to free the 250 Palestinian hostages demanded in exchange. The direct responsibility for Munich lies, furthermore, with the German bourgeois leaders, who put their mercenaries at the direct service of Zionist policy. Together, through class solidarity, they set the massacre in motion, with full knowledge of what they were doing.

2. In face of this collection of criminals, the action of the Black September group must be supported unconditionally as an act of war by a people forced off its

land, oppressed, herded into pens, and massacred. It is an act of legitimate violence by a people whom the international reaction and the treason of the bourgeois Arab regimes have left neither the choice of terrain nor the choice of weapons. The proof that the indignation expressed after Munich is not based simply on morality is that the people who were the most outraged over Munich yesterday show the least zeal in denouncing the Zionist army's current bombing of civilian populations on the Lebanese and Syrian borders, the arbitrary reprisals carried out in the name of the concept of "collective responsibility," already used as a justification by the French army in Algeria.

Whatever ideas or illusions the militants of Black September may have, the Palestinian resistance is the product of imperialist pillaging and maneuvering in the Arab world. We are dealing here with an objective phenomenon. Black September is on the receiving end of the entire ordeal. And for this reason its combat is justified. And it is not for those who are in one degree or another responsible for the lot of the Palestinian people to set themselves up as judges.

3. In the first place, therefore, one must choose sides. Within the revolutionary camp—once the line of support and of unconditional defense against reaction and repression is firmly established—a discussion can be opened on the best means to wage an effective struggle.

It is therefore from within the revolutionary camp, and from the point of view of revolutionary effectiveness, that we criticize the action of Black September. Its commandos have succeeded in drawing the attention of international opinion to the fate of the Palestinian people, something the public has tended to lose interest in. They have largely cancelled out the wheeling and dealing in progress be-

tween the Arab bourgeoisies and the Zionist state, fostered by U. S. imperialism and the Stalinist bureaucracy. From this very point of view, their action cannot be considered irrational.

But we doubt that Munich is a new Karameh. After the Six Day War in June 1967 demonstrated the bankruptcy of the bourgeois Arab regimes, at Karameh the armed Palestinian resistance asserted its role and freed itself from the tutelage of the Arab states. But after the September 1970 massacre, it is clear that if the Palestinian resistance is to move forward, it will have to resolve two fundamental questions:

a. It will have to link its fate to that of the Arab socialist revolution by turning its weapons against the bourgeois Arab regimes, which have been traitors and accomplices of Zionism and imperialism.

b. It will have to shatter the Zionist bloc, and prove the nonracist class character of its struggle by extending the hand of internationalism to the first detachments of

the vanguard in Israel itself who are struggling against the Zionist state from a class perspective.

These are the determining elements of the struggle; they can throw an entirely different light on all the armed actions of the Palestinian resistance.

4. In the light of these points, we must make a public self-criticism for the ambiguous character of the communiqué we published on the occasion of the Munich events and before their climax [*Le Monde*, Sept. 7]. In that communiqué we mixed up statements of support to the struggle of the Palestinian people and reservations as to the effectiveness of certain actions from a strategic point of view. But in the face of the outburst of international reaction, it was more than ever necessary to reaffirm, strongly, the fundamental line of demarcation between those within the revolutionary camp and their class enemies, leaving us free to continue the debate in the future, as we have done today, over the most effective strategy to put into practice.

# Terrorism and Class Struggle

By Daniel Bensaid

[The following article has been translated from *Rouge*, September 30, 1972.]

## Introduction

For the bourgeoisie, terrorism is on the agenda. Willy Brandt poses the problem to his Parliament. The European governments are preoccupied with it in Rome. The United Nations will discuss, during their present session, what measures to take.

Diplomatic activity proceeds apace, political naivete joining in with policy frenzy. Pompidou and his minister Schumann play at being clearheaded and audacious progressives, declaring that it is necessary to attack the causes of Palestinian terrorism. But what are the causes? Will the international assembly of these uneasy administrators of capital attack the exploitation and the oppression which are the most certain sources of terrorism, in Palestine as elsewhere? These dismayed "humanists," will they make an example by denouncing, on their own initiative, their own legal terror, exercised by the military, torturers and cops who are in effect legal terrorists?

They have summoned up a tone of mourning and affliction without precedent, they who kept quiet during the massacres of September 1970 at Amman and Irbid, who sell their arms to the Greek, Spanish, and Portuguese regimes; who gossip in their ministries and chancelleries with the Duvaliers, Suharto, butcher of the Indonesian people, and with Brazilian torturers.

Will they think, in their deliberations at the UN, to summon the terrorist Lanusse, chief of state of Argentina, and his henchmen, who ten days before Munich, executed 17 revolutionary militants in cold blood at Trelew prison?

The exploitation of man by man is the primary violence. The police, military and state violence exercised to maintain this exploitation are nothing but its extension. The more the capitalist order feels threatened, the more it will defend itself with violence, with claws and fangs, torture and napalm. And the more capitalist terror grows, the more it will incite reactions of self-defense, of revolutionary violence, by minorities or by the mass.

They claim exclusivity, a monopoly on violence! They will be quick to implement all methods imaginable. They will intensify border patrols, and searches; there will be automatic troop movements. But, at the same time, they need quick circulation of men and capital. They would like to soften the impact of tariffs within the Common Market, but intensify their police control of the borders. And the difficulties begin, bureaucratic orders and counter-orders. . . . An airline explains after the skyjackings that surveillance apparatuses exist; that they are implemented after an incident, but that because they are too heavy and slow (thousands of travelers must clear thousands of doors), they are gradually dismantled.

They are considering creating an international super-police. But already there is talk of differences within Interpol over whether terrorism comes within its jurisdiction, or if its constitution prevents it from becoming involved in political affairs. The creation of a unified international political police will encounter many difficulties. It is difficult to establish norms. Would such a police arrest Oufkir on his way to assassinate Ben Barka? Would they also occupy themselves with the trips made by Dayan to study anti-guerrilla tactics? And who would decide? One cannot on the one hand join in a fierce economic battle on the world market, and on the other claim to consolidate a homogeneous police force when the rivalries between various police forces only reflect the underlying competition.

In this great commotion of international cops, the Stalinist bureaucracy doesn't hesitate for a moment to play its role. Gromyko declares at the United Nations that the USSR is opposed in principle to acts of terrorism "which disturb the diplomatic activity of states as well as their communications and the normal process of international contacts." Poor "disturbed" ministers, diplomats, and unscrupulous politicians! Gromyko speaks like an upset functionary at team time, a statesman troubled by rumors of revolutions. And he is a true image of the regime he represents. In speaking thusly, Gromyko follows an already solid tradition: as early as 1939, Stalin tried to conclude an international agreement with various governments, including those of Hitler and Mussolini, for mutual extradition of terrorists!

Lastly, the daily *ABC* in Spain, the weeklies *Newsweek* in the United States, and *The Economist* in Great Britain have denounced the Fourth International as the most extensive system of international terrorism.

This open offensive against the only international revolutionary organization has already begun with the increase in the number of entry bans against the principal leaders of the Fourth International. Our program and methods are known, but no matter, the bourgeoisie know they are lying when they make an amalgam between our organization and groups like Black September. But they are right to see in the Fourth International their most indomitable adversary.

D.B.

## II

The bourgeoisie uses terrorism as a pretext to strengthen their repressive arsenal. That's their business; we must not allow them a free hand. But for that reason, it is all the more necessary that the question of terrorism be clarified both in the workers movement itself and the revolutionary vanguard. Too many "yes, but's . . ." evasive answers, various excuses, and pretensions of attributing blame, allow the real tasks to be evaded.

## Terrorism means many things

First, the notion of terrorism is applied indiscriminately to too many different things. The bourgeoisie and reformists take advantage of this ambiguity.

*Terrorism can be a political orientation.* The orientation of people who believe in decapitating the government or the general staff as the method of transforming society. We certainly know that the bourgeoisie will find new defenders and spokespersons, not all of the same caliber, to be sure, as long as they remain masters of the means of production. That's where their power comes from: in exploiting the workers, they brutalize them and make every effort to smash them, to teach them to submit; with the capital extracted from the workers' toil, they are able to buy all the decorated generals and flunkies they need. That is why only a movement of the masses, expropriating the bourgeoisie and smashing their state, can put an end to their domination.

*But terrorism can be a social phenomenon, and that is another question entirely.* Thus, Lenin made a distinction between the terrorist acts which followed 1905 and the terrorist orientation of the Socialist Revolutionaries or the anarchists before 1905. Before 1905, it was a question of false politics to which a number of romantic, desperate intellectuals were sacrificed. After 1905, we are dealing with a more broad and profound movement which prolongs the revolutionary crisis; what continued to be called terrorism included demonstrations of resistance, sabotage, the insolence of workers and peasants. It entered into the ferment taking place in the consciousness of the masses who drew in their own way the lessons of 1905. And the party must grasp this and enrich its understanding; even if this entails giving this development a distinct name, for greater clarity:

"The old Russian terrorism was an affair of the intellectual conspirator; today as a general rule guerrilla warfare is waged by the worker combatant, or simply by the unemployed worker." (Lenin in 1906.) This is perhaps the same difference as between the Baader band in Germany or the Red Army Faction in Japan (whose links with workers struggles are minimal) and the action of the PRT-ERP in Argentine, which is in consonance with the struggles of the workers movement.

## Individual terrorism and minority violence

*Another source of confusion is the notion of individual terrorism.* Opportunists of many stripes are quick to argue that Lenin on several occasions denounced individual terrorism. This devious argument consists of hiding Lenin's real meaning, and lumping together under the heading of individual terrorism all acts of minority violence.

What, then, must we understand by individual terrorism? Terror carried out against individuals? That would never make sense: the expropriation of funds, reprisals against well-known torturers, are always directed at individuals, sometimes isolated individuals, like it or not. Are we talking then about violence practiced by minority groups? This would also be completely meaningless: this type of action presupposes secret preparation and disciplined execution which excludes the direct participation

of the masses.

When Lenin condemns individual terrorism, he condemns the individual initiation of minority violence. Violence which is not subordinated to strategic objectives, which is not part of an overall plan for the seizure of power; and which does not concern itself with being understood by the masses, in order to strengthen their confidence and their mobilization. On the other hand, the execution of the CIA agent Mitrone by the Tupamaros, or of the torturer, General Sanchez, by our Argentine comrades of the ERP are actions which were explained to the masses, and understood by them; and as such, part and parcel of a revolutionary orientation.

## Terrorism today . . .

And today? The bourgeoisie is worried about terrorism on a world scale. That is because, in fact, it has a world dimension: from Ireland to Latin America, from Spain to Quebec, from Palestine to Japan. To guide us, the classics of Marxism will be useful, providing that we do not dodge the specific nature of the phenomenon.

The acute crisis of imperialism favors the birth and development, on a mass scale, of new revolutionary vanguards. These vanguards, when they seek to root themselves in the workers movement, which they understand or sense is the only force capable of resolving the crisis, run into the hard bureaucratic crust of Social Democrats and Stalinists. Thus, there is every reason to believe that the strategy of the IRA would have been different if, right off the bat, they had received the internationalist support of a qualitatively more powerful revolutionary workers movement in Great Britain. An analogous situation exists on the international plane: in Ceylon, the JVP was attacked by the bourgeoisie with the approval of the USSR, China and Great Britain; as for the Palestinian resistance fighters, they were stabbed in the back by the Arab bourgeoisie, to the great relief of the diplomatic authorities.

It is in this situation, in the gap between the ripening of the revolutionary conditions and the weakness of the organized vanguard, that the nub of the problem lies.

This discrepancy allows new generations of revolutionary militants to oscillate between revolutionary exaltation and desperate revolt. This is a hard fact which will only be resolved with the affirmation and the strengthening of revolutionary leaderships which can stand up to the test.

That is the source of terrorism; but that does not suffice to explain the impact that it has, which is partly responsible for its immediate effectiveness. The bourgeoisie have perfected their arsenal of repression, investing considerable money and research in it. They should be the last ones to put on a show of indignation in accusing the Palestinian commandos of cowardice for using booby-trapped letters. Will this same bourgeoisie and this same press accuse the Pentagon of cowardice when it perfects bombing methods by lasers or telescopes sights which can hit the bulls-eye half the time against targets that are often civilian; when twenty conventional bombs were needed to hit the same target from about 75 meters? Will they condemn as cowardice the dropping of thousands and thousands of "gravel bombs" from helicopters, like small tea-bags which explode when soldiers or Vietnamese villagers

walk on them? Will they condemn as cowardice the manufacture of splinter bombs, made of special material which cannot be detected by X-rays, so that the wounds cannot be dressed?

Faced with the technological development of bourgeois terror, revolutionary militants find their own replies. Their response receives its present publicity because the strengthening of the state apparatus and of capitalist concentration increases the number of targets, while urban development offers a new terrain for revolutionary combatants. The mass media makes each action immediately known to world opinion, provoking mobilizations forcing everyone to take a stand, and spreading examples. This is why, in the last analysis, the expanding mechanized systems grow more and more vulnerable to a grain of sand. And this is also, in a certain sense, the picture presented by capitalist society as a whole.

### **Build the party with living forces**

The bourgeoisie brandishes the specter of terrorism in order to resort to the amalgams which are their custom. But the fact is that a new revolutionary generation exists which is seeking its own way, which must respond to the blows dealt to it, and which can go astray in mistaking terrorism for revolutionary violence. The fastidious opportunists turn aside and hold their noses.

We must on the contrary face things as they are, and repeat what Trotsky said of Grynszpan, a young Jewish terrorist who had killed a member of the Nazi embassy in Paris in 1938: "People come cheap who are capable only of fulminating against injustice and bestiality. But those who, like Grynszpan, are able to act as well as conceive, sacrificing their own lives if need be, are the precious leaven of mankind. In the moral sense, although not for his mode of action, Grynszpan may serve as an example for every young revolutionist." The devotion and energy of militants of this type could be more effectively utilized. We can discuss that; we do not have to judge them. Because their capacity to find a firm revolutionary road and to link up with the mass of toilers will

depend in part on our own capacity, as a revolutionary organization, to resolve this same problem.

On these terms, acts of minority violence, today combined under the general rubric of terrorism, can find their place, as a tactical recourse among others, in a strategy for the conquest of power by the masses. And on these terms we can utilize to the full the experience and lessons of groups and militants who are fighting in a groping manner, but without sparing their forces. To win these militants to the proletarian revolution is our task, because generations don't have hardened cadres to spare; but to win them, we must understand their struggle.

There is no dearth of fastidious opportunists, even in the extreme left, who underline the dangers and the pitfalls. To them *Lenin has already answered that there are dangers everywhere . . . if the party is not sufficiently firm! There is the danger of seeing "all the means of struggle left to the spontaneous course of events to be used, perverted, and prostituted."* Strikes that are lost end in class-collaborationist agreements; the electoral struggle degenerates into electoralist maneuvering; the revolutionary press can be transformed into an intermediary which blunts consciousness. Finally, the very growth of the party can engender the bureaucratism and conservatism which are the basis of reformism. The most simple conclusion is that the party is not built without risks; and that it is necessary to take those risks.

The hardened bureaucrats and shamefaced reformists join in the bourgeois chorus denouncing terrorism. The reformists think that with round shoulders and soft hands they can filch a painless revolution from the bourgeoisie. The united denunciation of terrorism serves them all as an alibi for their past, present and future capitulations. These capitulations have already cost more in Indonesia and Greece than the victorious revolutions in Russia or in Cuba.

They are far from the plain language of Lenin: "Contempt of death must be spread among the masses to assure victory. . . ." And yet, Lenin was not a desperate terrorist, but a conscious and optimistic revolutionist.



# PART III. THE LIGUE COMMUNISTE AND THE LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS

## Political Resolution

Adopted by the Third National Convention of the Ligue Communiste, December 7/10, 1972.

[The following resolution was printed in the December 16, 1972, issue of *Rouge*. The English translation is reprinted from *International*, Vol. 2, No. 1, Spring 1973, (theoretical journal of the International Marxist Group, British section of the Fourth International.)]

**1** The crisis of the international imperialist system has deepened in recent years and is marked by a general decline in economic growth in all the imperialist countries. For the first time since the end of the Second World War, attempts to check the crisis of overproduction by increased inflation have run into grave difficulties: dollar inflation finally precipitated the destruction of the international monetary system and led to a monetary crisis which threatens to undermine international credit and, as a result, the expansion of world trade.

The principal stimulants of the economic expansion of the post-war period are subsiding; it follows that the underlying tendency for a fall in the rate of profit is emerging ever more clearly, holding back growth — as too does the restriction of the market relative to the colossal expansion of productive capacity.

U.S. imperialism has progressively lost its position of absolute superiority within the imperialist camp. Its share of the world market is constantly diminishing, as gains are rapidly made by its German, Japanese and E.E.C. rivals. Far from reducing inter-imperialist competition, this inflation, because of the protectionist measures it induces on the part of American imperialism, can only exacerbate it further.

**2** In capitalist Europe, the end of the long period of expansion has involved a sharpening of social contradictions which, since May 1968, has taken the form of a generalized social crisis in several countries (France, Italy, Spain, Great Britain). And so, as new demands flowing precisely from the explosion of the productive forces have been experienced in a particularly sharp manner, the European bourgeoisie has become less and less capable of making new concessions to the working masses. On the contrary, it has often been forced to attack the gains won by the latter during the preceding phase.

The reappearance of substantial unemployment (five

million unemployed in Western Europe) is simply the dramatic reflection of this phenomenon. Big capital is seeking to restore the rate of profit by increasing the rate of exploitation of the working class. The European working class has resisted this offensive by launching the biggest wave of strikes seen since the great recession of the thirties. But the current general rise in the level of struggle is occurring in a different context. As a result of a fifteen year decline in the numbers of the industrial reserve army, the European proletariat is entering this phase in a position of considerable strength and with a much higher degree of organization, in an international context marked by the crisis of the Stalinist camp and the political and military defeat of the dominant imperialist power in Indochina.

**3** Faced with a difficult economic situation and sharpening social contradictions, the bourgeois political system is in its turn entering into crisis: a crisis of the political parties, a crisis of the forms of political domination (e.g. the paralysis of the centre-left governments in Italy, the collapse of Gaullist bonapartism, the decomposition of the Franco régime).

The European bourgeoisies, therefore, have before them a fundamental choice between attempts at 'integration' — designed to reduce and nullify the combativity of the working class through concessions, which will reinforce the mechanism of class collaboration but which are economically expensive — and increased repression, involving attacks on democratic rights, the right to strike and the right to free wage negotiation.

These two alternatives, at present being used simultaneously, accentuate the decay of classical parliamentary democracy and shift the centre of gravity of the bourgeois state towards an executive more and more removed from any control, thus underlining the current tendency for the establishment of strong states corresponding more closely to the phase of monopoly capitalism which characterizes our epoch.

The most likely political perspective is that of a prolonged period of instability which will see a succession of different bourgeois governments and attempts at reform led by the traditional workers' organizations.

4 One manifestation of the crisis of bourgeois leadership in Europe is well illustrated by the jerky evolution towards European political unity. The greater interpenetration of capital throughout Europe, accentuated by the enlarging of the E.E.C. and the exacerbation of competition with American and Japanese capitalism, militates in favour of a strengthening of European pre-state superstructures. But each step along this road implies sacrifices for one or other of the 'national' bourgeoisies, thus increasing — as decisive stages approach — the hesitations, the social contradictions and the political divisions. European unity will not come about in the framework of the capitalist system. Its accomplishment would be likely to lead one or more European countries to the brink of a social explosion that could spread throughout the whole system and bring it down.

5 In France, the crisis of May 1968 revealed and precipitated the bankruptcy of the Gaullist bonapartist régime. This has been indispensable for leading the different sections of the bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie to accept policies necessary to place France on an equal footing with her European rivals; but in the process it has accumulated social contradictions which will finally erupt and destroy it.

The most conscious section of big capital envisages a realistic revision of its objectives and a modification of its forms of political domination, notably by getting rid of the bonapartist forms of the strong state.

This explains the birth of 'Pompidou-ism', whose principal function is to ensure a transition from the bonapartist régime — which arose out of the prolonged crisis of parliamentary democracy — to a presidential régime.

The second priority of the Pompidou presidency is to work towards objectives for the French bourgeoisie more in accordance with its real economic power. This means renouncing Gaullist dreams of world-wide power and accepting the role of a secondary imperialism, with an honourable place — particularly in Europe. This is the explanation of Pompidou's re-orientation of policy on Europe.

6 After May 1968, the first task for the bourgeoisie was to restore a balance of forces which had shifted to the advantage of the working class—whose militancy has, however, remained at a high level for the past four years.

The Chaban-Delmas government elaborated a policy of integration of the working-class movement. This was based on the one hand upon the exceptional expansion of the years 1968-70, resulting from the increase in domestic consumption provoked by the gains made at Grenelle and from the growth of exports achieved by the revaluation of the franc, and on the other hand upon the inactivity of the workers' organizations, which were afraid of launching a new May if they went too far in pursuing claims.

Despite these two trump-cards, the total balance-sheet of this 'policy of agreement' has remained pretty unimpressive. It is perpetually threatened by the workers' militancy, which is maintained at a high level by inflation and continually rising prices — which the bourgeoisie cannot prevent without severely restricting growth. Despite all the efforts made, Chaban's 'new society', in which it was hoped to gain the voluntary consent of the workers to the

norms and limits of the system, has not seen the light of day. It has not been possible to reverse the balance of forces created in 1968.

On the contrary, the objective crisis has raised the combativity of the working class to a level virtually incompatible with the smooth functioning of capitalist society, just as the social layers traditionally tied to Gaullism have entered into open conflict with the policies of rationalization being attempted by the Pompidou régime. Conscious that these policies mean their eventual elimination, small farmers, small businessmen and shopkeepers, etc. — i.e. archaic petty-bourgeois layers — have begun a movement which is taking them into conflict with the régime, which is thus losing its former ascendancy over them.

Finally, within the framework of the current social and political crisis, the government is attempting to give the various bodies which make up the state apparatus repressive and ideological functions more and more openly tailored to its own policies. This is what lies at the root of the various 'malaises' — of the police, the administration, the judiciary, the mass media, etc. — which generate scandals and undermine the authority of the régime.

The erosion of the latter is the product of a combination of factors, all of which impair the authority and legality of the bourgeois state: new forms of working-class struggle, agitation on the part of the petty bourgeoisie, the revolt of young people, the crisis of established institutions, the exposure of scandals.

In a word, the Pompidou-Chaban team did not manage to bring any lasting stability to the régime. A new pre-electoral attempt to achieve this has been made with the formation of the Messmer administration. But behind the change of facade, the policies and methods remain the same; failure is just as predictable.

This is why, in the absence of any immediately credible revolutionary perspective, a number of long-term alternative solutions are being prepared — both by the bourgeoisie and by the traditional workers' movement.

7 Neither the groups allied to the UDR (Giscard, etc.) nor the 'reformers' (Lecanuet and Servan Schreiber) have any strategic objective, either on the economic or on the European plane, which differs from that of the present administration.<sup>1</sup>

However, they have serious doubts about the ability of the UDR to achieve its strategic objective. The UDR is merely a bureaucratic apparatus, not properly under the control of big capital, formed in the late Bonaparte's backwash.

A 'Society of December 10',<sup>2</sup> a motley crew of upstarts and incompetents, political fanatics and bovine henchmen, this party is incapable of transforming itself without a disastrous internal crisis, nor can it sink firm roots into the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois layers which constitute the social base of the régime.

The presidential régime outlined for the near future must, if it is actually to see the light of day and to establish itself solidly, have a large conservative party upon which to base itself. The objective of those warring brothers the Giscard-centrists and the 'reformers' is to achieve this without provoking too brutal a split within the UDR —

which would open a breach in the shaky edifice which has existed since de Gaulle and allow the workers' movement to burst through.

They have chosen not to smash the UDR but to whittle it down gradually, and thus to shift the centre of gravity of the present majority first by a strengthening of the Giscardian wing and then by the entry of the 'opposition' centrists — an operation which Servan Schreiber and Lecanuet are jointly preparing.

The course they have chosen is fraught with difficulties, since any discrediting of the UDR weakens the régime itself which gave the latter its better days, and could operate to the advantage of the Union of the Left, which claims to be a global alternative to the existing order.

Thus a growing polarization is taking shape in bourgeois political life between a reconstituted majority and a Union of the Left dominated by the PCF. The way is being prepared for a decisive confrontation in 1976. In this way the post-bonapartist transitional phase will come to an end.

If the Pompidou régime has succeeded until now in negotiating the rapids without too many buffets, this does not necessarily mean that it will come through safely to its destination. Even if the restructuring of the bourgeois parties may be accomplished smoothly, that does not mean that the game is over. The self-defensive reactions of the wild men of the UDR, seeing themselves forced into a regroupment not of their choosing, cannot be predicted. Moreover, the Union of the Left is itself pregnant with inescapable contradictions and with a dynamic which could burst free of the bureaucratic apparatuses that conceived it.

8 The agreement concluded between the PCF and the PS<sup>3</sup> is the response of two reformist parties to the demand for political change which has been evident in the working class since May 1968, in the context of a strong state which has considerably reduced the margins of parliamentary manoeuvre. The common programme is in no sense an anti-capitalist transitional programme lacking only the will and the means to succeed. It places itself explicitly within the framework of the bourgeois state, even of the Fifth Republic, which it seeks to reform from the inside, without calling for the autonomous organization or mobilization of the working class. In a period of intense class struggle, when the bourgeoisie found itself driven into a corner, this programme might well be the last card that a section of the bourgeoisie would play, to try and prevent the success of the revolutionary process. But in the present situation, the PC/PS agreements cannot be characterized as a conscious machination of the bourgeoisie or of a significant section of it. Difficult though the situation may be, it does not justify the risk they would be taking in accepting a governmental solution which involved

the participation of the PCF. Certain sections of the bourgeoisie are only prepared to consider a bonapartist solution in the person of Mitterand if and when he shows that he can utilize for his own ends the strength of a PCF reduced to the role of a hostage, as in 1965. The PC/PS agreement has changed the balance of forces in the short term and temporarily deprived Mitterand of the support of the

distrustful rightwingers, which he banks on regaining in time for the presidential elections of 1976.

9 The PC/PS agreement represents the meeting-point of two reformist programmes put forward by parties whose aims are in fact quite distinct.

The leadership of the PCF was forced to come up with a concrete political solution in the face of the demands of a militant workers' movement. The general strike of 1968, the invasion of Czechoslovakia, the growth of the revolutionary organizations — these factors made such an initiative necessary.

At the same time, the limitations which a strong state placed on the parliamentary game and the loss of any audience in the working class forced the leaders of the old SFIO to realize that the bourgeoisie would never again be prepared to entrust them with power. Without a credible governmental perspective, the PS found itself adrift. Deferre's electoral debacle in 1969 left it only two possibilities for survival.

The first was an alliance with the centre, which would make it possible to present an alternative to the UDR. But the existing political polarization made this operation too hazardous. From the Poher candidature to Servan Schreiber's 'crusade', the centre appeared too fragile a pole for a bourgeoisie already anxious over the disintegration of the UDR.

The second possibility was an alliance with the PCF, with the hope of regaining a broader social base, among certain layers of highly-skilled workers and among middle strata. One element of this plan was the abandonment of FO in favour of the CFDT.<sup>4</sup> In order to accomplish this refloating operation, the SFIO accepted Mitterand's strategy almost unanimously, and its right-wing majority left the working out both of the party programme and of the Joint Programme to the left.

The signing of the Joint Programme thus allows the PS to refurbish its image, to strengthen its position vis-à-vis the PCF, and to prepare for the presidential elections of 1976 — in which Mitterand would benefit in the working class from the credit bestowed upon him in the campaigns of 1965 and 1973. He would then be able to make use of the Gaullist constitution of 1958 — which confers on the president the position of an arbiter and guarantees him a relative independence from his allies — and in this way collect the centre votes in the second round.

If the PC/PS agreement is not an acceptable solution for the bourgeoisie in the short term, because of the social dynamic which threatens to engulf it, from the point of view of the PS leadership it prepares the way, at the price of some real risks, for Mitterand's bonapartist operation — which could turn out to be a viable solution in 1976.

10 The contradictions of this kind of game are multiple.

A failure for the PS in 1973 would strengthen the right wing of the party, which could then launch a fight for a break with the PCF and an alliance instead with the centre. The PS would then be in danger of a new split. A heterogeneous party — both in terms of the currents it contains and in terms of the conflicting perspectives which coexist within it — the PS today can be defined neither

as a bourgeois party, nor as a working-class party which is bourgeois because of its weak implantation in the working class. The important thing for us is the function which the PS — incapable as it is of reconstituting itself simply on the reduced parliamentary terrain of the strong state — is fulfilling within the workers' movement through its alliance with the PCF.

Through its policies, the PCF is seeking to enhance the credibility of the PS in the eyes of the working class as a force that is indispensable to any social transformation, quite independently of its actual implantation. Already in 1965, the workers voted in their millions for Mitterrand. Thus when one considers the contradictory and transitory character of the PS, the PC/PS agreement is not one of a Popular Front type which ties the PC to the coat-tails of a bourgeois party. For the first time, it is actually being obliged to open up some sort of socialist perspective.

**11** In fact, in the present context, if an electoral victory for the Left remains unlikely, relative success could be enough to bring closer the beginning of a political crisis, by encouraging the mobilization of the workers and aggravating the divisions within the bourgeoisie. From this point of view, the anti-communist campaign which the bourgeoisie is mounting is not so much evidence of their fear of the PCF's aims as of their real fear of the social dynamic which could be concealed behind that of the PC/PS agreement.

The political solution put forward by the PC/PS agreement necessitates mobilizations controlled and channelled by the bureaucracy — which must at the same time block all struggles which threaten to break through the agreed limits. This contradiction is even more real today, when the working-class bureaucracy has not only spontaneous upsurges to fear, but also the conscious and active role in struggles of the revolutionary left, organized or otherwise, and of ourselves in particular.

Given this contradiction, we may expect to see the Stalinist bureaucracy punctuating the pre-electoral period with a series of national mobilizations and days of action, which will have the combined function of preparing for the elections and of channelling and dissipating the energy which could build up in the working class, by making use, in particular, of the CGT, which it controls, as a kind of electoral agent among the masses. The bureaucracy will endeavour to use these central mobilizations of opinion, altogether different from true class mobilizations.

Nevertheless, insofar as these mobilizations also express the aspirations of thousands of workers highly conditioned to belief in electoralism and the parliamentary system, their combination with an outbreak of sharp struggles, even if these are purely local, will provide very favourable conditions for the intervention and implantation of revolutionaries in the working class. And this is the case even if the battle to explain and denounce electoral illusions has been made more difficult because the signing of the PC/PS agreement gives a certain credibility to the perspective offered by the PCF.

The CFDT will not spare its criticism of the joint programme because it will want to preserve both its autonomy vis-à-vis the CGT and its own political role. It will also try to win a certain prestige on the basis of verbal

criticisms of the Union of the Left. But, incapable organizationally and politically of putting forward any alternative solution, it will on the one hand be reduced to tactical battles aimed at increasing its strength in struggles and on the other will, in the final analysis, throw in its lot

with the Union of the Left.

In the months to come, the election campaign will open up a period of political debate which will not be exclusively dominated by the PC/PS agreement. The two allies will have to try to capture the maximum number of votes in the first round, the PC insisting on the role of the working class and the PS claiming for itself, in a series of inexpensive political skirmishes, the role of guarantor of democracy in the alliance (hence Mitterrand's interventions on Czechoslovakia and Jews in the Soviet Union).

**12** Congress approves the decision of the Central Committee to put up candidates in the election. In the face of the reformist illusions of the Joint Programme, it is of vital importance to present in opposition a revolutionary Marxist perspective.

**13** In the second round, our recommendation to vote must make clear our analysis of the PC/PS agreement as a global reformist alternative and not a new Popular Front. In the second round, we will call nationally for a vote for the Union of the Left, except where there is a local proposal to the contrary ratified by a decision of the Central Committee. This does not mean that we will depict an eventual PC/PS government as a workers' government; we will simply explain to the masses who still believe in the electoral system that the reformist traitors will not be able to blame their failure of tomorrow on our defection.

It is unlikely that the effects of the Union of the Left on the working-class movement will emerge clearly between now and the elections. And even if certain indications were to appear, these alone would not be a sufficient basis for a definition of policy on our part. In fact, the influence of the Union of the Left on struggles could be much greater after a relative success (and *a fortiori* after an electoral victory) than in the pre-electoral campaign. We must remember that the erosion of the Gaullist majority in the 1967 elections was not entirely unimportant in preparing the events of 1968. This is what we must evaluate. Our attitude to the second round would only be posed in new terms if the electoral campaign were to lead to a spectacular sabotage of struggles on the part of the PS and the PC. But in this event, as in June 1968, the clearest response to an electoral operation which was in direct opposition to the struggle would be a principled abstention and not a vote for the PC. This is the framework of our approach in the second round.

Of course, our tactics in the elections, as opposed to questions of principle, can only be decided in the light of the indications which emerge from the first round as to the attitude of the masses towards the electoral contest.

**14** In this situation, one should not get involved in a discussion of the Joint Programme, reform by reform, to determine whether this or that one is anti-capitalist or not. We must start from a total characterization of the

Programme and its underlying purpose, discuss particular reforms above all from the point of view of the problem of power, for which they present no solution, and denounce the fallacious character of the 'socialist' perspective it puts forward.

**15** This polemic will give new life to our propaganda for a workers' government as defined in our Manifesto. However, we must be aware that — given the illusions which may be fostered by the PC/PS agreement — this propaganda, which is not made concrete in an alternative governmental formula, will remain somewhat abstract. The best way of relating it to practice is to intensify our agitation, on the basis of precise examples, on the themes of strike committees, support committees and workers' self-defence, as well as our propaganda for a genuine proletarian government, which can never be parliamentary, i.e. which can never exist without pyramidal structures of power which both support and control it.

**16** Under present conditions, the 1973 elections will

certainly accentuate the political crisis, by amplifying the disequilibrium of the bourgeoisie. A strong thrust from the Union of the Left, erasing the absolute majority of the UDR, will weaken the 'strong state' and push the UDR into unity with the other bourgeois forces, with the aim of increased repression against the working-class movement.

In the case of a Union of the Left victory, we can expect a development of workers' struggles and a crisis of the political institutions built up under Gaullism. In such a situation, with the danger of fierce counter-attack from the bourgeoisie, the *Ligue Communiste* will make every effort to break out of the framework imposed by the Union of the Left and will impel the struggle forward as far as possible, on the basis of two central themes: the self-organization of the class in a perspective of dual power (occupations, strike committees, workers' control); and the arming of the proletariat, to protect its initial gains against reaction and to make new gains. In this perspective, slogans calling for the establishment of working-class militia for self-defence will be put forward.

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## Addendum: On the First Round Vote

The first round will be conceived of as an anti-electoralist battle, one of programmatic clarification. Given the existing configuration of the far-left and the stage of development of the *Ligue*, a revolutionary current, in opposition to the Program of the Union of the Left, cannot take the form of a common political front incorporating the diverse components of the far-left. Such a front, if it were practicable, would lead to confusion and would be in contradiction with our tactic of clarification on the far-left.

Neither can a revolutionary current take form through a political agreement between *Lutte Ouvrière*, the OCI [Organisation Communiste Internationaliste—Internationalist Communist Organization] and the *Ligue*, which would include a vote for each other on the first round. Such a "solution" combines all the inconveniences and creates confusion by giving credence to the journalistic idea of the "Trotskyist family." Moreover, such a "Trotskyist" vote does not lend itself to polarizing the entire far-left vote,

thereby revealing on the electoral level a current that has broken with the Union of the Left.

On the first round, the emergence of a force that has broken with the Union of the Left—even if it is only on the limited plane of electoral action—is not a matter of indifference to us (cf. our analysis of the PSU [Parti Socialiste Unifié—Unified Socialist Party]/*Lutte Ouvrière* vote in the municipal elections). Where the *Ligue Communiste* does not put up candidates we will first call for a vote for *Lutte Ouvrière*. Everywhere else we will call for a first round vote for the candidates of the far left—that is, those candidates who reject the electoral and peaceful road to socialism.

The political battle we are waging for our program and our rejection of a loose front of revolutionaries, guarantee that this call to vote far-left on the first round will not encourage illusions about unifications.

This call to vote far-left means that we could vote for the candidates of the AJS [Alliance des Jeunes pour le Socialisme—Youth Alliance for Socialism] and certain candidates of the PSU or "independents" (with approval of the Central Committee).

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## Footnotes

<sup>1</sup> UDR (Union for the Defence of the Republic) is the Gaullist party which has been in government since de Gaulle returned to power in 1958. Giscard d'Estaing's 'Independent Republicans' are coalition partners of the UDR. Lecanuet, who led the rump of the old catholic centre party, and Servan Schreiber, who took over the remnants of the radicals, joined forces to form the 'reforming' centre party.

<sup>2</sup> The 'Society of December 10' is discussed at length in the second half of Marx's *Eighteenth Brumaire*. Marx describes it as follows: 'This society dates from the year 1849. On the pretext of founding a benevolent society, the *lumpenproletariat* of Paris had been organized into secret sections, each section being led by Bonapartist agents, with a Bonapartist general at the head of the whole. Alongside decayed *roués* with dubious means of subsistence and of dubious origin, alongside ruined and adventurous offshoots of the bourgeoisie, were vagabonds, discharged soldiers, discharged jailbirds, escaped galley slaves,

swindlers, mountebanks, *lazzaroni*, pickpockets, tricksters, gamblers, *maquereaux*, brothel keepers, porters, *literai*, organ-grinders, rag-pickers, knife-grinders, tinkers, beggars — in short, the whole indefinite, disintegrated mass, thrown hither and thither, which the French term *la bohème*; from this kindred element Bonaparte formed the core of the Society of December 10.'

<sup>3</sup> PCF — French Communist Party. PS — Socialist Party (led by Mitterrand), incorporating the old SFIO (French Section of the Second International).

<sup>4</sup> FO (*Force Ouvrière*) is a trade-union federation formed by a split from the PCF-dominated CGT in 1948. It had organic links with the SFIO. The CFDT (French Democratic Confederation of Labour) used to be a catholic trade-union federation, but broke its confessional links and in recent years has assumed a radical/social-democratic role, often outflanking the CGT on the left.

# What is a Class Vote?

[The following is a report on the discussions of the February 1973 French legislative elections that took place at the recent convention of the Ligue Communiste. It appeared in the December 16, 1972, issue of the Ligue's weekly, *Rouge*, from which it has been translated by *Intercontinental Press*.

[In France, elections occur in two "rounds." On the first, only candidates with an absolute majority are elected. On the second, held a week later, a plurality suffices.]

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There were three positions at the convention regarding the Ligue's tactical approach to the 1973 elections: The "Bolshevik-Leninist Proletarianization" tendency advocated abstention on both the first and second rounds. A minority of the outgoing Central Committee proposed withdrawing on the second round in favor of only candidates of the CP. The majority was for voting for candidates of the Union of the Left on the second round.

*Each of these positions stems from a different assessment of the present political conjuncture and of the Union of the Left.*

## Abstain on Both Rounds?

For the comrades of the "B-L-P Tendency" (Tendency 1), the post-May '68 period is characterized by a strain in the links between the working class and its traditional organizations. The brake the CP has put on struggles is causing the workers to increasingly distrust the political solutions advanced by that party.

"In these conditions," these comrades say, "the 1973 elections do not appear to the workers to be able to accomplish much. And this results in a relative lack of interest in the agreement between the SP and the CP, which seems all the less worthy of credibility in light of the fact that the workers remember how the left exploded in

May '68." Consequently, this agreement and the scenario it has come up with for the elections are incapable of setting off any dynamics whatsoever. The wait-and-see attitude and the disarray that it arouses within the working class will be reflected in an increase in abstentions. By calling for abstention on both rounds, revolutionary Marxists will therefore be responding to the spontaneous sentiments of the workers' vanguard. Furthermore, the Ligue Communiste has better things to do today than to devote all its forces to the electoral arena. It will take part in the battle through the regular activity of its cells, without attempting to systematically put up candidates.

## Not Just Any Election

Many spoke against this position at the convention. They felt that the members of the tendency were making a serious error in analysis. The election in winter 1973 is not, in fact, just any election. It will be the first legislative election since the general strike of May-June '68 and since General de Gaulle left office.

It is taking place in the context of a marked erosion of the government, of crisis within the majority's coalition, of a rise in the combativity of the workers, and of increasing discontent among the masses. The very signing of the joint program produces the appearance of a credible alternative solution. While a broad workers' vanguard tens of thousands strong is, indeed, skeptical about the strategy of the Union of the Left; while it doubts—correctly—that a victory of the Union of the Left will open up the road to socialism; and while, as a result, it is particularly receptive to the criticisms revolutionary Marxists make of the joint program, the fact nonetheless remains that the bulk of the class that has been brought up on electoral illusions will remain true to that perspective and that the

workers' vanguard itself, whatever reservations it may have, sees in a victory of the Union of the Left the only concrete way of flushing the UDR [Union pour la Défense de la République—Union for the Defense of the Republic] mafia out of power and thereby unlogging the situation.

For all these reasons, while it is true that the Union of the Left has not filled the workers with enthusiasm, it is absurd to maintain that it has met with "relative disinterest" on their part and that it has no credibility. To say that the '73 elections "do not appear to the workers to be able to accomplish much" is to completely misunderstand reality.

## Stakes of the Greatest Importance

On the contrary, because of the political conjuncture in which they are occurring, the '73 elections involve stakes, and a battle, of the greatest importance. The favorable evolution in the relationship of class forces that has been characteristic of the post-May '68 period could now be reflected in the electoral arena in a sizable defeat of the majority and a victory for the left opposition. This change in the relationship of electoral forces in a country where the working class has been brought up on electoralism will in turn affect the evolution of the relationship of forces between the classes: *A victory for the Union of the Left will be seen by the workers as a defeat for the bourgeoisie and a victory for the workers' movement.* It will serve as a stimulus to workers' combativity, intensifying the contradiction today between combative workers and the reformist apparatuses, thereby increasing the opportunities for bypassing the latter. A victory (unlikely, but not out of the question either) of the Union of the Left would in time set off a major political crisis capable of leading to a generalized explosion of struggles and to a test of strength between the mass movement and the bourgeois state appara-

tus.

This is why what is at stake in these elections takes on exceptional importance for all those who take part in them. They are going to give rise to some very serious quarrels. They have already totally polarized French political life during the first few weeks of the year. Within the working class, the question that is posed is nothing less than that of a socialist society and the strategy for taking power. Revolutionary Marxists must equip themselves with every means possible for them to become active participants, with full rights, in this battle. Running candidates everywhere the Ligue is located will allow us to take advantage of all the platforms made available by bourgeois institutions (the regional radio and press, etc.) in order to gain a hearing from the workers.

Experience has shown that no serious political campaign is possible during an electoral period without directly participating in the competition. Not to run candidates would be to go unnoticed. Such are the rules of a game that we do not control. There are elections in which a relatively low profile is possible and justified (cf. the '71 municipal elections). But given the importance of the coming elections, we must make our presence felt this time in a big way.

### Vote Only for the CP?

The resolution of Tendency 1 was rejected 262 to 12. But a new debate immediately developed within this anti-abstentionist majority itself over what tactic to adopt on the second round.

Certain comrades, agreeing with the minority of the outgoing Central Committee, advocated refusing to vote for the candidates of the SP and the left-wing Radicals on the second round, and thus of withdrawing in favor of only the CP.

These comrades denounced the political orientation of the SP at length: With a worsening of the crisis of the regime in the offing, what it [the SP] is attempting to do is put together a standby political solution for the big bourgeoisie that incorporates the working class through its most representative organizations, particularly the CP and the CGT [Confédération Générale du Travail — General Con-

federation of Labor]. The institutions of the Fifth Republic and the semi-presidential character of the regime more than counterbalance the inferior ability of the SP to reach an audience and to organize. What François Mitterrand has his eye on is the presidential elections of 1976, for which the '73 legislative elections are only a springboard. For the first secretary of the Socialist party, it is a question of installing himself in 1973 as the undisputed leader of a united left. Which implies not only establishing himself as its most prominent figure, but also of creating a favorable relationship of forces with the CP within the Union of the Left, in the absence of which the bourgeoisie will never agree to go along with this solution. Following this, there will be plenty of time leading up to the presidential elections to make a big move toward the center-right in order to consolidate the relationship of forces and win the confidence of the ruling classes once and for all. As head of the SP, Mitterrand is thus attempting to bring together the voices of the working class for a bourgeois-technocratic standby solution of the Wilson-Brandt type.

Revolutionary Marxists must in no way give any approval to such an operation. *The vote they call for must make it possible for the workers to register their mistrust of the Union of the Left, a bourgeois standby solution to which a genuine class vote ought to be counterposed.* By calling for a withdrawal of candidates in favor of the CP alone, the Ligue Communiste is urging the workers to reject any compromise with the bourgeois parties. Through such a vote, Communist voters are telling their leadership: "Break with the left-wing Radicals and the Socialist party! Break with the bourgeoisie! Apply your program! Struggle for power on a class basis!" A withdrawal in favor of the Union of the Left as a whole, on the other hand, would mean giving approval to the Mitterrand operation, would deprive us of the political means for denouncing it, and would force us to call for a vote for bourgeois candidates like Defferre, Faure, and many others. In short, it would be opportunist and would reflect the pressure of the Union of the Left on the organization.

### A General Reformist Alternative

The convention was not convinced by this line of argument. Many who spoke noted the imprecise and incoherent elements in it. First of all, it is not serious to characterize the Union of the Left by Mitterrand's plan alone. It is this plan that the minority comrades are denouncing.

But it is neither the only, nor the main, plan. What is today at stake in the Union of the Left is contradictory plans (those of the CP and the SP). They are confronting each other in a relationship of forces that is not clear. What François Mitterrand is hoping for is one thing; the political and social reality of post-May '68 France is another. The Union of the Left cannot be analyzed as though the SP and Mitterrand had established their hegemony over it once and for all when, in fact, by signing the joint program and by publicly repudiating the centrist alliance, they were forced to accept the CP's terms.

Journalistic considerations aside, the class nature of the Union of the Left must be analyzed. One cannot fail to see that the Union of the Left differs from classic front experiences (Popular Front, the Liberation) in that it does not represent an alliance of classes between the proletariat and a leading section of the big bourgeoisie under the leadership of the latter, but a general reformist alternative on the part of the traditional workers' movement. There is no party in the Union of the Left that really represents big capital, such as the Radical party in 1936 or the MRP [Mouvement Républicain Populaire — Popular Republican Movement] in 1945. The "left-wing Radicals" and the SP are relics and marginal groupings, not parties of the big bourgeoisie. It is the CP, a reformist workers' party, that has hegemony within the Union of the Left today. The conditions that have been imposed upon it are those of the CP. *It is this hegemony of the CP over the alliance as a whole that gives it its class nature, and not the presence of this or that bourgeois politician.*<sup>1</sup>

The ruling class in its entirety is making no mistake about this. No section of it today supports the Union of the Left. On the contrary, as it

is constituted in 1973, the Union of the Left is leading to a class polarization: on one side, the working class (represented by its political and trade-union organizations, the CGT, the FEN [Fédération de l'Education Nationale—National Education Federation], the CFDT [Confédération Française et Démocratique du Travail—French Democratic Confederation of Labor], etc.), polarizing various petty-bourgeois layers; on the other side, the various sections of the ruling class, also polarizing various layers of the middle and petty bourgeoisie. This is why the ruling class fears and fights the dynamics involved in the Union of the Left. The latter does not today constitute a "bourgeois standby solution," even though the bourgeoisie may find itself compelled to rally to it in case of a catastrophe, just as it resigned itself to having the CP in the government in 1945. Under these conditions, it is clear that it makes no sense to criticize the Union of the Left in the name of the "Workers' United Front"—that is, with slogans like "Comrades of the CP, apply your program! Break with the bourgeoisie! Break with the SP and the left-wing Radicals!" To do so would be to assume that the CP had betrayed its proletarian program by capitulating

to the bourgeois program of the SP, when actually their programs are the same and the signing of such a joint program constitutes a radical break with the traditional policy of the Socialist party.

### Position of the Majority

For the majority of the outgoing Central Committee, the Union of the Left thus represents a general reformist solution over which, whether we like it or not, the organized workers' movement as a whole has taken charge. The workers see it as the workers' alternative to the powers that be. As a result, their vote will have a class meaning. For these reasons, *an electoral victory for the Union of the Left would, in the present political conjuncture, constitute an important element in deepening the political crisis of the regime and, at the same time, a powerful stimulus to the combativity of the masses.* It is in the interest of the workers (as well as of revolutionary Marxists) for the majority coalition (viewed by the masses as belonging to the bourgeois camp) to meet with the biggest possible defeat and for the Union of the Left (viewed by the masses as the workers' camp) to meet with the greatest success.

This is why, on the first round, the Ligue Communiste must carry out an intense campaign of political denunciation and explanation (emphasizing in particular the reformist dead end of the Union of the Left) and why, strengthened by this clarification campaign, it must call for a vote on a national scale<sup>2</sup> for the Union of the Left on the second round. For the outcome of these elections will have a definite impact on the relationship of class forces and we are not at all indifferent about whether this relationship evolves to the advantage of the working class or of the bourgeoisie.

This position was finally adopted by 191 votes, with 71 for the Central Committee minority and 12 for the abstentionists.

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1. The Lambertists notwithstanding, the rallying of the left-wing Radicals to the Union of the Left changes nothing in the class nature of the latter; the marginal character of these allies is shown by the fact that they did not even take part in discussions on the joint program that they had to sign!

2. Which does not exclude the possibility of certain exceptions being made on the basis of proposals on a city level and a decision by the Central Committee.