

February 23, 1976

To P.C. members

The following article is translated from the February 13, 1976, issue of Rouge. The last two paragraphs are particularly interesting in outlining the LCR's attitude toward the centrist PSU.

Mary-Alice

P.S. The same issue of Rouge announces that the Daily Rouge will begin publication on March 15 for a trial run of two months. If they find they can't sustain it, they will suspend daily publication from May 15 until September and then resume.

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TRANSLATION

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PSU: WHAT KIND OF UNITY WITH REVOLUTIONARIES?
from Rouge, February 13, 1976

The Amiens congress of the PSU did not, strictly speaking, define the PSU's unity policy toward organizations of the far left. This default is explained by the PSU's strategic orientation to "popular unity" as this is understood in its current interpretation (see last week's Rouge). Actually, this "strategy of popular unity" does not in any way involve the revolutionary organizations; it is essentially a matter of "pushing to the left" the traditional forces in the workers movement in the hope of welding behind this political alliance a "social bloc" that would draw all the popular layers together around the proletariat. To the contrary, in this perspective of a strategic alliance with the reformist forces, the revolutionaries are seen as bad company. This explains why, in their search for "popular unity," the comrades of the PSU avoid as much as they can any united action and public debate with the revolutionary organizations, and why they don't conduct any struggle against the exclusionary policies of the reformists toward the revolutionaries.

However, this "strategy of popular unity" is deeply contradictory. Actually, it is a complete illusion to think that the reformist organizations will accept unity on a class basis unless they are forced to. But the PSU by itself does not have the strength to force them, and it has to be recognized that the solitary campaign of the PSU for "popular unity" has evoked scarcely an echo. The PSU seems to be aware of this, since it attempts to base itself on the radicalized workers (which we call "the broad vanguard"), who are distrustful of the reformist leaderships and receptive to the ideas and initiatives of the far left. But it wants to approach them for the most part independently of any unity with the revolutionary organizations, planning to regroup them in a broad "movement for workers control and self-management," the first step toward which were the meeting on "mini-Lips," the "workers institute" project, and the

PSU's call for an "Estates General for Self-Management." Consequently, the PSU runs a strong chance of bringing together only its sympathizers or of falling into manipulative practices, despite its intentions. We, on the other hand, begin from the idea that the organizations of the far left are the political expression, in a diverse way, of a "broad vanguard" that is breaking with reformism. They are an expression of a broad phenomenon of recomposition of the workers movement which is penetrating the mass reformist parties.

Therefore we propose:

1) unity of action at every opportunity by the revolutionary organizations, based on the sole condition that such unity should not be achieved on a basis that would contradict the pursuit of united action with the reformists and the masses they influence.

2) a common "mass work" on the trade union level, in building the women's movement, in the youth, in support for the soldiers -- all of which assumes agreement on a platform acceptable to everyone and a consensus on the mode of democratic functioning of such "mass organizations."

3) finally, a debate on the two central problems of the revolutionary strategy -- councils and the united front policy toward the reformists -- because we think that agreement on these two points, despite other differences, makes it possible to think in terms of a common organization and to concretely consider the problems of party functioning and the construction of the international.

Rather than puzzling over what conditions would permit revolutionaries to eventually participate in a government of the left, to us it seems more important to know whether the working class will be able to meet the next revolutionary crisis with, if not a mass revolutionary party, then at least a party capable of challenging the CP and SP's influence over the workers.