

# International Internal Discussion Bulletin

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# **I.I.D. Bulletin**

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# Declaration of the Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency

In the document "Argentina and Bolivia—the Balance Sheet," which was submitted to the International Executive Committee at its plenum in December, 1972, the authors ended the section dealing with the current crisis in the Fourth International by proposing that an international tendency be organized to seek reversal of the guerrilla orientation adopted at the Third World Congress Since Reunification (Ninth World Congress).

Some of the leaders of the Fourth International met in Santiago, Chile, March 5-8 to consider this suggestion concretely. After discussing the various problems that have arisen because of the crisis, they decided to undertake the responsibility of organizing such a tendency. They agreed on the following platform as a basis for appealing to the ranks of the Fourth International to intervene in an organized way in the struggle that has been conducted up to now on a leadership level among the sections.

## Platform of the Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency

1. For approval of the general line of the document "Argentina and Bolivia—the Balance Sheet."

2. For reversal of the Latin American guerrilla-war orientation adopted at the Third World Congress Since Reunification (Ninth World Congress).

3. For reversal of the projections of this turn in various fields as it became extended both geographically and programmatically following the congress.

4. For resumption by the leading bodies of the Fourth International of the method outlined in the Transitional Program to solve the problems we face in bidding for leadership of the proletariat in the class struggle.

5. For reaffirming the basic program, tradition, and practices of the Fourth International as they stood up to the time of the Third World Congress Since Reunification (Ninth World Congress), that is, specifically, of commitment to the Leninist strategy of building a combat party. The more revolutionary the situation, the more decisive becomes the role of such a party.

6. For democratic organization of the coming world congress. In addition to representation, this means specifically the translation and distribution of the documents in at least French, Spanish, German, and English as well in advance of the congress so that the membership of the Fourth International can have adequate time to study, debate, and decide on them.

7. Against any moves that endanger the authority of the coming congress and the unity of the Fourth International such as undemocratic selection of delegates, curtailment of discussion, or failure to issue, translate, and distribute resolutions and other documents on schedule.

## Membership Requirements

The basis for membership in the Leninist-Trotskyist tendency is agreement with the seven points of the above

platform. Membership in the tendency is open to anyone in agreement with the platform who is a member in good standing of a section or sympathizing group of the Fourth International. In accordance with the tradition of our movement, all those who join must take an open stand, informing the leadership of their section of their action.

## Assessment of Crisis in Fourth International

Besides the platform, those present at the Santiago conference agreed on the following summary of the internal situation now facing the Fourth International:

At the plenum of the International Executive Committee held in December 1972, the comrades responsible for the guerrilla orientation adopted at the Third World Congress Since Reunification (Ninth World Congress) made it clear that they do not intend to rectify this erroneous course. Instead, even after hearing a detailed presentation by two leading Latin American comrades of the lessons of the past three years' experience in Argentina and Bolivia, they reaffirmed their course, making it one of the planks in their call for formation of an international tendency to defend their views.

Although this decision was anticipated, it is to be regretted. It marked a further deepening of the crisis over orientation and leadership that has been developing in our movement, for it recorded both the failure of these comrades to recognize the lessons of the events in Argentina and Bolivia and their intention to fight for approval of their course at the coming congress. They played down the disastrous consequences suffered by the official sections of the Fourth International in those countries. In place of backing away from the guerrilla orientation, they hailed it and deepened it. Now they propose to continue as if the test of events had validated their line. Should they succeed, this would mean assuring the political and organizational disintegration of other sections just as surely as it did in the cases of Argentina and Bolivia.

It is clear that the Fourth International now stands at a turning point.

On the broadest analyses made by our movement of the world situation as a whole over the past decade, both sides have found themselves in agreement in the main (with some significant differences in particular sectors and on particular issues). Yet a growing disparity has appeared in the conclusions the two sides have drawn on how the Fourth International should orient itself in certain concrete situations of key importance (Argentina, Britain, Spain, for instance). That is, in general, mounting differences have developed over how the International should handle its own forces *concretely* so as to expand and strengthen them organizationally and ideologically, exert the greatest possible influence in the class struggle, and advance the cause of the socialist revolution most effectively.

To explain and account for this growing gap between the broad analyses of world trends and the conclusions

to be drawn from them in practice in party building is now of crucial importance. Two major tendencies have crystallized in the Fourth International. They stand in opposition on a series of important questions. It is evident from this that one of them must have departed from the methods advanced by Lenin in his works and practice and summarized by Trotsky in the Transitional Program. Such a departure cannot help but more and more deeply affect the concrete political assessments made by the tendency at fault, thus opening the way to political deviations of either an ultraleft or opportunist nature or a combination of both. Differences as fundamental as this must be brought out so that the proper rectification can be made.

It is the existence of conflicting concepts on the methodological level (which includes party-building methods) that explains not only the development of opposing positions on the guerrilla orientation, but to a large degree the development of differences of varying sharpness on various other important questions, such as the nature and role of the Maoist variety of Stalinism, party-building orientation not only for the sections in Latin America and Europe but elsewhere, construction of Marxist youth organizations, the historical balance sheet on "entryism sui generis," policies in the antiwar movement, and now the assessment of the Vietnam agreement and the nature and role of Stalinism in Vietnam.

*The Fourth International cannot overcome its current crisis without bringing the differences involving method-*

*ology into the open and clearing them up.*

The crisis of orientation and leadership in the Fourth International has been compounded by the insistence of some of the comrades of the Maitan-Mandel-Frank tendency that the discussion must be terminated at this point, that we must proceed to a world congress without further delay even if all the documents already submitted and the important ones to come (including resolutions!) have not been made available in translations, that we must resolve the differences—if only temporarily—by organizational measures; that is, by imposing greater international centralization on our movement at this juncture. Instead of ending the crisis, this "solution" would assure its becoming explosive, for it would signify staging an undemocratic congress lacking any real authority.

A preferable course would be to postpone the congress until the nature of the crisis we face has been more clearly defined, the issues at the bottom of the dispute have been fully clarified, the documents have been published, translated, and disseminated, and the ranks have had full opportunity to discuss them and make their own contributions.

One of the immediate objectives of the Leninist-Trotskyist tendency, besides doing everything possible to facilitate the preparations for the coming congress, will be to mobilize rank-and-file sentiment in favor of this wiser alternative.

The initial signers of this document are given below. Others are urged to add their names.

Argentina: Alberto, Arturo, Capa, Elias, Fierre, Lorenzo, Marcela, Mario, Nora, Pedro

Australia: Dave Holmes, Col Maynard, Jim Percy

Brazil: Antenor, Javier

Britain: Alan Harris, Connie Harris, John Roberts, Tony Roberts, Arthur Stewart

Canada: Alain Beiner, Ruth Bullock, Al Cappe, Joan Newbigging, John Riddell, Ernie Tate, Art Young

Chile: Juan Pérez

China: Chen Pi-lan, Peng Shu-tse

India: Kailas Chandra, Mohan Gan

Iran: Ahmad Heydari, Cyrus Paydar

New Zealand: George Fyson, Kay Goodger, Russell Johnson, Keith Locke

Peru: Hugo Blanco, Tito, Tuco

Spain: Carlos, Carmen, Hugo, Salvador, Trude

United States: Jack Barnes, Peter Camejo, Fred Halstead, Joseph Hansen, Gus Horowitz, Caroline Lund, Art Sharon, Ed Shaw, Barry Sheppard, Tony Thomas, Mary-Alice Waters

Uruguay: Juan, Juan Carlos, Sylvia

Venezuela: Antonio, L. David, Miguel Fuentes, Inés

# A Criticism of the United Secretariat Majority Draft Resolution on 'The Building of Revolutionary Parties in Capitalist Europe'

## -- an Initial Contribution to the Discussion

By Mary-Alice Waters

### Editorial Note

The general line of this report was submitted to a vote at the December 2-6, 1972, meeting of the International Executive Committee. The vote was 11 for, 20 against, with no abstentions.

### The Fundamental Errors

The United Secretariat majority draft resolution entitled "The Building of Revolutionary Parties in Capitalist Europe" opens a discussion within the International on the problems of party building in an area of the world containing a large proportion of the members of the Fourth International. This is a welcome and much needed discussion. It is quite different, however, from the discussion now taking place within our ranks on revolutionary perspectives in Latin America.

The Fourth International has already had a four-year test of the last world congress line on Latin America. In view of the balance sheet, this disastrous line must be reversed. Concerning tasks and perspectives for the sections in Europe, however, the discussion within the International as a whole is just beginning. The aim of our discussion must first be to define and clarify the issues. To begin this process, contributions from leaders of European sections are needed, drawing balance sheets of the period since the last world congress.

Six comrades who are members of the United Secretariat—Adair, Hans, Juan, Pedro, Stateman, and Thérèse—voted against the general line of the document "The Building of Revolutionary Parties in Capitalist Europe" because of the errors it makes in analysis and perspectives. If adopted and carried out by the sections of the Fourth International in Europe, they would seriously disorient our work. The purpose of this report is to outline what these errors are and to raise some questions about this document on which the Maitan-Mandel-Frank tendency stands.

In summary form, the major errors are as follows:

1. The document tries to develop a single continental orientation to cover more than 15 countries as different from one another as Finland, Sweden, or Norway from Portugal, Spain, or Greece. This method of deriving a tactical orientation is wrong and unrealistic. It repeats one of the fundamental methodological errors of the Latin American resolution passed by the last world congress—the prescribing of a tactical orientation on a continental

scale.

2. The document advances a dogmatic timetable that gives all of Europe only four to five years before the "decisive battles" are fought to determine which class will rule for the next historical period.

3. The document mechanically tries to derive our central political tasks and tactics from this projected time schedule. It does not define our tasks in accordance with the immediate situation or our actual forces. The fact is that we are still small nuclei of revolutionary workers parties, striving to transform ourselves into parties capable of leading the masses, and therefore faced with allocating our resources and deploying our forces in consonance with these limitations. Moreover, the resolution ignores or underestimates many of the actual political openings that could be taken advantage of, such as the youth radicalization, the women's movement, and anti-imperialist struggles. It even fails to sketch out a concrete program for the construction of class-struggle left wings in the trade unions today.

4. The document rejects the possibility of building mass revolutionary parties before the projected showdown and mistakenly counterposes an orientation of winning hegemony within the "new mass vanguard" or of "transforming the vanguard" into an "adequate instrument." In pursuit of this illusory goal, it takes "the concerns of the vanguard" as the starting point for our political initiatives, rather than the objective needs of the working masses nationally and internationally.

5. The document opens the door to adventurism by proposing that irrespective of our size or real forces, we start right now to teach the ruling class *in practice* that we will use arms.

6. The document demands a vote on a past period of the International's history. While it avoids a detailed and rounded critical balance sheet of the 1953-69 period, it incorporates a positive appreciation of the 17-year policy known as entryism *sui generis*, a strategy that came close to destroying the cadres of the Fourth International in Europe. Implicitly, it proposes repeating this orientation under similar circumstances, should they arise.

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

8. The document ignores the real political differences existing within the European sections. Fundamental political differences gave rise to a tendency in the International Marxist Group in Britain as early as 1970. Deep political divisions produced a split in the Liga Comunista Revolucionaria in Spain at the end of 1972. The last preconvention discussion in the Ligue Communiste in France revealed sharply divergent perspectives for party building there. None of these conflicts occurred over questions peculiar to only one European country. They go to the heart of the problems of constructing sections of the Fourth International today. Yet the document does not even mention that such fundamental differences exist. Much less does it try to deal with them clearly and openly. Let us examine these errors in more detail.

### The 'New Mass Vanguard'

One of the central concepts advanced in the document is the importance of the "new mass vanguard." In fact, the resolution states that our main task is "to win hegemony within the new mass vanguard." This, it is held, will constitute our base and be the striking force we can mobilize and lead. Using the tactic of "unity in action plus outflanking the bureaucrats," the "new mass vanguard" will, we are assured, be capable of breaking the stranglehold of the Stalinist and Social-Democratic parties over the workers movement.

The phenomenon that the resolution tries to deal with under the label of the "new mass vanguard" is genuine and important. The crisis of imperialism on a world scale, deepening class struggles in all three sectors of the world revolution, the crises that have repeatedly shaken the Stalinist parties internationally, the increasing integration of the Social-Democratic parties into the bourgeois state—these and other factors have combined to produce in the last decade a significant international radicalization of broad layers of youth—both workers and students. To a large degree these layers have escaped the control of the Stalinist and Social-Democratic organizations. There are today, in some countries of Western Europe, tens of thousands of anticapitalist, revolutionary-minded young people who want to be part of the struggle for a socialist world. This is a development of decisive importance to the Fourth International. Our prospects depend on our ability to win the best of these youth and to educate them as revolutionary Marxist cadres.

The term "new mass vanguard," however, is a confused and disorienting label for this phenomenon. It lumps together several very distinct components under a single designation, components moreover that are constantly shifting, developing, and changing. Instead of clarifying the characteristics of these forces, the label "new mass vanguard" as used in the resolution tends to obscure the real problems and options before us and camouflage the differences that exist between various countries.

What is this "new mass vanguard"?

First of all, and in largest part, it is the radicalized student youth and ex-student youth of several "generations" of the 1960s, a significant number of whom are already in their late twenties and early thirties.

The older layers of this young generation are now predominately teachers, technicians, skilled white-collar

employees, etc.

The younger layers constitute the new levies of high-school and university students who have been radicalized and become politically active in the post-1968 period.

The student movement as such has of course not remained on the same level of intensity as during the 1968 period. It has experienced ups and downs. But the continued political combativity of large numbers of students is clearly seen in the mobilizations in Spain and Greece against police repression in the universities, in the massive student demonstrations in Great Britain in early 1972 to defend the autonomy of the student unions. It can also be seen in the continued actions in countries like Belgium and France against student fee increases, government enforced tracking or "selection" of students, and other measures designed to "reform" the universities to bring them more into line with capitalist needs (such as the Claes-Hurez measures in Belgium, and the Fourchet reforms in France).

Large numbers of these students also participate in actions against the Vietnam war and in support of strikes by the working class.

Of particular importance, the deepening process of radicalization has activated increasingly large numbers of younger and younger high school and technical school students. During periods of upsurge they have been mobilized by the tens of thousands, as with the Guiot affair in France and over the draft question in Belgium.

The "new mass vanguard" is not, however, synonymous with the student movement. Many students who participate in the most massive student actions, while sympathetic to the revolutionary left, do not yet consider themselves active revolutionists.

The "new mass vanguard" contains a second very important component, which is a small, but growing, layer of young workers. The specific weight of this element of the radicalization varies greatly from one country to another. In Spain, for example, it is already a significant factor, whereas in West Germany, Scandinavia, or Switzerland the process of drawing working-class forces into the radicalization is only at the beginning.

Among these radicalized workers are young militant trade-union activists and leaders who have won their leadership credentials in hard-fought strike actions of recent years. There is also a layer of newly rebellious young workers and apprentices. Like many of the student rebels, they begin by challenging the fetters of established authority and the traditional reformist working-class leaderships. As the document explains, the component of young workers in this "new mass vanguard" is as yet not very politicized. "This radicalization is often limited to more advanced conceptions regarding methods of struggle and immediate objectives and divorced from a clear understanding of political problems, notably the question of power." In this respect the young workers are not different from most student radicals.

Third, it should be kept in mind that the "new mass vanguard" contains both large numbers of politically unorganized, revolutionary-minded individuals (who may belong to a trade union or some other mass organization), and depending on the country, hundreds or thousands of individuals belonging to organizations of our political *opponents*.

Upon analysis then, the "new mass vanguard" includes (1) conscious revolutionary Marxists (i.e., members of sections and groups of the Fourth International); (2) large numbers of unorganized students and workers who are buffeted by the cross currents of spontanéism, sectarianism, ultraleft infantilism, workerism, Stalinism, and reformism; and (3) the conscious enemies of revolutionary Marxism, whether they call themselves Communist, Maoist, left Social Democrat, anarchist, or even "Trotskyist."

It is especially necessary to bear in mind the influence and impact of Stalinism and the Social Democracy. Even though the new layers of radicalizing student and working-class youth tend to reject the traditional reformist working-class leaderships and this rejection sometimes leads them in an ultraleft direction, they are still subject to enormous pressure from political currents deeply rooted within the working class. This is especially true when such currents put on a left face, as the Maoists did prior to and through the "great proletarian cultural revolution"; or when they go on a massive electoral offensive, as with the Union de la Gauche in France today; or when their image is brightened by persecution as in Spain or Greece.

Breaking down the "new mass vanguard" into its component parts helps to demystify this amorphous category and enable us to pose some of the problems facing the revolutionary Marxists much more clearly. The tactical flexibility required for organizing, recruiting, educating, and fighting to win the leadership of these different components of the "new mass vanguard" demands first of all an understanding that we are not dealing with just one huge undifferentiated mass called "vanguard."

For example, the recognition that the "new mass vanguard" includes large numbers of high school and university youth clearly indicates that Trotskyist youth organizations would help us win political hegemony among the radicalizing students.

The recognition that it includes important layers of young factory workers reminds us that the problems of winning, educating, and leading trade-union militants require a kind of organization and political leadership that is quite different from a student youth organization.

The recognition that the "new mass vanguard" includes our organized political enemies reminds us that in addition to exposing them ideologically, politically, and in action, we will have to engage in all kinds of maneuvers—from united fronts to regroupments, from fusions to new splits—in order to destroy these obstacles to winning the political allegiance of the working masses.

Subjected to analysis, the task of winning hegemony in the "new mass vanguard" appears much more complex than simply "infusing" our program into it and turning it into an "adequate instrument."

## A Process That Has Hardly Begun

It is perhaps easier to understand what the "new mass vanguard" is if we define what it is not. The word "vanguard" obscures rather than clarifies.

First of all, as indicated, it is by no means a unitary or homogeneous social layer, group, or class. It has distinct and separate components.

Second, the so-called new mass vanguard is decidedly

not a *political* vanguard. The only political vanguard in Marxist terms is the revolutionary party or its nucleus. Today that means sections of the Fourth International.

Third, while it includes many advanced, class-conscious, and revolutionary-minded workers we are striving to win, the "new mass vanguard" is not a *social* vanguard. It does not represent the key sectors of the industrial proletariat that will play the central role in destroying the capitalist system and establishing a workers state. It is not yet even the "vanguard of the social vanguard." If the current radicalization of young workers continues to deepen and broaden, the process could lead to the creation of a sizable, politically conscious vanguard of the working class. But this is a *process* that has hardly begun in most European countries and is still in its infancy in such key countries as France and Great Britain, as the resolution itself indicates. It is a considerable error to view what is only potential as being already well developed.

Since it is neither a political nor a social vanguard, it is wrong to consider it to be a crystallized revolutionary force. While many individuals within it are potential members of the Fourth International, or may be influenced by us to one or another degree, or are willing to follow our lead in specific actions, the layers of radicalized student and worker youth referred to have no *independent* revolutionary role to play. On the contrary, to the extent we are unable to lead and educate them, sectors can go off in a wrong direction, becoming at best unreliable allies and at worst obstacles to the hegemony of the Leninist forces.

It is a broad milieu in which we work, within which we compete with all our opponents, from which we aim to recruit the best and convert them into revolutionary Marxist cadres. In the process, we aim to destroy the authority of all other political currents vying with us for the political leadership of this radical milieu and the working class as a whole.

## The 'Concerns of the Vanguard'

Winning the political leadership of the new radicalization, recruiting the most conscious and dedicated revolutionists to the program of the Fourth International and its sections, can be done only by proving we have the best program to answer the needs of the working class, as well as the capacity and desire to lead the masses in action to win their demands.

It is precisely on this crucial question—*how* we go about winning the revolutionary students and workers and on the basis of what program—that the document is most at fault.

The resolution projects "organizing national political campaigns on carefully chosen issues that correspond to the concerns of the vanguard, do not run against the current of mass struggles, and offer a chance for demonstrating a capacity for effective initiative..." (Section 17, p. 24.)

In other words, the document proposes that the sections of the Fourth International should determine what actions they will initiate by starting with the "concerns of the vanguard" and then making sure such actions do not contradict the struggles of the masses!

What is wrong with such a guideline?



The starting point for revolutionary Marxists is not our own subjective concerns or the immediate outlook of the "vanguard." We start with what is objectively in the interests of the broadest working masses and what must be done to advance the class struggle nationally and internationally. We never start with the vanguard and then try to make its interests and concerns compatible with the needs of the working class. We do just the opposite. We start with the objective needs of the masses. We then mobilize and organize the broadest forces we are capable of reaching and influencing and lead them in struggle to win concrete demands that correspond both to the needs and consciousness of the broad masses, and that can move the struggle forward and thereby heighten their level of consciousness. We employ methods of struggle that increase the confidence of the masses in themselves and teach them to rely on their own independent power.

The difference between these two starting points—the concerns of the vanguard or the objective needs of the working masses—is neither minor nor hair-splitting. From the two different starting points flow two divergent courses of action. One tends toward maximalist demands and so-called "militant" actions that presumably reflect the level of consciousness of the "vanguard." In reality they are adaptations to its political backwardness. The other is firmly based on the *method* of the Transitional Program, which aims at mobilizing the masses in struggle, whatever their level of consciousness, and moving them forward toward the socialist revolution.

Even when we are not yet able to mobilize the working masses behind our own banner (or the banner of a united front in which we participate), even though only the "vanguard" is following us, we still organize that "vanguard," large or small, in actions that speak to the needs and consciousness of the masses, not the concerns of the "vanguard." We do not proceed according to a two-stage theory—today we win the vanguard; tomorrow the working class. The two aspects of our intervention are totally inter-related and proceed simultaneously. To win recruits to our sections from vanguard elements we must convince them of the correctness of our program for the working masses.

To avoid abstractions, let us see how these two conceptions have worked out in practice in connection with the defense of the Vietnamese revolution, the pivotal issue of world politics over the past period.

## The Record on Vietnam

The European document draws no balance sheet on our activities in regard to Vietnam over the last eight years. In fact it barely mentions them. This is an amazing omission. Defense of the Vietnamese revolution has been the single most important political campaign of the International since 1965. It was the starting point in the reconstruction of most of the sections of the Fourth International in Europe and elsewhere.

A balance sheet for this eight-year period is needed because we have organized numerous correct actions *despite* serious political errors and incorrect estimates made by the majority of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International. Involved are the character of the Vietnam campaign, the basis on which it ought to be built, and

why this has been of central importance to us and to the world revolution.

The political errors stemmed from an analysis that was perhaps most clearly expressed by Comrade Ernest in his report to the December 1969 meeting of the International Executive Committee. There he tried to justify the position held by most of the European leadership at that time. This was to reject the perspective of making defense of the Vietnamese revolution a priority task. Throughout Europe the Fourth International was then abstaining from trying to mobilize significant numbers in massive action.

As Comrade Ernest explained, antiwar actions in Europe did not express the "immediate needs and demands of the broad masses." They reflected only "a process of *political radicalization* of the vanguard." Therefore, "For French revolutionists, Italian revolutionists, German revolutionists, there does not exist any possibility of making an immediate direct contribution to the victory of the South Vietnamese revolution, except by making an immediate victorious socialist revolution in their own country. For them, the key question is therefore the one of inserting themselves in the general trend of political radicalization, and contributing to the maturing and political clarification of that vanguard." (Emphasis in the original. *International Information Bulletin*, No. 1, January 1971, "Political Report at the December 1969 Meeting of the International Executive Committee," by E. Germain, p. 7.)

The idea that revolutionists outside the United States had nothing to contribute to the immediate and direct defense of the Vietnamese revolution—short of making a revolution in their own country—is so outrageously false that it is hard to believe such a statement was made by a leader of the Fourth International.

Did the 100,000 in the streets of London on October 27, 1968, contribute nothing toward advancing the Vietnamese revolution? Did the 35,000 in New Zealand on April 30, 1971, contribute nothing? Did the boycott of American ships by Italian and Australian longshoremen in December 1972 contribute nothing? Did the 25,000 in Mexico City on May 17, 1972, contribute nothing? Did 10,000 in Berlin on April 22, 1972, contribute nothing?

Certainly neither the Vietnamese nor the American imperialist rulers saw it that way.

The meaning of the line that each revolutionist should "make the revolution at home" in order to support the Vietnamese was explained quite well by a publication not previously noted for consistent advocacy of mass antiwar actions, the *Red Mole*: "...in Britain there is a tremendous insularity and chauvinism even in the ranks of the revolutionary movement. This was rationalised by some groups arguing that marches, demonstrations on anti-imperialist issues were pointless and the only way the Vietnamese could be helped was by working towards a revolution in Britain: i.e., doing nothing." (May 15, 1972.)

Undoubtedly, the *Red Mole* editors did not realize against whom they were polemicizing.

One could only conclude from Comrade Ernest's remarks that one of our major contributions to the "maturing and political clarification of the vanguard" in preparation for making the socialist revolution was to teach them that the struggle against a colonial war conducted by

American imperialism was not a fundamental question for the working masses in countries other than the U.S.!

Between 1968 and 1972 numerous rationalizations were put forward to explain why no attempt was being made in Europe to organize massive actions against the Vietnam war. All explanations boiled down to one thing: that the "vanguard" had turned its attention to the workers struggles taking place in Europe and was no longer deeply concerned about Vietnam. The perspectives document of the International Marxist Group (IMG) majority put it this way in 1970: building the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign was no longer a central task because "the youth vanguard had matured and is no longer prepared to be limited to single issue campaigns."

Or, as Comrades Vergeat and Delfin explained in their "Preparatory Text for the 1971 Conference of the Leaderships of the European Sections," anti-imperialism was simply a "stage of the international youth radicalization," which ended with 1968. (*International Information Bulletin*, No. 5, November 1972, p. 8.)

If the vanguard wasn't interested in Vietnam from 1969 to 1972, how could those whose starting point for projecting political initiatives was the "concerns of the vanguard" take the lead in organizing mass actions in defense of the Vietnamese revolution? So they didn't!

Instead, the majority leadership of the International adapted to the ultraleft moods. In place of patiently educating the "vanguard" on the necessity of continuing to organize actions aimed at reaching out to the working masses even if those actions were at first small, window-smashing sprees were organized instead.

Instead of teaching the "vanguard" that the struggle against an imperialist war of conquest on the other side of the globe was a fundamental task of revolutionists, stemming from the basic needs of the world revolution, some leaders of the Fourth International told them the anti-imperialist phase of the radicalization was over.

Instead of reminding them that the Vietnam war remained the focal point of world politics and the major confrontation between revolution and counterrevolution on the world arena, sections of the International adapted to the prevailing mood that "the war is over, Nixon is withdrawing the troops, the Vietnamese have won, it's time to turn to more important and pressing issues."

Many comrades in the leadership of the European movement have now come to the conclusion that the United Secretariat majority was wrong during the 1969-72 period in discouraging the sections from giving priority to Vietnam work. They have begun to correct this error, making serious and sustained efforts to coordinate our Vietnam work on an international scale. Permanent Indochina solidarity committees have been constructed in almost every country in order to be prepared to respond rapidly to whatever happens in Indochina. The French and Swedish comrades deserve some credit for this reorientation. This is all to the good.

However, we would have to add that the continued heroic resistance of the Vietnamese masses and the continued barbaric aggression of U.S. imperialism were the fundamental factors that convinced the "vanguard," including large sectors of the Fourth International, that the war was not over. It became clear that we *could* do something to help the Vietnamese in their struggle, and

as revolutionists it was our central political responsibility to do so.

The "vanguardist" error has also been repeatedly manifested in the character of the Indochina actions that were engaged in. Since the "vanguard" wanted "militant" actions — which usually meant smashing windows at the American embassy, provoking unnecessary confrontations with the cops, or some such infantile notion of "revolutionary" action — our sections often organized that kind of demonstration. But the very character of such actions discouraged any possibility of *mass* participation. This tactic was excused on the grounds that the Fourth International can't hope to mobilize the masses anyway, so it's better to have a "militant" action that appeals to the vanguard.

It is wrong to exclude the possibility and perspective of winning mass support. Dangerously wrong. Such an assessment can only lead us away from the construction of mass revolutionary parties.

If we had followed a different course from 1965-72, we would have had a considerably greater impact on the workers influenced by the Stalinists and Social Democrats. What if we had followed a persistent course based on trying to reach the masses, rather than trying to organize the kinds of actions that would appeal to the "vanguard"? What if we had spent that eight years trying to lead and educate the "vanguard," hammering away at the necessity of trying to reach the broad working masses, trying to mobilize them, organizing actions that would appeal to them, actions that would encourage them to participate — if not in the first, then in the second, the third or the fourth? Are we sure we would have failed?

Unfortunately, these questions will never be answered with certainty. Those European sections which, over an eight-year period, were capable of consistently carrying out such a policy, failed to do so. Instead, by trying to reach the "vanguard" they adapted to the political backwardness of that milieu.

The most extreme case was that of the British section, the International Marxist Group. They had a positive beginning, culminating in the mobilization of 100,000 in the streets of London in October 1968. This was accomplished through a sharp, public political fight against ultraleftists who sought to turn the demonstration into a "confrontation." But after this success, the majority leadership of the IMG, encouraged by the majority of the United Secretariat, turned their backs on the antiwar struggle, scuttled the broad united-front coalition the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign was well on the way to becoming, and never organized another significant action against the Vietnam war.

The major problem was not one of slogans, although the policy was reflected through slogans. Whether or not it is correct to carry banners saying "Victory to the NLF," or "Solidarity with the NLF," or some variant on that theme, is entirely secondary. The fundamental problem was one of *political orientation*. Once we decide that our perspective is to reach the masses, not just respond to the "concerns of the vanguard," the question of what slogans to raise will resolve itself quite naturally in the course of such activity and the response to it.

In contrast to the post-1968 course of the IMG, a totally different perspective was followed by the Fourth Internationalists in the United States, Canada, Australia, and

New Zealand. The "vanguardist" approach was rejected. This was not because of different national objective circumstances as Comrade Ernest argued in the same 1969 IEC report quoted earlier — although it is incontestable that the role of U.S. imperialism in particular gave the comrades in the United States both greater responsibilities and greater opportunities for reaching the masses of American people. The different line followed by the comrades in these countries flowed from a different *political* conception, one based on the method indicated in the Transitional Program, on a perspective of ceaselessly trying to reach out to the working masses and winning the "vanguard" in the process.

Most of the antiwar actions in the United States were also "vanguard" actions. Even a demonstration of 100,000 in Washington, while considerable by comparison with the pre-Vietnam war period and while it does reflect mass opinion, is not an action that can be said to have mobilized the American *masses*.

But a few climactic actions were *mass* mobilizations. The October 1969 Moratorium and half-million strong November 15, 1969, march on Washington were actions that involved masses of Americans. April 24, 1971, with some 800,000 in the streets of Washington and San Francisco, was a mass action. And even more, the mobilizations of May 1970 that followed the invasion of Cambodia were genuine mass mobilizations involving millions at one level or another. United actions in which Fourth Internationalists played a leading role swept the country: 50,000 in Minneapolis; 60,000 in Chicago; 25,000 in Seattle; 20,000 in Denver; 12,000 in San Diego; etc., etc. As a whole they were the largest political demonstrations in U.S. history.

*But these high points would have never taken place if the entire strategy of the antiwar movement, influenced by our ideas and intervention from its very inception five years earlier, had not been designed to prepare for just such a breakthrough.*

Many currents in the antiwar movement in the U.S. as in Europe contended that the demonstrations would have been more effective if they had been designed to appeal to the concerns of that "vanguard," which was largely ultraleft for a period. By and large, they considered "Bring the Troops Home Now" to be an insufficient slogan, and thought "Victory to the NLF" should be the basis of the antiwar struggle. They preferred actions to "Stop the War Machine," or to "Kick the Ass of the Ruling Class" (burning draft cards and records, blocking draft centers, etc.). But if the revolutionists in the Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialist Alliance had adapted to that mood and organized actions to express the concerns of the "vanguard" instead of seeking to involve broad masses *there would have been no May 1970*, there would have been no political crisis on the order of the one that sent a tremor through the entire U.S. ruling class.

The eight-year balance sheet of the international Vietnam campaign is not entirely negative. The Fourth International organized many important actions. We proved that in some countries, in response to our initiatives and in collaboration with other groups, we can on occasion bring out 10,000 or 20,000 revolutionary-minded youth.

We proved there is no need to wait for the traditional working-class organizations—the Stalinist and Social-

Democratic parties and union bureaucracies—in order to act. We attracted and won many revolutionists by virtue of our actions. We gave valuable and much needed aid to the Vietnamese revolution. The pressure of our activities even forced the Stalinists out of their inertia.

All these were positive and real gains. But the basic question remains: could not more have been accomplished if our guideline had been the objective needs of the working masses and not the "concerns of the vanguard"? Would it not have been better to have led the "vanguard," rather than adapting to it? Was it necessary to have dropped out during the 1969-72 period?

The resolution draws no lessons pro or con on this crucial point.

## Defense of the Irish Revolution

The errors to which the "vanguardist" perspective leads can also be seen in the work of our British section, the International Marxist Group, with regard to defense of the Irish revolution.

The position held by the majority of the IMG was expressed by Robin McGovern in the document "Irish Work: New Analysis, New Perspectives" adopted by the May 1972 convention of the IMG. He begins as follows: "our principal demand is 'Self-determination for Ireland' but since by itself this is abstract we put forward demands which relate to the specific situation *and which concretise the demand for self-determination*. Thus the slogans dealing with internment and the British troops follow naturally." (p. 6. Emphasis in the original.)

So far so good. Then McGovern goes on, "But in order to construct a thorough and principled programme it is necessary to deal with the armed struggle." And further along he summarizes, "The essence of our position is that in order to build a movement based on self-determination we must demand that it explicitly support the armed struggle of the IRA against the British Army." (p. 15.)

However, the IMG majority leadership has had great difficulty finding a slogan to express this position. At various times they have tried such formulations as "Victory to the IRA," "Solidarity with the IRA," and "Unconditional support for the IRA in its military struggle against British imperialism, and the forces of reaction in Ireland."

One part of the difficulty involves the problem of assessing the policies of the two wings of the Irish Republican movement and the Irish Republican Army. This is a problem that can more properly be dealt with in a separate document on the Irish struggle itself.

The key question for our British section was how best to defend and aid the Irish revolution, and that required a correct strategy for constructing a mass movement directed against the *British* government. Here the leaders of the majority of the IMG fell into an ultraleft and sectarian error by attempting to impose their own concerns and their own level of consciousness onto a much larger movement opposed to British imperialist policy in Ireland.

While they did not reject the call for the immediate withdrawal of British troops from Ireland, they considered that demand to be unacceptable as the axis for a mass campaign because it had what the *Red Mole* called a

"liberal" tinge. It was objected that people who were not consciously in favor of self-determination for Ireland, people who were still anti-Irish chauvinists could support such demands. Support for the withdrawal of troops could come from those who didn't give a hoot about Ireland but just preferred not to see their son, brother, husband, cousin — or themselves — die in Derry.

Thus in commenting on the October 31 demonstration of 20,000 called by the Anti-Internment League, the editorial in the November 15, 1971, issue of the *Red Mole* explained: "Many genuine revolutionaries believe that the demand for the immediate withdrawal of British troops is adequate for this purpose [the basis of a solidarity campaign], and indeed it is essential to include this demand in the platform of any campaign. But this demand on its own is unfortunately ambiguous: It can very easily be taken up and transformed into a 'Bring the boys home' campaign based on liberal issues with only a negative impact."

If the IMG leadership had taken as its starting point the objective needs of the Irish and British working masses they would have seen that the biggest contribution British revolutionaries could make toward the defeat of British imperialism in Ireland is a *political* contribution. That is, to build a mass movement in Britain capable of preventing British imperialism from operating with a free hand militarily and politically, a movement that can begin to affect the political thinking of British troops in Ireland, a movement that can give renewed determination to the fighting spirit of the Irish masses.

To accomplish those ends such a movement will have to set as its goal reaching and mobilizing the *masses* of British workers by the hundreds of thousands and eventually by the millions. It cannot be built overnight. It may take years of patient and persistent propaganda, agitation and action, as in the case of the American anti-war movement. But from the outset the most conscious revolutionaries must project the kind of actions and slogans capable of reaching the working masses and the British troops, educating and mobilizing them.

Far from helping this process, "Victory to the IRA" or some variant on that theme cuts across its expansion. First of all, this is not a *demand*, something the masses of British workers can act upon.

It is a sentiment, an expression of opinion, a revolutionary desire or objective.

It is not a demand directed against the British government. It does not mobilize mass pressure on the British government to do something it doesn't want to do — get out of Ireland. Moreover, it takes the British government off the hook by diverting attention from the real enemy, the imperialist government, into discussions about the merits or tactics of the alternative leaderships of the struggle in Ireland. It repels people who want to do something to support the Irish struggle but don't support the IRA.

The demand for the immediate withdrawal of British troops is the principled and sufficient basis for an anti-imperialist mass movement in England in defense of the Irish revolution. It translates the policy of revolutionary defeatism into a slogan that is understandable to the masses of British workers, a demand they can act upon.

Naturally the movement may use other demands. But

all demands should express the right of the Irish to self-determination in a concrete way against the British government.

To use the words of the *Red Mole*, wasn't the Bolsheviks' demand for "peace" likewise "unfortunately ambiguous"? Couldn't it "very easily be taken up and transformed into a 'Bring the Boys Home' campaign"? But that was precisely one of the reasons for the revolutionary dynamic of that slogan. The masses of soldiers and peasants could take up the demand for "peace," and they did not have to have a developed Bolshevik consciousness to be ready to act upon it.

The demand for immediate withdrawal of British troops is based upon the objective needs of the Irish nation and the British working masses. It is an eminently reasonable, understandable, and realizable demand. It makes sense to the British workers and soldiers, even if they disagree with it at first, as the overwhelming majority of American workers initially disagreed with the demand to withdraw U.S. troops from Indochina. Yet it is a demand that challenges the most fundamental prerogatives of British capitalism and world imperialism.

It is a demand that in and of itself begins to educate the British workers about British imperialism. In the struggle to win the masses of British workers to support that demand, they will come to realize *they* have no interest in maintaining British domination of Ireland. The feeling that it is not worth the life of one's son, husband, brother, cousin — or one's own life — to keep Ireland in bondage, is the most elementary, embryonic level of anti-imperialist consciousness in Britain today. It is arrogant "vanguardism" to regard the demand as a "liberal" sentiment. It is infantile to refuse the support of the working masses who may not yet understand the democratic principle of self-determination for Ireland, or who may not yet understand it is in the interests of the British workers as well. Rather we should solicit and welcome their support. In the process of struggle around a goal we agree on — withdraw British troops — the process of education begins. That is the method of the Transitional Program.

To insist on "Victory to the IRA" or some variant of that sentiment as the basis for united-front action means we will never be able to put together a coalition that is broad enough to bring any weighty sector of the population into action; we will not be able to win a hearing among the broad masses of British workers; we will not be able to mobilize them in action; we will never have the *opportunity* to educate them in the course of common struggle — about the aims of the IRA or anything else.

Use of the slogan "Victory to the IRA" reflected the "concerns" of a very small segment of the vanguard even, largely limited to ourselves. Even the Republicans were either skeptical of the slogan or openly opposed to it. When we imposed "Victory to the IRA" on the groups we led, such as the Irish Solidarity Campaign, we ended up in splendid sectarian isolation.

This experience helps illustrate in a rather stark manner the truth that there is no way to win the leadership of the "vanguard" apart from presenting a correct program to meet the needs of the working masses. It is in the process of fighting for such a program that the real vanguard becomes convinced that we are correct and joins with us. If our program is wrong we will not gain the "vanguard"

either.

The European resolution fails to emphasize the importance of the Irish struggle itself as one of the central political developments in Europe today. It does not indicate the correct method to mobilize defense of the Irish revolution and does not call attention to this as a central political task.

## The Impending Showdown

Another major theme of the European resolution is the idea that the revolutionary Marxist forces throughout the continent have a very limited time to prepare for the showdown with the power of capital.

"The socialist revolution is once again on the agenda in Europe...even from a conjunctural point of view." (Section 2, p. 9.)

We can "envisage a period spread out in most cases over four or five years before the decisive battles are fought." (Section 3, p. 11.)

"If a new revolutionary leadership is not built in the time remaining to us, after successive waves of mass struggles... the European proletariat will experience new and terrible defeats of historic scope." (Section 6, p. 14.)

In his report to the December 1972 International Executive Committee, Comrade Ernest explained that we have a limited time before us (he made it three to six years) "during which we must regroup the vanguard as a serious striking force within the workers movement in order to lead the masses in a global confrontation with capitalism that has the possibility of winning."

This warning resounds throughout the document. Phrases like "decisive battles" and "global confrontation," "socialist revolution on the agenda" and "terrible defeats of historic scope" cannot be interpreted otherwise than to mean that within the next few years the European proletariat will be faced with the choice of either taking power or suffering defeats of the scope of the interwar period of the 1930s or the early 1920s. Is this a prophetic forecast or the projection of a wish?

We hold that only the parties of the Fourth International are capable of leading the coming revolutionary upsurges in Europe to victory. Thus our parties—if we are to take this vision of the immediate future seriously—must think of leading the struggle for power in very short-range terms. As Comrade Ernest put it, we are faced with leading "the masses in a global confrontation with capitalism that has the possibility of winning." If we fail, if we are not strong enough to succeed, there will be a crushing defeat for the entire working class and perhaps fatal decimation of the revolutionary forces. All this perhaps by the time of the Eleventh World Congress!

To prophecy that by 1978 at the latest, this historic showdown between the contending classes will already have come and gone for all of Europe, commits our movement to a dangerously false and disorienting short-term perspective as a guide to action. It is no less false and disorienting than the war-revolution thesis at the Third World Congress. It is no less false and disorienting than the projection at the last world congress that mass urban struggles were largely ruled out for all of Latin America because of increasingly brutal repression by the native ruling classes and imperialism.

The reality in Latin America turned out to be quite different. Instead of a continental civil war with rural guerrilla warfare as its central axis and more and more repressive regimes, we have seen mass urban revolutionary upsurges, two reformist military regimes in Bolivia, a popular front in Chile, a reformist military regime in Peru, and urban semi-insurrections forcing the military regime in Argentina to engage in an electoral maneuver of some scope. At the same time, major countries like Mexico and Brazil have remained relatively stable. The imminent continental perspective proved to be false. The class struggle cannot be programmed into a schema with a specified timetable and predetermined forms of struggle.

How is the perspective in Europe to be estimated?

Are we in a period marked by a new rise of workers struggles? Of course. Is it correct to say that such a period will not last indefinitely, that if wave after wave of struggle is defeated the bourgeoisie will succeed in forcefully imposing its solutions? Of course. Is it correct to project the possibility of explosive new prerevolutionary crises and revolutionary upsurges in one or more countries in the next four to five years? Of course. Will such explosions have repercussions throughout Europe? Certainly. Are there exceptional opportunities before us in the coming period for party building? Absolutely.

But this is *not* what the document says. Instead, it postulates one extreme variant—that the next four to five years *will* see revolutionary crises in several European countries and that these will spread throughout Europe. It then proceeds to blueprint our tasks and responsibilities as if this specific course of events is virtually predetermined.

Furthermore, it derives all our tasks for the immediate period from this abstract projection without reference to our concrete size, forces, resources, or what genuine political openings currently exist.

It would be pleasant if the most favorable variant were so certain and it were so easy to derive tactics from it. However, history—and the experience of our own movement—has taught us that timetables for the arrival of revolution are more often disorienting than not. Acting in accordance with predetermined schemas often blinds us to historical *surprises* and leaves us unprepared to take advantage of the *real*, if unexpected, openings and opportunities.

The overthrow of the Barrientos dictatorship in Bolivia, the installation of a reformist military regime, and the rise of the Popular Assembly certainly did not appear as the most probable variant to the majority of comrades at the last world congress. They made a methodological error that was disastrous to the Bolivian section by deciding to blueprint a political and organizational course that virtually excluded being prepared to take advantage of such unforeseen variations. The mechanical, scholastic political analysis left our comrades unprepared for just such unexpected turns and historical "surprises."

The Latin American resolution of the last world congress is not the only example of this type of undialectical analysis in the history of the Fourth International. The Third World Congress in 1951 adopted the war-revolution theses and from it derived entryism *sui generis* as the only course of action open to the European sections in view of the absolute imminence of World War III. Some comrades were so certain that war and revolutionary crises

were on the agenda that one of Pablo's prophetic American supporters even set an outside date when World War III would begin — by June 1954.

It soon became evident that instead of remaining on the rails determined by divination in 1951, history had one of those surprises in store for us. The imminent war-revolution turned out to have been falsely prophesied. Unfortunately, the entire European movement had already embarked on a course of action that developed its own logic: entryism *sui generis*. When the outbreak of World War III proved to be more distant than envisioned, new justifications for the entryist line were found, and it was 17 years before this disastrous policy finally died of old age and was formally ended by the 1969 world congress. In the meantime, the first major waves of the youth radicalization washed over most of the European sections of the Fourth International and passed them by — except in France, where the comrades working in the Union of Communist Students empirically broke with the entryist orientation. Elsewhere, unfortunately, we were unable to adjust to a trend of development that was different from the schema that had been falsely predicted.

Comrade Pierre gingerly referred to this shortcoming in his report to the 1969 world congress: "There was a certain slowness in discerning the signs of the development that was to result in the youth becoming radicalized politically outside the organized workers movement." ("Report on Tactics in Europe," by Pierre Frank, *International Information Bulletin Reprints: Discussion on Europe*, p. 14.)

### A Short Digression on Entryism Sui Generis

This is not the place for a balance sheet on entryism *sui generis*, yet something must be said about it because a tendentious "historical" evaluation of entryism *sui generis* was injected into the document on "The Building of Revolutionary Parties in Capitalist Europe." It was dragged in so as to give it a stamp of approval.

Why did the authors of the document feel that this was necessary?

When the International was reunified in 1963, all parties agreed to put aside the long-term *historical* evaluation of entryism *sui generis* since the differences over this were clearly recognized. To defer a historical judgment was feasible since it is not the norm in the Trotskyist movement to have official versions of history. Realistic revolutionists do not settle disputed historical questions by voting on them. We vote on what to do next. The reason is very simple: comrades who disagree on this or that event in history can agree on what must be done now to move forward. This does not mean that such discussion or evaluation is unimportant or unessential; only that at the present time it is not a prerequisite for prospective action, as the Healyite sectarians insist.

The attempt of the European resolution to settle the evaluation of entryism by giving it a parenthetical affirmative blessing in one line of an 18-page document reflects an unwarranted compulsion to try to justify the past. Unless the gratuitous evaluation of entryism were removed, those who disagree with that version of our history would have to vote against the document on that reservation alone.

The European resolution places a full debate on entryism *sui generis* on the agenda. But that is a topic for another article.

### The Reality Is Not Cut and Dried

The exact timing and pace of developments in Europe in the next few years depends on factors that we, as the revolutionary vanguard, cannot completely predict or control. For example, new developments in the colonial revolution from Egypt to Zimbabwe, from the Philippines to Mexico, could influence what happens in Europe. The fluctuations and tempo of economic difficulties are not predetermined. The exact shape and extent of the new "peaceful coexistence" deals between Moscow, Peking, Washington and the other imperialist powers will have consequences that are as yet only vaguely discernible. Paradoxically, the projection of a timetable abstracted from all major political developments of the class struggle on an international plane gives the European document an almost "surrealistic" quality. It is isolated from the dialectics of the three sectors of the world revolution. The march toward dual power on a continental scale is divorced from the politics of the rest of the world.

It is particularly false and disorienting to project on a continental scale the idea that the decisive battles will be fought out by 1978 and that the relationship of class forces for the whole next historical period will be determined by then.

Should the comrades in Sweden believe they have only four to five years before the decisive battles, and must they conduct themselves accordingly?

On what basis do we decide that West Germany has four or five years, as opposed to eight or eleven, before a revolutionary crisis erupts? Isn't it quite possible that there could be a sequence of inconclusive confrontations, spread out over a number of years, and that the first class battles might not be any more decisive than May 1968 in France? Isn't it possible that five years from now, Austria will not have experienced any qualitative transformation in the relationship of class forces? Isn't it possible that the next prerevolutionary crisis in France will not resolve the dilemmas of French capitalism any more decisively than the last did, especially if the workers are not yet won away from CP influence? Isn't it possible there can be new May 1968s that will not result in historic defeats on the order of fascism?

We can agree that the class struggle throughout Europe is on the rise. We have already seen major confrontations between capital and labor, and we are moving toward additional ones. New confrontations will occur before there is any reversal of the direction in which the major class forces are moving. But to assert that the "decisive battles" will all take place by 1978, on a continental scale, can produce only two possible results: (1) either the comrades in most of the European sections will ignore that timetable and proceed as though it may be true for some other country but certainly not *their* country; or (2) the comrades will try to operate according to that timetable, start looking for *shortcuts* to building a revolutionary party, and make serious political blunders as a result.

## Three 'Tactics'?

The tendency to look for shortcuts to the construction of a mass revolutionary party, or to search for alternatives to the construction of a party on the Bolshevik model, is fostered by the document's pessimistic view of the possibilities for growth in the coming period. The estimate the resolution makes on this question stands in sharp contradiction to the four-to-five-year-dual-power-showdown perspective.

If we maintain that Europe is on the verge of prerevolutionary and revolutionary explosions, then our central perspective must be the building of mass Trotskyist parties in the very heat of the coming struggles. Under the impact of revolutionary events, it is not inconceivable that even small nuclei of several hundred experienced cadres who are thoroughly grounded in Marxist principles and are audacious and flexible in their tactics can rapidly grow into mass parties.

Yet, while the document assures us that the "decisive battles" will occur in the next four to five years, it rules out massive recruitment over the same period.

Section 11 of the document elaborates three so-called tactics for building the party. One is entryism *sui generis*, another is "massive organic growth," and the third is "winning hegemony within the mass vanguard." After posing these three choices, the document asserts that the appropriate "tactic" for this period is the third one.

This trio of so-called tactics exhibits a schematic conception of party building along with confusion over what a tactic is. "Massive organic growth," for example, is hardly a tactic. It is not something we decide to do or not do. When would we ever decide *against* "massive organic growth"? At all times we recruit all those who accept our program and agree to function as members of a disciplined revolutionary organization.

What possible rational interpretation can be given to the document's rejection of the "tactic" of massive growth? We can only assume it is a forecast that we cannot *anticipate* massive recruitment in the next few years, although this "tactic" might become valid during a subsequent stage.

If we believe objective circumstances rule out rapid growth of the sections of the Fourth International in Europe, we should say so clearly and openly. But such an assessment would be in direct contradiction to the possibility of our sections playing any important role in "decisive battles" within four to five years.

Should we rule out the possibility that a new revolutionary upsurge like May 1968 in France could transform the Ligue Communiste—which already numbers nearly 4,000 members and organized sympathizers—into a party of 20,000 or 30,000? Such a development would obviously have immediate repercussions for our sections in all other European countries.

Likewise, owing to the positions our comrades have already established in the Spanish workers movement, a revolutionary explosion in Spain could result in the transformation of our cadres there into a mass party. Such developments depend on the vicissitudes of the class struggle—and our capacity to take full advantage of them. They are in no way a "tactic."

The document rejects entryism as an orientation for the current period. By entryism it means entryism *sui*

*generis*, not the short-term tactical maneuver advocated by Trotsky and practiced by the SWP in the 1930s. But 17 years of entryism *sui generis* was not a "tactic" either. It was an orientation based on the schematic conclusion that there would have to be left centrist splitoffs from the mass workers parties and that we could not influence them unless we were inside those parties wearing left-centrist masks. Therefore, irrespective of the size of our forces or how long they had to wear left-centrist masks within the mass workers parties, we entered these parties and sacrificed everything else to staying in. By doing so, we hoped to be able to take advantage of the anticipated splits when they eventually developed.

## The Third Tactic and 'Adequate Instruments'

If neither mass recruitment nor entryism *sui generis* are really tactics, what about the third one, "winning hegemony within the mass vanguard"?

This is no more a "tactic" than the other two. Winning the leadership of the most advanced and conscious radicalizing elements is a *goal* we *always* strive to attain. When in the history of the Marxist movement have we not tried to win the leadership of such forces? In this sense, the correct "tactic" turns out to be nothing but a commonplace statement of something we should always be doing, plus the conclusion that we have no realistic possibilities for large-scale recruitment in the immediate future.

The schematic approach of choosing a "tactic" for building the party at each "stage" is an innovation for the Marxist movement.

One can only conclude that the so-called tactic of "winning hegemony in the new mass vanguard" must mean something other than simply striving to win the most conscious and dedicated elements to the sections of the Fourth International by proving that we have the only program, and perspective, as well as the ability, to lead the masses and the vanguard in the struggle to overthrow capitalism.

What does it mean? Perhaps the clue is to be found in the passages suggesting that our task is somehow to change this vanguard itself into a revolutionary force, to "transform it, making it an adequate instrument for re-composing the organized workers movement" as the document says. (Section 6, p. 14.) Or, as Comrade Ernest said more explicitly at the IEC, "regroup the vanguard as a serious striking force within the workers movement to lead the masses in a global confrontation with capitalism that has the possibility of winning."

If by "transforming the vanguard" the document means we must recruit the most conscious elements and build sections of the Fourth International, there is no dispute. But it is not at all clear.

One difficulty is that the document uses terms so loosely that they often obscure rather than clarify matters. For example, Section 6 talks about the need for the "revolutionary left" to achieve hegemony in the mass vanguard. Elsewhere it uses the designation "revolutionary Marxist left." We normally reserve the term "revolutionary Marxist" for ourselves, Trotskyists, sections of the Fourth International. Does the "revolutionary Marxist left" include forces other than ourselves? If so, who are they? And what about "revolutionary left"? Is that synonymous with

sections of the Fourth International? Or is it broader? If so, who does it include? What does it mean to say the "revolutionary left" must achieve hegemony in the vanguard? Is this different from saying that the "revolutionary-Marxists" must win hegemony? Is it different from saying the Fourth International must win hegemony?

The document says this mass vanguard must be "crystallized out into a serious and powerful revolutionary Marxist organization." (Section 6, p. 14.) Does that mean a section of the Fourth International? Or does it mean some other kind of organization that will not be exactly Trotskyist but nevertheless an "adequate instrument"? If it means a section of the Fourth International, and the new vanguard is a mass vanguard, then shouldn't we prepare for "massive organic growth"? If on the other hand we are trying to transform it into an "adequate instrument," then what kind of adequate instrument will be adequate enough? It has always been our position that only a mass revolutionary Marxist party, *like the Bolshevik party*, is adequate to the task of leading the "masses in a global confrontation with capitalism that has the possibility of winning." Is that position now being reexamined?

The document is very confusing on this point. The confusion must be cleared up.

### The Case of the Missing Category

One of the gravest errors made in the European document is the mechanical way in which it tries to derive the central party-building tasks before each of the European sections of the Fourth International today from an analysis of previous revolutionary upsurges and from the need to prepare for the emergence of organs of dual power in coming prerevolutionary crises.

The document says the revolutionary "perspectives [for our work] can be summed up essentially in two categories of problems: the problems of relating to the revolutionary upsurge; and the perspective for the revolutionary struggle for power." (Section 7, p. 14.)

But one entire category of problems is missing: those related to building revolutionary parties *prior* to a revolutionary upsurge, i.e., those relating to the concrete day-to-day, month-to-month tasks of every section in Europe *today*.

It is bad enough to set up schematic solutions to the problems of seizing power tomorrow; to think that these abstractions can solve the problems of party building today is to engage in dangerous fantasies. The criteria according to which a small nucleus of revolutionary cadres deploys its forces in order to recruit and grow are not the same as the criteria used by a mass revolutionary party on the eve of a revolutionary crisis. How we utilize our forces today—or in a coming revolutionary crisis for that matter—depends on many factors *in addition* to a general assessment of broad social, economic, and political trends, and *in addition* to the strategic goal of overthrowing capitalism.

For example, whether we have 25, 100, 1,000, or 10,000 members is highly relevant. The class composition of our cadre is another factor, and their political maturity another. It sometimes limits what we are able to do, sometimes prevents us from engaging in maneuvers that would

otherwise be absolutely correct—such as fusions and regroupments with other political currents. The level of consciousness, combativity, and radicalization of the working class is of fundamental importance. Other sectors of society that are in political motion, the strength of our political opponents on the left—these too are crucial factors that must be taken into account in determining the areas of our political intervention and the allocation of our cadres.

Yet the document ignores all these concrete problems of party building today. It seems to proceed on the premise that since our problem *in the future* is the creation of organs of dual power, therefore the central axis of *our work today* should be intervention in workers struggles around the demand for workers control.

Unfortunately, our central task is much more elementary than preparing for dual power. It is *recruiting and educating* the basic nucleus of cadres who will be able to win a base in the working class and build a mass Trotskyist party capable of handling every political situation that arises, including the development of dual power. We must recruit wherever we can find those political cadres—in the factories, universities, high schools, the army, the women's movement, among our opponents, etc.

If we don't keep that task in the forefront of all our decisions on how to use our forces and resources, we will drift into a dream world where our projected tasks are out of line with today's reality. It is illusory for a revolutionary nucleus that may not lead a significant class-struggle tendency in any trade union in any industry in the country to talk as if its task is to create a "generalized system of organs of dual power." This would be almost as far from reality as the idea that a revolutionary core of several hundred in Argentina can form its own army and thus call forth a revolutionary war.

There are probably cities or countries where we are missing opportunities for recruiting working-class cadres to our movement, and we must devote serious attention to this. Any revolutionary party worthy of the name is always probing, testing, checking, to make sure it is taking full advantage of available openings to reach the workers. We do this because the working class is the only force capable of taking power and destroying capitalism. And only a party that is proletarian in both program and composition can lead this. But recognition of those elementary truths is only the beginning of wisdom.

The key problem before us is *how* do we get from where we are today—small nuclei of revolutionary forces—to mass Trotskyist working-class parties?

The question is not *whether* we must win a base in the working class, but *how*, given the present size of our forces, their composition, their political maturity, and the present political context in which we are working.

Tasks like building a youth organization, leading struggles by radicalized women, or putting forward a revolutionary alternative in election campaigns stand at a different level from that of setting up organs of dual power. But they are of decisive importance for the *construction* of revolutionary Marxist parties deeply rooted in the working class.

We are revolutionary politicians; we must be alert to possible openings for political work in the unions and plants. But at the same time we must recognize that it



is around questions and issues like those raised by students, women, and the colonial revolution that the initial waves of the radicalization are tending to outflank the traditional working-class leaderships, more rapidly than many struggles in the factories. We can often win the leadership of such struggles, orient them in a revolutionary direction, and link them up with working-class struggles. This can result in rapid political advances in recruitment and the education of our cadres, who gain valuable experience in leading mass struggles. *It is often through such channels that we begin to be looked upon as a significant political force and gain a hearing and initial recruits in the working class.*

Although this point is absent from the current document on Europe, it was made quite well and correctly in the "Report on Tactics in Europe" prepared by Comrade Pierre Frank for the 1969 world congress. In discussing some of the lessons to be learned from the errors of the entryist period, he commented, "we must draw the lesson that it is not sufficient to base ourselves on a general tactic which we consider to be correct for the workers movement as a whole. We must also be able to grasp the importance of turning toward certain sectors which, while of a special or marginal character, offer the potential for more immediate results." (*International Information Bulletin Reprint: Discussion on Europe*, p. 14.) In many ways the current document is a retreat from the correct points made in Pierre Frank's 1969 document and the contribution by Vergeat and Delfin.

The general error is reflected in the tendency to relegate all struggles except the demand for workers control to a decidedly secondary place. This logically leads to downplaying the importance and the independent dynamic of struggles in other sectors. It underestimates the impact they can and will have on the radicalization and politicization of the broad working masses. This is reflected in what the document says—and even more in what it fails to say—about trade-union work, the youth radicalization, anti-imperialist struggles, the radicalization of women, work in the armed forces, the importance of the struggle for democratic rights, and how to deal with our major political opponents.

It misses the *combined* character of the current radicalization, as well as its unevenness.

## What Program for the Factories and Trade Unions?

The document calls for long-term, persistent work in the trade unions and factories. Yet one would be hard pressed from reading the text to determine how, concretely, our comrades should intervene in the unions and plants.

Today there are genuine and important opportunities for recruiting radicalized young workers in many European countries. But *how* do we intervene in this development?

Upon what *program* is a class-struggle left wing to be built in the factories and trade unions today?

The document advances workers' control as the central axis of our propaganda. It tries to justify the centrality of this demand *now* by pointing to the future need for organs of dual power—not by analyzing the workers struggles the comrades are actually engaged in, and not by reference to the level of consciousness of the workers

they are trying to reach and lead.

The basic program for any class-struggle tendency in the factories and trade unions *today* would have to include propaganda advocating workers control, but it would have to be much broader and more politically rounded. Workers control is a fundamental concept of our transitional program, and a goal toward which we are trying to lead masses of workers in struggle. It is not the beginning and end of our class-struggle demands.

For example, the European document does not point to the problems of inflation and unemployment as being crucial economic problems of the working class. But they are. The transitional demand for a sliding scale of wages and hours should be a fundamental part of any class-struggle trade-union program in Europe today.

This demand leads into a whole series of others that should be considered as elements of a program on which to base effective factory work, and which can lead progressively toward workers control—consumer and factory committees on prices; opening the books of the giant corporations to workers inspection; workers committees to oversee government statistics.

These are tied in with demands pointing to the rational and socially oriented allocation of society's resources: public-works programs; comprehensive medical and social security programs; equal pay increases for all; unemployment compensation at union wages; retirement at full pay; and many others. Partial victories can be won through struggles around these demands, but they cannot be completely implemented short of a socialist revolution.

Another series of fundamental demands that must be included in working out any class-struggle left-wing program are those relating to and tying in with the other issues raised by the combined character of the current radicalization: demands relating to the youth—students, apprentices, and draftees, whose aspirations for expanded political and economic rights add momentum to the youth radicalization; demands relating to immigrant workers and workers from oppressed nationalities—full economic equality, political rights, and security against deportation; demands relating to women—equal job opportunities, equal pay for equal work, 24-hour-a-day child-care facilities, the right to abortion, paid maternity leaves; demands reflecting the anti-imperialist sentiments of the radicalizing workers—confiscation of profits from military production, closing military bases, breaking with imperialist military alliances, solidarity strikes in support of the struggles of workers in other countries.

It is around demands such as these that many key forces of the political vanguard in the factories will be assembled. The class-struggle left-wing in the factories and trade unions today will be drawn in significant part from the youth, the women, the consciously anti-imperialist workers, and others affected by the broad scope of the economic, political and social issues raised by the radicalization.

Another important category of issues are those related to the fight for the class independence of the workers organizations and against their growing assimilation in the state apparatus. This raises many issues, such as the fight against government incomes policies, wage freezes and restrictive legislation; the fight against the Common Market; the need for internationally organized trade-union

actions. Increasing government intervention in these areas makes it even more important for us to have a correct strategy in regard to the electoral policies of the Stalinists and Social Democrats.

In countries like Spain and Greece, of course, even the fundamental democratic right to organize becomes central to our program.

Yet another category of demands are those related to the fight for democracy within the trade unions and plants. Democratic election of trade-union officers, subject to immediate recall; wages of officials to be no higher than those of a skilled worker; election of shop stewards; democratically elected strike committees; general assemblies of striking workers. Our transitional demands move forward to factory committees; workers control over production; regional networks of elected factory committees; and eventually, soviets.

Still another category of problems relates specifically to preparing the workers to defend themselves against strike-breaking goon squads and direct intervention by the police and other military or paramilitary forces—whether "legal" or "extralegal." A broad propaganda campaign waged by the mass workers organizations to expose the violence of the ruling class is the only way to create a climate in which the organization of strike pickets, defense guards, and workers militias becomes realistic.

These are only a few of the elements that must be taken into account in beginning to draw up a program for a class-struggle tendency in the factories and trade unions today. The exact formulation of demands; how we combine them; which ones we emphasize at any particular time; variations from country to country, industry to industry, factory to factory—those, of course, are questions that can only be decided on the basis of intimate knowledge of specific conditions.

But all these are among the demands that speak to the needs of the masses of workers we hope someday to lead in struggle. They indicate the kind of platform on which we can build a class-struggle tendency in the mass workers organizations. Struggles around any one of these broad range of demands can set off a process leading in progression toward workers control, dual power, and the socialist revolution. Any tendency to dissolve the richness of the Transitional Program into propaganda for workers control alone would be seriously disorienting.

Without such a program we stand paralyzed in face of the major class-struggle battles that are emerging in Europe today. Not only are we unable to intervene correctly in the trade unions and plants, but we are even unable to respond on the broad political level to events like the dockers strike in Britain last year, or the Upper Clydeside occupation in Scotland.

Yet the European resolution is silent about all the difficult political and tactical problems involved in working out such class-struggle programs for the trade unions and factories. Instead of concrete examples drawn from the experiences of our sections, it offers only a generalized prescription that workers control must more and more become the axis of our work in the plants and unions.

The fact that a fundamental discussion on these questions is urgently needed is shown by the assessment made by Comrades Vergeat and Delfin in their "Preparatory Text." In their opinion, "propaganda founded on the 1938

Transitional Program is obviously not enough to serve as a basis for intervening in this area [the working class]." (p. 7.)

The Transitional Program is not a holy scripture that provides answers on all occasions for all time. New questions and issues have arisen since 1938. Using the method outlined in the Transitional Program, we should try to incorporate them into our basic program, as we did with "The International Youth Radicalization and the Tasks of the Fourth International."

But if some leaders of the Fourth International believe that the programmatic document on which our movement is founded can no longer even provide the *basis* for intervening in the working class, that is certainly a viewpoint that should be brought forward and discussed.

## The Character of the Youth Radicalization

The European perspectives document rejects an orientation toward building Trotskyist youth organizations today. It stands in direct contradiction to the United Secretariat document adopted prior to the 1969 world congress, "The Worldwide Youth Radicalization and the Tasks of the Fourth International."

The current European document implies that building revolutionary youth organizations of the kind we led in the 1960s was essentially a passing phase in the reconstruction of sections of the Fourth International, owing to the attrition of forces in the old sections. Comrades Vergeat and Delfin explain this thesis even more explicitly in their "Preparatory Text for the 1971 Conference of the Leaderships of the European Sections," where they say that youth groups like the JCR [Jeunesse Communiste Révolutionnaire—Revolutionary Communist Youth] in France and the JGS [Jeune Garde Socialiste—Socialist Youth Guard] in Belgium represented "a transitional step in the construction of new sections." (*International Information Bulletin*, No. 5 in 1972, p. 5.)

The European perspectives document argues that the situation has changed. Now, it says, we have considerably strengthened our sections and the radicalization has advanced to a higher level than anti-imperialism, so that youth organizations are not needed until sometime in the future when we have gained a significant base in the working class. Not only is there no need for youth organizations at the present time but the recruitment of too many petty-bourgeois youth can even be dangerous.

The line of the 1969 youth document was quite different. It explained that the international youth radicalization was rooted in the interrelated crises of imperialism and Stalinism and the character of the post-World War II epoch in which today's youth have grown to political maturity. It emphasized that despite oscillations and temporary ups and downs, this radicalization will prove to be a permanent phenomenon of our epoch. We have gathered only the first fruits. Moreover, we can expect it to *deepen* as the radicalization begins to affect other sectors of the population. It outlined a program for intervening in the student radicalization in such a way as to link up the struggles of the youth to those of the working class and its other allies.

On the basis of this analysis of the youth radicalization as an ongoing political factor, the document pro-

jected the need for building independent revolutionary youth organizations.

"The experience of the world Trotskyist movement during the past few years has shown that its work among the youth can most effectively be carried forward through revolutionary-socialist youth organizations fraternally associated with the sections of the Fourth International but organizationally independent of them.

"The Trotskyist forces in various countries vary greatly in size, and they are in different stages of growth and development. Different tactics will have to be used to reach the goal of constructing a revolutionary-socialist youth organization—including participation in other youth formations. But all such activity should be seen as a tactical step toward the construction of such an organization.

"It is important to note that the social and political analysis of the student movement today and the world situation in which it is developing shows the *objective* basis for such independent revolutionary-socialist youth organizations."

On the basis of that analysis the document projected three interrelated tasks:

"1. To win the leadership of the radical youth in the spheres of both ideology and action.

"2. To build strong Marxist youth organizations.

"3. To draw new cadres from the youth to replenish the ranks and supply fresh energy to the leadership of the sections of the Fourth International."

In other words, the 1969 document emphasized that the need for revolutionary Marxist youth organizations flowed from the character of the international youth radicalization and its roots in the objective conditions created by the class struggle on a world scale—and not from either our conjunctural weakness or the conjunctural level of consciousness of radicalizing students.

The line projected in the current European document is the one that has actually been implemented throughout Europe since 1968, that is, the progressive liquidation of every youth organization associated with the Fourth International. In some countries the decision to fuse the existing small sections of the Fourth International with youth organizations may have been required. But this was a necessary evil rather than a desirable solution to the problems created by extremely weak parties resulting from what the European perspectives document delicately labels "overspecialization in entryist work." (Section 16, p. 22.)

Thus we are faced with a *new* situation and a *new* problem. We no longer have a single nationwide youth organization anywhere in Europe.

In talking about the "Renewal of the European Sections of the Fourth International" (Section 16), the European document puts heavy stress on the dangers posed by the youth radicalization and is thankful for the sage though admittedly pragmatic avoidance of these dangers through the liquidation of our youth organizations. If we don't have a youth organization, we certainly can't recruit too many petty-bourgeois youth, and that takes care of that problem! We're less likely to "be caught up in a sectarian (or spontanéist) tendency to underestimate and misjudge the organized workers movement." (p. 23.)

The task of avoiding sectarian, spontanéist or oppor-

tunist pressures is wrongly posed. By stressing the dangers and political weaknesses of the radicalized youth, the document misplaces its emphasis. Those weaknesses exist but can be combated as long as we do not adapt to them. But there is a bigger danger to the Fourth International today and that is to miss the tremendous opportunity the youth radicalization offers us, to miss the openings in the student milieu and to forfeit the possibility of leading a powerful left wing, which in periods of upsurge and mass mobilization around specific demands can lead the entire student movement in revolutionary action.

The allocation of significant resources and cadres to the construction of revolutionary youth organizations should be one of our priorities. Yet this does not rate a single word in the listing of central political tasks in Section 10!

Instead, the document puts forward the "critical threshold" theory to explain why we shouldn't build youth organizations today. It argues that an adult revolutionary organization needs a "critical threshold in forces and roots in the working class" before it is proper to start building a youth organization. (p. 23.) This puts the problem upside down.

Exactly the opposite point should be made. Many openings and opportunities have been created in the youth arena by the manner in which it has escaped control by the bureaucratized Stalinist and Social-Democratic parties. It is often precisely by winning a significant base in the student movement that we can take, and in many places have taken, the first crucial steps toward assembling the initial cadre of our rejuvenated sections. It is through the construction of youth organizations, through our ability to recruit from and lead radicalized students in action, that we have so far been able to win an initial hearing in the working class.

If we had followed the line of the current European document and postponed building youth organizations until we had a base in the working class in Europe; if we had waited to cross the "critical threshold" before building the JCR, the RKJ [Revolutionär Kommunistische Jugend—Revolutionary Communist Youth], the JGS, Révolte, and other youth groups, we probably would not now have sections worthy of being called such in France, Germany, Belgium, or Holland.

We are all aware of the political weaknesses of the student radical milieu. But recruiting heavily from the student milieu can and will be a serious problem to the Fourth International only if we *adapt* our program and the character of our parties to the weaknesses of the student milieu. It will only be a problem if we fail to *educate* our members in the fundamentals of Marxism, in principled class politics.

If we did not believe that many revolutionary-minded students could be won to the program of Marxism we would have to throw out 90 percent of all the recruitment the Fourth International has done in the last decade and start over again. The only guarantee of the political firmness and revolutionary character of the Fourth International lies in uncompromising programmatic clarity—not in refusing to build a youth organization so as to avoid the "dangers" of student recruitment.

## Why Youth Organizations

The fact that we are today larger than several years ago, or that we are now able to recruit a certain layer of young workers, does not change the need for an independent youth organization. The student radicalization continues and we cannot afford to let valuable opportunities for recruitment in this area pass us by. If we don't win these radicalizing students, our opponents will.

The real "hybrid" forms to which the document refers are not the youth organizations we could be building today on the basis of the acquisitions we have already made, but the Red Circles and sympathizer groups. These offer no advantages over a youth organization, and have numerous disadvantages, precisely because they are not independent organizations.

Without an independent youth organization, our ability to effectively intervene in the struggles that erupt in the high schools and universities is reduced. Even more important, it is harder to recruit, *especially* among high-school students. There are many potential members in the high schools and universities who are more than willing to join a Trotskyist youth organization that does not demand as high a level of commitment or political sophistication as a section. They want a chance to be active, have time to educate themselves, and make up their minds before joining a party. But they are more likely to join an organization in which they can have some influence over decisions. They are less likely to join an appendage to an adult party.

Sympathizer circles are no real substitute for an independent youth organization for another very important reason. The training and education that young comrades get in the process of building their own independent organization is the best cadre school available. A process of selection takes place and comrades have the opportunity to develop as leaders and gain confidence in themselves as political cadres. The absence of youth organizations entails a much slower process of leadership selection and education.

The absence of youth organizations also introduces a much greater element of instability into the sections of the Fourth International. This is already reflected in relatively high turnover rates in membership and wide fluctuations in our rate of growth. This is inevitable without a youth organization because we must either recruit to the section on a more minimal basis, or turn away hundreds of potential members simply because we have no adequate way of determining in advance which ones are potential cadres and which are not.

Given the uneven character of the current radicalization, there is no way that one organization can fulfill the dual functions of an adult revolutionary organization and a youth group. Either the party will tend to act like a youth organization and reflect the norms and character of a youth organization in recruitment, turnover rate, areas of work, age composition, and intense level of activism—which comrades with jobs and family ties find impossible to match or maintain. Or, owing to a fear of becoming even more like a youth organization, the section will arbitrarily and artificially limit its ability to take advantage of potential opportunities for

growth and recruitment in the student arena. Worst of all, it is possible to combine the two problems. It is possible to be a youth organization in fact, but to pretend it is not so, and to turn away from accomplishing those tasks we are best equipped to accomplish.

The perspective of constructing revolutionary youth organizations as outlined in the 1969 youth document provides the fundamental solution to all these problems. The rejection of this perspective in the European perspectives document is unwarranted.

## Hypothesis of an 'Irreversible Turn'

In its analysis of the student radicalization, the document postulates "an irreversible turn" in the student movement, "everywhere in the world" following May 1968. The document tells us that "people are adopting positions today primarily in function of intervening in workers struggles and by the perspectives of these struggles." Aside from the inaccuracy of the generalization (irreversible? everywhere?) it reveals a lack of understanding of the student radicalization.

Youth are perhaps the sector of society *most* sensitive to all forms and manifestations of social oppression and exploitation. Youth react more readily against the varied horrors and depravities created by the capitalist system. They find it easy to identify with, respond to, and struggle alongside diverse sectors of society coming to political and social consciousness. They are as prone to identify with a Vietnamese peasant struggling against imperialism as with a friend who has lost his job. The grounds for postulating some irreversible turn in the consciousness of radicalized students on a world scale are not provided in the European perspectives document. The reason for the oversight is probably that the hypothesis represents nothing but an impression drawn from a passing phase of the youth radicalization.

Following May 1968, the European student milieu responded to a new form of the class struggle that they had not before experienced at firsthand—the rise of workers struggles in the advanced countries. If this had not occurred, we would have had to revise our entire analysis of the student radicalization.

The fact that the students turned toward the European working-class struggles following May 1968 was extremely positive. But in doing so, many tended to develop an apolitical, economist outlook and to turn their backs on the burning political issues that had radicalized them, such as the struggle against imperialist war. Rejecting their previous dismissal of the revolutionary potential of the working class, many radical students made the opposite error of becoming romantic neopopulists. This was a political weakness that we should have been the first to combat.

When whole layers of radicalized students lost interest in Vietnam, got "tired of marching," or became convinced the imperialist intervention was over, that did not represent a step forward in political consciousness. It was a step backward into parochialism and economism—no matter what rationalizations were given about the importance of "workers struggles." The civil war in Vietnam is a workers struggle too, one of the most heroic in the history of humanity.

The document tends to foster a shortsighted outlook by putting forward the view that student radicalization around "workers struggles" is on a "higher level" than the "lower level" anti-imperialist solidarity. In fact, the struggle against imperialist war in general is relegated to an elementary school category by the document.

Section 12 explains that despite the "irreversible" turn of the student milieu and its advance to higher levels of consciousness, there are always some new layers who don't understand that the student movement has gone beyond anti-imperialism. "It remains both possible and necessary to politicize younger levies by means of anti-imperialist propaganda and action, above all in periods of ebb in workers' struggles." (p. 19.)

In other words, anti-imperialist struggles are important to educate the "youngsters," especially when there is nothing more important going on! But once the workers in Europe begin to move, the struggle against imperialist war becomes less important and less immediate.

The whole paragraph is nothing but a "sophisticated" restatement of the "vanguardist" error on Vietnam work discussed earlier. Far from combating the idea that Vietnam was not so important, the majority leadership of the Fourth International clearly helped to foster this misjudgment.

This error reveals an incorrect idea of what the radicalization process entails. As the militancy, radicalization, and politicization of the working class develops, we can expect the most conscious workers, the vanguard elements, to be *more* concerned about the fate of Vietnam, *more* interested in the liberation struggles of oppressed nationalities, *more* receptive to the demands raised by women, *more* responsive to the problems of immigrant workers, and *more* interested in the broadest social and political problems. If this were not the case it would be an extremely disheartening perspective for revolutionists.

It is precisely as a politicized workers vanguard begins to develop that we must *step up* our propaganda and action around the broad range of political issues, because we have the perspective of reaching the vanguard of the working class around these issues. Drawing them into action around questions like Vietnam is a vital step in their political education.

## The Radicalization of Women

The document, as we have pointed out, fails to orient us toward the student radicalization as one of the key steps in constructing a revolutionary party in Europe today. This omission is paralleled by failure to take note of another important development in most European countries since the last world congress—the beginning radicalization of women as a distinct social group.

This "oversight" can be accounted for only by assuming that the rise of women's liberation struggles is considered one of the diversionary "new opportunities turning up in this or that sector" that we "must resist temptations" to turn toward impressionistically. (Section 17, p. 23.)

The document does not deal with the women's liberation movement in Europe, although it has emerged in some countries on a considerable scale and in others as a significant beginning.

It fails to call attention to the profoundly revolutionary

thrust of this radicalization of women. It neglects to point out that the demands being raised constitute a challenge to the basic institutions of class society. It offers no estimation of the meaning of the radicalization of women, although it is one of the clearest signs of the depth of the social crisis described by the document.

It does not expose the political backwardness of the mass Stalinist and Social-Democratic parties concerning the issues raised by radical women today, such as abortion and the role of the family. It does not alert our sections to take advantage of this weak link in the chain of bureaucratic control over the workers movement.

It does not point to the double exploitation of working women and emphasize the role women can and will play in building a class-struggle left wing within the unions. It does not explain that revolutionists must take the lead in propagandizing and fighting for the demands raised by women in order to win the best militants to the revolutionary party, and to educate the working class concerning the oppression of women.

It does not point to the importance of the women's liberation movement as an arena where we can win valuable new cadres and where we have immense advantages over all rivals, large or small. It doesn't point to the important impact the women's movement can have on the Fourth International, especially on the political development of our women cadre.

It does not point to the need for the Fourth International to be in the vanguard of women's liberation struggles as they emerge. It does not emphasize that any party that fails to recognize the importance of these struggles—which reflect basic needs and aspirations of more than half of humanity—will prove incapable of leading the working masses to power.

It does not say that the Fourth International must be in the forefront of the struggles for abortion on demand, freedom of divorce, equal pay, child-care centers, and many other demands.

Far from explaining any of these things and drawing the corresponding programmatic conclusions, the lengthy document devotes only *one word* to the rise of women's liberation struggles. In Section 15 the document mentions a category called "other radicalized groups"—"(women, artists, scholars, users of public services, tenants, and groups defending the ecology)." Then, perhaps fearing that even this single word added too much weight, the authors of the document appended the qualification that such developments cannot be allowed to divert us from our "priority of winning a base in the working class and strengthening the organization and its general political activity..." (p. 22.)

Just the opposite is the case. It is often precisely such openings that will help us win a base in the working class—especially among working-class women—help us educate and develop our own membership and strengthen our general political functioning.

The question is not—as Comrade Ernest phrased it in his remarks at the IEC—"whether we should consecrate more forces to the feminist movement than to the penetration of the factories." The question is how do we as a tiny nucleus of revolutionary Marxists go about transforming our small groups into mass revolutionary parties? *How* do we penetrate the factories? *How* do we win a hear-

ing in the working class?

To be very concrete, in most European countries we have only a few hundred members. Generally no more than 30 percent of them are women and in some sections considerably fewer. A women's liberation movement capable of mobilizing and educating thousands of women is starting to develop. It is wide open to our political influence. If we do not attempt to provide leadership and to recruit from it, the Maoists, spontanéists, or others who claim to be Trotskyists will. Should we take advantage of that political opening, and assign some of our women to it, attempt to lead it in a revolutionary direction, recruit new cadres from it?

This embryonic women's movement—even if indirectly at first—can be an important route to penetrating the factories, to reaching the lowest paid and most oppressed sector of the working class. Entering this new arena would be far wiser than defaulting and letting the women's liberation movement pass us by.

That is the kind of choice facing us in most sections in Europe today. In many cases we would have to decide that it is correct to allot significant resources to the women's movement. Given our current size and political openings, it is one of the most effective ways to build up our revolutionary forces.

The European document cannot be a substitute for a document on the women's liberation movement, of course. But the absence of *even one sentence* pinpointing the significance of this new development and what it indicates for revolutionary Marxists shows how wrong and disorienting the European document is.

It reveals a narrow, almost economist, view on what steps are required to build a revolutionary party today, and a poor comprehension of how struggles around broad social issues will play a key role in the politicization of the working class.

Ironically, the document ignores the extent to which the European sections *have* turned toward the rise of the women's liberation movement and drawn some correct lessons from it.

## Work in the Armed Forces

Another question virtually absent from the document is the need for work in the armed forces. This question gets one line, in passing.

Even a hasty reading of the press of our European sections indicates that a significant antimilitarist radicalization is developing among high school and university students as well as layers of young workers. The question of how we relate to this, how we counter the propaganda of the pacifists, how we advance our concepts of workers militias, is important.

The fight for basic civil liberties within the armed forces is a challenge that confronts our sections in virtually every country in Europe. The right to engage in political activity, to form discussion groups, to receive literature, to publish leaflets and newspapers expressing the views of rank-and-file draftees—such ideas strike at the very heart of the prerogatives of the imperialist military machine.

A number of European sections have already had some valuable experience with work in the armed forces and propaganda directed at the troops. The seriousness with

which the European bourgeoisie views these activities is evidenced by the panicky reaction of the French ruling class even to the organization of public meetings in defense of victims of military "justice."

We also need to draw a balance sheet of how well the Fourth International met the challenge presented by the opportunity for a *mass* propaganda campaign directed toward the troops of an imperialist occupying army—the British troops in Ireland. From the beginning of the occupation, our propaganda should have been directed to the troops, calling for their immediate withdrawal from Ireland. We should have tried to involve British soldiers in demonstrations for the withdrawal of troops. Such actions should have been a central axis of our mass work in defense of the Irish revolution. Unfortunately, they were not.

The failure of the document to deal with any of these questions, or to orient the sections of the International toward serious work in the armed forces, is another measure of the document's narrow political focus.

It is especially curious given the professed aim of the resolution—to prepare for the emergence of organs of dual power within four to five years. Certainly, if the document is serious about that, preparing the way for soldiers councils is an indispensable task.

## The Fight for Democratic Rights

The European document does not emphasize that the fight for democratic demands and basic civil liberties is an important task for revolutionary Marxists in our epoch, not only in countries like Spain and Greece, but in the bourgeois democracies as well.

Concern for democratic demands and tasks is absent from the document on all levels. For instance, nothing is said about the role and importance of the struggles by oppressed nationalities from the Basques to the Lappers. Ireland is not even mentioned in this regard. The resolution does not explain the interrelationship of struggles by oppressed nationalities and the socialist revolution. These struggles for the democratic right of self-determination have a revolutionary dynamic. They are part of the permanent revolution in Europe itself, and we must be in the forefront of supporting these struggles and leading them where possible.

Nothing is said about other unresolved aspects of the national question in Europe, such as language conflicts. The Fourth International should be known as the best defender of the fundamental democratic right of every oppressed nationality to be able to freely use its own language in everything from education to work to dealings with the state.

Democratic slogans were advanced in connection with the bourgeois revolutions that cleared away the precapitalist social and political structures to make way for capitalist relations. They were an expression of the needs of the rising capitalist economy and culture in opposition to the preceding forms. But in the period of the death agony of capitalism, the observance, reinforcement, or expansion of democratic rights militates against the needs of capitalist rulers to defend their power, property, and privileges against the advance of its historic successor, the working class on its way to power.

In other words, capitalism has reached the point where it becomes more and more incompatible with any form of democracy. This is currently reflected in the tendency toward the "strong state" throughout Europe. Thus, along with the advancement of transitional measures that propel the working masses beyond capitalism, the defense and extension of democratic rights is a prime proletarian task in the advanced capitalist countries as well as in the colonial and semicolonial world.

It has fallen to the revolutionary Marxist movement to protect and promote the great gains and historic objectives of previous revolutions, such as freedom of thought, freedom of the press, freedom to organize, and self-determination for oppressed nationalities. We defend them, of course, through the proletarian method of *mass* struggle, not by bourgeois parliamentary shadowboxing.

The Bolsheviks understood this task facing the proletariat, and Lenin explained it over and over. For example, in a polemic against P. Kievsky (Y. Pyatakov) in 1916, he wrote:

"...Marxists know that democracy does *not* abolish class oppression. It only makes the class struggle more direct, wider, more open and pronounced, and that is what we need. The fuller the freedom of divorce, the clearer will women see that the course of their 'domestic slavery' is capitalism, not lack of rights. The more democratic the system of government, the clearer will the workers see that the root evil is capitalism, not lack of rights. The fuller the national equality... the clearer will the workers of the oppressed nations see that the cause of their oppression is capitalism, not lack of rights, etc.

"...under capitalism the right of divorce, as *all* other democratic rights without exception, is conditional, restricted, formal, narrow and extremely difficult of realisation... *All* 'democracy' consists in the proclamation and realisation of 'rights' which under capitalism are realisable only to a very small degree and only relatively. But without the proclamation of these rights, without a struggle to introduce them now, immediately, without training the masses in the spirit of this struggle, socialism is *impossible*." (From "A Caricature of Marxism and Imperialist Economism," written August-October 1916, *Collected Works*, Vol. 23, pp. 72-74.)

The European document certainly does not help to educate the Fourth International in this aspect of Leninism.

It is around the question of travel bans against leaders of the Fourth International that reluctance to fight for and champion basic democratic rights and civil liberties has been most obvious.

For example, in France, for five years, the Ligue Communiste has refused to undertake any concerted campaign to reverse the French government's ban on Ernest Mandel and other prominent leaders of the Fourth International. The reason nothing has been done in France on the Mandel case, we have been told over and over again by the leaders of the Ligue Communiste, is that the "vanguard" isn't interested in such questions because they (like Kievsky) consider it normal for a capitalist government to abridge democratic freedoms. And besides, we are told, Mandel's ban is hardly very important compared to the murder of Pierre Overney or the strike at Joint Française.

So, as each additional leader of the Fourth International is placed on the list of those banned from France,

*Rouge* prints a little article to take note of the event, someone is smuggled in for a "sensational" speech or interview as an annual publicity stunt, and that is all. The idea that we should seize upon such actions by the government to "train the masses in the spirit of this struggle" for basic democratic rights has met with little response among the Ligue Communiste leaders.

Likewise in Britain, the fundamental defense work on the Mandel travel ban has been done by sympathizers of the Fourth International *outside* the British section. Their success is a good indication of what could be done if an organization the size of the IMG seriously undertook the indicated campaign.

The record has been much better in other countries such as Germany and Denmark, where many comrades put considerable work into the Mandel defense effort. But the absence of a systematic Europe-wide campaign on the Mandel case made their efforts less effective than they could have been.

In France and Britain, at least, we would have to say that instead of leading the "vanguard" on this question and educating, as Lenin did in his day, about the *proletarian* task of fighting for democratic rights, we have adapted to the political backwardness of the "vanguard" and defaulted in a necessary political duty.

The line of the European document will not help to correct these weaknesses and errors.

## Where Have All Our Opponents Gone?

One of the biggest holes in the document is the absence of any substantial analysis and discussion of our major political opponents: the Stalinists in either their Moscow or Peking guise; the Social Democrats in either right-wing or left-wing dress; the various pretentious claimants to "Trotskyism"; the anarchists, spontanéists, and other assorted flora and fauna of the "new mass vanguard."

The document correctly characterizes the mass Social-Democratic parties as parties representing a political current within the working-class movement. This is progressive in view of the confusion and disagreements on this question in several key sections. But beyond that bare characterization, the document makes no attempt to deal with many hotly debated questions of vital importance in the construction of revolutionary parties in countries like Germany, Sweden, Britain, and France.

The nature and seriousness of the questions our European sections are trying to grapple with in this regard are expressed in the debate in the German section over the character of the SPD [Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands—Social Democratic Party of Germany] and the decision not to call for a vote for the SPD in last November's elections; the discussion in the Swedish RMF [Revolutionära Marxisterna Förbundet—League of Revolutionary Marxists] over the character of the Social-Democratic trade unions; the differences in the British section over what attitude to take toward the Labour Party; the debate in the Ligue Communiste over the class character of the French Socialist Party.

The document does not try to clarify these fundamental political problems connected with party building in Europe. It does not even indicate such problems exist. Yet, if our analysis of and orientation toward these parties and the

unions they lead is not correct, we will hardly be able to build mass revolutionary parties in these countries.

The document does not even raise the *idea* of doing fraction work within these mass Social-Democratic and Stalinist parties or their youth organizations. It does not evaluate our progress in winning forces from the mass workers organizations. Are we having any success in this at all? If so, around what questions and campaigns? This is an important gauge for evaluating our progress toward building revolutionary parties.

The current document is much weaker on this question than the other recent documents on perspectives in Europe, which dealt at length with the need to be alert for openings to carry out fraction work in the mass workers parties and youth groups. For example, the statement "On Tactics in Europe" adopted by the majority of the United Secretariat in January 1970 declared that "the new orientation set by the European sections continues to require them to follow attentively all developments in the mass organizations of the working class, especially inside the trade unions but also inside the mass parties claiming to represent the workers. The need for continuing or beginning fraction work inside these organizations must be examined at each specific stage in the class struggle, taking into consideration the forces at our disposal, the opportunities, the perspectives for the class struggle in the short and medium term, and the differentiation within the working class." (*Intercontinental Press*, March 23, 1970, p. 261.) Does this still hold? If so, shouldn't the European resolution say so?

Concerning our smaller opponents on the left, the document says nothing, except to note their existence and observe that the left often shifts and changes.

In countries like France, England, and Italy we face the very difficult task of overcoming the obstacles created by such groups as the Socialist Labour League, the International Socialists, the Organisation Communiste Internationaliste, Lutte Ouvrière, and Avanguardia Operaio. Such a task cannot be carried through by ideological exposure and propagandistic denunciation alone—or by indifference and inertia. It will almost surely require organizational measures involving constant pressure for united actions, regroupments, fusions, and new splits. What progress have we made?

What, for example, is the balance sheet on the fusion negotiations between the Ligue Communiste and Lutte Ouvrière? After being discussed and strongly approved by the December 1970 IEC, the International has heard nothing further. Why did the unity negotiations fail?

Evaluating the work of our opponents is particularly important in relation to the question of a youth organization. What about the Lambertists, who claim to have 3,000 members in their youth organization, the AJS [Alliance de Jeunes pour le Socialisme—Alliance of Youth for Socialism]? What kind of youth are they attracting? Does this pose any special kind of challenge to us?

What about the Labour Party youth in Britain? They are the base of the Revolutionary Socialist League, which is one of the flourishing "Trotskyist" sects in Britain.

What about the SPD youth in Germany? How do we evaluate their evolution? Are there any possible openings for fraction work there, given their leftward course?

Regardless of the precise answers we could give to these

questions after some thought and discussion, it is obvious that the youth organizations of our opponents and of the traditional workers parties pose a whole range of special problems on which we should have a clear perspective.

In fact the European document does not even pose these problems or indicate that they are crucial tests for us on the road to the construction of revolutionary parties.

As with the problems of building a class-struggle left wing in the trade unions, constructing revolutionary youth organizations, intervening in the radicalized women's movement, or working in the armed forces, the document fails to take up the real and concrete aspects of party building in Europe today.

### 'Violent Minority Actions'

Let us turn now to one of the most important questions being debated in the European movement—a question so vital that it can prove fateful for our sections in the immediate future. The issue is what several comrades of the Ligue Communiste refer to as the need for "a deliberate somewhat voluntaristic initiative by the vanguard" to reintroduce "violence" into the class struggle. [See Appendix, "The Debate in the Ligue Communiste."]

This idea is not developed clearly in the European document, but the essence is included in Section 19, which states: "The spirit in which our sections will have to educate the entire mass vanguard moreover, is this: to show the bourgeoisie *in practice* that the price it will have to pay for any attempt to establish an open dictatorship will be a civil war in which both camps will use *arms*." (p. 25. Emphasis added.)

One interpretation of this line has already been initiated in France to a sufficient degree to indicate what it entails.

The May 13, 1972, issue of *Rouge*, the official paper of the French section of the Fourth International, prominently featured a "last minute" news bulletin that announced:

"In response to the intensification of imperialist aggression in Indochina, on Wednesday, May 10, at 6:30 a.m. revolutionary militants attacked the offices of Honeywell-Bull and the machine display at the Trade Center. Molotov cocktails were thrown and the machines were seriously damaged. Simultaneously, a similar action took place against the Toulouse headquarters of Honeywell-Bull.

"The Ligue Communiste supports and salutes the revolutionary militants who have thus demonstrated their determination not to let the new arrogance of imperialism go unanswered. By these acts they have denounced the war profiteers who furnish the matériel for imperialist aggression. And they have demonstrated their solidarity with the Indochinese people—at the very moment when the French government was trying vainly to ban the mass demonstrations that took place Wednesday night."

On September 2, 1972, *Rouge* carried another special article, which approvingly reproduced the press release issued by a commando squad that firebombed the Argentine embassy in Paris, following the murder of the Argentine comrades in Trelew. As *Rouge* reported it:

"In France in the dawn hours of August 25 revolutionary Marxist militants attacked the Argentine embassy with Molotov cocktails. The following communiqué was



issued by these revolutionists shortly after their actions:

"Today revolutionary Marxist militants attacked the Argentine embassy in Paris. This symbolic action is part of the worldwide wave of protest developing in the wake of the savage murder of sixteen unarmed Argentine revolutionists by the mercenaries of Lanusse. On the defensive today politically, the imperialists and their watchdogs are escalating their extortions and crimes in Latin America and throughout the world.

"They will not go unpunished because the day is near when the Argentine and Latin American masses, mobilized by their vanguard on the road of revolutionary war, will sound the death knell of the murderers' system and make them pay the full retribution for their accumulated debt of blood.

"Long live the Argentine socialist revolution.

"Long live the Latin American revolution.

"Hasta la victoria siempre. Venceremos.

"Cuarta Internacional"

The signature of the communiqué falsely gave the impression that this was an action approved by the Fourth International and carried out by its forces.

The rationale for such actions has been explained at length in a number of articles in *Rouge*.

For example, the June 10, 1972, issue carried an article entitled "Terrorism and Revolution" by Daniel Bensaïd, a member of the Political Bureau of the Ligue. He states:

"As far as we're concerned, we have not hesitated to resort to violent minority actions when the actions were tied up with mass activity. In December 1970, at the time of the Burgos verdict, the Ligue Communiste supported the attack of a group of militants against the Bank of Spain, but that was parallel with leading the mass campaign 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 we supported the action led by militants against the firms profiting from the U.S. war. But this was parallel with systematic mass work on behalf of the Indochinese revolution, within the framework of the FSI [Front Solidarité Indochine—Indochina Solidarity Front] in particular."

Such actions, we are told, have a basis in theory—the theory of the "dialectics of mass violence and minority violence." According to this "theory," violent actions organized by a small group can show the way, stimulate actions by the masses of workers through raising their combativity, and prove to the workers that they can and should use violence on a mass scale.

For example the June 10 article takes up the question of kidnapping factory owners or supervisors. "It is clear that the occupation of a factory that mobilizes a mass of workers to control the means of production and eventually passes over to active administration has a far greater significance than the kidnapping of a supervisor or a boss.... 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 a passivity and resignation of the masses by beginning to overthrow its hierarchical idols, then kidnapping can be a correct initiative the workers ought to defend and even in certain cases promote."

According to this theory, it should be noted, the Sallustro kidnapping was correct, and a similar type of action in France or anywhere else would also be correct. Unlike some of the other supporters of the guerrilla warfare line for Latin America, Comrade Bensaïd has the virtue of at least being consistent.

We should begin by disposing of the idea that this supposedly new theory of the "dialectics of mass violence and minority violence" has anything in common with Leninism. The idea that violent actions by a small group can show the way and stimulate mass actions of the workers is as old as the workers movement itself. Just because Comrade Bensaïd has given it a contemporary suit of clothes and a new "Marxist" name, "dialectics of minority violence and mass violence," does not make it either new or dialectical.

The execution of an infamous police agent or the kidnapping of a bitterly hated industrial tycoon, is not fundamentally different from the assassination of a czarist official in the 1870s or 1880s. It is an action carried out by a tiny clandestine band of individuals (indeed it must be) and directed against an individual representative of the oppressor class. The masses participate only as spectators, not as active agents. Such actions can at times be popular with masses of workers, as it was in some cases of assassination of czarist officials. But it is precisely because the masses are involved only as spectators that the Marxist movement since its foundation has opposed such actions.

But, argues Bensaïd, the difference is that an action like the hypothetical kidnapping described in *Rouge* is not conceived of or intended as an isolated action, an end in itself. It has a dialectical relationship with mass violence, i.e., it is designed to accustom the workers to use violence, to increase their combativity, the "insolence" of the masses. It is not a substitute for mass action but is carried out along with mass action, and psychologically paves the way for armed mass action.

In reality, this is nothing but a "sophisticated" version of the old anarchist "propaganda of the deed" argument, recast in Marxist terminology.

Bensaïd's supposed innovation that "minority violence" is somehow different if it is conducted alongside mass actions is as old as the Marxist movement itself. For example, in *The Young Lenin* Trotsky describes how the Narodnaya Volya (People's Will) in 1879 decided they would devote only one-third of their resources to preparing assassinations. The other two-thirds were to be devoted to work among the masses. (*The Young Lenin*, Trotsky, Doubleday, 1972, p. 33.)

Lenin found himself polemicizing against just such positions when they were put forward by the Socialist Revolutionaries.

"The April 3 [1902] leaflet [issued by the Party of the Socialist Revolutionaries] follows the pattern of the terrorists' 'latest' arguments with remarkable accuracy. The first thing that strikes the eye is the words: 'we advocate terrorism, not in place of work among the masses, but precisely for and simultaneously with that work.' They strike the eye particularly because these words are printed in letters three times as large as the rest of the text... It is all really so simple! One has only to set 'not in place of, but together with' in bold type—and all the ar-

guments of the Social-Democrats, all that history has taught, will fall to the ground." ("Revolutionary Adventurism," *Collected Works*, Volume 6, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1961, p. 190.)

## The Dialectics of 'Minority Violence'

In his June 10 article, Comrade Bensaid tries to throw everything into the same pot, to draw an equation between firebombs at the Argentine embassy and helping the workers to organize picket squads to defend a strike against the bosses or the fascist-type goon squads of the CFT [Confédération Française des Travailleurs—French Confederation of Workers]. *But the two types of action are not twins, they are political opposites.* Firebombing the Argentine embassy is the action of a small clandestine band of revolutionists who operate independently of the workers movement. Organizing picket squads is an action in which revolutionists inside the workers movement use their knowledge and leadership capacities in direct association with the workers in organizing an effective action in the class struggle.

The Argentine embassy action has *nothing* in common politically with other types of actions that sometimes result in violent confrontations with fascists, Stalinists, or Zionist zealots—such as defending our right to sell our press outside factory gates, in marketplaces, or wherever; organizing a defense squad to prevent our meetings from being broken up; or marshaling our demonstrations to defend them against attack. Such actions have a defensive character. They are designed to protect our fundamental right to function as a political organization. The onus for initiating violence rests on our opponents. And defensive actions of this kind provide the broad workers movement a correct example of how to defend itself.

Actions such as those at the Argentine embassy or Honeywell-Bull do not teach the ruling class the "lesson" that they should refrain from trying to impose a bloodthirsty dictatorship. Even less do they demonstrate to the masses of workers how they can organize themselves to wage an effective struggle.

As for the rulers, they learned long ago that it is in *their* interests to promote such activities by revolutionary groups, because acts of exemplary "minority violence" make it easier to isolate and destroy these organizations. It will take something much more effective than Molotov cocktails thrown by small clandestine groups to convince the ruling class that it should refrain from imposing a bloodthirsty dictatorship.

As for the workers, they decide to use means of struggle involving violence only when the need for such measures arises in the course of their own mass struggles.

Actions like those at the Argentine embassy or Honeywell-Bull are in no way related to the needs of the masses or any section of the masses. They do not organically grow out of developing mass struggles. They are not necessary to advance any struggles. They are completely arbitrary, "voluntaristic" acts carried out by a small group of militants operating clandestinely. The idea that such actions are correct as long as they can be related to some campaign of mass action is simply a repetition of the urban and rural guerrilla warfare schema tried out in Latin America, where armed units led by the party set

out to "link up" with the struggles of the masses by engaging in "exemplary" guerrilla skirmishes.

The second major fallacy of the "dialectics of mass violence and minority violence" as a guide to action for a revolutionary nucleus is the idea that it is possible for the same tiny organization to carry out *both* mass work *and* small armed actions over an extended period of time.

There is a logical course built into the evolution of a small revolutionary organization that starts out on the road of "voluntaristic minority violence"—precisely because such acts do not grow out of the fundamental needs of the mass struggles. The example of the Argentine PRT-ERP [Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores-Ejército Revolucionario del Pueblo—Revolutionary Workers Party-People's Revolutionary Army] is the most recent and graphic example.

The arbitrary, "voluntaristic" initiation of violent actions opens the door to adventuristic acts that can escalate, lead to terrorism and the substitution of such acts for the mobilization of the masses in struggle. Using means of struggle involving violence is not a moral question with us. It is a matter of politics. We decide on the basis of whether it helps advance the consciousness, confidence and fighting capacity of the masses of workers, whether it aids in the construction of a mass revolutionary party or not. The experience of more than a century of the workers movement is that the "voluntaristic" introduction of violence into the workers movement harms rather than helps the attainment of our objectives.

While such acts of violence by a handful may be ostensibly "linked to political objectives," they have their own logic and develop along their own path—from window-breaking sprees to Molotov cocktails, to plastic explosives, to kidnappings, to assassinations, etc. At first, it may seem like the ruling class hardly pays attention. They may even tolerate, if not abet, certain kinds of actions for some time, as they increase their deployment of agents-provocateurs. But then *they* choose the moment most politically advantageous for *them*, move in, and try to isolate and crush the organization.

It is not correct to draw a parallel with working in countries like Spain or Portugal, where all revolutionary political activity is underground. By embarking on the "minority violence" course, comrades are forced underground (or, as in Argentina, deeper underground) *artificially or unnecessarily*. Often the organization itself is banned while other political groups continue to function openly and enjoy the advantages of legality. Any kind of mass work becomes more and more difficult, especially if the repression is directed against only one or two groups. The problem of sheer physical survival becomes increasingly important, program and perspectives less and less relevant, "military cliques" and adventurers more numerous, and the political disintegration of the organization proceeds apace.

Such an evolution is not automatically predetermined. Some groups embarking on the road of "minority violence" turn back without traveling the full course. But from the People's Will to the Saor Eire to the PRT-ERP and the Tupamaros, this downsliding has been repeated many times in the history of the workers movement.

Embarking on a course of "voluntaristic minority vio-

lence" has a second result as well. Such actions increasingly isolate revolutionary Marxist militants from their only possible source of protection—their ability to mobilize a significant, massive defense effort.

Any revolutionary party knows that the more effective it becomes, the more it can anticipate "selective state repression." This is nothing new or unique to the present epoch; it has been true ever since the rise of the workers movement. We carefully prepare to fight back *politically* against this repression by always acting in such a way that the onus for initiating and using violence against the mass movement or the revolutionary forces lies with the ruling class and its agents. We try to foster a climate of solidarity with all victims of repression, whether we agree with their politics and activities or not. We take the lead in organizing defense campaigns on the principle that an injury to one is the concern of all.

But it is always difficult to create a broad defense effort on behalf of an organization that has been carrying on a campaign for and around the use of "minority violence." Support evaporates because the actions the revolutionary militants have engaged in are not understood by the masses of workers. The will to defend them hardly exists on a broad scale because the workers do not consider the actions to be "their own."

Of course, if the initiation of "minority violence" did serve to spark effective revolutionary action by the working class then it would be justified, despite the isolation and repression it invites. That is precisely the point; theory and experience do not justify it. Moreover, far from pointing the way to effective action by the working class, actions like Honeywell-Bull and the Argentine embassy *mis-educate* the workers.

The oppressed and exploited masses do not learn how to effectively combat the violence of the rulers simply by hearing or reading that some revolutionary Marxist militants have "voluntaristically" thrown some firebombs someplace. If the workers learn anything, it will be a negative lesson that such actions only give the government a convenient handle with which to attack a revolutionary organization.

As Comrade Roger explained in the course of the recent debate over some of these questions in the Ligue Communiste, "How many times have we seen cases of neighboring factories where the workers movement in one has experienced battle with the CRS [special police] and where in another one very nearby, the workers only 'discover' violence the moment it reaches them. . . ."

"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." ("Contribution to the Debate After Document No. 30," by Roger, *Bulletin d'Histoire et de Sociologie du XXe Siècle*, No. 33, 1972, p. 5.) [See Appendix, "The Debate in the Ligue Communiste."]

The Leninist method of educating the working masses in effective anticapitalist action is not through the exemplary action of small, clandestine groups, violent or otherwise. It is by organizing and *leading* the masses in struggle to

achieve their demands. As those struggles unfold, the masses themselves come to understand the need to defend their interests against the violence of the rulers. As that point approaches, we help the masses to organize *their* defense of *their* struggles.

As in every other aspect of the struggles of the masses, we play a *vanguard* role. We take the initiative *within the masses* on such questions as the formation of strike pickets and workers militias or, in certain situations, guerrilla units to defend the mass struggles of the peasants. We take these initiatives as members of the *mass* organizations, and in the name of the *mass* organizations, even if initially few besides ourselves are involved. The course followed by Hugo Blanco in Peru and the course followed by the Trotskyist leaders of the 1934 teamsters strike in Minneapolis offer instructive examples.

We recognize that the central problem is the *political* education of the workers, not the technical preparations or "exemplary" small-scale, isolated actions.

The average French worker would have been infinitely more impressed with the Ligue Communiste if it had been able to march a demonstration of 20,000 to the Argentine embassy to denounce the murder of our comrades at Trelew. But the Ligue Communiste couldn't do that because it is too small, too weak. And that is precisely the point. The firebombing of the Argentine embassy, which the Ligue Communiste hailed, was an act born out of weakness and frustration, not out of strength. It is what Lenin would have labeled an "infantile" reaction. And that is precisely how the masses of French workers must have interpreted it also.

## The Majority of the International Leadership Remains Silent

When the largest section of the Fourth International begins dabbling with the theory of exemplary armed action initiated by the party; when it carries this line in its press; and when it lends support to adventurist actions such as those at the Argentine embassy and Honeywell-Bull—it is incumbent upon the leadership of the International to oppose these activities and explain why they can only lead into a blind alley.

Far from doing this, the majority of the United Secretariat has either said nothing or strongly affirmed their support for these actions favored by the Ligue Communiste.

Now, by advising that we must educate the vanguard to teach the bourgeoisie in practice that we are ready to use arms, the European document puts forward a formula that can only encourage the further development of adventurist tendencies. This formula represents an extension of the Latin American guerrilla warfare line applied to the current European situation.

Even the rationale for this line is the same as that advanced to justify the guerrilla warfare line in Latin America: "History has shown that from any point of view, such an eventuality [open civil war] is preferable to an institutionalized civil war in the form of a bloodthirsty dictatorship where the bourgeois camp murders and tortures at will, while the proletariat and the worker militants, disarmed and disoriented, stand by helplessly and watch the massacre of their own." (Section 19, p. 25.)

No one can take exception to such a noble sentiment,

which has motivated rebels for many centuries. "Give me liberty or give me death." "Patria o muerte." "Before I'll be a slave I'll be buried in my grave." This resolve has been expressed in many moving ways.

However, given the current opportunities for revolutionary work and party building in Europe, it does not reflect a very optimistic outlook.

In a document orienting the activities of the Fourth International in Europe for the immediate period ahead of us, what is required is a definition of tasks based on the real perspective—the existence of an excellent opportunity to strengthen the existing revolutionary nuclei and root them in the masses.

Prosaic as it may appear, this approach is far more revolutionary than an emotional appeal on the desirability of preparing to "take some of them with us when we go."

### Let's Discuss the Real Issues

In the European sections of the Fourth International, discussion on many of the questions raised by the European document has been underway for some time, but the exchange of views within the International as a whole on those questions is just beginning. The scope of the issues and their importance points toward a valuable discussion. But we must avoid abstractions. We must now take up the concrete issues that are producing tendency fights and even splits within the European sections, examine them, and see how they relate to the United Secretariat majority document on Europe.

Those who voted against the document in the United Secretariat and at the plenum of the International Executive Committee reject a number of the premises on which the document rests:

1. That all of Europe has only four to five years before the "decisive battles" are fought.

2. That our immediate party-building tasks can be derived from the situation that will come about if this assumed timetable proves to be accurate.

3. That we should turn away from many of the actual openings we have for intervention in important struggles such as the youth radicalization and the women's movement under the excuse that penetrating the factories takes priority.

4. That a single set of tasks can be projected for all of Europe, regardless of the varying size of our forces and the different objective situations we face in each country.

5. That we cannot anticipate large scale recruitment prior to a revolutionary upsurge and that our task must therefore be to transform the "vanguard" by orienting to its concerns.

6. That we should begin now, regardless of our size or other factors, to teach the bourgeoisie in practice that we will use arms.

These premises represent an extension of the mistaken party-building orientation outlined for another continent,

Latin America, at the last world congress.

The discussion on European perspectives and orientation is not fundamentally about "Europe." It is about differing approaches to and perspectives on party building. As with the Latin American discussion, it is only the concrete test of time and experience that will thoroughly clarify what the differences mean in practice and what they point to. However, the European discussion starts on a different level, precisely because the Latin American discussion preceded it. It is not necessary to repeat the errors made in Latin America. We can learn from them and move forward.

The class struggle is unmistakably on the rise in Europe. Events in each country will spill over and affect developments in others, including countries outside Europe. There will be new events paralleling and even surpassing those of May 1968 in France. But it is difficult to schedule revolutionary situations according to timetables, and we cannot predict in advance when and where the decisive openings for us will occur.

The central task before us is to take the next steps in the process of transforming our small nuclei of revolutionary forces into mass Trotskyist parties. We should proceed to do this by applying the method of the Transitional Program, i.e., by intervening in and leading the struggles of the masses as and where they develop, without prescribing a preconceived formula as to which will be important and which will be "diversions" in the process of assembling the basic cadre of a mass revolutionary party.

The alternative to "The Building of Revolutionary Parties in Capitalist Europe" is not an omnibus counterdocument for all of Europe. We reject this approach, just as we rejected the idea of a continental counterdocument on Latin America. It was only as we concretized the discussion around perspectives for revolutionary struggle in Bolivia and alternative roads to the construction of revolutionary parties in Argentina that the differences became clear.

The attempt to write a single perspectives and orientation document applicable to more than 15 European countries whose social, political, economic, and historical problems diverge as widely as those of Spain from Austria, Ireland from Luxembourg, and Greece from Sweden, can only produce a document so rigid as to be seriously disorienting or so ambiguous and abstract as to be easily misinterpreted — or both.

As with the debate on Latin America, it is only when the discussion becomes concretized around the political analyses and experiences of the various sections in Europe that the meaning of the European document will be clarified.

The next step in the discussion must be contributions from the European comrades to bring out these real issues that have already given rise to alternative party-building perspectives, tendency struggles, and splits in important sections.

## Appendix:

### The Debate in the Ligue Communiste

The document "The Building of Revolutionary Parties in Capitalist Europe" avoids any reference to the real debates taking place within the European sections and groups today. It avoids any attempt to draw a balance sheet on any aspect of the activities of our sections and groups in the last four years. With one or two exceptions, it does not even refer to any activity actually engaged in, or provide examples drawn from experiences, in order to illustrate what it considers correct.

This abstractness makes it possible for the document to serve as a platform for a combination of divergent tendencies within the various sections and groups, many of which have sharp differences over perspectives for the construction of sections of the Fourth International in their own country. For example, in the International Marxist Group (at the present writing) there are three distinct tendencies within the so-called "majority." They have not been able to agree on a common perspectives document for Britain. Yet each claims to be correctly interpreting the line of "The Building of Revolutionary Parties in Capitalist Europe," as applied to Britain.

This is not necessarily a maneuver by one or another of these groupings. The abstractness and obscurantism of the European document is one of the features that makes it necessary to go outside the framework of the document to try to decipher its meaning. We have to look at the concrete activities and discussions in the European sections and groups in order to judge how well the document actually reflects the real issues, concerns, and problems they face.

In that respect, the political debate that began in the Ligue Communiste prior to its December 1972 convention is of particular importance and relevance to the International discussion. While the discussion was artificially aborted, it began to open up a series of questions that vitally affect the future of the Ligue. A knowledge of that discussion is essential for comrades to begin to understand the kinds of questions and problems the European document covers up and avoids.

With a refreshing frankness and directness, four comrades from the Ligue's central committee (one of whom, Comrade Jebracq, is also a member of the Political Bureau and the International Executive Committee) raised a series of problems they felt the Ligue must deal with "in an attempt to probe the future." ("Is the Question of Power Posed? Let's Pose It!" by Antony, Arthur, Jebracq, and Stéphane, *Bulletin d'Histoire et de Sociologie du XXe Siècle*, No. 30, June 1972, p. 4.)

#### A Rejection of Leninism

Bulletin No. 30 begins by ruling out the possibility of building a revolutionary mass party in the period lying ahead.

To prove this point the four authors argue that there will be no repeat of the "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....

"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." (Ibid., p.4.)

Given the "double-lock" of the strong state and a powerful Stalinist party, the authors argue, there will be no "slowly maturing working-class consciousness," no "long experience of workers' control during which a legal revolutionary organization could pull the chestnuts out of the fire.... the government cannot tolerate a threatening expansion of the vanguard." (Ibid., p. 4.)

Faced with the impossibility of building a mass revolutionary party plus a growing danger of selective repression by extralegal fascist-type gangs, the authors of the article ask whether it is correct to maintain a legal existence for long. Under the circumstances, they argue, serious consideration must be given to deciding when the Ligue should go underground.

"...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 aren't 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.*" (Ibid., p. 4. Emphasis in the original.)

In other words, the time is coming when being a legal party may be too restrictive for extralegal activities, and it may be necessary to sacrifice legality in order to continue with illegal actions. The assumption that we can't build a mass revolutionary party in time anyway gives a certain logic to this fatalistic and defeatist position.

The article goes on to reject the idea that we can look to the history of the Russian revolution or the Bolshevik Party for guides to the problems in France. There is a big "technical" difference, they argue. The Russian revolution—like the German revolution of 1918—took place in "a specific military context in which the proletariat is either already armed, or supported militarily by other social forces" [i.e., the czar's peasant army]. (Ibid., p. 4.) But in France the situation is radically different. "We stress the fact that the proletariat is economically exploited,

politically oppressed, ideologically dominated. We forget to say that it is also militarily dominated...." (Ibid., p. 5.)

The authors do not flinch from drawing the conclusions of this line of reasoning. They implicitly reject the Transitional Program. They implicitly reject the Leninist concept of armed struggle, the Leninist perspective on how a revolutionary party proceeds to arm the proletariat for the seizure of power.

Bulletin No. 30 argues, "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." (Ibid., p. 5.)

By way of class contrast, bulletin No. 30 holds that "the peasantry is more supple and has greater capacity for evasive action.... 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." (Ibid., p. 5.)

In a later document the four authors indicate they went too far in this passage on the violence-prone attributes of the peasantry and urban middle classes. "It is true that the problem was approached from a 'militarist' perspective," they admit. They did not intend to "attribute to the peasantry an offensive capacity, in principle superior to that of the proletariat and decisive in a period of revolutionary crisis." ("Un point, c'est tout!" by Jebracq, Antony, Stéphane, Arthur, *Bulletin d'Histoire et de Sociologie du XXe Siècle*, No. 38, October 1972, p. 19.)

But this retraction does not change the essence of their position. The key problem the authors pose is this: The workers are not inclined to offensive military action and their struggles naturally give rise only to defensive organs. Therefore, if one "conceives of the revolutionary crisis... 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." (*Bulletin*, No. 30, p. 5.)

"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." (Ibid., p. 5.)

This is plain enough. Whoever wants to avoid a propagandistic deviation on armed struggle must begin to act as a military vanguard *now*.

The authors point out that this has obvious ramifications for the entire construction of the revolutionary party. "If we are talking about an orientation of armed struggle... then this fact affects the whole process of constructing the party." (Ibid., p. 7.)

"For us... 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....

"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, intervention groups." (Ibid., pp. 8-9.)

And the document calls attention to the danger of "'military' cliques beginning to operate independently and departing further and further from the general context of our work." (Ibid., p. 9.)

Throughout this notable document, it remains unclear what the authors propose to do about the fact that, according to their analysis, we cannot hope to build a mass Trotskyist party in France prior to a revolutionary showdown.

Is a mass revolutionary party no longer needed? Will some other "adequate instrument" take its place? The closest they come to resolving this dilemma is a rather interesting attempt to redefine the Leninist party. "The Leninist party is not synonymous with the revolutionary party of the 'classical schema,' but of the proletarian revolution in general." (Ibid., p. 5.)

Such a definition constitutes a rejection of the need for a party constructed on the Bolshevik model — the *raison d'être* of the Fourth International as the World Party of Socialist Revolution. It substitutes pragmatic criteria for those of historical materialism. It rejects *program* as the fundamental criteria for defining a revolutionary party. In effect, such a definition means: if it takes power, it's a Leninist party; if it doesn't, it's not a Leninist party.

That definition immediately transforms Tito's Communist League and Mao's Stalinist Chinese Communist Party as well as the July 26th Movement into Leninist parties. And, to be consistent, by that definition the Trotskyist Left Opposition could not be considered a Leninist formation.

## In Defense of the Working Class

Two things about bulletin No. 30 are of special importance. One is the obvious parallel between the perspectives raised by Antony, Arthur, Jebracq, and Stéphane for France, and the line for Latin America adopted by the last world congress. The four comrades are being consistent in drawing the conclusions of this strategic line for the advanced capitalist countries as well, and honestly raising it for discussion. As they emphasize, it has immediate practical consequences for every aspect of work and the character of the political-military organization they are trying to build.

The second important thing to note is that this not unexpected contribution to the Ligue Communiste discussion did not go unchallenged. One comrade in the Political Bureau, Comrade Roger, responded sharply.

"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.... 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, 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, young 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 mass initiatives by the working class...."

We would only add that document No. 30 does not present a new conception of the party but a direct extension to Europe of the concept advanced by the Latin American resolution of the last world congress and carried to its logical conclusion by the PRT-ERP.

[In footnote number 1, Comrade Roger indicated that he considered actions such as those linked to Indochina work and those that took place during the Burgos trial of the Basque nationalists in December 1970 to be correct initiatives. He held that such actions were correct because they had the support and understanding of a mass movement.]

"At bottom," Roger goes on, "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...."

"...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 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 mighty 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 the nerve centers in manufacturing and services. . . .

"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...."

"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." ("Contribution to the Debate After Document No. 30," by Roger, *Bulletin d'Histoire et de Sociologie du XXe Siècle*, No. 33, 1972, pp. 4-5.)

## Issues Papered Over

Unfortunately, soon after Comrade Roger's contribution, this very instructive and important discussion on the perspectives and problems of the French revolution, was brought to a halt. Instead of recognizing that the contribution made by Comrades Antony, Arthur, Jebracq, and Stéphane represented a fundamental departure from Marxism, instead of meeting that challenge head-on, the leadership of the Ligue drafted a political resolution that completely avoided all these crucial questions, under the

pretext that they were diverting the discussion. The political theses were adopted with both Roger and Jebracq voting for them. Thus the entire discussion was swept under the rug instead of being threshed out in the open. Understandably, this sequence of events caused a certain amount of unease within the ranks of the Ligue Communiste.

The line put forward in bulletin No. 30 was never adopted by any body of the Ligue Communiste, but neither was it formally rejected. Comrades Jebracq, Antony, Stéphane, and Arthur submitted a further "clarification" of their views in which they said these had been hastily formulated and were thus open to misinterpretation. However, they rejected the request of the Political Bureau to undertake a self-criticism. (I refrain from comment on the peculiar character of such a "request," which is entirely alien to the traditions of Leninism.) They felt their original contribution outlining the problems facing the Ligue Communiste was fundamentally correct.

"Text No. 30," they wrote, "has already given rise to a number of false debates; often due to its imprecise formulations. Therefore the BP [Political Bureau] asked the four members of the CC [Central Committee] who signed it to produce a self-criticism, in order to distinguish between that which flows from political errors and that which flows from incorrect interpretations. After carefully rereading all the texts, we prefer to speak of a clarification rather than a self-criticism. Not through any desire to save face, but because with the exception of two important slips, we hold to our initial problématique." ("Un point, c'est tout!" by Jebracq, Antony, Stéphane, Arthur, *Bulletin d'Histoire et de Sociologie du XXe Siècle*, No. 38, October 1972, p. 17.)

The two "slips" the four authors pointed to were certain "imprecisions concerning the peasantry and the new urban layers," and the imprecise use of terms such as "armed struggle, prolonged revolutionary war, civil war." (Ibid., p. 19.)

There the matter rests. But the issues posed cannot be disposed of so lightly.

We have still to hear from all but a few of the members of the Political Bureau of the Ligue Communiste concerning the views expressed in bulletin No. 30, which reject the very foundations on which the Fourth International has been built. Perhaps they simply have not had time.

However, unless otherwise indicated, we would eventually be obliged to conclude they are in essential agreement with bulletin No. 30, even if they, like Jebracq, consider some formulations to be hastily written and unfortunate "slips."

The debate over bulletin No. 30 roughly coincided with the drafting of the document on "The Building of Revolutionary Parties in Capitalist Europe." The leadership of the Ligue Communiste was involved in this drafting process. So the majority of the United Secretariat was certainly aware of the key problems of party building and orientation being posed and discussed in the largest section of Europe.

The European document papers over these, and other, real and pressing questions. It ignores the existence of deep disagreements that could lead to serious divisions at a later period.

This will prove to be a great disservice to the European and world Trotskyist movement. The only basis on which any party can move forward with a solid foundation for *real* growth is through clarifying and resolving deepgoing political and organizational differences. The attempt to sidestep them can only lead to more explosive and damaging internal developments in the future.

Why is it that in France and elsewhere, comrades who have widely divergent perspectives for work in their own country all claim to base themselves on the European document? The most generous explanation is that "The Building of Revolutionary Parties in Capitalist Europe" is so ambiguous that it is susceptible to opposing interpretations—a grievous and intolerable fault in a guide to action. It can serve as the platform for a combination of tendencies (how principled remains to be seen) only because it camouflages rather than clarifies the experiences and the disputes within the European sections.

February 27, 1973



# Two Lines, Two Methods

By George Novack

Every serious theoretical and political dispute within the workers movement and its vanguard implicitly or explicitly poses the question of the methods used by the respective tendencies which have brought them to divergent orientations. That is the case with the controversy over political analysis and party-building policy in Latin America that has unfolded inside the Fourth International since 1969. The conflicting lines defended by the majority and minority at the Third World Congress Since Reunification (Ninth World Congress) resulted from the use of different methods. The application of these different methods has yielded very different results in analysis and practice.

The approach of the majority is marked by traits commonly found in ultraleft thinking. It is schematic, dogmatic and one-sided—in a word, undialectical. It offered an oversimplified diagram of the complex and variable interactions of the class forces at work in Latin America and the possible range of their political manifestations. This led the majority to insist that regardless of the terrain it had to traverse, the locomotive of revolution would proceed along the single track of guerrilla warfare. The consequences of this arbitrary choice were disastrous.

The contrast between the methods of the majority and minority has been highlighted by what happened in Bolivia and Argentina since the two positions were counterposed at the congress. These experiences have been carefully examined in the document entitled: "Argentina and Bolivia—the Balance Sheet" submitted by Hugo Blanco, Peter Camejo, Joseph Hansen, Aníbal Lorenzo, and Nahuel Moreno. My contribution aims to supplement its findings with some comments on the methods involved.

## What the 1969 Resolution Called For

The 1969 resolution prescribed the formula of rural guerrilla warfare on a continental scale as the strategic line for revolutionary activity in Latin America over the next prolonged period. Technical preparations for this form of struggle was the pressing task assigned to all the Latin American sections of the Fourth International.

A salient characteristic of the Mandel-Maitan-Frank tendency is its inconsistency on this matter. The majority resolution plainly stated that "the principal axis for a whole period will be rural guerrilla warfare." That is what the minority opposed and voted against at the congress.

Now that this perspective has been discredited, its sponsors are trying to disown and disavow it. In his contribution, "In Defense of Leninism," Comrade Germain denies that such a line was ever put forward. The minority, he claims, misunderstands or misinterprets what the document is all about.

Only the naive and uninformed will be taken in by this gyration. Even Comrade Germain acknowledges that "there is no reason to deny that the 9th World Congress

resolution on Latin America contained several elliptical and synthetic formulas on rural guerrilla warfare and continental civil war open to various interpretations, which try to encompass too many different variants and successive stages of struggle into a single sentence or a couple of sentences."

This excuse won't hold water. What is involved is not literary ineptness but a political error. Comrade Germain's argumentation includes some shifts in formulations to camouflage the contradiction between the position the majority held in 1969 and the patching up they have been driven to since. His improvisation is unconvincing.

How ingenuous is his proposal to set everything straight: "Wouldn't it be more intelligent for the minority to claim that it succeeded in having the majority change its initial position—which we would deny. . . ." The minority spokesmen don't have to resort to such ruses or debater's points because we stand on exactly the same ground in 1973 as in 1969, whereas the majority must twist and turn in a frantic endeavor to cover up an untenable line.

## Its Mistakes in Method

Two things were wrong with their projected line on its very face. A guerrilla movement can legitimately be called for if it is warranted by certain special conditions of the class struggle, especially in countries with a heavily oppressed rural population that has not experienced an agrarian reform or has been occupied by a foreign conqueror. The Fourth International has as its strategical objective the conquest of power through the mobilization and organization of the masses. This necessitates building a bridge between the existing consciousness of the working class and the socialist program of revolution. It necessitates building a mass revolutionary Marxist party. It necessitates action on a mass scale. Guerrilla warfare can serve in a tactical way as one of the means to these ends. But it cannot be a general substitute for it. Multiple means of mass action, ranging from demonstrations and electoral campaigns to general strikes and armed urban insurrection, can take precedence over guerrillism in promoting the anticapitalist movement. The majority was wrong in principle to elevate that one tactic into a strategical line. Adding urban guerrilla war did not alleviate the error; it deepened it.

It was bad enough to substitute a subsidiary tactic for a strategy for the whole span of the mass movement prior to the revolutionary showdown in a single country. It was far worse to extend this error to cover an entire continent for a prolonged period, considering the considerable peculiarities in the conditions of countries as different as Guatemala and Chile, Brazil and Costa Rica, and the wide fluctuations in the class struggle from one stage to another.

Marxist policy should be based upon a concrete analysis of the given facts of the situation in all their complexity. The majority resolution did not follow this rule. It singled out those elements in the totality of conditions that pointed toward their preordained conclusion and discounted or disregarded weighty countervailing considerations. The one-sided schema of development that came out of this process of selection was unrealistic from the outset and, as it turned out, ran counter to the actual course of events.

Here were the principal features of the picture they drew of Latin America in 1969. The class struggle there had entered upon a historically new and higher stage: "prolonged civil war on a continental scale." The native bourgeoisies were incapable of even minimal independent action, had scant room for maneuver with the discontented masses, and lacked the resources for any significant economic concessions or democratic reforms. The pressures of imperialism drove in the same direction. Under these conditions, with some episodic exceptions, the sole political response of the ruling classes to the combativity of the masses had to be brutal repression in the form of military dictatorship.

The workers and peasants for their part were left with no alternative but to resort to armed confrontation with the capitalist regimes. Its principal axis would be rural guerrilla warfare. The proletarian vanguard should lose no time in reorienting itself accordingly.

This chain of reasoning was based upon certain palpable facts. As a rule, class relations are much tenser in the colonial and semicolonial countries and continents than in the imperialist metropolises. The Latin American possessing classes have far less economic and political resources than the imperialist giants to cushion the shocks of class conflict, and their Yankee backers are not inclined to make life more comfortable for them by loosening and lightening the chains of exploitation and extending ampler aid.

Explosive situations that pose the problem of power loom up more frequently, suddenly and sharply. Confronted with the menace of mass insurgency, the ruling classes, in the absence of other alternatives, traditionally count on the officer caste to intervene, bridle or crush the unruly masses, and stabilize the system of private ownership through military regimes.

The majority was correct to incorporate these factors into its analysis. Its methodological mistake was to transform long-range tendencies into absolutes and to slight the intermediate factors that dictate the choice of tactics best suited to advance the revolutionary movement at a given conjuncture. They violated the first maxim of Marxist thought: the truth is concrete.

### Sudden Turns and Tactical Reorientations

Their unilateral analysis and conclusions left out of calculation the ebbs and flows that characterize the entire process leading toward the decisive encounter between the classes. The death agony of capitalism, we have learned from Trotsky's writings and the experience of the past half-century, is punctuated by abrupt turns of events that open up new immediate perspectives and require rapid readjustment of tactical orientation by

the vanguard. This generalization applies with special force to countries as unstable as those in most of Latin America.

Frictions between different layers within the possessing classes and strong pressures from below can give rise to deep changes in the relationship of social forces and produce sudden shifts in the political situation. These turns can also be brought about by shifts of the epicenter of the anticapitalist struggle from the countryside to the cities, or from one sector of society to another. The initiative displayed by students, peasants, slum dwellers, or discontented elements among the lower middle classes can give these a leading role for a time and their resistance may act to energize the workers and other oppositional forces.

Such developments can oblige the ruling class to replace personalities at the head of state who are used up or played out in the eyes of the people. Thus from 1969 through 1970, after the death of Barrientos, a set of military figures (Ovando, Torres, Banzer) succeeded one another in Bolivia. The rulers can also switch from one type of regime to another, alternating repression with concessions, outright terror with reformist measures, however circumscribed, even within the framework of military rule, as in Peru and Bolivia. These swings can go as far left as a Popular Front regime, as Chile has demonstrated.

Since 1969 such oscillations from right to left have taken place to one degree or another, in one mode or another, in Argentina, Peru, Bolivia, Chile and Mexico, to cite only the most conspicuous and telling cases. These modifications in the method of rulership are not fortuitous or incidental. They are the political effects of deep disturbances that throw the regime off balance until a new equilibrium of class forces is attained.

These transitions from one regime to another present great challenges to the capacities of the revolutionary vanguard and can be of critical importance. A brusque move to the right can place the revolutionary party in mortal peril and force it into illegality. It must be fully prepared for this. On the other hand, a lurch to the left can offer highly favorable opportunities for party building and is ready-made for a broad and bold application of additional components of the Transitional Program.

The very fact that these interludes between the upsetting of one regime and the stabilization of another at the expense of the masses are precarious and can be short-lived make them all the more precious. No time should be lost in recognizing their emergence and, while they last, they must be exploited to the full for revolutionary gains. The ability to do this is one of the central tests of the calibre of a Leninist party.

### How the Majority Line Misguided Our Movement in Bolivia and Argentina

The harmful influence of the sectarian pattern and narrowed perspective enjoined by the majority has been most evident at such decisive turns along the road. An ocular defect called "tunnel vision" restricts the view of the observer to what lies straight ahead and shuts off what is happening in the whole field. So the blinkers imposed by the majority schema blanked out of sight those contra-

dictory factors arising from the alterations in social and political forces that impel the native ruling classes to try new ways and means of heading off, diverting, and controlling the upsurge of the masses. Thus for Bolivia they ruled out the possibilities of a reformist interlude or an urban insurrection with the categorical assertion that only guerrilla warfare was on the agenda.

When events contravened this perspective, it hung like a leaden weight on the POR(G), the Bolivian section of the Fourth International, holding it back and crippling its readiness to respond properly and promptly to the novel situation. Moreover, it committed the party to a different course of action, thus misguiding and disorienting the POR (González).

Saddled with the guerrilla panacea, the Bolivian comrades largely missed the possibilities of effective intervention in the formation and activity of the Popular Assembly. A little later the similarly incapacitated PRT (Combatiente) failed to move out boldly and take advantage of the opening to the masses provided by Lanusse's proposed arrangements for parliamentary elections. Both fumbled the chance to put forward the method of the Transitional Program to deal with the problems of a transitional period. No small measure of responsibility for these defaults lies with the misbegotten Ninth World Congress turn and the approval, tacit or explicit, of their activities by the United Secretariat majority and its followers.

Unlike Bolivia, in Argentina it proved possible to test the merits and demerits of the two lines under almost laboratory controlled conditions of political experimentation. Following the method of the Transitional Program of the Fourth International, the PRT (Verdad) seized the new possibilities created by the rising mass movement and the governmental concessions to acquire semilegality, merge with the PSA (Coral) and find a way to participate in the electoral campaign through its organization of the PST and its call for the formation of a class struggle Workers and Socialist Pole against all the bourgeois parties and class-collaborationist combinations. It has begun to build a youth movement and considerably increased its size, influence and prestige in all sectors of the radicalized population—especially in the plants in the main urban centers—as a result.

Bolsheviks have always attached great importance to tactics in the battle against the bourgeoisie. Whenever a bourgeois regime is forced to maneuver with the restive masses, a realistic revolutionary leadership has to counter with its own moves. When the Lanusse dictatorship shifted its tactics by calling national elections, the PST comrades demonstrated their flexibility by emerging from the underground and energetically engaging in public political and union activity with excellent results.

On the other hand, the PRT (Combatiente), fettered by its militarist dogma, was obviously disoriented by this unanticipated development, proved incapable of turning it to advantage, and simply abstained from participation. Abstentionism in general is not a revolutionary policy.

The Maitan-Mandel-Frank group has condemned Verdad's initiative on the grounds that it lent credibility to the parliamentary maneuver of the regime or, more vehemently, that it betrayed the guerrillas. Since neither

participation in elections nor fusing with a left centrist group to win its members to revolutionary Marxism are wrong in principle, these steps have to be judged by the conduct of the party and the fruits of its activity. Do the critics seriously maintain that Combatiente's abstentionism did more to combat Lanusse and expose Peronism than Verdad's intervention in the elections through its merger with the Coral group? The results do not warrant such a judgment. The Verdad comrades did extremely well in both the merger and the election without infringing a single principle. Their example should be studied, not censured or ignored by other sections of our movement.

## The Exceptions Are the Rule

The sum and substance of the majority formula was: military "gorillas" versus rural guerrillas for an extended period on a continental scale. Other variants of political development were ruled out as ephemeral or insignificant. The flux and tumult of political life was enclosed in a small box. The opposing camps would each proceed along one and the same direction: the rulers toward harsh, unyielding military dictatorship and the oppressed toward guerrillaism. Any zigzags by either side were written off in advance as of no account. There was to be no meaningful deviation from the predetermined pattern. The people's war would wind its way through the countryside and later onto the concrete pavements of the urban centers—but, alas, removed from the concrete course of the class struggle.

The inadequacy of the majority conception has been exposed by the other variants that have emerged since 1969: Popular Fronts versus conservative bourgeois parties (Chile, Uruguay); military reformists versus insurgent workers and peasants (Bolivia and Peru); a temporary tryout of the parliamentary gambit (Argentina and Venezuela). Meanwhile relative stability has prevailed under the two very different regimes of Mexico and Brazil. The exceptions to the 1969 perspective have proved to be the rule.

The majority line left open no room for a return of the Peronists to office via the parliamentary road, made possible by the March 1973 election. If realized, the second edition of Peronism would usher in a distinctly new chapter in Argentine politics and in the class struggle. How would guerrillaism, which even some Left Peronists have engaged in, fit such a situation?

How could the dogmatists of guerrillaism directed toward marginal areas in the mountains or countryside, or engagement in marginal acts such as kidnappings, hijacking and distribution of meat and milk, cope with such developments centered in the mass struggles of the cities, factories, and the universities as well as the mining regions? How can the proletarian vanguard be expected to conduct any consistent and effective struggle for democratic demands, immediate measures or transitional slogans intended to activate the masses when all its forces and resources, and the fundamental education of its members, are enlisted in preparations for guerrilla warfare?

The Transitional Program has been elaborated to promote and direct the action of masses along revolutionary lines. Within that framework guerrilla warfare has a place as an exceptional tactic adapted to special and limited

situations. The majority line overturned these relations. By making guerrilla warfare the rule, it perforce subordinated the organization and action of the masses to this tactic. What was happening, or about to happen, elsewhere receded in importance and urgency.

This reversal of priorities had no warrant in Marxist tradition or the teachings of Trotskyism. It was made plausible and palatable only by the Cuban precedent. The majority, along with others, sought to duplicate and extend the tactics—as they understand them—that led to victory in Cuba to the rest of Latin America. They did so, not too little, but far too late. There has already been fourteen years of experience with rural (and urban) guerrilla warfare without a principled Marxist political program and the building of a vanguard party. All without exception have been negative and costly.

The bitter irony is that, after the manifest failure of rural guerrilla warfare (or its sequel, urban guerrilla terrorism), the majority made it the keystone of its policy. Instead of drawing a balance sheet of the results since 1959 and explaining the reasons for the reverses, the majority patched together the worn-out clothes of Guevarism and distributed them to the Latin American Trotskyists. This had a fatal logic. It meant dropping without explanation or justification the method of the Transitional Program.

### Wishful Thinking Versus Objective Judgment

Sectarian schematism goes hand in hand with voluntarism and subjectivism. The most flagrant example is the assertion motivating the conduct of the PRT (Combatiente) that civil war is going on in Argentina as well as the rest of Latin America. This is a product of wishful thinking, a vice that is incompatible with the scientific objectivity of Marxism.

Revolutionary policy demands accurate and sensitive observation of the real state of affairs, and especially a correct estimate of the precise degree of development of the class struggle. A leadership that recklessly disregards this elementary precaution can suffer needless and grave losses and even break its neck.

That has unfortunately been the case with PRT (Combatiente). Its leaders have fundamentally misjudged the actual situation in their own country and in Latin America as a whole. In defiance of reality, they proceeded from the premises that civil war had already begun, that the masses were well aware of this fact, and that therefore the role of revolutionists was to intensify this conflict through guerrilla warfare and exemplary terrorist acts.

This reasoning was false from beginning to end. Argentina did enter a prerevolutionary crisis in May 1969 and has gone through tempestuous mass struggles, up to semi-insurrections, since that time. But open civil war between the contending class camps, as in Spain of July 1936, has yet to break out.

To the contrary, the military agents of the Argentine ruling class have taken steps toward parliamentary pacification of the popular movement and drawing the teeth of Peronism. When and if civil war does erupt in that country, it will be the tendency that has implanted itself in the mass movements through prior participation in all the ongoing struggles that will be best situated to

defend the workers against extreme reaction and to go over to the counteroffensive.

The subjectivist approach of the PRT (Combatiente), aided and abetted by the "turn of the Ninth World Congress," has been matched by the subjectivism of the United Secretariat majority, not only in reference to the Latin American situation but in relation to the problem of building the Fourth International. This was expressed in the extraneous reasons given for adopting this turn by its original architect, Livio Maitan. The Fourth International, he argued in verbal and written form, needed to achieve power somewhere under its own banner in order to counteract the taunts of the Khrushchevists, Maoists and Castroists that the Trotskyists were nothing but impotent theorists and sideline critics. This was the way to overcome the skepticism of the waverers and be taken seriously as the alternative by left-wing militants.

He had located the place where this golden fruit was ready to be plucked. "The Fourth International," he announced, "will be built around Bolivia." Pinning hopes upon "The Big Breakthrough" in an arbitrarily selected area was an impermissible approach to the construction of the World Party of Socialist Revolution. This time, as has happened before, it encouraged adventurism and playing with such alien concepts as the formation of an "adequate instrument" in place of a Leninist party.

It needed no prophet to tell us that the Fourth International would receive a tremendous impetus and be lifted to a higher stage of its development in the event that any section succeeds in leading the masses toward the conquest of power. We can unanimously agree on that.

However, even an experienced gambler does not risk his entire bankroll on the turn of a single card. What then is to be thought of revolutionary leaders prompted to such an impulse? The future of the Fourth International as the leadership of the world socialist revolution does not hinge upon what does or does not eventuate in a single country—or even a single continent—at any one time. If so, the defeat of the Left Opposition within the Soviet Union would long since have settled its fate. Its progress today as in the past depends upon the skillful, persistent and effective application of its Marxist ideas and methods wherever its cadres function in order to build the vanguard party as the indispensable instrument of proletarian struggle. There is no other road to victory.

### The Coming Congress Must Reject This Wrong Line

The majority resolution on Latin America has done the greatest damage in this respect. It has miseducated and misled the Trotskyist forces concerning its main tasks not only in Latin America but wherever its precepts and method have been accepted as correct. The Latin American resolution departed from the dialectical method of Marxism and discarded the methods of mass action and party building contained in the heritage and program of the Fourth International. Vainly seeking a shortcut to glory, the Fourth International was called upon to surrender its independent position and mimic Castroism. Where this policy was followed by the sections in Bolivia and Argentina, it led to disaster.

To forestall further disasters, this line has to be reversed and repudiated by the next world congress and replaced

by a return to the basic program and practices of the Fourth International. The cadres of our movement can turn the negative experiences since 1969 to positive ad-

vantage only through a clear understanding of how the method applied by the majority led to an indefensible orientation that events subsequently shattered irretrievably.

March 16, 1973

## Corrections in Translation of Draft Theses: 'The Building of Revolutionary Parties in Capitalist Europe'

Comrade Ernest Mandel, one of the authors of the draft theses, "The Building of Revolutionary Parties in Capitalist Europe," has asked that some errors be corrected in the translation that appeared in the *International Internal Discussion Bulletin*, Vol. IX, No. 5, November 1972.

In his letter, Comrade Mandel says the following: "I noticed that there are rather numerous errors in the English translation of the European document. While some of them are only minor, and make certain sentences obscure, others are grave, especially the translation of 'recomposition' or 'restructuration' du mouvement ouvrier by 'regeneration.' This wrong translation could expose the authors of the document to the unjustified accusation of revising our traditional opinion of the definitively conservative nature of the Social Democratic, Communist party, and trade-union bureaucracies. We don't believe that these people can 'regenerate' themselves in any way. The concept of 'recomposition' means that the organizational and political relationship between the different components of the organized labor movement changes; e.g., that the trade-union bureaucracy becomes more independent from the Social Democratic party, that the CP bureaucracy is forced to change its attitude toward the student movement, but not that these bureaucracies in any way cease to be bureaucracies."

The list of corrections follows:

Page 9, column 2, third, fifth, and ninth lines from bottom. Replace "productive relation" with "relations of production."

Page 10, column 1, ninth line from bottom. Replace "productive relations" with "relations of production."

Page 10, column 2, seventh line from the top. Replace "productive relations" with "relations of production."

Page 11, column 1, fourth and third lines from bottom. Replace "the field of politics in this region" with "their political attitude towards the European question."

Page 11, column 2, third and fourth lines from top. Replace "supranational European superstructures" with "European supranational structures of a pre-state nature."

Page 11, column 2. In subtitle 4, add "of the working class."

Page 11, column 2, seventeenth and sixteenth lines from bottom. Replace "no longer goes along with" with "that can no longer be channeled through."

Page 12, column 2, seventeenth and eighteenth lines from top. Replace "anti-working-class and anti-union compromises of the traditional political organizations" with "fact that the traditional political organizations become compromised by accepting anti-working-class and anti-union measures."

Page 12, column 2, twenty-eighth and twenty-seventh lines from bottom. Replace "regeneration" with "recom-

position."

Page 13, column 2, middle of page. Replace "1,000,000" with "100,000."

Page 17, column 2, ninth line from bottom. Replace "regeneration" with "recomposition."

Page 17, column 2, seventh line from bottom. Replace "factions" by "sectors."

Page 18, column 1, nineteenth line from top. Insert "of action" after "initiate unity."

Page 18, column 1, twenty-ninth line from top. Insert "threat of a" before "bonapartist dictatorship."

Page 18, column 2, ninth line from top. Replace "regenerating" with "recomposing."

Page 19, column 2, twenty-eighth line from top. Replace "turn is being imposed today primarily" with "these people are adopting positions today primarily in function of."

Page 19, column 2, eighteenth line from bottom. Replace "reconstruction" with "recomposition."

Page 20, column 1, eighth and ninth lines from top. Replace "But in the present stage of recruiting" with "Therefore, in the present stage the recruiting of."

Page 20, column 2, fourteenth line from bottom. Replace "or a third-period Stalinist" with "of a third-period Stalinist."

Page 20, column 2, seventh line from bottom. Replace "misunderstanding" with "lack of understanding."

Page 21, column 1, fifteenth line from top. Insert "and from" before "the lingering Stalinist."

Page 21, column 1, thirteenth line from top. Delete "Neues Rotes Forum in Heidelberg." (This correction has not yet been made in the French edition either. — E.M.)

Page 21, column 1, twenty-ninth line from top. Delete "not" before "by their incomprehension."

Page 21, column 1, twenty-fifth line from bottom. Delete ")" after PSIUP.

Page 21, column 2, eighth line from top. Replace "regeneration" with "recomposition."

Page 21, column 2, twenty-sixth line from bottom. Insert "mass" before "party."

Page 22, column 2, seventeenth and eighteenth lines from the top. Replace "avoid" with "pay attention to the risks involved in."

Page 22, column 2, nineteenth and twentieth lines from bottom. Replace "these struggles for workers' control and various forms of struggling for control over society" with "the struggle for workers' control and these various forms of struggle for direct control by the masses of different spheres of social activity."

Page 23, column 2, twentieth line from bottom. Replace "actions confined to single issues and" with "discontinuous actions or those confined to isolated."

Page 26, column 1, first line from top. Replace "profitability" with "efficiency possible."