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## Contents

	Page
Critical Notes on "The Building of Revolutionary Parties in Capitalist Europe," by Wilcox	3
On the International, by Sakai	14
Some Remarks on "Draft Theses for Detailing the Tasks of the Fourth International in Capitalist Europe (Second Edition)," by Sakai	20
Appendix I: Resolution from the Fourth Congress of the Comintern	29
Appendix II: On "The Building of Revolutionary Parties in Capitalist Europe," by the Japan Revolutionary Communist League	30
For a Class Line in the Portuguese Revolution! Democracy Or Proletarian Dictatorship? Resolution of the Eighth National Congress of the Japan Revolutionary Communist League, Japanese Section of the Fourth International, February 1976	34

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# CRITICAL NOTES ON "THE BUILDING OF REVOLUTIONARY PARTIES IN CAPITALIST EUROPE" (EPD—European Perspectives Document)

by Wilcox

Tendency A from the outset clearly situated itself upon the terrain mapped out in the EPD [European Perspectives Document—"The Building of Revolutionary Parties in Capitalist Europe," IIDB, Vol IX, No. 5]. However, we also from the outset maintained that the EPD by no means furnished all the elements necessary for a revolutionary intervention in the British class struggle (both these positions were adopted in the Klein/Wilcox "Winter Crisis" document). Until now we have not attempted to establish whether there is a systematic political *pattern* to the inadequacies of the EPD, and whether these inadequacies stem from simply a lack of specificity about each national conjuncture or rather from a systematic absence in the account given of every national conjuncture. It is the aim of these notes to explore these questions.

## Strengths of the EPD

The EPD was based on an analysis both that the capitalist economies were entering a new period of crisis and that this was crisis of capitalist social relations as a whole, with a different structure and rhythm from previous crises because of the new forms of reproduction of labour power. The overall crisis of the bourgeois order led to the emergence of a *new mass vanguard* capable of moving into action against the capitalist system independently of the Stalinist and Social Democratic leaderships. Moreover, the capitalist crisis generated an inherent tendency to provoke confrontations between a newly awakened mass movement and the capitalist state. The task of the sections of the International was to seek to hegemonise the new mass vanguards by becoming the most lucid and consistent exponents of all tactics for strengthening and extending the mass struggle in the direction of the emergence of institutions of dual power.

Although the above very bald summary of the central theses of the EPD does not do justice to the nuances and refinements to be found in the document, it does indicate some of its underlying strengths. Firstly, the USFI majority distinguished itself from nearly every other political current claiming to be Trotskyist by its understanding that May 1968 was a turning point marking a new phase of capitalist crisis and of mass upsurge. The development of the class struggle in Italy, Britain, the Iberian peninsula and elsewhere in capitalist Europe has thoroughly vindicated this position. Moreover, the novel form and content of this crisis have been more adequately recognised by the USFI than by any other current—this is the reason that it was able to achieve a better understanding of the student movement than other currents. Most critics of the USFI completely fail to grasp these strengths of the USFI perspective. They do not see that an orientation to the youth radicalisation required much more than simply "presenting revolutionary ideas" or the Trotskyist programme to them—that, in fact, "revolution-

ary ideas" could only gain ground among the youth to the extent that they were wedded to *initiatives in action*. Moreover, the USFI was able to build sections throughout Europe precisely because of these political positions which are most attacked by other currents in the Trotskyist movement: the application of the entry tactic in the fifties and sixties, the theses advanced on the Cuban revolution and the Vietnamese revolution and the orientation to the new mass vanguard. Throughout Europe the FI groupings distinguished themselves by an early appreciation of the significance of the Cuban revolution and the Vietnamese revolution and thereby were enabled to achieve a primitive accumulation of cadre and to present the revolutionary programme to the radicalising layer of youth in a very concrete and pertinent fashion. The debate within the USFI on Stalinism, however provisional and preliminary in its conclusions, was an indispensable basis for these practical political orientations. Unquestionably, there were adaptations to the ultra-leftism of the newly radicalised layers and there were illusions in the possibilities of the guerrilla movements, but the fundamental orientation was correct. Thus the USFI must insist on the vindication of its fundamental positions reflected in the ability of its French section to take a whole series of "initiatives in action" from its presence on the barricades in May 1968 to its recent role in the French army mutinies and Postal Workers' strike. In general, the healthiest sections of the International are those whose leadership reflects the whole cycle of experiences from entrism, through solidarity movements and youth radicalisation up to the tactics for gaining hegemony within the vanguard and implantation within the working class outlined in the EPD. Having indicated these points, however, it is now necessary to consider the problems posed by this latter document.

## The Unresolved Problems posed by the EPD

One difficulty presented by the EPD is that the version of this document that has been most influential in the IMG and some other sections is not the version actually adopted at the Tenth World Congress.\* Many of the weaknesses of the first draft of the EPD (published in *International*) were partially remedied by amendments: e.g. the omission of any serious discussion of immigrant workers. These amendments helped to improve the document, but they did not by any means fully resolve the problems it poses, some of which stem from a plethora of ambiguities and overgeneralised formulas and qualifications. Underlying most of the inadequacies of the EPD is a failure to properly

\*[The final version, as edited by the IMT following its adoption by the 1974 World Congress, is available in a special issue of *Intercontinental Press*, "Documents of the World Congress of the Fourth International," Vol. 12, No. 46, December 23, 1974, \$2.50/£1.]

grasp *the strictly political dimension* in the capitalist crisis, in the impact of the rest of the world on Europe and in the tasks of revolutionaries. Thus the account given of the crisis of the political order (section 3 of the document) is much weaker than the account given of the economic crisis and the crisis of social relations; the account given of the emergence of newly radicalised layers is much stronger than the analysis of the traditional political organisations of the working class; the perspective given of the rise of mass struggles greatly oversimplifies the task of giving a *sharp political focus* to this struggle. Formal reference to the Transitional Programme, to the slogan of the Workers' Government and to the need to build revolutionary parties is made but none of these questions is directly linked to the form of the political crisis of the bourgeois political order and of the workers' parties which presently inhabit that order. Let us take these points one by one.

### The Shape of the Political Crisis

On the economic plane the theses advanced in the EPD are based on a coherent body of theory: namely Mandel's *Late Capitalism*. This work is a sustained attempt to analyse the nature of the post-war boom and the inherent limits to that boom. This theory is certainly open to discussion but it had the enormous merit of predicting the generalised world recession and beginning to identify the novel elements in the crisis. The most debatable aspect of the analysis is probably the adoption of a modified version of Kondratiev's theory of "long waves"; significantly enough, Trotsky rejected this theory partly on the grounds that it placed undue emphasis on technological factors and neglected the impact of political events (wars, revolutions etc.) on the economic trade cycle. In *Late Capitalism* the sections dealing with the state are the least developed. But in the domain of economic analysis there is at least a well worked out body of theory which can be the subject of discussion. Moreover the economic theory also leads into certain general theses about the crisis of social expenditure and the capacity of the capitalist system to satisfy the new needs which the post-war boom has helped to bring into existence on a mass scale. In particular areas—e.g. the nature of the student movement and more recently the nature of women's oppression—the USFI has also been able to draw on a wide-ranging theoretical discussion both inside and outside the ranks of the F.I. Again there may, as yet, be few really firm conclusions but at least there is a clear basis for discussion and for the elaboration of provisional perspectives of intervention. When we turn to section three of the document, an altogether different situation prevails: the document invokes a whole series of concepts such as that of "the strong state" or the "decay of bourgeois democracy" which have not been established, even in a provisional manner, by any underlying body of theory.

### Marxism and Bourgeois Democracy

Neither inside nor outside the ranks of the FI is there any sustained Marxist attempt to theorise the nature of bourgeois democracy and its contradictions. Most work by Marxists on the contemporary capitalist state are designed to prove that it is indeed capitalist (e.g. Miliband or

Poulantzas). This is a valuable and important task of demystification, but it does not solve the problem of the specificity of bourgeois democracy nor does it identify the typical expression of capitalist contradictions in such political regimes. Marx tended to regard Bonapartism rather than bourgeois democracy as the normal form of bourgeois political regime—it was, he said, the "religion of the bourgeoisie". Engels, in the *Origins* and other texts, was much more percipient, recognising that the representative state would be the typical regime of advanced capitalism.

Ever since Lenin wrote *State and Revolution* Marxists have attacked bourgeois democracy on the grounds that it atomises and fragments the masses, pulverising the working class and separating politics from the organisation of the working class at the point of production, the ultimate source of the proletariat's political power. This critique has been echoed in different ways by Lukacs (in his *Lenin*), Colletti (in *From Rousseau to Lenin*) and Poulantzas (in the section of *Political Power and Social Class* devoted to the representative state). So far as they go all these critiques are *perfectly valid*. Bourgeois democracy does indeed seek to dominate the working class in the ways described. But the crucial element that they miss out is the *special way* in which bourgeois democracy seeks to integrate the working class, permitting, or being forced to permit, a degree of *independent working class organisation*, in trade unions and political parties. Bourgeois democracy is, in fact, a specialised mechanism for (1) Securing the formal consent of the governed to their own exploitation and oppression (2) Integrating the working class *collectively* through its own organisations (3) Favouring that fraction of the ruling class best able to integrate the masses. The source for this approach is, of course, Trotsky's *Struggle Against Fascism in Germany* and some suggestive passages in Lenin's *Left Wing Communism*. Some of the most important theses on this question are to be found in these texts as cited in the Klein/Wilcox "Winter Crisis" document.

### The Significance of Bourgeois Democracy in Post War Europe

The importance of identifying the contradictions of bourgeois democracy stems from the fact that this has been the normal regime of capital in the advanced countries since the end of the Second World War. The functioning of relatively stable bourgeois democratic regimes was made possible in the immediate post-war period by the failure of the major workers' parties to propel forward the permanent revolutionary implications of the struggle against fascism and fascist occupation. This has not been an entirely smooth process—the wars in Algeria, Vietnam and Ireland have generated forces which undermine a parliamentary regime. But so far at least it is striking that these regimes have been able to survive even quite powerful upsurges of mass struggle and even quite serious attempts to sabotage them (Watergate, the Algerian putsch, the Italian military conspiracies, etc.).

Because bourgeois democracy rests on mass consent as well as the bourgeois state's monopoly of violence, it is particularly suited to the task of absorbing and recuperat-

ing any upsurge in the mass struggle. Far from being a weak form of bourgeois rule it has proved remarkably resilient in the face of proletarian offensives. If we consider the list of revolutionary and protorevolutionary upsurges mentioned in section seven of the EPD, it is striking that nearly every single one of them was initially contained and defeated by a bourgeois democratic regime, even if that regime was subsequently overthrown from the right. For obvious reasons a bourgeois democratic regime allows especially great room for manoeuvre to the reformist or centrist leaders of the workers' movement and makes use of them to absorb the working class upsurge. It is particularly striking that bourgeois democratic regimes either forestall the emergence of institutions of dual power (Britain, 1926, or France, 1968) or otherwise neutralize and absorb those elements of dual power that have emerged (the workers' councils in Germany, 1919, Italy, 1920). In general it seems that embryonic institutions of dual power can be established more readily in the context of a collapsing absolutist state or totalitarian regime (i.e., Russia in 1905 and 1917; Portugal today). Such regimes are not based on such a defined separation of the political and the economic levels of the social formation and they do not possess the same sophisticated array of mechanisms for integrating the masses. The conclusions we should draw from this is that in regimes of bourgeois democracy, far from there being a semi-spontaneous tendency for dual power to arise in a crisis, the likelihood of dual power institutions consolidating themselves will critically depend on the tactics and intervention of the revolutionary vanguard. The task of this vanguard must be to use an intervention inside and outside the bourgeois political order to stimulate the mass struggle and to orient the mass struggle so that it is capable of exploding the contradictions of bourgeois democracy. The Transitional Programme, the slogan of the workers' government and of workers' control of production are vital instruments in carrying through these tasks. United actions around transitional demands and workers' control initiatives are designed to encourage an organisation of the masses which bourgeois democratic regimes will find impossible to absorb. Intervention in the bourgeois political order at every level provides an indispensable sounding board for agitation and organisation around the transitional programme taken as a whole. The slogan of the workers' government is a crucial device for confronting the manoeuvres of the reformists and centrists and indicating to the mass movement the road to workers' power. Above all agitation and propaganda guided by these concepts enables the revolutionary vanguard to accomplish that "conquest of the masses" which precedes and accompanies the conquest of power.

Because it fails to assess the peculiar strengths and weaknesses of bourgeois democracy the EPD very much underplays the need to project a rounded-out Transitional Programme and the slogan of a workers' government in favour of initiatives in action and agitation designed to stimulate and extend the mass struggle. However, beyond a certain point the mass struggle cannot be indefinitely extended and stimulated simply by exhortation. It runs up against the complexity of the social formation and the recuperative mechanisms of bourgeois democracy, notably the trade unions and the reformist workers' parties. And to the extent that it poses a real threat to the bourgeois order it runs up against the repressive apparatus of the

bourgeois state. To ensure that the working class vanguard can undertake to lead the masses in a fundamental confrontation with the bourgeois power—and do so with the greatest chances of victory—the revolutionaries must master a whole combination of tactics prior to and during the decisive confrontation. The revolutionaries must know how to combine intervention in the mass struggle with united front initiatives, with military work, with agitation around democratic demands, with electoral work, with an increasingly precise and concrete conception of the nature and functioning of institutions of dual power. As we shall see the EPD is quite sketchy on many of these crucial questions and future perspectives for Europe will have to be greatly developed, drawing upon the most advanced experience of the recent period and indicating more precisely a rounded out revolutionary strategy. Centrally this will involve a more developed sense of the full programmatic basis of the revolutionary intervention since it is a proper grasp of the content and method of the Transitional Programme which can alone equip the mass struggle with the necessary sharp political focus and enable it to overcome all the unevenness spontaneously produced by the bourgeois social formation. We will now turn to a detailed examination of these points.

### The Limits of Spontaneity

In the pre-Congress discussion the Japanese section points out that the EPD did not display an adequate grasp of the role of the transitional programme for social revolution (see IIDB No. 2, 1974). In fact, Section 7, subsection (a) looked forward to a mass upsurge which would express "*the workers' instinctive attempt to take the leadership of society and to rebuild it along the lines of their socialist programme.*" This formulation contains the seeds both of an original and profound observation about the nature of mass consciousness and of a dangerous oversimplification of the problems facing revolutionaries. It is indeed the case that mass spontaneity in a revolutionary and pre-revolutionary situation has a protean nature. For example, in Chile between 1970 and 1973 the masses threw up a great many tactics of anti-capitalist struggle which should have been promoted and generalised by any revolutionary vanguard. The masses are necessarily more inventive than even the most advanced vanguard if ever they are aroused to defend their own interests. Moreover in most countries the working class inherits an accumulated political tradition which incorporates many anti-capitalist, even "socialist" elements (Mandel's *Leninist Theory of Organisation* develops this theme in an original argument). However, to acknowledge all this is not to say that they *instinctively* wish to lead society or possess a socialist programme. If this was the case it would be sufficient merely to point out the most advanced and efficacious methods of struggle, to propagate the need for a revolutionary workers' power and to denounce the reformist parties. Of course, all these are indeed among the tasks of revolutionaries, but propagated in isolation they lead to frustration and defeat. It is *also* necessary to advance the demands which will most effectively mobilise a mighty alliance of the exploited and oppressed against the capitalist state, and to advance these demands in every

available arena, in the mass organisations, in the electoral arena, in the armed forces. Advanced *methods of struggle* can only be sustained for long by a *coherent programme*. The fraternal critique we should make of the MIR in Chile should focus on its failure to find the right combination of tactics, capable of consolidating and extending the organs of mass struggle at the base, *by challenging the political framework which had been established by the traditional workers' parties*. Despite the many exemplary features of the struggle of the MIR, they failed to develop the necessary tactics for confronting the bourgeois political order and the traditional workers' parties—in consequence their conception of dual power was also arbitrary and imprecise.

Every bourgeois social formation displays great unevenness and complexity. Every European social formation presents an original combination of the forces of world politics and world economy and each is deeply marked by the history of wars, revolutions and counter-revolutions. It is not only the level of mass struggle which distinguishes between the different social formations, but also the nature and history of the ruling political order and of the capitalist economy, the political traditions of the mass of the working class and the particular form of its vanguard forces. If we do not recognise these different national permutations of the elements of world politics and world economy then they will take their revenge upon us. Thus British revolutionaries have recently had a signal lesson in this matter with the fiasco of the campaign against British membership of the EEC. The British workers' movement, having unceremoniously removed the government of Edward Heath and confronting an enfeebled and demoralised ruling class, seemed assured of victory in this campaign. Some in the leadership of the British section even forecast a political victory comparable with the Italian divorce referendum. In sociological terms the campaign over membership of the EEC could undoubtedly be presented as a class confrontation—Wilson and the right-wing labour leaders were exceptionally isolated within the organised workers' movement over this question. But such an understanding betrayed a gross misunderstanding of the political issues at stake and the political forces engaged: both the strength of chauvinism within the labour movement and the political appeal for the masses of the more advanced bourgeois solution.

### Complicating Factors

At the root of the complexity of the bourgeois social formations is the real separation between the economic and the political level which is one of the most characteristic features of the capitalist mode of production. Precapitalist forms of exploitation and oppression are based on the direct incorporation of physical coercion and constraint within the labour process. The slave-driver, the feudal lord with his retainers embody this fact. In advanced capitalism the organisers of the capitalist enterprise cease to directly carry out a function of physical coercion; this now devolves wholly upon the armed bodies of men on which the bourgeois state is based. The wage struggle of the direct producers thus has no absolutely necessary political dimension. Only at the level of the state and the political order are all social classes brought into relation with one another. The organisations and the

forms of consciousness born out of the struggle in the workplace are nevertheless the indispensable basis of all revolutionary politics because this is the arena where capitalism itself has assembled and organised the working class. But it is only by reaching out of the workplace and linking up in a revolutionary fashion with every oppressed and exploited group—on an international as well as national level—that the workers can hope to defeat the imperialist bourgeoisie. The orientations of the EPD are, of course, based on a rejection of the traditional forms of economism and spontaneism. But nevertheless a certain accommodation to these trends as they emerged in the mass upsurges after 1968 can be detected in the neglect of certain vital questions of the class struggle. Thus the original version of the EPD had virtually nothing to say about democratic demands, about the women's movement, about immigrant workers, about oppressed national minorities and nationalities, about the new petty bourgeoisie and middle strata or about the impact of international developments—especially those in Eastern Europe and the Third World. If comrades will re-read the list of omissions again, they will see that it amounts to a fairly comprehensive neglect of crucial questions. It is the hall-mark of any adaptation to spontaneism or economism that it will be silent on many of the questions that go to make up the crisis of the political order and help to constitute the revolutionary process. The amended draft of the EPD did go some way to rectifying the neglect of vital questions. Thus more account was taken of the women's movement and of the struggles of immigrant workers. In a document of this sort concerned with laying down a basic framework it would be unrealistic to expect a detailed treatment of even very important questions such as those we have indicated. But even the amended version of the EPD implicitly assumed that the new layers of the petty bourgeoisie and middle strata are more or less automatic allies of the working class. No doubt the experience of successful reactionary mobilisation of the old and new petty bourgeoisie in Chile and Portugal need not be repeated in the more advanced countries. But these experiences, combined with the debate between Maitan, Poulantzas, Vincent and others, should enable us to refine our understanding of this question and discover the demands and watchwords of struggle which will neutralise, or win over, these layers. Similarly on the question of Ireland there is a generic paragraph which simply does not mention any of the real complexities of the situation—notably the strength and social basis of loyalism. The impact of international events is wrapped up *in a single sentence* (see section 11 paragraph g). As we shall see later, the absence of any substantive reference to the deformed workers' states in Eastern Europe is probably linked to a schematic and inadequate conception of the development of the Stalinist parties.

If we consider the major political crises which have afflicted the European bourgeoisies, we will see that they frequently involve the type of "complicating factor" in the class struggle mentioned above. Nearly everywhere the progress of the mass struggle has been interrupted or accelerated by such factors. In Italy the mass upsurge of 1969-70 was followed by a political crisis for the ruling bourgeois party provoked by defeat in a referendum over divorce. A different type of democratic demand—defence of trade union rights—played an important role in the defeat of the Heath government. In West Germany a crisis over

Brandt's *Ostpolitik* disturbed the placid routines of the Bonn regime and even for a moment threatened the eruption of the masses into the crisis. In Portugal the dictatorship was eventually destroyed by its colonial wars and in Greece the military regime foundered in the wake of the Cyprus adventure. Throughout Europe, but especially in Spain and Britain, the question of the oppressed nationalities has been an explosive ingredient of the political system.

### The Question of Military Work

The lynch-pin of the bourgeois political order is, of course, its repressive apparatus. Allied to the general weakness of the analysis of the political level in the EPD is an inattention to the problems posed by the armed bodies of men commanded by the bourgeois state. Instead the EPD wishes away this problem too by invoking the immense potentialities of the mass struggle: "... the economic striking force of the proletariat in the advanced countries is so great, and the social basis of the bourgeoisie's power so narrow that in the event of a revolutionary upsurge involving the great majority of workers, the repressive apparatus can be partially paralysed at the outset." (Section 8, paragraph d). This statement may even turn out to be true, but since it is the sum total of what the EPD has to say about the problem of the repressive apparatus of the bourgeoisie, it allows all sorts of misconceptions and mistakes to go unchecked. Thus any underestimation of the repressive apparatus can breed either a spontaneism with regard to the technical preparation of armed insurrection or its converse—an adventurist or militarist confrontation with them. More generally, it leads to an underestimation of the role of agitation within the armed forces. The EPD did not reflect or anticipate the importance of military questions either for our sections or in the crisis of the bourgeois political order. A future perspectives document for Europe should seek to summarise the advanced experience of the French and Swedish sections in this field. It should also learn from the Portuguese experience the critical nature of developments within the armed forces. For a considerable time after April 1974 it was held that the comparative inexperience of the Portuguese masses would mean that the developments in Spain—where the experience of mass struggle had been more advanced—would dominate and command the events in Portugal. This approach both underestimated the political consciousness of the Portuguese masses—especially their deep attachment to their newly won democratic rights and forms of organization—and equally underestimated the consequences of the utter disarray inside the armed forces following the colonial wars, the overthrow of the dictatorship and the resulting popular upsurge. In the event it may well be Portugal that will be the key to Spain rather than vice versa.

### The Question of Dual Power

The Portuguese experience has also demonstrated the necessity of a much more concrete account of what we mean by institutions of dual power. Although the emergence of institutions of dual power was held to be the decisive development of the European class struggle for which we should plan, the EPD had little to say about the

conditions for a healthy and robust development of these dual power organs. The EPD declared that it was vital that once embryos of dual power had emerged they be extended and unified into a national system. The success or failure of embryonic institutions of dual power crucially depends on their ability to answer to the most immediate and pressing problems confronting the masses; both the problems of everyday life and the central problem of the counter-revolution. It is of course vitally important that the dual power organ is progressively based on *the widest mass involvement and self-organisation, that every current in the workers' movement should be able to advance its ideas within these bodies and that effective means exist for making and carrying out collective decisions*. The fact that both Stalinist and Social Democratic politics are a strong influence in the workers' movement in every European country makes a proper grasp of these conditions for the development of dual power particularly important. The Stalinist conception of such bodies as bureaucratic instruments to be manipulated by the Party leadership is, unfortunately, not confined to the Communist Parties but is also found among some organisations of the "far left" that have a recent Stalinist background. If a workers' commission or neighbourhood commission is being turned into the fief of one or another political group this will speedily disorient and demoralise the masses. On the other hand a recuperation of these bodies by a bourgeois democratic order will naturally take place unless they are increasingly armed with a revolutionary programme for mobilising the masses for their own independent class interests in an armed assault on the bourgeois state. There must be complete freedom for the organised political vanguard to assert itself within these bodies by winning the confidence of the masses they integrate. Again the classical writings on this question do not take us very far. Thus *State and Revolution* has nothing to say about the relation between workers' parties and the soviets. It also has little to say about how a growing proletarian power—based on workers' control, factory councils, soldiers' committees, etc.—actually federates together at local and national level in a systematic counterpower to that of the capitalist state. Recently we have called for a National Popular Assembly in Portugal. By themselves these words have no particular magic. We have not yet spelt out how it should be established, what relation it would have to the existing organs of popular power, in what way it would be answerable to the masses, the franchise it would be based on, the way in which it would assert its authority as a workers' state. What is needed is not utopian blueprints but realistic projections of the present potentialities of the Portuguese revolution. Moreover we should indicate very precisely the immediate burning needs of the masses to which the dual power organs correspond. As we know the masses do not establish dual power organs for their own sake but rather to accomplish specific and pressing tasks that cannot be carried out without such an instrument: this will typically include both measures to suppress the anarchy of the capitalist economy and to organise against counter-revolution. The development of the SUV in Portugal illustrates the way in which a genuinely autonomous mass movement develops in this way. Its demands embraced material demands of the rank and file soldiers (free travel to their homes, more adequate pay) as well as immediate



political demands relevant to the barracks (democratic rights for soldiers, expulsion of reactionary officers, soldiers' committees). This approach contrasted very sharply with the abstract rhetoric about popular power peddled by the ultra-lefts.

## The Actuality of the Revolution

If the incipient deviation in the EPD was to be identified it would probably be that of the Lukacs of the early twenties who launched the concept of the "actuality of the revolution" and who wrote *Lenin* and the "Question of Parliamentarism." It should be remembered that Lukacs certainly did not neglect the need for a revolutionary vanguard and favoured a thoroughgoing attack on both reformism and electoralism. But despite the brilliance of the Lukacs of this period he completely failed to identify the strategy and tactics that the revolutionary vanguard must adopt if it is to lead a socialist revolution in an advanced state with a regime of bourgeois democracy. The *actuality of the revolution* makes redundant any search for transitional demands or adoption of the tactics of the united front. "When the revolution is an actuality the old problem of whether it can be 'made' thus acquires a completely new meaning" (*Lenin*, p. 31). The most extreme expression of Lukacs's attitude to the problems presented by the bourgeois political order was the essay "The Question of Parliamentarism," where he declared: "where a workers' council (on however modest a scale) is possible, parliamentary work is redundant." In a critical note on this article Lenin wrote: "G.L.'s article . . . gives no concrete analysis of precise and definite historical situations; it takes no account of what is most essential (the need to take over and learn to take over all fields of the work and all institutions in which the bourgeoisie exerts its influence over the masses, etc.)". In *Left Wing Communism* Lenin identified both the universal lessons to be drawn from the experience of the Russian revolution and the particular tactics and strategy which revolutionaries would have to adopt to lead socialist revolutions in the advanced countries. Trotsky also addressed himself to these problems both in the twenties and in the thirties, in the process refining the tactics of the United Front and of the Transitional Programme.

The EPD had very little to say about electoral work as a means of developing the agitation, propaganda and organisation of our sections. Some sections have nevertheless had a relatively extensive experience of electoral intervention; notably the Swiss sections who participate in cantonal as well as national elections. The British section presented three candidates in the February 1974 election but this intervention was made with minimal preparation. The candidates, who had no connection with the working class movement in the areas for which they were standing, were announced less than four weeks before polling day. There had been no previous intervention in local elections to prepare the way for these candidatures. Clearly the opportunities of an electoral intervention are not going to be maximised by this type of approach. But in Britain in 1974 the main problem was the overall estimate of the prospects for the mass struggle in the context of the election. The fact that the miners remained on strike after the election had been called helped to secure a Labour

victory. But the momentum of the strike towards mass pickets and class confrontation was broken and the formation of a Labour government soon introduced a completely different overall political framework for the class struggle. At this point a precise understanding of the Labour Party and a sure grasp of the tactics to be adopted towards it became more necessary than ever before. The problems posed by the traditional workers' parties have in fact loomed large within each of the major political events in Europe in the past period: the development of the Union of the Left, the electoral victory of the Italian Communist Party, the unfolding of the Portuguese revolution.

## The Traditional Workers' Parties

The formulations in the EPD concerning the traditional workers' organisations are not very satisfactory. There are generalisations to the effect that the social democratic parties are being absorbed by the "state apparatus" and that the Communist Parties are undergoing a process of "social-democratisation." Both these statements are heavily qualified but the end result is that little of value is said about the nature and dynamic of these parties. No firm criteria are advanced for deciding when a given social democratic party has ceased to be a bourgeois workers' party, and equally no firm criteria are advanced for deciding when a Communist Party has become social democratic. In both these cases there seems to be a certain underestimation of the tenacity with which these traditional parties will pursue their traditional political project. The main tactic advanced towards these parties was that of unity in action and outflanking. Though this tactic was primarily directed at accumulating forces at the level of the extra-parliamentary struggle and was always to be combined with revolutionary attacks on reformism and electoralism, it nevertheless could lead to underestimating the obstacle represented by the traditional organisations. Underestimating these parties can take two apparently dissimilar forms. Firstly they can be verbally expelled from the workers' movement: thus the Portuguese Socialist Party or the SPD are declared to be bourgeois parties through and through, or the IMG leadership declares the Labour Party to be "organisationally dead" at its Spring 1973 conference. (And now finding that it is still alive executes a 180 degree turn which is equally incorrect.) The real influence which these parties are able to exercise within the working class is in no way reduced by such leftist rhetoric, as events have shown in each of these cases. Alternatively it can be thought that the rise of the mass struggle will effectively neutralise the leadership of these parties. Thus in the more recent period some comrades have been drawn to the view that the Portuguese CP or the British Labour Party are capable of being outflanked without any accompanying process of *confrontation*. If we re-read the EPD we will find some warnings against this sort of error (see notably section 9 entitled "The Inadequacies of the Subjective Factor") but also we will find that the impetuous rise of the mass struggle is able to disperse most problems revolutionaries face like mist on a summer's morning. Thus reformist and electoralist illusions will be dissipated as the mass struggle is extended and unified. But the illusions of the masses in reformism are not mere illusions, but have a powerful material base in the reforms that have actually been won. Abstract attacks by revolutionaries on reformism



can too easily seem like attacks on the reforms themselves, which represent historic gains for the working class. The fact that these reforms have been twisted to fit the logic of capitalist society and that they serve to attach the masses to bourgeois institutions in no way cancel out this fact. Revolutionaries clearly must defend all the historic gains of the workers' movement (democratic rights, social services, full employment, etc.). They should do this by advocating forms of mass organisation to defend these gains and should employ themes of mass agitation that challenge the reactionary content (e.g., reliance on the bourgeois state and on the bourgeois family). But above all revolutionaries must seek to defend the gains of the masses in very concrete and effective terms—this cannot be done without a combination of united fronts and confrontation with the traditional workers' parties, and without a combination of self-organisation of the masses and an intervention in the bourgeois political order, both at national and at local level. Transitional demands and a transitional programme are classically designed to defend the organisations and social conquests of the masses in a revolutionary fashion. Sometimes it will be possible to drag the traditional workers' parties into united fronts on these questions—and the attempt must always be made to reach the widest possible extent of united action. But equally it will invariably be the case that there are a whole range of questions on which an intransigent struggle against the traditional workers' organisations will be necessary. These will not be remote questions of revolutionary theory but burning problems facing the masses. For this reason we should have the consistent perspective of encouraging *class struggle currents* to develop in the trade unions around an Action Programme, comprising the *agitational aspects* of the Transitional Programme. To project *revolutionary tendencies* inside the trade unions as recommended in the EPD would be to neglect many invaluable opportunities for undermining the reactionary role of the trade union bureaucracies and their political allies. In the formulations of the EPD regarding economic class struggle there is an overriding emphasis on methods of struggle—elected strike committees, etc.—at the expense of a rounded out conception of the demands which are capable of sustaining these more advanced methods of struggle. An Action Programme should precisely relate transitional and democratic demands to the most burning immediate problems confronting the masses: inflation, unemployment, decay of the social services, moves towards strengthening the powers of the state, oppression of national minorities, etc. The possibility of developing an agitational platform of this kind and organising around it will vary from country to country—but however difficult this task may be, it remains an indispensable complement to more advanced methods of struggle.

### The Stalinist Jekyll and Hyde

The formulations in the EPD on the Communist parties are equally as indeterminate as those on the social democratic parties. The Communist parties throughout Europe are today subject to powerful contradictory forces which can only lead to acute tensions within them. Any process of social democratisation of these parties—and such

a process is a palpable reality—runs into powerful resistance from a number of sources. First there is the link with the Soviet bureaucracy which despite everything remains the crucial defining feature of these parties. The Soviet Union may propel these parties toward reformist politics but this still does not produce the wholesale identification with their “own” bourgeois state typically found in social democratic parties. Russian policy can also place great strain on the orientation of these parties towards the national bourgeois political arena as over Czechoslovakia and Portugal. In the EPD the crisis of Stalinism in Eastern Europe is referred to only in the context of the process of social democratisation of the Communist Parties—a process which according to the EPD is accelerated by such events as the invasion of Czechoslovakia. This is a one-sided conclusion since these events also helped to encourage the emergence of Brezhnevite currents which *in their own way* oppose the process of social democratisation. With the publication of the article by Zardov in *Pravda* for August 6, there has even been a tendency for the Russian bureaucracy to encourage a certain theoretical critique of the practice of the Western Communist Parties. It should also be recognised that the process of social democratisation also runs up against resistance from the domestic political traditions and political project of these parties. Though all these parties openly proclaim a peaceful, parliamentary road to socialism, there is certainly a layer of the membership, and even of the functionaries of these parties, that regard such programmatic declarations as a tactical manoeuvre designed to throw dust in the eyes of the bourgeoisie. Many of these parties have some direct experience with armed struggle against fascism and a layer within these parties has identified with the social revolutions in Cuba and Indochina. The rise of the class struggle and the need felt by the Party leadership to maintain its position within the workers' movement vis-a-vis both social democracy and the far left also act as a check on the process of social democratisation. Because of the Stalinist framework within which these differences emerge the “left” is not necessarily always more healthy than the “right.” The latter, for example, are frequently much more sensitive to questions of proletarian democracy—though, typically, they will fail to distinguish between this and bourgeois democracy. We are faced in fact with the familiar Jekyll and Hyde schizophrenia of Stalinism which can oscillate between the most abject class collaboration and putschist attempts to extend its own bureaucratic control. In united front initiatives directed at the Stalinist parties particular saliency must be given to the questions of the *political independence* of the workers' movement and to the question of *proletarian democracy* within the organisation of the struggle. This will be the best way of winning over the centrist currents which are likely to develop within these parties.

### Governmental Slogans

The traditional workers' parties undoubtedly constitute a gigantic obstacle to the making of socialist revolution in capitalist Europe. The birth of institutions of dual power may make this problem easier to tackle but, as Portugal has already shown, it will remain formidable nonetheless. Trotsky wrote about the problem represented by the large

reformist parties as follows: "In a developed capitalist society during a 'democratic' regime, the bourgeoisie leans for support primarily upon the working classes, which are held in check by the reformists. In its most finished form this finds expression in Britain during the administration of a Labour Government as well as during that of the Conservatives. . . . In the course of many decades, the workers have built up within bourgeois democracy by utilising it, by fighting against it, their own strongholds and bases of proletarian democracy: the trade unions, the political parties, the educational and sporting clubs, the co-operatives, etc. The proletariat cannot attain power within the formal limits of bourgeois democracy, but can do so only by taking the road of revolution: this has been proved by theory and by experience. And these bulwarks of workers' democracy within the bourgeois state are absolutely essential for taking the revolutionary road. The work of the Second International consisted in creating just such bulwarks during the epoch when it was still fulfilling its progressive historical labour." (*The Struggle Against Fascism in Germany*, pp. 158-59). These formulations were applied by Trotsky to the Social Democratic parties but with certain modifications they could be extended to the Stalinist parties as well. We have already insisted that the tactic of the united front and agitation around transitional demands are the key to unlocking the anti-capitalist potential represented by these parties and the political and social conquests they have won in the past. But just as agitation within a bourgeois army will in the long run require the emergence of an alternative proletarian armed force if it is to be maximally effective so these tactics require the vigorous assertion of a pole of revolutionary politics. Revolutionists must aim to challenge and confront the traditional parties in every field. Agitation around an Action Programme in the mass organisations has already been mentioned. Challenging these parties on their home territory, the electoral plane, is also a crucial tactic since it enables a fully rounded out programme to be presented. We have already suggested that a very concrete and pertinent intervention in local politics could be a useful corrective to the propagandism and deadly abstraction that afflicts so much revolutionary politics.

Where this is possible our Governmental slogans should express the demand for a fighting unity with the traditional workers' organisations—embodying simultaneously a recognition of the importance of these organisations for the masses and a programmatic challenge to them. The crucial question here is the relative strength of the mass vanguard, especially of its proletarian component. But at least in Portugal, Spain, Italy, France and Britain the size of this vanguard is sufficiently large to warrant consistent propaganda for a workers' government in this sense. This slogan can quickly become agitational in a contest of mounting mass struggles and crises of the bourgeois political order. A governmental slogan which refers only to the traditional workers' parties sets undue and arbitrary limits on the further development of the class struggle. Such slogans can only encourage illusions in the traditional workers' parties. The slogans of a workers' government understood in a revolutionary sense, without any Zinovievite equivocations, demands the utmost political independence and combativity of the revolutionary organisation, as in all united front formulas. Thus Trotsky, writing on "A Workers' Government in France" in 1923, declared that within such a workers'

government the revolutionary Communist would have to "ceaselessly consolidate our political positions and our *organisation*, preserve our freedom of criticism with regard to our allies and weaken them by ceaselessly presenting new proposals that would break up the combination driving more and more of the right wing elements away." Trotsky was, of course, writing about the tactics of relatively large Communist parties. But the same basic principles should apply to the approach of today's revolutionary left to united front work and to the prospect of workers' governments. Moreover, as the EPD so correctly points out the task of our sections must be to hegemonise the mass vanguard that exists in most European capitalist states and use it as a lever within the united front.

The particular composition and structure of the workers' movement in the different countries varies considerably for reasons that have been referred to above. In this situation we badly need concrete studies of the variations involved such as was undertaken by Pierre Frank in his article in *Inprecor* on the Western Communist parties. In Britain the Labour Party continues to retain certain special features because of its unique relationship with a unified trade union movement. The far left in Britain can operate relatively freely in the trade unions and this gives it the illusion that it can dominate the Labour Party despite the fact that the Labour Party has always systematically excluded from direct membership the bulk of the proletarian vanguard. Revolutionaries should still maintain the right of all proletarian political tendencies to affiliate collectively to the Labour party on the terms set out by Lenin in *Left Wing Communism*. *But after the experience of six reformist governments it can no longer be an absolute rule that revolutionaries in Britain confine themselves to some variant of a Labour Government formula. The organisations to the left of the Labour party now comprise a number of active militants quite comparable with those inside the constituency Labour parties. Moreover the organisations to the left of Labour played at least as active a role in the great mass struggles which removed the Heath government as did these constituency parties.*

## The Concept of the "Far Left"

The nature of the organisations which inhabit the milieu of the mass vanguard must also be analysed very concretely. The concept of a "far left" as a generic category is losing efficacy and validity. Thus, for example, the Maoist organisations which have demonstrated the greatest resilience have often been those closest to the original Stalinist model. This seems to be particularly the case where the general level of the class struggle has been low—West Germany, Scandinavia, and, until April 1974, Portugal. Where Maoism is an influence rather than an organised dogma it has tended to be associated with ultra-leftism. Indeed the ultra-leftism of the "centrist" organisations of the "far left" was somewhat underestimated in the EPD and materials tributary upon it. These organisations preserve many of the deformations of Stalinism—especially with respect to questions of proletarian

democracy—since they are not based on a thorough-going critique of the programme and practice of Stalinism. This necessarily acts as a brake on the development of the class struggle and can powerfully antagonise important layers of the masses. In Portugal this phenomenon has appeared both in some of the Maoist organisations and in the militarism and commandism of the PRP. These are, of course, not just ideological deformations but can correspond to a real impatience of the mass vanguard—at times even a *chauvinism* of this vanguard towards the masses. Our goal of hegemonising the mass vanguard should never lead us to any accommodation with its political weaknesses—and these are many. Such an accommodation takes an organisational as well as a political toll. It leads to a hectic, hyper-active style of work, a grasshopper jumping from one campaign to another and a search for political short-cuts at the expense of the necessary programmatic clarity. Inevitably it undermines the political development of our cadre and leads to a casual and haphazard approach to political education and scientific research.

Since we have concluded with some very brief reflections on the dangers of accommodation to the mass vanguard, we must reiterate that, despite the manifest political immaturity of the mass vanguard and its attendant political vices, it remains *the crucially important layer* for the intervention of our sections. The great merit of the documents of the Ninth and Tenth World Congresses was that they insured that we should be in the right place and oriented to the right layer. Portugal has resoundingly vindicated the theses advanced on the mass vanguard and the prospect of the emergence of dual power organs. We have argued above that the *political content* of our orientation was not always adequate: though we were in the right place we were not always saying and doing all the right things. But this criticism hopefully should completely block the path to any backsliding in the direction of traditional programmatic fetishism and propagandism. Our programme must develop the struggle of the active layer already confronting the bourgeois order and not provide a hostile commentary upon it.

### **Lack of Europe-wide campaigns**

The crucial tasks of hegemonising the mass vanguard and confronting the traditional workers' organisations can be interpreted in a sectarian fashion, with an emphasis on the vindication and numerical growth of our own organisation. During a period of crisis such an approach completely misses the tremendous opportunities for regroupment of whole sections of the left arising out of the strains imposed on the traditional political formulas of social democracy, Stalinism and the various currents to their left. A successful policy of revolutionary regroupment and gains at the expense of the traditional workers' organisations demand initiatives on the crucial political questions thrown up by the crisis and an ability to back these up with appropriate forms of organisation and political analysis. In the sixties the International in Europe was transformed by its ability to play a leading role in understanding the significance of the Vietnamese revolution, the student revolt and the May events. This

great success was only possible because the political initiatives of the International were based on a vigorous and penetrating debate on the nature of Stalinism, on the character and significance of the Cuban revolution, on the contradictions of late capitalism and the potential of the youth revolt. Finally the International's experience of political organisation, of solidarity campaigns, of the ability to achieve joint action with non-Trotskyist political currents equipped us to make a qualitative organisational advance in the late sixties and early seventies. However aware we should be of the failings of the Trotskyist propaganda circles and entrust groups, we should never underestimate the strength of the political traditions they transmitted. The culmination of this period was probably the Red Europe rally and the demonstration to commemorate the Commune. Since that time the sections have grown numerically in some countries, sections have been established on a firm basis in new areas (Sweden, Portugal) and certain sections have continued to display a capacity for intervening in the decisive developments of the class struggle: notably the French section and more recently the LCI. But, despite significant advances, the European sections as a whole have not maintained the élan and coherence which they displayed until 1972. The central project of extending and unifying the mass struggle has failed to locate with sufficient precision the decisive developments in capitalist Europe. Even, or perhaps especially, in countries like Italy and Britain where the mass struggle has had a direct impact on the bourgeois political order, the sections have not been able to use the theses of the EPD as a springboard for a successful national political intervention. (In the document, "The Winter Crisis and the IMG," we have tried to analyse the reasons for this, in the British case during the crucial 1973-4 period). But perhaps the biggest disappointment in the recent period has been the rather slow and uncertain reaction to the development of the Portuguese revolution, with few significant initiatives co-ordinating the activities of all the European sections.

The existence of *Inprecor* should make the task of such co-ordination much easier than it ever was in the past. In the English-speaking world the public debate of the IMT with the LTF on Vietnam and Portugal has probably had a largely positive effect—which is not to condone the way the LTF have used *I.P.* [*Intercontinental Press*]. This open debate on the decisive question of world politics has had a great impact on the vanguard and the march of events has helped to adjudicate the relative merits of the different positions. However much work remains to be done in developing an analysis and balance sheet of the developments in Portugal and of their lessons for the revolutionary movement elsewhere, especially in Europe. It will also be necessary to convince the mass vanguard that our sections embody the qualities which the social revolution in the advanced countries will demand: proletarian democracy, a model of Leninist organisation that has no nostalgia for monolithism and commandism, a revolutionary practice that knows how to draw on the best in Marxist science and culture. The ability of our sections to attract and lead advanced workers will depend on their success in demonstrating such qualities in practice.

## Some conclusions

These notes have sought to identify problems rather than to specify solutions. Here we will tentatively indicate some of the conclusions that are implied by the preceding critique.

The obstacle presented by the traditional workers' parties demands different tactics depending on the relative weight of these parties in the workers' movement, on their proximity to Government and on their political origins. The large Governmental social-democratic parties of Britain, Sweden, West Germany and Austria are top-heavy labour bureaucracies which the masses see as defending certain historic gains they have made; but they do not any longer see in these parties any promise of a fundamental change in society. The parliamentary representation of these parties is remote from their mass base, and political organisation at the point of production is almost non-existent. The tactical prescription of 'unity in action and outflanking' thus has very little purchase in the case of these parties: it can be applied on some international questions (Chile, Spain, but not Portugal) and in cases where the bourgeois parties threaten a parliamentary coup against the Government. But on most of the central questions of the class struggle there is no prospect of establishing any kind of united action with the social democratic party—despite its many special features, the British Labour party is essentially a party of this type. As the capitalist crisis erodes full employment, the social services and wage levels, the social democratic parties become vulnerable to united action initiatives from below aimed at defending and extending democratic rights, past social conquests and immediate material interests of the masses. The challenge from below need in no way respect the given political form of the workers' movement—the large social democratic parties invariably exclude the most active and advanced workers from effective membership and this is why they can act as a straight-jacket upon the working masses. At the same time, every effort should be made to unite with the combative workers at the base of the parties around class-wide demands, embodied in an action programme.

The tactics to be adopted towards the non-Governmental parties are necessarily different. In most cases these parties do still represent for the masses some hope of a fundamental transformation of society, and in the case of the Stalinist parties they do still display some capacity to organise at the point of production. Even if the large Stalinist parties enter the arena of Government in the coming period, they will remain for a time the focus of popular hopes; a significant electoral advance by the French or Italian CPs would almost certainly be linked to a development of the extra-parliamentary mass struggle. A Governmental manoeuvre by the Spanish CP would not have the same significance but is still not likely to be capable of dampening or containing the mass movement in the context of the crumbling dictatorship. At all events the assumption of Governmental functions by the Communist Parties anywhere in Europe is unlikely to have the effective of leading to an immediate decline in the level of the mass struggle as was the case following the formation of the Wilson government in Britain in February 1974. The

smaller CPs often still retain an influence on a certain layer of combative workers and often function not so differently from the more right-wing centrist groups of the past. The tactical prescription 'initiative—unity in action—outflanking' retains its validity in the case of these parties, even though it must always be accompanied by programmatic confrontation focusing on the crucial questions of the political independence of the workers' movement and the necessity of proletarian democracy as a component of today's struggles and not only as a characteristic of the future socialist society.

In our analysis of each social formation we should take the greatest care to establish the national specificity of political institutions, of economic development and of class forces. Each social formation represents an original combination which cannot be reduced to the pure logic of capitalism as a mode of production; indeed a proper understanding of the capitalist mode of production demonstrates the necessity of the existence of a relatively autonomous political order. Thus the course of the class struggle in the crumbling Spanish dictatorship, with its economic crisis, acute national tensions and special political traditions will differ sharply from the pattern of events which are likely to unfold in France, with its relatively advanced social formation and economy and extensive experience of bourgeois democracy. Equally the fate of the social-democratic Government in Britain is likely to differ greatly from that in Sweden, given the acute discrepancy in the strength of the capitalist economy and the size of the layer of combative workers. We should also pay attention to the differential impact that international developments will have in the various countries of capitalist Europe. A crisis of the Stalinist regime in East Germany would have a quite different—although still very great—impact in West Germany and Italy. Clearly the gamut of variations cannot be explored here, but we have nevertheless sought to identify some of the most crucial variables: level and type of economic development, relationship to the capitalist world market and to the non-capitalist economies, nature of the political system, deployment of bourgeois political forces, organisation of the armed force, police and para-military formations, relationship of forces within the workers' movement between reformism, Stalinism, Mao-Stalinism, ultra-leftism, etc., relationship of the traditional workers' organisations to the government, level of unionisation, organisation of unions, composition of the workforce (including proportion of women, immigrants, etc.), size of service sector, scope of Government economic activities, extent of home ownership and extent of development of hire purchase, credit, financing and organisation of health, education, etc. Within each state, we should also naturally study regional variations, degree of national integration and so forth. Developing such a detailed picture of each national combination must seem unduly laborious and time-wasting—in fact, of course, failure to identify the specific field of revolutionary practice in this way will lead to an incomparably greater loss of the time and labour of our militants.

It follows from the above that the democratic and transitional demands which we project must be extended and developed to provide the most suitable terrain on which to confront the traditional workers' parties. We should seek to equip the mass vanguard with a *global*

*programmatic alternative* to social democracy and Stalinism. Our revolutionary programme must not be a thin echo of the Bolshevik programme of 1917, but must be based on an understanding of *all* the contradictions of an advanced capitalist society.

The combination of bourgeois democracy with moves towards strengthening the repressive powers of the state creates conditions in which agitation for democratic rights for soldiers and the disbanding of all the special repressive instruments of the bourgeois state can acquire great mass resonance. Across a wide front radical democratic demands can play a crucial role in forging a fighting alliance of all oppressed and exploited; especially demands relating to women, immigrants and oppressed nationalities. Full support for the right to national self-determination must involve no accommodation to nationalist ideology: in the case of nationalities that are not oppressed, our support for the *right* of self-determination should not be accompanied by advocacy of it (e.g., Scotland). The demands developed within the women's liberation movement can vitally enrich the traditional socialist demands relating to women's oppression (e.g., the demand for "Free Abortion on Demand" or for universally available creche facilities lead directly into the nature of the social services). The defence and extension of trade union rights (including for immigrant and women workers) will be of special importance. Especially in sectors where unionisation is low, we should always seek to extend union organisation and not confine ourselves to calls for elected strike committees. Democratic rights in the workplace, coupled with workers' control initiatives, incipiently challenge the bourgeois limitations with which democracy is hedged around in capitalist society. The necessity of workers' self-defence can emerge even from struggles that have an essentially democratic content. However, this is not to say that defence of democratic rights should not be accompanied by a full transitional programme.

In addition to the classical transitional demands for a sliding scale of wages and hours, we should demand a sliding scale of social benefits and social expenditure. The crisis of social expenditure requires from revolutionaries a qualitative as well as quantitative series of demands. It presents excellent opportunities for linking up the struggles of workers in the social sector with initiatives directed at the working class as a whole, since its 'social wage' is here at stake.

The development of late capitalism has typically led to a proliferation of economic mechanisms for tying the 'middle sectors' and the better paid sectors of the working class to the fortunes of the capitalist economy: notably a growth of mortgaged home ownership and the spread of hire purchase agreements. We should demand a moratorium on all hire purchase agreements and mortgages below

a certain figure. The discussion of the middle sectors generally suggests that they are integrated by socialised forces of production in contrast to the traditional petty bourgeoisie. We should seek to remove or reverse those mechanisms that give them a stake in capitalist society. Worker control initiatives and qualitative demands in the workplace are also likely to play an important role in drawing the middle sectors to the side of the working class.

The above are just a very few of the demands we should be exploring. The most burning problems facing the masses should be met by an Action Programme comprising the immediately agitational demands of the Transitional Programme and proposing a working class solution to the capitalist crisis. Such an Action Programme should become the basis for class struggle currents within the trade unions. The full transitional programme should be systematically presented in the bourgeois electoral arena. We should understand that elections are usually an excellent opportunity for agitation and organisation as well as for the development of the mass struggle and to the everyday problems of the masses. Approached in the right way, they provide an indispensable opportunity for programmatic contestation of the traditional workers' parties—both of their immediate proposals and of their model of socialism.

## Resumé

The points we have tried to make in these critical notes on the EPD could be summarised as follows. Firstly, the EPD tends to underestimate and oversimplify the problems posed by, and at, *the political level* of the bourgeois order—the specificity of national conjunctures, the role of the recuperative mechanisms of bourgeois democracy, the complexity of the social formation. Secondly, and as a consequence, the EPD underplays the role of *the subjective factor*: the need for revolutionary work in many different fields (including the armed forces and the bourgeois electoral arena at every level), the need to spell out more concretely our understanding of how soviets could develop and should function, the need to arm the mass struggle with transitional demands and a transitional programme. The "objectivist" faith in the "actuality of the revolution" centrally involves a failure to grapple adequately with the obstacle represented by the traditional workers' organisations in Europe and the tactics needed to remove or neutralise this obstacle. Finally the above inadequacies lead to indulgence towards the political vagaries and deformations of many "far left" and "centrist" currents and an insufficient attention to ensuring that our own sections really embody and project the qualities that a socialist revolution in an advanced country will demand.

# ON THE INTERNATIONAL

by Sakai

## I.

1. How should the evolution of the International from 1968 to 1974 be characterized?

The main features of the evolution of the International since 1968 can be summarized in three points, as follows: a) the spontaneist and empiricist growth and expansion of the International based on the new international youth radicalization; b) the grave failure of the Ninth World Congress line on the Latin American revolution with its disastrous organizational effects upon the International in Latin America; c) the formation of international tendencies and factions with the aggravation of the internal faction fights and polarization of the International.

2. The fast growth and expansion the International achieved was based on the new international youth radicalization in a deeply spontaneist and empirical way without a uniform political and organizational leadership of the International. This resulted in the uneven development of the International politically and organizationally. The biggest unevenness in the growth and expansion of the International is most evident in the incredible decomposition of the Indian Trotskyist movement and the vacuum of Trotskyism in Southeast Asia. Even in Western Europe we can see serious unevenness among the successful breakthroughs, such as the grave failure in Italy and the unbelievable West German non-intervention into the real explosion of SDS [Sozialistischer Deutscher Studentenbund—German Socialist Student Federation].

We can see the political unevenness in the difference between the pacifist antiwar intervention in the U.S. and the West European anti-imperialist Vietnam solidarity orientation. The process of growth and expansion of the International was not the direct result of a consistent and systematic political and organizational intervention by the International through its international leadership but rather the result of the spontaneist and empirical thrust of sectors of radicalizing youth to the International. In any case, the International has succeeded in renewing its ranks internationally and in expanding numerically and geographically since 1968. Now almost all the sections and sympathizing groups are under the leadership of the new generation; the renewal of the International has been accomplished at the leadership level of the sections and sympathizing groups since 1968. This renewal of the International is the historic gain of the last seven years.

However, because of the specific spontaneist and empiricist nature of the fresh growth, the International is characterized by the following major features: the lack of a strong centralized international leadership which can represent the new generation of young cadres; the lack of a deep political homogeneity among the new international cadres; and the great geographical unevenness in the

growth and expansion of the International, to be seen, first of all, in the decomposing situation of the Indian section and the vacuum of Trotskyism in Southeast Asia.

3. The second important feature is the grave error of the Ninth World Congress on the question of the Latin American revolution and its disastrous organizational results in the region. The extremely difficult organizational situation of the International in the Latin American world is reflected in the following two facts: First, the Argentine political situation is highly explosive due to the consistent trend of the working class offensive since the late 1960s and it is quite possible to have a nation-wide dual power situation with a deeper explosion of the Argentine working class in the not too distant future. This will surely result in profoundly influencing the future course of the continental political situation. But the International has no reliable organization with some minimal organizational stability and political capacity that can intervene in the actual development of the class struggle there. There is the PST, but it has shown a strong right-wing deviation since the late 1960s. The International is really paralyzed in Argentina. Second, the International has no "pivotal" sections that can take systematic initiatives for developing international coordination among the sections and sympathizing groups on a Latin American scale. Though the International has the PST, the problem is the same as in Argentina. The International is also paralyzed as an International on the continental scale in Latin America.

Such an extremely difficult situation of the International in Latin America is the precise result of the grave error of the Ninth World Congress on the Latin American revolution—that is, the line of prolonged rural guerrilla warfare (see the Japanese position paper on the Latin American question).

4. The third important feature is the formation of the International Majority Tendency and the Leninist Trotskyist Faction and the aggravation of the internal faction fight with the crystallized polarization within the International.

Organizations of the International have split along the political differentiation of the international majority and the international minority in Mexico, Canada, Australia and Spain. For more than a year before the Tenth World Congress the international faction fight was aggravated even organizationally and most of the energy of the International in connection with its international work had been absorbed by the internal faction fight. The external international activity in the United Secretariat had been paralyzed. Even now the international faction fight is a big burden upon the international leadership in extending its external international activities.

The formation of the IMT and the LTT (later the LTF)



and the aggravation of the faction fight since the end of 1972 is, in a sense, an inevitable political result of the fast and extremely spontaneist growth and expansion of the International since 1968. In its political content this international faction fight has an aspect of historical continuity with the split of 1953 between the International Secretariat and the International Committee. On the other hand, a spontaneism of the new young cadres on the organizational question and the wrong orientation of the international majority on the Latin American revolution played negative roles in aggravating the international faction fight organizationally.

However, in the International which has had an influx of the new generation, the core of the differences has been deeply political. The international majority has represented the aggressive or active nature of the new cadres that reflects the explosion of radical militancy, triggered by the Tet offensive of 1968, among students and young workers all over the world, and it has also represented an internationalist tendency which tries even in their empiricism to respond to the question of power, which is posed by the actual development of the international class struggle. As for the international minority, it has been represented by the block of the SWP of the U.S. and the PST of Argentina. The SWP has represented the political level of the radicalization of the white masses that developed in the general framework of pacifism through the antiwar movement in the USA; therefore it is a rather national political tendency which does not yet pose the question of power in its actual practice in the mass movement. On the other hand, the PST of Argentina is another national political tendency which can be characterized as a specific opportunism that tail-ends this or that tactical opportunity from time to time and has mainly oriented itself to the opening of a quasi-parliamentary situation. Thus the SWP-PST's position, that evades the question of power in the actual class struggle, has clashed politically with the internationalist tendency of the international majority which tries to respond actively to the question of power in its practice. Therefore the deepening of the international faction fight was inevitable in the International and the international faction fight has posed the fundamental question: that is, on what political basis the International is to be built as a genuine communist international organization under a single and united international leadership.

## II.

5. Now the crisis and decline of the international imperialist hegemony of the USA is clear enough; the global balance of forces between the world-revolutionary forces as a whole, which include the workers states of the USSR and China, and the counterrevolutionary forces around U.S. imperialism has clearly become favorable for the former. This new international situation has been created by the breakthrough of the Vietnamese revolution, and this new international balance of forces poses new international perspectives for class struggles and antibureaucratic struggles all over the world. Now the international class struggle has entered a new epoch where it must fight for achieving the total victory of the world revolution. At the same time the international class struggle is now increasingly posing the question of power in more and

more countries. After the victory of the Vietnamese revolution, now the struggle for power is posed to the Thai proletariat, that is, how to accomplish the Indochinese revolution in the coming period. In the region of the Philippines, Malaysia-Singapore and Indonesia, the Marcos regime is far from a stable situation. A situation for open proletarian struggle for power is coming closer and closer in South Korea and Japan. Now in Western Europe we have the Portuguese situation and next we will have a Spanish explosion. In Italy the traditional bourgeois governmental forms around the Christian Democratic party are now in a final crisis and in France we have a critical balance of forces between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. The coming explosion of the Spanish proletariat will very strongly influence the situation in Portugal, France and Italy. We have the unstable Greek situation.

Thus we can say that the proletarian struggle for power is posed or is going to be posed directly in the Mediterranean countries. As for the Arab world, the not too distant emergence of the Egyptian proletariat against the Sadat regime will mark a deep change in the character of the Middle East political situation; the Egyptian working class will become the backbone of a new proletarian permanent revolution in the Arab lands. In India the nature of the situation is all too clear; the question is purely one of leadership. The Indian proletarian struggle should provide the backbone for the subcontinental struggle for power. The nature of the Latin American situation is also clear enough; there has been the Chile coup d'etat and we have the current Argentine situation. Therefore the only remaining question in the capitalist world is the problem of North America. Even for North America, if we are loyal to Trotsky on the question of U.S. imperialism, there will not be a long intermediate period before we will face the very same question of the proletarian struggle for power in North America.

The crisis and decline of the international hegemony of U.S. imperialism and the revival of the struggle for power in Western Europe and East Asia will give the antibureaucratic struggle in the USSR, the East European countries and China new anti-imperialist international perspectives for their political revolutions.

6. Thus it is very clear that the International faces the tasks of building the revolutionary parties which can intervene in the actual struggles for power and of building a strong Communist International which will centralize the national revolutionary parties as a single international communist organization. Therefore it is an absolute necessity to start a determined struggle to overcome the spontaneist and empiricist nature of the International since 1968, to overcome the crisis of our Latin American movement, and to give the utmost political clarification to the present international faction fight and overcome it.

Now the International faces two levels of its practical problems and tasks, political and organizational, which it must solve in the present period.

## III.

### 7. Political Problems and Tasks—I.

First of all, the International must clarify the nature of the LTF political lines. The core of the LTF political



orientation is a *systematic evasion of the question of power in the present situation of the class struggle*. The propagandistic method of party building by the LTF leadership of the SWP is closely related with its argument for consistent nationalism and democracy in general in the epoch of decaying imperialism; that is, of building a mass party through consistent mass campaigns along the line of nationalism and democracy. But the key link which is lacking in the argument of the LTF leadership of the SWP is the question of proletarian struggle for state power and the proletarian dictatorship. The essence of the theory of permanent revolution is that the unsolved democratic and national tasks can be solved only through the proletarian struggle for its dictatorship as part of the internationalist socialist revolution in the epoch of decaying imperialism. This is also the essence of the famous April thesis by Lenin in 1917. The LTF leadership of the SWP has turned this theory of the permanent revolution upside down. The result is an automatist theory of a new type of the consistent nationalist and democratic road to a socialist revolution or a road to the socialist revolution through a consistent nationalist and democratic mobilization of the masses. The proletarian struggle for its dictatorship poses the question of property relations and the question of power which are fundamentally class questions and our party building is only possible if it is based on a clear political program for the proletarian dictatorship and through actually preparing ourselves for an open struggle for power or actual intervention into the proletarian struggle for power. So we must characterize the SWP leadership argument for the LTF on consistent nationalism and democracy and its propagandist method of party building as a system of theory that evades the question of power for the proletariat in the present situation of class struggle in a consistent way.

And now the actual development of the international class struggle poses the very question of power in various degrees, of course, in more and more countries all over the world. Under such a situation of the international class struggle, a consistent evasion of the question of power is not simply a "neutral" position but a Menchevist position in the actual class struggle. That is the iron logic of class struggle. Thus, since the LTF continues to evade the question of power under the present tendency of the international class struggle, our difference with the LTF becomes a fundamental political difference between the International and the LTF. The question which the LTF is now posing is the life or death question for the International.

Now the real nature of the LTF political line should be clarified as fully as possible so as not to allow any illusion on that point and the International should make its determination to fight against the Menchevist LTF line in the International. This is the foremost task of the International at the present stage.

There is also a grave revisionist tendency in the arguments of the LTF leadership of the SWP on the question of the workers states and Stalinism and on the nature of the post world war II development of the world situation and the international class struggle, but I will not take up those questions here.

## 8. Political Problems and Tasks—II

Secondly, it is now an absolute necessity for the

International to draw an *honest* and crystal-clear balance sheet on the Latin American line of the 9th World Congress, to initiate a systematic and consistent effort to overcome its present extremely difficult situation in Latin America. The International must elaborate a solid political base on which its Latin American sections and sympathizing organizations can start their region-wide international coordination to build the Latin American movement of the International in a systematic and consistent way.

## 9. Political Problems and Tasks—III

The present Portuguese intervention by the International and the present Portuguese debate in the International are extremely important at the present stage of the International, not only because the Portuguese question is at the center of the internal political struggle, but also because the Portuguese situation poses the problem of political strategy and tactics, such as the governmental slogan, united front policy, problems of the proletarian alliance with other oppressed classes and layers, and problems of the dual power situation and its organizations among the masses. Almost all of these problems have been solved *theoretically* in the tradition of the first five years of the Comintern and, after that, Trotsky's contributions to the international class struggle. But for us, the new generation of international cadres, these problems are new in our actual experience and we must learn the theories from tradition and learn to apply them in practice to our own actual experiences. This is an essential part of the rebuilding process of the Communist International among the world-wide new vanguard which lacks any historical memory of the traditions.

Now the International more and more faces the question of actual proletarian struggle for state power and its problems of political strategy and tactics in the Mediterranean countries of Europe, East Asia, Latin America, the Indian subcontinent and the Arab world. The International now faces the fundamental political problems of the proletariat in its struggle for state power. The International is entering or has entered a new stage in its political tasks. When we see the 10th World Congress theses on capitalist Europe, the nature of the document is very clear; that is, the document aims to give a general guideline for building *revolutionary organizations in a precise situation* where there are *potentials* of prerevolutionary or revolutionary explosions and there are layers of radical elements which are spontaneously politically independent from the traditional reformist leaderships of the working class, *but where there is no open prerevolutionary or revolutionary situation*. The nature of the document is very precise, to build a nationwide political organization of Trotskyists (the "revolutionary organization") in the actual mass movement, based on the radical elements of a "mass proportion" which are spontaneously independent from the traditional reformist workers' parties (that is, the "new mass vanguard,"), and before a prerevolutionary or revolutionary explosion of the situation. But when this document was adopted at the last world congress it had already been outdated in the actual situation of Italy and France at least. Then we had the explosion of the Portuguese situation in 1974. When the document was originally drafted it was outdated in respect to the actual nature of the Italian political situation, because the Italian situation was far more advanced in its bourgeois political

crisis than the French situation at that same period. The burning political problems of united front politics, the governmental slogans, the question of the dual power situation and its organizations were extremely vital for Italy at that time. It was absolutely impossible to "outflank" those real political problems in order to build "an Italian revolutionary organization." In Italy the question of party building has been posed in direct relation with the political problems of the proletariat in its actual struggle for state power. Thus the West European document has not been able to serve as the answer to our Italian question which was far more advanced. As for the critical remarks of the Japanese section on this document, see "On 'The Building of Revolutionary Parties in Capitalist Europe'" by the Japan Revolutionary Communist League, Japanese section of the Fourth International, SWP Internal Information Bulletin, January 1975, No. 2 in 1975.

In any case, the explosion of the Portuguese situation has definitely opened a new stage of the class struggle in capitalist Europe. The West European sections should be tested and politically rearmed on a qualitatively higher level through the Portuguese struggle and the coming explosion of the Spanish situation. This fact means that the International has to respond to the real problems of the proletarian struggle for state power in its day to day activities, and we are facing the very same question in East Asia, especially after the fall of Saigon. Now the International must relearn the Bolshevik Leninist theories on this question and learn to apply those theories in its actual practice. This is the new stage in the development of our International and the International must work for a political homogenization of the new cadres of the International on this key political question which is a decisive part of the International's task of overcoming the past spontaneism in growth in expansion.

#### 10. Political Problems and Tasks—IV.

The crisis and decline of the international hegemony of the U.S. and the new rise of international class struggle pose the question of the international perspective of the proletarian revolution. Now the International must start to discuss the aspect of the international perspectives of proletarian revolution. The International perspectives of proletarian revolution are the real political base on which the International can build its international centralization of the national sections and sympathizing organizations. We reject any kind of federalist concept of the International, and we stand for a genuine *political* centralization of the International based on the international perspectives of proletarian revolution. The world revolution is a single and historic organic unity, and each region of the world has its own specific organic and historic unity as a part of the total unity of world revolution. Therefore the International should be a single and centralized Communist international organization based on its single international perspective of world revolution. And it should have its regional international leadership based on the regional international perspective of proletarian revolution in each region.

Therefore the discussion and elaboration of our international perspective proceeds on two levels: The single

perspective of proletarian revolution on a world scale (the world political program of the International) and the regional international perspective of proletarian revolution (the regional international program). In regard to the perspective of proletarian revolution on a world scale, the International must work to elaborate the political balance sheet document on the evolution of the world situation and the international class struggle since the beginning of the Second World War. The International should have its balance sheet discussion on the Second World Congress of 1948, the Third World Congress of 1951 and the Unification Congress of 1963, and the nature of the present stage of the world situation and its perspectives. As for the regional international perspectives, our young Arab movement has the first draft thesis on the Arabian revolution and we, the East Asians, are working to elaborate the East Asian perspective for proletarian revolution. But now in Europe we have a very strange phenomenon. The West European document has posed our actual preparation for the proletarian struggle for state power, and the Mediterranean sections and sympathizing organizations are now in the very situation where the question of power is our real political problem. But there is no first draft thesis of the regional international perspective of proletarian revolution for all of Europe (East and West, of course!). Just to repeat, the "Red Europe" slogan is our international perspective in Europe. But is the "Red Europe" a "red socialist Common Market" or a proletarian unification of East and West Europe? How can the International even fight for a proletarian revolution in some of the capitalist European countries without having an all-European-scale and regional international program of proletarian revolution? In this context, our West European movement is even now deeply empiricist and spontaneist. We must ask: What is the basis of the actual international unity of our West European sections and sympathizing organizations in Europe. In this same context, the method of our new Arab movement with its first Arab draft thesis is really internationalist and far freer of the West European type of national empiricism and spontaneism. In North America the Quebec comrades have begun to discuss the problem of the "Red North America" perspective.

The International must initiate determined efforts to overcome this spontaneism and empiricism on the question of the international perspective of proletarian revolution through which the International will be able to develop the political homogenization of the new international cadres, that is, a political centralization process of its sections and sympathizing organizations.

11. The International can develop and deepen the political homogenization and political centralization of its international ranks only through a determined effort to solve all these four political problems and tasks at the present stage in the evolution of the International. We are just at the very first stage of international building.

#### IV.

#### 12. Organizational Problems and Tasks—I.

First of all, how should we think about building the International as a real international communist organiza-

tion and its international leadership? This is the fundamental organization question for the present International, on which we must have a clear and precise idea in order to overcome the spontaneism and empiricism characterizing the international organizational question since 1968.

The international leadership which we must work to build in the coming period should be composed of the cadres who can represent actual movements of the International in the regions of Western Europe and Eastern Europe, the Arab world, Black Africa, the Indian subcontinent, East Asia, North America and Latin America. Therefore, *the building of a real international leadership is a whole process of building the International itself all over the world, overcoming the present political, organizational and geographical unevenness of the International.* There are two levels to the problem in this context of building a real international leadership. These are: a) *to develop a regional scale international coordination and its regional international leaderships in each region where the International already has its movement.* b) *to overcome the geographical unevenness of the International, especially in the Arab-Asian belt from the Arab world to East Asia, Eastern Europe and Black Africa.* Now the cadres of the new generation operate at the level of national leadership of the sections and sympathizing organizations. In general, these new cadres of the International are just building their national leadership in each section or sympathizing organization, and they have not had real experiences on the level of international organizational work. The International must create a layer of its international cadres which can form and fill the single international leadership of the International as a whole as well as the regional international leadership of each regional international movement. It is absolutely impossible for a single international leadership to follow and intervene in the activities of all the national sections and sympathizing organizations directly, effectively, and permanently. Only the intermediate regional-scale international leadership, which works for regional coordination based on the regional international perspective of proletarian revolution, can follow the activities of the national sections and sympathizing organizations in the region more or less on a day-to-day basis, and the single international leadership can intervene in the activities of the national section and sympathizing organizations through such regional-scale international leaderships. In this organizational aspect international building means to build both the single international leadership and the regional international leadership and, at the same time, it means that *each national section must be built as a part of the regional international movement of the international in its region from the very beginning.* Therefore the present prospect of building leaderships on the national level must definitely be combined with the *simultaneous* development of the regional-scale international coordination and the building of the regional international leadership in each region; that is, *the building of section level leaderships must be regionalized directly or, the building of section level leaderships must be a directly regional international work.* The building of the section-leadership must be truly internationalist from the very beginning in each region. It is thereby a process of building regional-scale international leaderships simultaneously and the combined process is to

create a layer of international cadres for the International. Building the international leadership is not merely to gather some individual cadres into the body of the leadership but it is essentially to build the national sections and their leadership in a genuine internationalist way. This is the real and organic base of the International and its international leadership. As for the equally important task of overcoming the geographical unevenness of the International in building the International and its international leadership, the need is now clear enough. While it is vital to realize the regional-scale internationalization where we have regional-wide movements, such as in Western Europe, North America and Latin America, it is also vital for the building of the International and its international leadership to overcome the geographical unevenness of the International in the belt area from the Arab world to East Asia, Eastern Europe and Black Africa.

*Now our central organizational weakness is in India.* The Latin-American situation of the International is grave and extremely difficult. Yet we have the sections and sympathizing organizations even if they have problems and difficulties. Our Latin American difficulty is essentially political as the precise result of the wrong line of the 9th World Congress. We have some serious initial activities in Eastern Europe, the Arab world and East Asia but, in the Indian subcontinental area, our Ceylonese section, which has positive energy and real possibilities in the country, is isolated in the region, and our Indian situation is just a shame for the International. We witness a decomposition of the Indian section of the 4th International, the Communist League of India while the present Indian situation is nearing the final crisis of the Indian Congress regime of the national bourgeoisie since its independence in 1947 and there is a huge potential of explosive class struggle in India. This Indian class struggle is the real backbone of the proletarian revolution on the Indian subcontinent which has to build a real unity of workers and peasants on the subcontinental scale, breaking up the divisions instituted by the neocolonialist ruling classes in the region. Now it is an absolute necessity for the International to make a real initial start in rebuilding its *Indian movement.*

In any case, overcoming the geographical unevenness of the International is an essential part of building the international leadership and the International itself. Clearly, it is no solution to pick up come "capable" individual cadres and put them in the body of the international leadership without their regional bases. Those cadres should be able to represent their regional movements and they must be able to play international roles on the body of the international leadership in relation with the regional movement.

To build the international leadership and the International itself through the realization of regional-scale international coordination and formation of the regional international leadership in each region and through overcoming the geographical unevenness of the International in the belt from the Arab world to East Asia, Eastern Europe and Black Africa—this must be the general organizational orientation of our international.

### 13. Organizational Problems and Tasks—II.

Since the last world congress an important step has been taken to build a permanent political center of the international leadership with several fulltime cadres and the regular publication of *Imprecor*, the fortnightly organ of the United Secretariat. This formation of the permanent political center of the international leadership and the publication of *Imprecor* have a historic importance in building the International and its working leadership. This important step has been taken on the basis of the past growth and expansion of the International and is also an important international action, politically and organizationally, to try to overcome the last traces of spontaneity and empiricism of growth and expansion tied up with the political, organizational, and geographical unevenness in the International. However, this step is an *initial* action in order to build a real international leadership and its permanent political center.

What should be the fundamental role of the international leadership at the present stage? This statement of ours has pointed out the four political problems and tasks in the sections from 7 to 10 and the two fundamental organizational tasks of the regional internationalization and the overcoming of the geographical unevenness of the International in section 12. The role of the international leadership is to take real international initiatives to solve these political and organizational problems and tasks in the present period. Of course, this includes following the important developments in the world political situation and the international class struggle, giving clear class positions to these developments, helping the regional movements and the sections and sympathizing organizations to intervene in the important and decisive developments of the class struggle, organizing international campaigns, and so on. Our international leadership must conduct its normal day-to-day functioning, that is clear. *But we should be much more precise about the fundamental political and organizational tasks of the International leadership, which are very specific according to the nature of the present evolution of the International. Otherwise, our present even-now-weak and extremely precious international leadership will be all too easily absorbed and spontaneously swallowed up by the actual developments of the international class struggle and the internal evolution of the International.*

Now the International has its region wide movements in Western Europe, North America and Latin America. But the Latin American movement is not strong because of the political crisis of the movement. Therefore the West European and North American movements are the only ones which have some minimal organizational capacity and possibility to accept the main responsibility for the international leadership on the everyday level of work in the International. As for the North American movement, the SWP is the main organization and the LTF leadership of the SWP is developing a strong right-wing revisionist tendency and a federalist concept of building the International. Thus our West European movement is the only regional base which can accept the main responsibility of supporting the international leadership at the present

stage despite the fact that there are various political and organizational problems in the West European movement today. The whole International must support the present West European based body of the International leadership in order to evolve toward a really worldwide based international leadership. It would be natural for the present body of the International leadership to have the North American cadres in its composition, and the coming new developments of other regional movements will give new international cadres to the international body of leadership.

### 14. Organizational Problems and Tasks—III.

At the present stage of the International, however, the West European based body of the International leadership presents the possibility of serious problems as an international leadership. That is, there is a real danger that the West European based international body might become a regional leadership body of West Europe under the pressure of the acute West European class struggle and the possible internal *problems of our West European movement*. The whole International should be clearly aware of this objective danger in order to resist the West European regional empiricism and spontaneity.

Here the core of the question lies in the very fact that the West European section-level leaderships are just in the process of forming themselves as more or less experienced and matured national political leaderships, with their empiricism, and sometimes, even now, pure empiricism, and that our West European movement has not formed its own international regional leadership (West European bureau of the Fourth International) with its European theses on the proletarian revolution. Therefore the present West European based international body of leadership is obliged to play a double role, that of the international leadership and the West European regional leadership and sometimes mixing the two. (For example, see the United Secretariat statement on May Day of this year, which was a West European May Day appeal but not a real International May Day appeal). *So the best and only possible way to protect the West European body of international leaderships from the possible and probable West European regional empiricism and spontaneity is to initiate definite and determined efforts to realize a West European regional internationalization of the movement and to build a permanent bureau of the West European movement. The International will be able to make our West European movement into a strong internationalist base of the International and to mobilize this regional movement for the real worldwide international class struggle most effectively and fully only through the deepest regional internationalization of our West European movement.*

October 30, 1975

(Note: This statement is written on the basis of the general line of a draft document for the 8th National Congress of the Japanese section of the Fourth International, presented by its Political Bureau).

## Some Remarks on "Draft Theses for Detailing the Tasks of the Fourth International in Capitalist Europe (Second Edition)"

by Sakai

1. Why is a new document necessary on the tactical questions of the International in capitalist Europe?

The "Theses on Building of Revolutionary Parties in Capitalist Europe," adopted at the Tenth (fourth since reunification) World Congress in February 1974, gives a general idea of the perspective of a generalized dual-power situation and its tactical problems in capitalist Europe in general. *But the fundamental nature of the document on capitalist Europe is to give a general guideline for building national-scale Trotskyist political organizations as sections of the International in a situation that is not openly prerevolutionary or revolutionary.* However, now in Portugal, Spain, Italy, France, Greece, and Britain, although the depth of the crisis of the bourgeois state is different in those countries, we have a situation in which a whole series of policies and tactics concerning the question of power has become vital for the practice of our International. A whole series of tactical questions on the relationship between the party and the working class is posed in the perspective of the question of power. Therefore it is clear that the International needs new theses on the question of tactics. The new document, "Draft Theses for Detailing the Tasks of the Fourth International in Capitalist Europe (Second Edition)," is fundamentally *theses on tactics* centered on the question of power in the critical countries of capitalist Europe.

On the nature and weakness of the document on capitalist Europe, we have expressed our own criticism and assessment in the Japanese position paper "On 'The Building of Revolutionary Parties in Capitalist Europe (Draft)'" (Appendix 2 attached to this contribution) and in my note "On the International" (which is submitted to the United Secretariat for internal international circulation and which is published in the SWP Internal Information Bulletin No. 1 in 1976).

### 1.

2. The new draft theses (second edition) refers to ". . . the central place the emergence of a situation of dual power occupies in our revolutionary strategy as a whole" (English text, Section 6, p. 15). *The central and key idea, as a strategy, of the draft theses is the formation of a generalized dual-power situation. The tactical questions are presented in relation to this key idea of the formation of a generalized dual-power situation.*

On the centrality of the emergence of a generalized dual-power situation as a key for the West European proletarian revolution, the draft theses put forward the three major arguments as follows:

a) *The idea that once a dual-power situation has been generalized, a general confrontation is inevitable between the bourgeoisie and the working class.* The resolution on

capitalist Europe of the Tenth (fourth since reunification) World Congress says: "What distinguishes a situation of dual power is the fact that it constitutes a state of affairs that cannot be absorbed into the normal functioning of bourgeois institutions. As long as this dual power persists, a 'return to normal' is impossible. Even in the event of some partial defeats of the mass movement, an overall test of strength between the classes remains inevitable within a more or less short period of time.

"It flows from this that *the main task of revolutionists in case of an explosion of tumultuous mass struggles consists in preparing for and ensuring the appearance of organs of dual power that can prevent the rapid absorption of the upsurge by bourgeois state and economic relations, and, as a result, give the class struggle the form of a series of general confrontations, thereby creating the best conditions for a rapid growth of class consciousness and for a rapid strengthening of the revolutionary party.*" (Intercontinental Press, Vol. 12, No. 46, December 23, 1974, p. 1825.)

The new draft theses say the following on this point: ". . . the Portuguese experience also confirms that a period of near paralysis of the bourgeois state cannot last beyond a certain point. Thus, repeating the lessons of the Spanish and German revolutions, the Portuguese revolutionary process confronted the proletariat and its vanguard with a precise alternative: either a situation of dual power would at least be generalized through the lasting centralization of the bodies of self-organization of the masses, or else the bourgeoisie would take the initiative in breaking down these bodies, in reestablishing a repressive striking force, in driving back the most advanced conquests of the mass movement, and in consolidating its state power, at first behind a 'democratic' smokescreen." (English text, Section 2, p. 3.)

b) *The second basic argument for the strategy of a generalized dual-power situation concerns the deep bourgeois-democratic and reformist illusions of the traditional workers movement in Western Europe and the fundamental question of how to overcome the illusions in bourgeois democracy held by the majority of the working class.* The draft theses say the following: ". . . the strength of bourgeois-parliamentary traditions among the toiling masses in capitalist Europe is such that a crisis of the institutions of the bourgeois state power is improbable, if not impossible, without a crisis of the legitimacy of bourgeois-parliamentary democracy in the eyes of the masses.

"One of the essential functions of a period of dual power is precisely to deepen this crisis of the legitimacy of bourgeois-parliamentary democracy among the proletariat and the other oppressed layers of the population and to



lead it to an explosive point . . . . This shaking [of the legitimacy of bourgeois-parliamentary democracy—S.] requires a series of practical experiences in struggle and mobilization that show the masses that bourgeois-parliamentary institutions tend to restrain and repress their freedom of action during revolutionary periods, that institutions of the soviet type (workers councils and various forms of territorial councils or of sectoral self-organization of the masses) permit a broader extension of the enjoyment of democratic rights (including basic political rights like freedom of organization and freedom of the press) than bourgeois-parliamentary democracy and allow a qualitatively greater number of workers to participate in political practice and in the exercise of power, and that the immediate and burning needs of the masses can be satisfied only by their own initiatives and decisions, going beyond the 'sovereignty' of parliamentary institutions. The ideas of 'popular sovereignty' . . . and of 'popular will' must be disassociated in practice from the institutions of indirect bourgeois democracy and must be increasingly embodied in institutions of direct workers democracy, the masses resolving to determine their own fate themselves." (English text, Section 4, p. 7.) Therefore, the central formula is a *direct workers democracy vis-à-vis an indirect bourgeois democracy*.

c) *The third major argument on this point is related to the fundamental question of Stalinism and the existence of the bureaucratized workers states of the USSR and other East European countries.* The draft theses say: "The fact that the revolutionary crisis that is now ripening in capitalist Europe comes after long experience with the bureaucratic dictatorship in the USSR and East Europe—experience that was once again symbolized for the masses of this continent by the intervention of the armies of the Warsaw pact in the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic and the consequent brutal destruction of all the elements of socialist democracy introduced during the 'Prague Spring'—creates a special repugnance among the proletariat of Europe against any attempt to limit or stifle democratic rights during the revolutionary process. To permit the bourgeoisie and its agents within the workers movement to place the masses before the choice 'either bourgeois democracy or "people's democracy" as in East Europe' is to assure the victory of the counterrevolution.

"That is why revolutionary Marxists must attach special importance to the intransigent defense of the principles of workers democracy with no restriction or exclusivity, as soon as the revolutionary crisis breaks out and as soon as a situation of dual power develops. That is why, from the present stage, they must encourage all the forms of mobilization and struggle that foster the self-organization and independent activity of the toiling masses, including the most modest initiatives of 'direct democracy' (without falling into the sectarian practice of substituting self-organization of the broad vanguard for the organization of the masses)." (English text, Section 4, p. 8.)

This third argument is supported by "our 'socialist model'—our conception of socialist democracy, of a state based on workers councils (councils of the working people), of democratically centralized (planned) self-management, of consciously organizing the withering away of the market categories by both gradual means and abrupt leaps forward, and of the conscious struggle after the seizure of power for the radical transformation of human relations in all spheres of everyday life, particularly the struggle

against the persistence of patriarchal values and institutions. This model can inspire political activity in several ways. It can mobilize people against capitalism, strengthen the vanguard vis-a-vis the reformist and Stalinist apparatuses, and help to preserve the future soviet state against bureaucratic deviations." (The resolution on capitalist Europe of the last World Congress, *IP*, Vol. 12, No. 46, December 23, 1974, p. 1829.)

## II.

3. First of all, in regard to the idea that "as long as this dual power persists, a 'return to normal' is impossible" and that "even in the event of some partial defeats of the mass movement, an overall test of strength between the classes remains inevitable within a more or less short period of time," *it is not necessarily true to say so.*

When there is "a situation of dual power . . . generalized through the lasting centralization of the bodies of self-organization of the masses," it is almost always the traditional reformist leadership, or a part of it, that has a majority influence in the centralized body of soviet-type organs. If not, such a generalized dual-power situation is improbable. As the new draft theses say: "This means, particularly, that the masses may create structures of self-organization that progressively exercise functions of power and transform themselves into workers councils without any prior directives from the traditional apparatuses but also *without necessarily and completely breaking their political allegiance to these parties.*" (English text, Section 6, p. 12) *It is extremely important to recognize this seemingly contradictory nature of the emergence of a generalized dual-power situation, in which lies the objective basis for our united-front policy and tactics for the final seizure of power by the proletariat during a situation of generalized dual power.* It is impossible initially to have a revolutionary party as a majority among the working class, second to have the emergence of a generalized dual-power situation under the majority leadership of the revolutionary party, and third to seize the power. *We will not have the emergence of a generalized dual-power situation without mobilizing the traditional majority workers parties or considerable sections of them under the pressure of explosions and direct actions of the vast majority of workers.*

The traditional reformist workers parties of sections of them will almost always have the majority influence in any centralized body of self-organization of the masses or soviet-type organs on a national scale. It is categorically certain that those traditional leaderships will do anything, and will accept every kind of "radical" reform or concession for the workers, *in order to avoid a general confrontation with the bourgeoisie and its state or "an overall test of strength between the classes."* To avoid a clear class differentiation and an overall confrontation between the working class and the bourgeois state, those leaderships will accept some kind of self-management in factories and neighborhoods, as has been shown by the Portuguese experience of 1975. The French Socialist Party is talking about its self-management concept. That is the role of the leaderships of traditional reformist workers parties in a revolutionary or generalized dual-power situation. They will use every kind of leftist demagogic phrase. Therefore, "as long as this dual power persists, a 'return to normal' is impossible"—yes, this is correct. But it is not necessarily true to say, "Even in the event of some

partial defeats of the mass movement, *an overall test of strength between the classes* remains inevitable within a more or less short period of time.” (Emphasis added.)

It is true to say that once a generalized dual-power situation has emerged, it is inevitable, in spite of the class-collaborationist role of the traditional reformist parties, for the bourgeoisie to have a confrontation with at least a part of the working class in order to “normalize” the situation somehow. A partial confrontation between the working class and the bourgeoisie, such as the November 25 event in Portugal, is not our target. *Our target is a generalized confrontation between the working class and the bourgeoisie as an overall test of strength between the classes. In order to have a generalized class confrontation between the working class and the bourgeois state, it is absolutely indispensable to paralyze the class-collaborationist majority influence of the reformist parties and to build effective political unity of the working class against the bourgeoisie and its state. This is the central question for us in a generalized dual-power situation.*

4. *The emergence of a generalized dual-power situation does not automatically guarantee an overall confrontation between the working class and the bourgeoisie. If somebody says the contrary, he is a pure spontanéist, denying the very essence of the Leninist role of the party.*

It is true that the emergence of a generalized dual-power situation is a climax of the crisis of the bourgeois state: In a situation of generalized dual power, the bourgeoisie has lost its direct control of the political situation as a whole, being somehow paralyzed; the masses are engaged in the broadest and deepest movements, in which they pass through the most rapid, broadest, and deepest experiences, testing the class-collaborationist reformism of the traditional workers parties in a fundamental way and making the most basic challenge to those reformist leaderships *spontaneously*; the masses themselves experience and test everything *freely* in the deepest way. The extreme, fundamental, and historical importance of this process the masses go through in a generalized dual-power situation or a revolutionary situation is crystal clear. It is also clear that the Bolshevik-Leninist organization must be *patient enough* to follow and participate in the whole process of self-experience by the masses *with its flexible united-front tactics*.

But such a situation of the working-class masses in a generalized dual-power situation cannot *by itself automatically* lead to a generalized and overall class confrontation of the working class against the bourgeoisie and its state; in their spontaneity, the working-class masses can exhaust their energies and remain divided politically by the reformist leaderships. That is, the emergence of a generalized dual-power situation and the whole process of self-experience by the working-class masses *cannot replace the role of a revolutionary program for proletarian dictatorship and its Bolshevik-Leninist party or organization*. A thorough class independence from the bourgeoisie and its state can be represented *only by a definite program for proletarian dictatorship, its Bolshevik-Leninist party, and the party's concrete class policies*. A revolutionary party for proletarian dictatorship is a specific and essential political organ or “instrument” at the level or dimension of an *essentially political* state of the bourgeoisie. Through it the working-class masses express their degree of class independence in a conscious manner. *Only such a Bolshevik-Leninist organization or party can fight*

*for a generalized confrontation of the working class against the bourgeoisie and its state, through its political battles against the influence of the reformist class-collaborationist leaderships amongst the working-class masses in motion.*

As we have said in our Japanese position paper on the draft document on capitalist Europe (“On ‘The Building of Revolutionary Parties in Capitalist Europe’”), *the emergence of a generalized dual-power situation is the real beginning of a full-scale and definite political battle over an effective majority of the working class, a battle between an orientation for proletarian dictatorship and the class-collaborationist betrayal line of the reformist parties—if there is a Bolshevik-Leninist organization on a national scale that has reached a minimum stage as a party of proletarian revolution*. For such a revolutionary organization to be able to conduct the political battle effectively against the class-collaborationist influence of the reformist parties, there are at least two fundamental political conditions: (i) *that the organization has been fully armed programmatically for a proletarian dictatorship*; (ii) *that it has been armed and trained with a system of transitional demands for a workers government and with the methods and tactics of the working-class united-front policy—the former being an uncompromising partisan expression of class independence, and the latter being an extreme flexibility to win an effective majority of the working class.*

5. On the questions of the programmatic independence of a Bolshevik-Leninist organization and the transitional demands for a workers government and working-class united-front policy, the experience of the 1917 Russian revolution from February to October is 100 percent valid even today, and it teaches us very much. We must maintain the good tradition of Leon Trotsky in learning from the experience of the 1917 Russian revolution.

First of all, it is extremely important to recognize the historically proved fact that it is not so easy a job for a revolutionary organization to maintain real and consistent class independence in an explosive, revolutionary, or generalized dual-power situation. This has been shown by most of the far-left organizations in Portugal in 1975—militantism does not equal class independence for proletarian dictatorship—and by the Bolshevik party itself just after the February revolution. We have also seen a grave danger in the International on this very programmatic point in relation to the actual development of the Portuguese situation in 1975; that is, a grave programmatic deviation from the line for proletarian dictatorship in the LTF's democratic orientation on Portugal in 1975. (The eighth national congress of the Japanese section in January 1976 adopted a resolution on the Menshevik and stagist nature of the LTF orientation on Portugal, and I hope we can translate it into English for the pre-World Congress discussion.)

If someone thinks there is a fundamental and programmatic difference between the stand for proletarian dictatorship and the reformist class-collaborationist position *on the question of whether to accept a situation of generalized dual power or not*, he is wrong through and through! If this were true, once we had the emergence of a generalized dual-power situation, it would be automatic for revolutionary currents to have majority influence in the mass organizations of dual power, and an overall and generalized confrontation between the classes would be automati-



cally guaranteed! The emergence of a generalized dual-power situation is the highest expression of the crisis of the bourgeois state forced by the explosion of direct actions of the masses. Therefore, the class-collaborationist leaderships of the reformist parties are stubbornly against the emergence of a dual-power situation *before the emergence of such a situation*. But once a generalized dual-power situation has begun to emerge spontaneously through the explosive direct actions of the masses and when the momentum is strong enough, the masses themselves will force the reformist parties to join the movement. The reformist parties themselves will accept the emergence of mass organizations of dual power and participate in them in order to keep playing their class-collaborationist role aimed at avoiding a final class confrontation between the working class and the bourgeois state. We have seen the Portuguese CP in the embryonic mass organizations of dual power just recently. *This truth is simply an A-B-C of Marxism. Therefore, there is no fundamental or programmatic difference on the question of the emergence of a dual-power situation in itself between the class-collaborationist position of reformist parties and a revolutionary position for proletarian dictatorship.*

So, where is the fundamental programmatic difference between the reformist class-collaborationist position and the revolutionary position for proletarian dictatorship? This question was the central theme of the famous April theses of 1917 by Lenin, which was also the core of the programmatic position of permanent revolution by Trotsky. Lenin's April theses reorganized or rearmed or reoriented the Bolshevik party of the time politically and programmatically toward the direct fight for a proletarian dictatorship. This programmatic reorientation of the party was the beginning of the Bolshevik struggle for the successful October revolution, *that is, the overcoming of the dual-power situation through the final destruction of the old bourgeois state and the establishment of a new revolutionary workers government as a proletarian dictatorship*. Here is the real programmatic difference between the revolutionary position for proletarian dictatorship and the reformist class-collaborationist position. *Therefore, the fundamental task of a revolutionary party for proletarian revolution is to overcome the dual-power situation with the victorious establishment of a new revolutionary workers government, smashing the old bourgeois state completely through uncompromising partisan class independence, through a definite party program for proletarian dictatorship, and through a system of transitional demands for a workers government and the tactics of working-class united-front policy.*

The emergence of a generalized dual-power situation marks a qualitative change in the political situation in which a direct struggle for power is posed. Therefore, the question of the emergence of a generalized dual-power situation is extremely important; nonetheless, the question itself is a tactical one. The united-front fight for the emergence of a generalized dual-power situation in itself is not our fundamental task. *Our fundamental task is to prepare our sections by arming them with party programs for proletarian dictatorship and by arming and training them with systems of transitional demands for workers governments and with the method of working-class united-front policy to be used in their actual tactical interventions in the mass movements toward the final battle for seizure of power by the proletariat.* This

fundamental point should not be missed.

6. Although it is nothing more than another A-B-C of Marxism, it is extremely important to recognize that *class independence toward the goal of proletarian dictatorship and overthrow of the old bourgeois state starts from a program, a definite party program for proletarian dictatorship, which is the real beginning of a proletarian struggle for seizure of power!* Without clear, precise, and definite programmatic class independence from the bourgeoisie and its existing state in a particular country, we cannot consider any problems of tactics: Without a definite party program for proletarian dictatorship, there is no base for tactics. This is the fundamental historical meaning of Lenin's April theses for the Bolshevik party, *and the Bolshevik party developed its various tactics based on the programmatic April theses for proletarian dictatorship*. I repeat that masses of the workers can maintain consistent class independence from their bourgeoisie and its state only through a revolutionary party armed with a definite party program for proletarian dictatorship. This is expressed with crystal clarity in L.T.'s article, "Communism and Syndicalism" (*Leon Trotsky on the Trade Unions*, Pathfinder Press). *This fundamental lesson of the 1917 Russian revolution and the Portuguese experience of 1975 should be stated and emphasized very clearly in the new document on capitalist Europe.*

It is absolutely true that the question of party building and problems of tactics are now posed in practice in a direct relation with *the specific question* of the emergence and generalization of a dual-power situation in the Mediterranean countries of capitalist Europe. Therefore, the question of full programmatic class independence of revolutionary organizations and party building must be emphasized again and again because a new qualitative turn in a political situation poses this central question with new actuality and acuteness. We fight for the emergence of a dual-power situation and its generalization with our transitional demands and slogans and with our working-class united-front tactics. But at the same time we must be fully prepared and armed to fight against every kind of spontanist illusion in the dual-power situation itself, which is precisely the base of the reformist class-collaborationist leaderships' betrayal maneuvers, operations, and manipulations during a generalized dual-power situation. The question of party building and a definite party program for proletarian dictatorship should be emphasized with renewed vigor.

The first chapter of the new draft theses (second edition) starts with the arguments on the role of a dual-power situation in relation to bourgeois democracy and notes the specific importance of workers democracy in relation to the bureaucratized workers states (Section 4). Section 5 takes up problems of the governmental slogan. On the other hand, Chapter IV seems to be on the question of party building, and Section 18 of the chapter talks about "an immediate action program." When the new draft theses try to formulate the fundamental problems of a dual-power situation, the question of a definite party program for proletarian dictatorship and the fundamental role of a Bolshevik-Leninist party on the question of class independence should be taken up for specific clarification on the nature of the period of dual power.

7. Briefly on the question of a party program for proletarian dictatorship in a particular country:

We have made many analyses of political situations, but

*an analysis of a political situation in a particular country at a particular moment is absolutely different from an analysis of a political state in the country.* We have capitalist states in capitalist Europe: all those states are capitalist. But each section of the International in capitalist Europe must analyze the specific nature or the specificities of the bourgeois state in that country. It remains abstract to say that this or that state is bourgeois-democratic, semifascist, or fascist, or bonapartist. *Each state must be analyzed in the combined totality of all its specific—internal and international—unevennesses, which form elements of the historical specificity of the state as a specific political state.* That is, we analyze a state in its historical specificity as an object that must be destroyed consciously by the proletarian revolution. To this analyzed state, which is grasped consciously by us, we can counterpose our precise and definite program of proletarian dictatorship. What is referred to as “our socialist model—our conception of socialist democracy” is *an idea about what kind of nonbureaucratic workers state the International wants in Europe. Therefore it is abstract and cannot replace a precise and specific party program for proletarian revolution in each country.* We must precisely analyze and grasp each state in its historical specificity. This understanding of the precise specificity of the state is the beginning of precise class independence from the state.

In my opinion, a party program for proletarian dictatorship or for proletarian revolution, which is consciously counterposed to a specific existing bourgeois state, and under which a revolutionary party for proletarian revolution is organized politically, should have the following components at least: an analysis of the social composition of the given bourgeois country, an analysis of the international conditions of bourgeois society, formulations on the specificity of the state and the specificity of the fundamental organism of its reformist mass workers organizations, and the fundamental tasks of the proletarian revolution in the country. The latter would include the following basic elements: nationalization of all key industries, banks, international trade, and so on without compensation, and central planning of the economy in the interest of the toiling masses under the proletarian leadership; our policy for oppressed petty bourgeoisie; our policy on the question of national minorities; rejection of bourgeois international alliances and foreign policies, and revolutionary international alliances and foreign policies in relation to the already existing workers states, the colonial revolution, and other European capitalist countries and the U.S.; dissolution of the standing army, police, and other oppressive forces and the general arming of the proletariat and other oppressed masses; dissolution of the parliament and other bourgeois state apparatuses and the founding of a revolutionary government based on workers and peasants councils.

We should not forget that the fourth congress of the Third International decided that all the sections should elaborate their own programs of proletarian revolution, and that the resolution said that such a precise program would be a base for transitional demands in each particular country (see Appendix 1). In any case, there is a practical urgency in some of our West European sections and sympathizing organizations on the question of national minorities. This question of national minorities is precisely a part of the general question of the party program for our section in this or that country. As for the Japanese section, the sixth national congress in February

1973 elected a special Program Commission to work on a new program of Japanese proletarian revolution for the section.

*A definite party program is the base on which we must unify all the vanguard elements of the working class. It is the only base on which a vanguard party of proletarian revolution can unify the effective majority of the working-class masses against the bourgeoisie and its state and for overthrowing them.*

### III.

8. I move now to the new draft theses' second major argument for the strategy of a generalized dual-power situation, which is related to the deep bourgeois-democratic and reformist illusions of the traditional workers movement in Western Europe and to the question of how to overcome the illusions in bourgeois democracy in the majority of the working-class masses.

It is absolutely true that the freest experience of the working-class masses during a generalized dual-power situation is the fundamental and indispensable basis for the masses to overcome their bourgeois-democratic illusions and go beyond their class-collaborationist reformist parties, but *with the active political intervention of a Bolshevik-Leninist vanguard party.* The freest and most direct experiences of the working-class masses are the indispensable objective basis for overcoming bourgeois democracy. But I must repeat what I have tried to emphasize in the previous section; that is, the self-experience of the masses itself does not lead them to systematized class independence from bourgeois democracy spontaneously and automatically. This is the same question of the fundamental nature of the role of a Bolshevik-Leninist vanguard party for proletarian revolution. Therefore, I will not repeat the same theoretical and abstract arguments; the previous section is my theoretical answer on this question.

9. Here I will take up a specific historical problem of the traditional proletarian reformism of the big countries of Western Europe and the contemporary West European proletarian revolution.

It is 100 percent true and correct to say that *the question of how to overcome the traditional reformist workers parties of class collaborationism occupies a special and extraordinary centrality in the coming contemporary West European proletarian revolution, especially in Italy, France, and Britain.* Now we can say categorically that *the bourgeoisies and their states have maintained their rule not primarily because of their objective and subjective capacity as a class, but essentially, or we can even say exclusively, because of the totally class-collaborationist nature of the traditional reformist workers parties in those countries.* It has been revealed time and again that the very class collaborationism of those reformist workers parties has been the essential and fundamental political basis that enables the bourgeoisies and their states to continue ruling in those countries. That is, *it has become crystal clear that the central question is nothing more than that of the leadership crisis of the proletariat in the strictest sense of the term.*

10. We can summarize the specific contradictory nature of the present situation in the Mediterranean capitalist Europe and Britain as follows:

a) An objectively powerful and offensive position of the

proletariat in relation to the bourgeoisie; the latter's serious lack of capacity to lead the explosive bourgeois society socially and politically; and the deep reformist nature of the proletarian movement, at least in its big majority.

b) The combination of these three factors results in a somehow prolonged and deepening crisis of the states and of capitalism in the region, given the present condition of the international capitalist economy and the present balance of forces between the objectively world-revolutionary forces, including the existing workers states, and the world-scale bourgeois counterrevolutionary forces around U.S. imperialism.

c) The center of the question is the contradictory nature and role of the traditional reformist mass workers organizations (parties and trade unions). Those mass workers organizations are under strong pressures because of the present situation of the working-class masses. Now the balance of forces between the bureaucratic leadership and the spontaneity of the masses is different from that of the 1950s and 1960s, in favor of the latter. *The traditional reformist leaderships' immediate capacity to control the masses is seriously weakening and is more and more limited. The reformist leaderships, or significant sections of them, tend to act in a manner detrimental to the immediate interests of the bourgeoisies but in a general framework of class collaborationism. The working-class masses can pressure their traditional leaderships to move, but it is another matter for the masses to become independent politically from the general framework of the class-collaborationist traditional leaderships.* Therefore, the crisis of the bourgeois states and of capitalism continues to deepen, but without any definite solution to the crisis on a short-term perspective.

So, how should we explain the specific nature of the present combined crisis of capitalism and the proletarian leadership?

*It is a historical result of the general reformist development of the West European working-class movement since the 1920s, combined with the results of World War II in Western Europe, the new expansion of productive forces from the middle of the 1950s to the end of the 1960s, and the new international political and economic situations since the end of the 1960s.*

11. *In general, we can say there has been a reformist evolution and development of the West European working-class movement since the 1920s. Of course there have been various interruptions, but all the revolutionary developments and potentials have degenerated or have been defeated, blocked, or forced to make a historical retreat. The revolutionary potential of the Italian proletariat was defeated by Fascism in 1921-26; the German proletariat suffered a serious retreat in 1921-23; the British coal miners' struggle was defeated; the German proletariat was definitively defeated by the Nazis' bourgeois-imperialist counterrevolution in 1933; in the middle of the 1930s the political degeneration of the bureaucratic regime entered a definite stage in the USSR, and the Stalinization of the European Communist parties also entered a definite stage—by the way, the CPs were THE revolutionary parties of the European working class in the 1920s and 1930s, and it has been proved that the European working class did not have enough historical energy left to build new revolutionary parties in the 1930s or even in the 1940s; the French proletariat could not make a victorious*

revolutionary breakthrough in 1936-38; the Spanish revolution was strangled in the civil war; and we had the continental expansion of the counterrevolutionary German empire, threatening the very existence of the USSR as a workers state, from the end of the 1930s to the beginning of the 1940s. The center of an open bourgeois-imperialist counterrevolution was Nazi Germany in Europe. However, this center in Nazi Germany could not consolidate and generalize the open bourgeois-imperialist counterrevolution definitively in continental Europe. Anti-Nazi German resistance movements started to develop in continental Europe, the strongest being the anti-German war of the USSR, supported tactically by U.S. imperialism. The year 1943 marked a decisive turn in the European situation in relation to the open bourgeois-imperialist counterrevolution: Nazi German imperialism reached its highest peak; the USSR began to make its offensive military actions against Nazi Germany; and the various anti-Nazi German resistance struggles of the broad popular masses also began to gain a definite momentum in many countries. Finally Nazi German imperialism was defeated definitively and dismantled in 1945.

The open bourgeois-imperialist counterrevolution was smashed on the continent, but in early 1950 it was clear that the defeat of the counterrevolution could not result in a victory of proletarian revolution in Western Europe. In Eastern Europe, the victory of the USSR over Nazi German imperialism led in the late 1940s to the abolishment of capitalism and the formation of new workers states, even though these new workers states were deeply bureaucratized from the very beginning. *The final defeat of Nazi German imperialism, however, resulted in the reemergence of bourgeois-democratic regimes in Western Europe, in spite of the fact that the traditional West European imperialist powers were definitely weakened and thrown into deep crisis internally and internationally.* There were two basic causes, subjective and objective, for the reemergence of these bourgeois-democratic regimes in Western Europe.

a) The proletariat was socially and politically fatigued after the long years of defeats, economic difficulties, dictatorial regimes, and wars almost uninterruptedly since 1914 in almost all of Europe. At the same time, the prestige of the USSR and the CPs was restrengthened among the proletariat by the Soviet military victory over Nazi Germany and the CPs' participation in popular resistance movements against the Nazis. Under such conditions, the West European proletariat could not advance its class struggle to the highest stage of open confrontation between revolution and a new counterrevolution following World War II, and the Kremlin leadership took a capitulationist position toward U.S. imperialism and the other imperialist bourgeois democracies of Western Europe in the critical years just after the war. The betrayal role of the Kremlin leadership and the French and Italian CPs was vital in those years.

b) The other basic cause was the emergence of U.S. imperialism as a new world-scale imperialism with its extraordinary superiority of productive forces after World War II. U.S. imperialism supplied these postwar bourgeois democracies with strong economic and political support. *This economic and political support was the material base of the West European social democracies, which defended the bourgeois-democratic regimes in the international framework of the imperialist Atlantic alliance between the*

*U.S. and Western Europe against the USSR, the CPs, and the colonial revolution, and maintained the political division of the European proletariat on a European-wide scale as well as in France and Italy. At the same time, the West European bourgeoisies were too weak to impose their own open counterrevolutionary solutions on the proletariat after World War II; they were fundamentally in a deeply defensive situation. In any case, the new international recovery and expansion of the international capitalist economy relatively consolidated the fragile West European bourgeois-democratic regimes in the late 1950s and early 1960s. The international capitalist economic recovery and expansion itself were realized mainly around the U.S. economy.*

12. Thus, the bourgeois-democratic regimes were reestablished in most of the West European countries. Through these regimes the historical continuity of the working-class reformist movement since the time of the Second International was also reestablished in the 1950s with their revolutionary tradition definitely decapitated, and with the CPs decisively deepening their reformist nature. Here we can see a very specific historical phenomenon, at least in France and Britain; that is, *a combination of a strong and long continuity of the working-class movement in the framework of reformism, along with the natural accumulation of reformist militancy of the working class, and the socially and politically weakened bourgeoisie.* As for Italy, it seems that the defeat of the proletariat in 1921-26 might not be a definite and fatal one as was the German defeat in 1933; during its whole existence, the Italian Fascist regime had always been unstable. The Italian working-class movement reappeared very powerfully after World War II, but with the reformist CP as its left-wing leadership.

Secondly, in the late 1950s and the 1960s, there was a relatively large expansion of new productive forces in the West European countries, and the expansion of the productive forces has strengthened the proletariat socially—numerically, culturally, in its composition in terms of generations, and so on. *In face of the level of organization the proletariat had already attained despite its deeply reformist nature, the bourgeois economic expansion was not great enough for the bourgeoisies to restrengthen in any qualitative way their socio-political capacity to rule the proletariat. Therefore, the bourgeois economic growth could not change the basic balance of forces between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie established after the Second World War.* As for Britain, the situation is far worse for the bourgeoisie. Because of the existing balance of forces and the new expansion of productive forces, we have seen a very interesting phenomenon in the workers movement in the recent period; that is, *the traditional forms of the organized workers movement have become outmoded for the new spontaneity and necessities of the working-class masses, which are the objective basis for the new actuality of “self-management,” “self-organization” of workers, or “new forms” of workers struggles; etc., etc.* It is very clear that Comrade Ernest Mandel had foresight on this point. This type of phenomena is manifested especially clearly in Italy and France.

Thirdly, a new international political situation has emerged since the end of the 1960s. The victorious advance of the armed liberation struggle in Indochina against the direct U.S. military intervention has changed the balance

of forces on a world scale between the objectively revolutionary forces, including the existing workers states, and the bourgeois forces around U.S. imperialism fundamentally in favor of the objectively revolutionary forces. In the late 1960s, U.S. imperialism reached its highest peak of power as a postwar worldwide imperialism. Since then it has entered a new period of historical decline as an international empire. *The post-World War II international imperialist system has lost its stable center of gravity politically and economically. This has a historical significance in relation to the ultimate fate of the West European neoimperialist system, because the Atlantic politico-military and economic alliance has been the central core in the “way of life” of post-World War II neoimperialist Western Europe.* Without this imperialist Atlantic alliance, West European capitalism could not have survived as it has. “. . . contrary to the period immediately after the second world war, American imperialism is neither capable of or prepared to ‘bail out’ ailing European capitalism through the equivalent of a second-edition ‘Marshall Plan’” (New draft theses, English text, Section 4, p. 6), and the present military balance of forces between the U.S. and the USSR poses a grave question to neoimperialist Western Europe.

U.S. economic superiority and military superiority were the most fundamental international bases for the West European social democracies. So, will the social democracies be neutralized politically in relation to the USSR? The CPs are posing a grave question to NATO in Portugal, Italy, Spain, and France. *The West European social democracies are losing the once strong and stable base of U.S. imperialism internationally, which means that the social democracies become weaker politically in relation to the proletariat in Western Europe. In this context, the deepening reformist nature of the West European CPs should be analyzed in its international aspect, too.* Is it a full-fledged political capitulation and adaptation to the imperialist Atlantic alliance? *In any case, the victorious armed liberation struggles of the Indochinese peoples have undoubtedly helped the European proletariat very much.* There are problems of the colonial revolution in Magreb, the Near and Middle East, and in Central and Southern Africa in relation to neoimperialist Western Europe, but I will not take up this question here.

Finally, as a part of the international economic crisis of capitalism, the West European capitalist economy, revolving around the European Common Market, has entered a period of crisis. In this crisis of the West European capitalist economy, there are two fundamental problems:

a) The West European capitalist economy experienced its relatively big new economic growth from the late 1950s to the 1960s. However, it faced the wall of the ailing giant U.S. economy in its way of expansion. Hence the new aggravation of interimperialist economic competition and the crisis of overproduction. That is, the post-World War II recovery and expansion of West European capitalism has reached a stage when the still giant U.S. capitalist economy has become a decisive block for the further expansion of the former, and it is out of the question for the former to defeat the latter.

b) The general economic crisis of overproduction has opened the period of crisis of the European Common Market. The Common Market faces the greatest difficulties for further integration. It will take a huge amount of financial input for it to make a further decisive step

forward in its integration—but it lacks the financial possibilities and the U.S. is not ready to pay for it!

Thus the West European capitalist economy has entered its acutely critical period. This means the West European bourgeoisies are losing the final basis on which they would counter the new rising tendency toward proletarian militancy. By the way, I think the present economic crisis of West European capitalism confirms the historical validity of L.T.'s basic understanding of the fundamental contradictions between the U.S. and Europe and of the economic difficulties of Europe. This is explained in his two speeches on the question in 1924 and 1926 (*Europe and America*, Leon Trotsky, Pathfinder Press).

13. A specific historical continuity of the working-class movement in a reformist structure, with the historical revolutionary elements decapitated and the bourgeoisies decisively weakened as a result of World War II; the relative expansion of the new productive forces since the middle of the 1950s to the 1960s with all its socioeconomic results; the victorious armed liberation struggles of the Indochinese peoples and the decline of U.S. imperialism as a post-World War II empire on a world scale, which means a historical shift in the international balance of forces between the objectively world-revolutionary forces, including the existing workers states, and the worldwide bourgeois counterrevolutionary forces centered around U.S. imperialism, in favor of the former; and the crisis of the international capitalist economy and the beginning of the "structural crisis" of the West European capitalist economy around the Common Market—these are the fundamental elements of the present West European situation. There is, at least, another fundamental element of the West European situation; that is, the question of the USSR and other East European bureaucratized workers states and Stalinism, which is related to the new draft theses' third argument on the question of the generalized dual-power situation and workers democracy.

In any case, we thus have *the specific political structure of the current West European crisis*; that is, *there are extraordinarily favorable objective conditions for the proletariat, but this proletariat has lost its revolutionary parties of the 1920s. The historical continuity of the working-class movement in reformism, with the definite interruption of revolutionary practice in the working class, is the proletarian subjective base for the current West European crisis and the working-class explosions.* The general perspective for Western Europe is a prolonged and deepening crisis.

*There is another fundamental aspect of the situation and the proletarian movement; that is, the appearance of the "new mass vanguard."* Now this "new mass vanguard" is deepening its working-class composition more and more, especially in the Mediterranean countries. This phenomenon of the appearance of the "new mass vanguard" is the precise and spontaneous expression of the internal contradiction of the current workers movement as a whole: the contradiction between the general political framework of reformism in the overwhelming majority of the working-class movement and the huge and new spontaneity of the working-class masses who unconsciously reflect the extraordinarily favorable balance of forces and conditions. The "new mass vanguard" also reflects precisely the historical interruption of revolutionary practice in the working class itself since the 1930s. The "new mass vanguard" is a new, spontaneous phenomenon,

which reflects and represents the revolutionary potential of the contemporary West European proletariat. Therefore, the "new mass vanguard" is the actual socio-political base, the only base on which we can build the new vanguard parties of proletarian revolution.

*The West European crisis will be prolonged, and the roots of the crisis will become deeper and deeper. Taking into consideration the present balance of forces on a world scale and all the fundamental elements of the present West European situation, it is extremely difficult for the bourgeoisies to impose by force their definitive solution to the crisis, that is, an open fascist counterrevolution. The West European working-class movement will have many ups and downs in the coming period. The final settlement, however, will be fought between the "new mass vanguard," which must have been definitely united as vanguard parties of proletarian revolution and their proletarian International, and the open bourgeois counterrevolution.*

It is impossible to overcome the bourgeois-democratic illusions of the working-class masses—that is, to overcome the political influence of the reformist class-collaborationist parties in the vast majority of the working class masses—without the masses themselves participating fully in a process of experiences for a whole period. It is impossible to reorganize the "new mass vanguard" into definite vanguard parties of proletarian revolution and into their proletarian International without all the elements of the "new mass vanguard" having a whole process of experiences and training for a certain period. And the International should be ready for this not-so-easy historical task during the entire coming period. There is no shortcut way out; we must be stubbornly CONSERVATIVE in sticking to the old Bolshevik-Leninism on the question of proletarian revolution.

#### IV.

14. On the question of how to overcome Stalinism in the West European proletarian revolution, it is absolutely true that the direct experiences by the working-class masses of dual-power situations, revolutionary upheavals, revolutions, and so on are the fundamental subjective basis for the working class to overcome the worst influences of Stalinism on the question of proletarian revolution and socialism in general. I have also no objection to emphasizing the importance of workers democracy in the workers movement itself. By the way, the Japanese far-left movement has one of the worst and ugliest examples on this point: *uchigeba*—open physical battles among the far-left groupings, including killings! We are stubbornly against any violation of workers democracy. Physical suppression of workers democracy is one of the worst results of Stalinism, and we must fight against it.

On the other hand, when we see the nature of the West German workers movement, that is, deep anticommunism among the vast majority of workers, it is also absolutely clear that the deadly bureaucratization of the USSR and other East European workers states is another fundamental political cause that has helped greatly to maintain the division of the West European proletariat. Without waging a definite struggle against the bureaucratic degeneration of those workers states, it is impossible to unify the great majority of the West European proletariat for victorious



revolution. The existence of the bureaucratization of those workers states and their deeply nationalist foreign policies are another fundamental and negative condition for the West European proletarian movement. But at the same time, these phenomena are the side of the medal of West European proletarian reformism. *East European bureaucratic degeneration and West European reformism have been complementary to each other throughout the history of the European proletarian movement since the 1920s; we cannot separate the two.* Historically, West European proletarian reformism since the Second International was responsible for the degeneration of the first workers state, the USSR.

Therefore, it is not enough only to emphasize the importance of defending workers democracy in the practice of the new proletarian movement of Western Europe. Essentially, such a method is passive. On the question of Stalinism and the degeneration of those workers states, we must give our radical answer; that is, the perspective of political revolution in the USSR and other East European countries. At least the vanguard elements of the working class must be definitely armed by our perspective of political revolution in the bureaucratized workers states. That is, the West European proletarian revolution should be put into the international perspective of the political revolution in Eastern Europe.

The common international perspective for the West European socialist revolution and the East European political revolution is the famous international perspective of the Socialist United States of Europe—a socialist unification of the entire European proletariat. When our West European comrades talk about their “Red Europe” slogan, it seems that sometimes they unconsciously forget to include the Eastern part of Europe in their “Red Europe”! In any case, on this question of Stalinism, the political revolution, and the perspective of a proletarian unification of all of Europe, I have expressed my opinion in some detail in my “Letter to an IMT Comrade—on the International and some problems of our European perspective” (November 1975), which has been presented to the United Secretariat for internal international circulation, so I will not argue further on this question.

## V.

### Some Random Remarks

15. As I emphasized in section II, the extreme importance of class independence in relation to the dual-power situation should be clearly stated as one of the fundamental lessons of the 1975 Portuguese experience.

16. The question of party program in each country should be posed in relation to our fundamental task of building a vanguard party of proletarian revolution. The question of party program is related to such questions as national minorities, the women’s question, immigrant workers, the petty bourgeoisie, the army question, etc., etc. A general discussion on such a party program is part of an actual party-building process. We must work for a Bolshevik-Leninist unification of all vanguard elements into a single revolutionary party as a section of the International. Our general discussion of a draft party program and a draft party program itself are extremely important in our Bolshevik-Leninist regroupment of these elements.

17. The new draft theses say, “This revolutionary crisis raises for the first time the possibility of the transformation of the sections of the Fourth International into revolutionary parties rooted in the proletariat in some of the countries that stand at the head of the process of world revolution.” (English text, Section 3, p. 6.) *It is true that we now face an actual task of building vanguard parties of proletarian revolution in Portugal, Spain, Italy, and France, and the process of building “revolutionary parties rooted in the proletariat” is not a simple organizational and numerical “transformation” of our sections.* The task is a qualitatively new one, which poses the question of how to unify all the vanguard elements of the working class in a section of the International, through various regroupments. The last World Congress document on capitalist Europe is a *guideline document to build our West European sections as independent political organizations of Trotskyism on a national scale* in a period that is potentially explosive but that is not yet openly prerevolutionary or revolutionary. Therefore, programmatic, political, and organizational problems of actual party building should somehow be posed in a precise way. Chapter IV of the new draft theses seems to be on the organizational question of sections, but this chapter is just poor!

18. *The question of how to realize now the regional internationalization of our West European sections and sympathizing organizations should definitely be posed in the document, if we are seriously building our International in Western Europe.* The International is something more than sections and sympathizing organizations. This question of regional internationalization is now an urgent organizational task for us in Western Europe, for at least two reasons: (a) our interventions in Portugal, Spain, Italy, and France now demand more and more a real unification, and our organizational situation in those countries is extremely uneven; more and more this organizational unevenness can be overcome only through a real international politico-organizational intervention; (b) we must now prepare sections of other West European countries for the Mediterranean situations; those sections must be ready for coordinated international mobilization for the unfolding situation among the far-left and centrist organizations in non-Mediterranean countries is now under the strong political influence of the situations in the Mediterranean countries. Now we more and more need international operations in our day-to-day political activities. *The question of building the West European Bureau should definitely be posed.*

19. The new draft theses say, “It is urgent for the Fourth International to lend this slogan [the Socialist United States of Europe—S.] a more concrete and precise content that takes account of the necessity of progressively shifting this campaign from the domain of programmatic propaganda to that of agitation for a transitional slogan, taking account of each specific situation in which this slogan can effectively take on this function.” (English text, Section 16, p. 30.) I agree with this statement of the draft theses 100 percent, but the use of the slogan “For a Socialist United States of Europe” in transitional and agitational slogans will necessitate the International’s elaborating a full document on the historical evolution of present-day Western Europe, its international and internal structures, and so on. I welcome this effort of the International wholeheartedly. *If we try to apply this*

*"Socialist United States of Europe" slogan in a practical, transitional way, we will face the very question of our international regional-wide program for proletarian revolution in this continent.*

On this point, see my note "On the International" and my "Letter to an IMT Comrade."

20. On the problems of the Northern countries of Western Europe, I am not well informed so I cannot say

much. Please see my "Letter to an IMT Comrade" on this point. On the question of West Germany, I hope I can express my opinion later.

21. On the precise tactical problems as well, it is also not so easy for someone who is working in the Far East, away from Europe, but I will try to contribute some remarks on the problems of tactics before the coming World Congress.

April 26, 1976

## Appendix I

### Resolution on the Program of the Communist International

1. All draft programmes shall be submitted to the Executive of the Communist International, or to a commission appointed by it, for study and detailed elaboration. The Executive is obliged to publish all draft programmes which it receives as quickly as possible.

2. The congress confirms that those national sections of the Communist International which do not yet have national programmes, are obliged to begin at once on the drafting of their programmes, which shall be submitted to the Executive at least three months before the fifth congress for ratification by the next congress.

3. The programmes of the national sections must clearly and decisively establish the necessity of the struggle for transitional demands, making the necessary reservations about the dependence of these demands on the concrete circumstances of time and place.

4. The theoretical basis for all transitional and partial demands must be clearly stated in the general programme, and the fourth congress likewise decisively condemns the attempt to depict the inclusion of transitional demands in the programme as opportunism, as well as all attempts to gloss over or replace the fundamental revolutionary tasks by partial demands.

5. The general programme must clearly explain the basic historical types of the transitional demands of the national section, in accordance with the basic differences in the economic and political structure of the different countries, for example England on the one hand, and India on the other.

[Translation from *The Communist International 1919-1943: Documents*, Jane Degras ed., Frank Cass & Co., London, 1971.]



# On "The Building of Revolutionary Parties in Capitalist Europe"

By the Japan Revolutionary Communist League

[The following document expresses the position adopted by the Seventh National Congress of the Japan Revolutionary Communist League, Japanese section of the Fourth International, held November 23-25, 1973. The translation was prepared by the Japanese comrades.]

\* \* \*

1. We support the general characterization of the political situation in capitalist Europe, i.e., the operation of a tendency toward prerevolutionary or revolutionary crises and its implications, as presented in "The Building of Revolutionary Parties in Capitalist Europe." The most important element in this connection is the fact that the working classes are objectively on the offensive. It is therefore correct for the European document to pose the tasks of building the revolutionary parties in connection with the coming possibility of such crises.

2. Considering that the offensive developments of the working-class mass struggles can pose the question of partial and national dual power situations in practice in the present political situation of the European capitalist countries, we support the aim of the European document to arm the European sections and sympathizing groups there on the question of dual power struggles.

Today, the questions of workers' control, factory committees and workers' self-defense are necessarily being posed in practice as a result of the whole development of the trade-union movement, working-class parties and the European capitalist economy, at least, since World War II. The objective immediacy of workers' control, factory committees and workers' self-defense in the daily struggles of the working class reflects the deepening contradictions between the serious politico-economic decline of the West European imperialist countries as a result of World War II and the postwar rebuilding and maintenance of the bourgeois democracies (e.g., the reformism of the working-class parties and trade unions). It is a concrete expression of the objectively offensive position taken by the working class in face of the ruling bourgeoisie which is pointed out in the European document.

The comrades of the IEC minority (the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction) fail to understand and see this precise historical character of the relationship of classes in capitalist Europe.

3. The appearance of the newly radicalized youth, mainly the young workers, and their active militancy as a layer, which is conceived as "a new vanguard of mass propor-

tions" (*International Information Bulletin*, No. 5 in 1972, p. 13) in the European document, is one of the most concrete expressions of the deepening contradictions of neo-imperialist Europe and the objectively offensive position taken by the working class in face of the bourgeoisie.

To base ourselves upon the "new vanguard of mass proportions" in the mass struggles against the bourgeoisie and its state power and the political fights with the traditional reformist organizations is a concrete expression of our efforts and initiatives to conform to the political orientation of the working class, which is in the offensive position, in the existing political situation and the mass movements. We therefore support the IEC majority tendency on the question of the "new vanguard of mass proportions."

4. It is correct to base ourselves upon the "new vanguard of mass proportions" in our building of revolutionary parties in capitalist Europe. We support the position of the European document that the central task is to intervene among the radicalizing young workers at the present stage of our party building.

The difference between the IEC majority tendency and the minority (Leninist-Trotskyist Faction) on the question of the interrelations between the young workers and students at the present stage of the youth radicalization as a whole results from their disagreements on how to appraise the appearance of radicalized young workers and what is to be done in relation to the present situation of the youth radicalization. We appraise the active radicalization of young workers as a new and very positive stage of the "youth radicalization," and, in our opinion, it gives us the practical possibility of carrying out a politically qualitative reorganization of the radicalized youth as a whole in our favor. That represents a shift from the first centrist and spontaneist stage of youth radicalization when students were its motive force to the next stage where we have a real chance to reorganize the radicalized youth under our proletarian politico-organizational hegemony. It is therefore correct to say that it is the main task of the capitalist European sections and sympathizing groups to develop the organizational activities among the young workers.

5. On the above points, we support the European against the criticisms by the IEC minority (L-T Faction). At the same time we criticize the European document on the following points.

6. In the first section of the European document ("The Change in the Objective and Subjective Conditions for Building Revolutionary Parties in Capitalist Europe Since 1967") the programmatic position of the permanent revolution for all Europe should be explicitly indicated, that is, the perspective of the Socialist United States of Europe.

Needless to say, we support the analyses of the first chapter in themselves. However, the first part of the European document limits itself to an analysis of the problems of the European capitalist crises as tendencies or trends which are common to all the European capitalist countries, and it does so on a "continental scale," delineating their common aspects, tendencies or trends. However, the first section does not give a unified or synthesized "continental" perspective to the European capitalist crises, based on pointing out the major contradictions and weaknesses of the neo-imperialist European politico-economic structure as a historical and organic totality composed of the various countries, and analyzing the degree and perspective of the ongoing politico-economic crises as a whole. The European document says that a crisis is approaching in each country of capitalist Europe and that the situation is ripening for the proletariat to have a serious confrontation with the bourgeois state power in each of the capitalist European countries. But there is no indication nor suggestion in the document about the contradictions, crises and perspectives at the level of "continental scale" of neo-imperialist Western Europe with the Common Market as its central organism.

The European document says almost nothing about the fundamental problems confronting neo-imperialist Western Europe as a historically combined complex, at the critical stage it faces, in relation to U.S. imperialism (politico-militarily and economically), with the Soviet Union and the East European workers' states, or with the colonial world of Arab, Africa, Latin America and Asia, or as regards the internal military, political and economic problems of capitalist Europe, such as the question of the Common Market, the problems of the capitalist peripheries of Europe (Greece, southern Italy, Spain, Portugal, Ireland, etc.). Therefore the document does not pose the question of what are the common or "continental-scale" political tasks facing the capitalist European proletariat as an independent and politically unified international working class in regard to its basic programmatic perspective of the whole European Socialist United States at the present stage of the capitalist European crises. So, the European document remains on a "mosaic" level and fails to pose the fundamental form of revolutionary struggles which is common to each of the countries, and embraces the national struggles for state power in each country. In the European document the struggles of the capitalist European proletariat are not unified in their political perspective on the "European scale," but unified only at the level of tactics or "strategy" that should be followed in each country.

7. In our opinion, the European document should be explicit on the fundamental character of our capitalist European sections as a politically unified international vanguard of the capitalist European proletariat, and the document should present fundamental indications in regard to

the unified political tasks of the sections on a European scale.

In our view, the organization to be formed has to be based upon a unified and historical political objective, and the necessity of an International should also be based upon a unified international program. The necessity of our International as a continental-scale unit in capitalist Europe should be, first of all, based upon the European proletarian revolution as a combined and permanent revolution with the single political perspective of the European Socialist United States as its fundamental program. Our International will be able to be built firmly in capitalist Europe only if it is based upon a European-wide program as a concrete part of the world revolution and its political perspective.

The European document does not present our International in capitalist Europe as based upon the single political perspective of the European revolution, so that the international tasks (such as the defense of the workers' states and solidarity with the anti-bureaucratic struggles, solidarity with the fights of colonial peoples, capitalist European workers' struggles and immigrant workers) are put forward as part of our general internationalist duties or as practical needs in each country, in the European document. The fight for the defense of the workers' states against the imperialist international military power, the active solidarity in defense of the anti-bureaucratic struggles in the East European workers' states and the Soviet Union, the support for the liberation struggles in the colonial world, the international defense of the mass struggles in Greece, Spain, Portugal, Ireland, etc., the fight for proletarian unity with the immigrant workers — these tasks are not posed as a part of the essential tasks for the European revolution as an integral part of the world revolution. Therefore these tasks are not integrated programmatically into the fundamental perspective for the realization of the European Socialist United States. And thus the call for the European Socialist United States will remain on the purely propagandist level for our European sections.

8. The European document should be explicitly clear on the overall meaning of the program for party building and the method of the Transitional Program (1938). The European documents presents the building of the sections as revolutionary organizations centered around the national formation of dual-power organs of the masses. But a national section should from the very beginning be built as a revolutionary party aiming at the destruction of the ruling state power and establishing a revolutionary dictatorship as its fundamental objective.

The true worth of a revolutionary party will be decisively tested under just such a situation of revolutionary mass upheaval leading to a national dual power situation. Firstly, the revolutionary proletarian organization should not be swallowed up nor dissolved by the very upheaval of the masses, and it should assert its independent capacity to keep its own national political unity and identity as a vanguard organization for the seizure of state power in the unfolding revolutionary situation. The central question here will be how revolutionary and thoroughgoing the party program is and how firm and solid the

party's internal political cohesion is in implementing the revolutionary party program. Lenin's program of the workers-peasants' revolutionary dictatorship was melted away by the upheaval of the February revolution; the Bolshevik party was forced to carry out a new political orientation as a revolutionary party through Lenin's April Theses.

Secondly, the party must prove its political capacity to carry out effective struggles against the traditional reformist influences over the vast proletarian masses and to win and unite an effective majority of the proletariat for the political task of seizing state power, through the extraordinary developments of mass movements liberated by the revolutionary upheaval itself, or through national dual power organs of the exploited masses themselves. A real political fight and confrontation between the reformist organizations and a revolutionary vanguard party over the effective majority of the working class will be opened by the revolutionary upheaval of proletarian masses itself or through the very formation of a proletarian national dual power organ, and a revolutionary vanguard party and its cadres should be formed and prepared for such a situation and such a political confrontation with the reformist organizations. The decisive wall between a revolutionary upheaval of proletarian masses and the seizure of state power, the wall between a situation of national dual power and the seizure of state power—is essentially the *political* wall of bourgeois reformism, which will never be broken down simply by some technical, tactical, organizational means or methods. It is only by *essentially political* means and methods around a system of transitional demands for the proletariat and the lower petty bourgeoisie along with the concrete governmental slogan and proletarian united front tactics applied to the real situation that a revolutionary vanguard party can intervene and prepare a situation of national dual power leading to an open civil war and a victory of the armed uprising.

9. The European document has a major weakness of above mentioned point (No. 8). As is clear from section 10 of the second chapter ("Our Central Political Tasks"), the document centers the tasks of European sections on the formation of the proletarian national dual power organ at the height of a revolutionary upheaval of mass struggles, and it also centers the tactics of European sections upon the tactics of partial dual power and embryonic dual power, such as factory committees, workers' control and workers' self-defense, during the present preparatory period. And, here, the European document in fact ignores the question of party program as a fundamental problem of party building and the problem of the Transitional Program.

*This neglect of the fundamental party program and the method of the Transitional Program as a system can possibly produce a situation where our sections in capitalist Europe are completely disarmed politically just at the moment when a revolutionary upheaval of the masses has exploded or when a national dual power situation has been realized.* The European document leaves room for empiricism on the decisive point of how to organize the proletarian masses politically for the seizure of state power and in the area of united front tactics. The very

fight for the formation of a national dual power organ of the proletariat cannot be carried out without setting forth a system of transitional demands, tactics of dual power struggles (workers' control, factory committees, workers' self-defense, etc.), and concrete application of the united front tactic.

10. The neglect of the problems of party program as a fundamental question of the revolution and its party building and the method of one-sided concentration on political tasks around the formation of a national dual power organ necessarily open up room for political empiricism on tactics and the presentation of concrete tasks in the present preparatory period. The problems of immigrant workers and women inside the proletariat of capitalist Europe, the peasant question, the question of intellectual workers, problems of education, health, social security and other social services, the problems of governmental foreign and military policy and the army, national questions, etc.—all these are not presented in a unified and synthesized way as problems of a party program and a system of transitional demands in the European document. All these are not posed in the document as unified political tasks in a proletarian fight for destruction of the ruling state power and for its own revolutionary state power. The tactics and tasks in it are systematized only in regard to the formation of the national proletarian dual power organ. Therefore, it gives too much scope for political empiricism in direct relation with the basic principles of Marxism and the general duties of the proletariat in the fields of the demands originating from various aspects of the life of the proletariat, the demands posed by the various oppressed social layers, and the problems of governmental foreign and military policy. These political tasks tend to be posed issue by issue in an empirical way and are not synthesized as component parts of a proletarian political fight for state power.

11. Thus, in the European document, the concept of the party is reduced to a functional organizational means for the formation of a proletarian national dual power organ, and the document is very vague on the concept of a revolutionary vanguard party, which should be firmly organized under its own program for a revolution and which should lead the proletariat to the seizure of state power through the combined method of the Transitional Program. It is not explicitly clear on the fundamental concept that a revolutionary vanguard party organized under its program for a revolution has to unite an effective majority of the proletariat for the political aim of the seizure of state power through a system of transitional demands and united front tactics and carry out a consistent political fight to win the oppressed layers of the petty bourgeoisie as active allies for the proletarian fight.

Therefore we must say that the European document has serious weaknesses on the systematic method of a party program, a combined method of party building and the Transitional Program.

12. We demand:

(i) That the European document, in its second section on "Concrete Forms and Content of the Revolutionary Perspectives in Capitalist Europe," should be explicitly

clear on the decisive importance of a politically independent national existence of a revolutionary vanguard party firmly organized under its party program in a prerevolutionary or revolutionary situation;

(ii) and also on the decisive importance of the political fight of the revolutionary vanguard party, armed with a system of transitional demands, a governmental slogan and united front tactics, against the reformist organizations and for the effort to win an effective majority of the proletariat for the seizure of state power, in a prerevolutionary or revolutionary situation;

(iii) that the document should make clear, in regard to section 9 ("The Inadequacies of the Objective Factor") and 10 ("Our Central Political Tasks"), the fact that the party's consistent and systematic interventions in various struggles of the proletariat and oppressed social layers, and all the partial political struggles utilizing a system of transitional demands and proletarian united front tactics, are to prepare the political capacity of the revolutionary vanguard organization and the proletarian vanguard for the political fight against the reformist organizations and to win the effective majority of the proletariat for the seizure of state power;

(iv) that the fourth chapter ("The Type of Organization Most Suited to the Present Capabilities of Revolutionaries in Capitalist Europe") of the document should have another section which would insist on the fundamental importance of the elaboration of a party program and a system of transitional demands for the building of a na-

tional section, and which should instruct each European section to start the elaboration of its party program around a system of transitional demands.

13. With regard to Chapter 3, section 11 ("Three Tactics"), we have a different opinion on the entry tactics based upon the Third World Congress than either the document or the IEC minority (L-T Faction), although we agree with the European document on the character of the present stage of party building through the building of independent revolutionary political organizations based upon the radicalized young active militants, mainly young workers.

14. We ask the world congress to decide that a document, which draws up a balance-sheet of the historical decline of European imperialism after the late 1930s, its neo-imperialist reorganization through and after the World War II, and the historical developments of the situation in European capitalism after World War II, and which will pose problems of the contemporary European revolution and the fundamental perspectives of European Socialist United States, should be drafted for the eleventh (fifth since reunification) World Congress discussion. The draft document should be a direct continuation of L.T.'s historical work up to 1940, and should be elaborated as a joint project of the United Secretariat and the sections and sympathizing groups in capitalist Europe.

## For a Class Line in the Portuguese Revolution! Democracy Or Proletarian Dictatorship?

Resolution of the Eighth National Congress of the  
Japan Revolutionary Communist League,  
Japanese Section of the Fourth International  
February 1976

### I.

The SWP leadership at first tried to deny that the Portuguese situation had definitely entered a prerevolutionary or revolutionary crisis, in spite of the complete failure of the March 1975 coup by the Spínola faction and the consequent spontaneous development of offensive struggles of Portuguese working masses. On this point, the LTF's PST (Argentine) leadership, which grasped that the situation had become one of prerevolutionary or revolutionary crisis, was opposed to the SWP leadership. The disagreement over the political characterization of the Portuguese situation after the failure of the Spínola coup in March was on the most fundamental question: whether or not the proletarian struggle for power to smash bourgeois rule and its state apparatus and to establish the revolutionary power of the working class was already posed in practice as an immediate class task in the post-March situation.

In the LTF resolution "Key Issues in the Portuguese Revolution," adopted at the end of August 1975, the SWP leadership managed to admit that the Portuguese situation had entered a prerevolutionary situation after the failure of the March coup of the Spínola faction and the explosive rise of offensive struggles of the working masses. Nevertheless, if we read the LTF resolution carefully, it *denies* that a definite anticapitalist struggle for power by the proletariat to smash bourgeois rule and its state apparatus and for a revolutionary establishment of workers power was posed as a direct class task in practice. *Here is precisely the fundamental problem.* The important thing that must be clarified is, *what must be concluded as a direct class task of the proletariat in practice from the confirmation that the situation is prerevolutionary. In spite of the existence of a prerevolutionary situation in Portugal, a direct struggle for power to smash bourgeois rule and its state apparatus and for revolutionary establishment of workers power is not posed as a class task of the proletariat in practice; this is the essence of the LTF resolution.*

### II.

Well, then, what does the LTF resolution—which asserts clearly that Portugal was in a prerevolutionary situation—point to as the direct class task of the Portuguese proletariat in practice? It is quite simple. Namely, the overall realization of democracy as represented by the Constituent Assembly, in which the working-class parties, the SP and CP, comprised a parliamentary majority; *that is, the struggle for democracy.* This point is clearly expressed in the LTF's Portugal resolution as follows:

"The fundamental task is to bring the workers to break

from subordination to the Armed Forces Movement and to assert their right to put a workers and peasants government in power.

"*This fight at the present time centers on the sovereignty of the Constituent Assembly, in which the workers parties have a substantial absolute majority and which is the only national body thus far elected by the populace. This is counterposed to the sovereignty of the unelected military hierarchy which constitutes the present government. Closely linked to this is the crucial struggle for democratic rights and democratic control in the armed forces. The various 'direct democracy' schemas floated by the demagogues of the AFM are intended to divert the workers from insisting on the concrete expression of popular sovereignty through the Constituent Assembly; that is, by establishing a workers and peasants government.*" (From Section 8, "The Road to Workers Power and the Role of the Constituent Assembly," IIDB, Vol. XII, No. 6, p. 9, emphasis added.)

In the same section of the resolution, they spell it out in the following way:

"Thus, there are six axes of the revolutionary process in Portugal at the present stage.

"1. *The defense of the economic gains of the workers and other layers of the masses, and the fight for the economic aspirations awakened by the fall of the Salazarist regime.*

"2. *The struggle for immediate withdrawal of all troops from the colonies.*

"3. *The struggle for democratic rights of the ranks of the armed forces.*

"4. *The struggle for democratic rights and democratic decision-making in every area of social life.*

"5. *The struggle for effective workers organizations.*

"The Portuguese workers are still at an early stage of organization. The embryonic factory committees and nuclei of industrial unions that have developed, although they show certain advanced features, are still not adequate on a national scale to effectively defend the elementary interests of the workers. In this situation, propaganda and agitation for industrial unions, a united democratic union structure, and the transformation of the embryonic factory committees into action committees that can mobilize and represent the workers and poor masses in the industrial centers combine closely with other revolutionary tasks and form an essential component of a concrete revolutionary answer to the concerns of the masses of workers.

"The fight for workers control in the present conditions also fits in with these tasks, and the workers have already asserted control in many instances to protect their specific interests, in the face of government assaults, employer sabotage, and mounting unemployment and inflation. Workers control is necessary to obtain the economic information, and organization necessary to defend jobs, to

prevent the flight of capital, to fight inflation, and to administer a sliding scale of wages and hours. However, workers control cannot serve its purpose unless the workers make clear that they do not accept any responsibility for the functioning of the economy until they have real political power over it.

"Because of the demagogy of the military regime and the Communist party—demagogy that has been reinforced by the anarchist predilections of the left-centrist groups—the danger is that a façade of 'workers control' may be used by the government to induce the workers to accept austerity. If such a tactic is successful, it will result in profound demobilization and demoralization of the working class. . . .

"The greatest danger to the organization of the workers on the economic level is the attempt by the military regime and its Stalinist supporters to impose the tutelage of the bourgeois state over the unions. The so-called Trade Union Unity Law, imposing Intersindical as the only legal national federation, was precisely an attempt by the military junta and the Communist party to subordinate the unions to the bourgeois state, to convert the unions into a transmission belt for the policy of the bourgeois government in the working class.

*"6. The struggle for a workers and peasants government.*

"On the political level, the workers in their great majority look for leadership from three sources: the Socialist party, the Communist party, and Intersindical, the trade-union federation. The Socialist party has the largest following and is the most attractive at the moment to the majority of the working class. The Communist party and Intersindical are the strongest organizations of the working class and are looked to for leadership in action such as the resistance to the coup attempts in September 1974 and March 1975. At present no alternative to these mass organizations has credibility among large layers of workers. Nor can any alternative develop except as the masses learn in practice the limitations of the leadership offered by these organizations.

"The only national politically representative body chosen by the workers and the masses in Portugal is the Constituent Assembly, in which the workers parties hold an absolute majority. The fight for a workers and peasants government cannot be waged without defending popular sovereignty and democracy, and concretely, without defending the Constituent Assembly against attempts by the Communist party, the military junta, and the SP leaders to undermine its authority and limit or destroy its sovereignty.

"The struggle for a workers and peasants government focuses at present on the Constituent Assembly. The sharpest issues are defense of the Constituent Assembly, the demand that the Constituent Assembly represent the interests of the toiling masses who elected it, and repudiation by the workers parties of the Pact-Program, which codified their capitulation to the military junta. By signing this agreement with the military regime, the leaders of the mass workers parties betrayed their responsibility to represent the workers who support them. . . .

"Incipient organs of workers power will arise out of united mass struggles of the working class, as they have in every previous revolutionary upsurge. In Portugal, the way cannot be cleared for such struggles without beginning by

contesting the self-assumed right of the military government to rule. Acceptance of this pretension is not only the strongest force in maintaining subordination of the workers to a bourgeois leadership and the biggest impediment to their organization; it is also the main obstacle to the mass working-class organizations engaging in united-front actions.

"Concretely, defending the sovereignty of the Constituent Assembly against the military government involves calling upon the Communist and Socialist parties, as the representatives of the overwhelming majority of the Portuguese workers and the majority of the Portuguese people, to establish a new government by exercising their majority in the Constituent Assembly and appealing to the masses and the rank and file of the armed forces to mobilize in support of it. These are also the main political forces in Intersindical, which should remain independent of any government, even a workers and peasants government, as the direct defender of the economic interests of the workers.

"Making this demand on the two mass parties of the working class is an essential part of the process of advancing a socialist governmental alternative to the military regime and exposing the incapacity of these parties to provide such an alternative.

"As the disillusionment of the masses with the military regime deepens, and the economic crisis grows worse, the threat of a reactionary coup will become increasingly grave. At the same time, the AFM will lose its capacity and its desire to resist a rightist onslaught. Since its power is based specifically on the bourgeois army, it views arming the masses as a deadly threat. Furthermore, as the regime becomes more and more discredited, the masses will become increasingly reluctant to mobilize under its auspices, since this would continue to subordinate them to a regime over which they have no control, and which seems less and less inclined to respond to their needs and interests.

"Thus, propaganda and agitation for mobilizing and arming the masses against the rightist hangmen can only be carried out successfully in combination with the struggle for a workers and peasants government."

(IIBD, *ibid.*, pp. 10-11.)

In the above assertions from the LTF's Portugal resolution, what must be noted is the fact that *it remains within the limits of democracy on the three most fundamental questions of the proletarian revolution—capitalism and socialism, the state and revolution and power*—or its fundamental assertion that workers power can be achieved through the struggle for democracy.

First of all, the question of property rights, or of a transitional struggle for nationalization of the key sectors of the economy without compensation, which is an anticapitalist class offensive against the capitalist private-property system, is not posed. Neither does it pose the transitional demand of emergency planning of the entire economy under workers control over production in the interests of the workers and peasants.

Secondly, on the question of the army as a fundamental question of the state and revolution, the struggle for democratic rights of the ranks of soldiers in the army is brought up, but the transitional struggle to break up the bourgeois military system itself is not posed—that is, transitional slogans such as the formation of soldiers committees, denial of the officer corps' right to give orders,



the right of soldiers committees to elect and recall their commanders, and arming of the worker and peasant masses outside barracks, linked to the active introduction of the class struggle into the army. On this question of the army, the LTF's Portugal resolution, Section 9, states concretely: "Defense of the right of *all members of the armed forces* to discuss all political ideas and to organize politically on an equal basis in the barracks and on military installations. *Full democracy within the armed forces*, including the right to elect officers and to discuss all orders that have a political significance" (emphasis added). Here also the question is posed as a question of *nonclass* pure democracy, as is seen in the statements on "equal" political rights of "all members of the armed forces" and "full democracy within the armed forces." While it is possible that an army may split between the bourgeois officer corps and the worker-peasant soldiers along class lines, there cannot be anything like "relations of equal political rights" or "full democracy" between the officers and the soldiers in a bourgeois army. That is, the LTF's Portugal resolution does not clearly pose the class task of organizing the soldiers, who are workers and peasants in uniform, independently from the bourgeois officer corps. It, therefore, does not raise the slogan for class organizations of mass action by the soldiers, such as soldiers committees and soldiers councils. What is posed is not a struggle against the bourgeois army along a basic class axis, but a political struggle against the army along a basic axis of democracy. On the question of arming the worker and peasant masses, the LTF's Portugal resolution in the same Section 9 calls only for: "Advancing the unity in action of the working class by pushing the demand for a united front of all organizations that claim to represent the workers in defense of the gains that have been made and against any offensive by bourgeois forces that threatens the proletariat as a whole. *This includes the appropriate measures to arm the proletariat to defend its gains*" (emphasis added). This mention of the arming of the proletariat corresponds to the part at the end of the previous quotation in this section, which reads "Thus, propaganda and agitation for mobilizing and arming the masses against the rightist hangmen can only be carried out successfully in combination with the struggle for a workers and peasants government." That is, the LTF's Portugal resolution poses the question of arming the proletariat in the context of the democratic struggle for a workers government of the Constituent Assembly in which the SP and CP comprise a majority, in order to defend the struggle for the democratic workers government from the possibility of a rightist coup. Just as the LTF's Portugal resolution does not pose the question of disintegration of the bourgeois army through the soldiers along class lines, so also the question of arming the proletariat outside the barracks is not posed as a class right and class necessity of the proletariat, completely independent of the entire bourgeois state system, including the parliament—in this case the Constituent Assembly. That is, it is not posed as a question of a class task going beyond democracy in general.

Thirdly, while the governmental slogan is posed for a workers and peasants government in which the SP and CP predominate, on the basis of the Constituent Assembly, this slogan itself, as it is, remains within the limits of democracy. Such a government in and of itself does not imply a revolutionary government that is irreconcilably

opposed to the bourgeois state, aimed at the establishment of the power of proletarian dictatorship. This is because it does not include mobilizing the working class for planification of the whole economy with nationalization without compensation of key industries of the economy and under workers control of production; nor does it include dissolving the army through a class disintegration by organizing the soldiers independently of the officer corps; nor does it include arming the working masses. That is, the governmental slogan is not posed in practice as a perspective of a workers and peasants government that organizes a national council of workers, peasants, and soldiers as a nationwide revolutionary power.

Thus, the political conclusion we must draw from the LTF's Portugal resolution is the following: Namely, the LTF resolution recognizes that Portugal entered a prerevolutionary situation after the failure of the March 1975 coup of the Spínola faction, and *it poses in practice a political struggle strictly within the limits of democracy as the direct class task of the Portuguese proletariat in this "prerevolutionary situation."* It calls for developing a struggle for workers power strictly within the limits of democracy. Consequently, the resolution clearly *adopts the revisionist method of the Menshevik "two-stage revolution" in posing a democratic struggle as a stage in the direct class tasks of the proletariat in a prerevolutionary situation.* The method that limits the class tasks of the proletariat to democratic political struggle in a prerevolutionary or revolutionary situation and, thereby, makes the democratic political struggle a stage in practice—such a method is a definite deviation from Trotsky's method of permanent revolution in the Russian revolution, from the method of Lenin's "April Theses" of 1917, and in general from the Fourth International's whole method of permanent revolution and the Transitional Program. It is nothing but a political capitulation to the Menshevik right-wing revisionist method in the proletarian class struggle.

### III.

While a section directly referring to the MFA government as a military dictatorship is missing from the LTF's Portugal resolution, the LTF's SWP leadership insisted that the MFA government was a military dictatorial government, and that the axis of the Portuguese situation and the class struggle was the conflict between this military dictatorship and a democracy focusing on the Constituent Assembly. The meaning of this quite democratic political scheme becomes clear in the light of the SWP leadership's Menshevik "two-stage revolution" method in regard to the Portuguese revolution.

It goes without saying that under a military, police, or other authoritarian dictatorial political regime, the struggle to overthrow the regime and to acquire full democratic freedom for the development of the mass movement of the workers and peasants and their various struggles—that is, a democratic political struggle—is to be posed as the direct task of proletarian class struggle in practice. Of course, the practical task of the proletarian revolution, while conducting a democratic struggle to smash the authoritarian dictatorial regime, lies in consistent opposition to various bourgeois and petty-bourgeois currents which try to fix



this struggle as a stage, and in holding to the class perspective of permanent revolution, which aims at developing the explosion of proletarian struggles, liberated through the overthrow of the dictatorial regime, permanently toward the establishment of the proletarian dictatorship.

The Portuguese dictatorial regime was overthrown by the April 25, 1974, military coup. After the failure of the Spínola coup in March 1975, offensive workers struggles broke out, and the Portuguese big bourgeoisie lost its direct control over the state and the political situation as a whole. In this way Portugal entered a situation of prerevolutionary or revolutionary crisis. There was the MFA government, which had its direct base among the officer corps of the bourgeois army and which was developing a bonapartist character, but this bourgeois governmental regime was not one of authoritarian dictatorial political rule over the masses of workers and peasants.

The explosive rise in workers struggles since March 1975 was marked especially by the workers' instinctive attempts at class attack on the capitalist relationship of production, as was indicated by the widespread actions in which the workers occupied many factories and enterprises and tried to force the MFA government to nationalize them. Through such occupations and demands for nationalization, and through the development of autonomous mass organizations of direct action, such as factory committees, neighborhood committees, tenants committees, etc., the spontaneous movement of the workers posed in practice the problem of a class political leadership able to consciously develop the attack on the capitalist relationship of production based on the system of private property.

Thus, since March 1975 in Portugal the degree of formation of a class political leadership—that is, a leadership capable of directing the spontaneous attempts at class offensive against the capitalist relationship of production and its social system, which the workers had initiated according to their class instinct, consistently toward overthrow of the bourgeois state itself and toward revolutionary establishment of workers power—became a definite factor in determining the development of the actual political situation in the revolutionary crisis. In reality, a class political leadership that had a mass influence and adhered to the class position and method of proletarian permanent revolution had not been prepared in Portugal—as is also the case in other countries. It was Cunhal's Portuguese Communist Party that had the broadest influence among the active and militant sectors of the Portuguese proletariat. This party fiercely opposed Soares's Portuguese Socialist Party, which is the Portuguese social democracy. But the PCP never tried to lead the spontaneous class offensives of the workers against the capitalist relationship of production, by developing the offensives along an independent class line up to the establishment of workers revolutionary power. That is, the PCP never followed the class position and method of proletarian permanent revolution. Thus, the lack of a class leadership with mass influence on the side of the Portuguese proletariat provided certain room for the MFA government, as a government of the bourgeois state, to develop the "leftist" bonapartist characteristic in relation

to the working class, which had rushed into an offensive struggle. That is, by "institutionalizing" the MFA government as a Portuguese bourgeois regime, tossing around leftist demagoguery, and tying the masses' "direct democracy" (People's Assembly) to the MFA regime in a class-collaborationist way, the MFA tried to carry out its objective role of maintaining the bourgeois system in a mediationist way.

The MFA government had its origin in the anti-Caetano military coup of April 1974, and its direct base was in the officer corps of the bourgeois army. But in the situation of the rising struggles of the working masses, including political differentiation within the army itself, this military government lacked the political prerequisites for the military suppression of the offensive class struggles of the workers. Thus, this military government can be said to have been a government of the bourgeois army which was developing a "leftist" bonapartist character. This bourgeois government, which adopted "leftist" policies as if it were following in the wake of the development of the workers offensive struggles, talked loudly about Portuguese socialism and about the People's Assembly as a people's organ of direct democracy, etc. In this way it was doing its best to block the workers movement from developing politically on a class line independent of the MFA government, and to hold out politically until the spontaneous combativity of the working class would ebb after a certain period.

By the way, what the LTF's Portugal resolution counterposes to such a military government of the MFA is the right of the Constituent Assembly to form its own government; that is, a position that would lead the political process that had begun with the collapse of the Caetano dictatorial regime to its completion as a bourgeois democracy. The LTF's Portugal resolution counterposes the achievement of bourgeois democracy, through having the Constituent Assembly form a government, as the class task of the proletariat in practice. It counterposes this to the MFA government, which was under the objectively offensive pressure of the Portuguese proletariat, which directly reflected the extremely acute political crisis of the big bourgeoisie, which talked loudly about "Portuguese socialism," "people's direct democracy," etc., and which was developing a "leftist" bonapartist character.

#### IV.

Firstly, even if a government of the Constituent Assembly, which would replace the MFA government, might happen to be a parliamentary "workers government" of the SP and CP, this in itself would by no means imply a proletarian solution to the problems of the army and of power. The Constituent Assembly government and the MFA within the officer corps of the bourgeois army could coexist quite well, and the two could even supplement each other. In essence, there is no class contradiction between the MFA government and the Constituent Assembly as a system of bourgeois democracy, nor between the MFA or the bourgeois army in general and the Constituent Assembly or the bourgeois parliament in general. That is, to counterpose a Constituent Assembly government, as a democratic government, to the MFA government, as a military government, is to deliberately confine the masses of workers within the general framework of democracy and thus is nothing but deliberate

cultivation of political illusions in parliamentarism and democracy in general. Whether or not a “workers government” of the working-class organizations—be it formed through a parliament or by extraparliamentary means—can really become a revolutionary transitional government, which implies the actual breakout of the proletarian revolution, does not depend on how fully democracy in general is realized in a given situation, but on whether or not the active majority of the proletariat has joined together in mass organizations of dual power and, at the same time, is ready for a fight to finally dismantle the bourgeois army. Therefore, it is a tactical question in itself how and through what channel to form a truly revolutionary transitional government—which actually inaugurates the proletarian revolution—by means of the proletarian united-front policy. For that reason, it is incorrect to say that the revolutionary workers government must necessarily be organized on the basis of a nationwide soviet organization of the working class. In general, we cannot exclude even the possibility that a revolutionary government might be formed through a bourgeois parliament—although of course this would immediately pose an open class split of the bourgeois parliament and the end of it. On the contrary, it is a well-known fact that on the eve of the October revolution of 1917, Lenin insisted on the organization of an armed insurrection directly under the political responsibility and initiative of the revolutionary party, not through the intermediary of the soviet organization. In any case, in order to start an open civil war for establishment of proletarian dictatorship as an immediate target in a situation of revolutionary crisis, it is an absolute necessity for an active majority of the working class to have been concentrated around mass organizations of dual power in some form or other, or to have prepared itself fully to gather around the mass organizations of dual power, and for the working class, through its vanguard, to have made its political, organizational, and military preparations for final dissolution of the bourgeois army.

However, the LTF’s Portugal resolution, as was pointed out, consistently “evades” the anticapitalist transitional slogans with the perspective of proletarian dictatorship and the struggles for those slogans. It avoids a class attack on capitalist social relations, political disintegration of the bourgeois army and arming of the proletariat, and organizational preparation for a revolutionary government through nationwide centralization of working-class mass organizations of dual power. Thus, the perspective of a democratic struggle for the Constituent Assembly and an SP-CP government in opposition to the MFA government, without a practical orientation of consciously preparing the working class for an open civil war, is necessarily an option within the limits of bourgeois democracy. Consequently it is an attempt to drive the proletariat into a ruinous political blind alley. It is nothing but an attempt to lead the proletariat to another blind alley of an inevitably reformist “workers government” of the SP and CP within the limits of bourgeois democracy, in place of the blind alley of the MFA government. Again, therefore, it is absolutely correct to define the LTF’s Portugal resolution and the line of the SWP leadership on the Portuguese revolution as an anticlass betrayal line of Menshevik “two-stage revolution.”

## V.

Secondly, because the LTF’s Portugal resolution and the SWP leadership’s democratic orientation as a political line in the Portuguese revolution pose another political blind alley for the Portuguese proletariat, the united-front policy of trying to unite the proletariat as a class through struggle for what is supposed to be the most general and universal democracy cannot achieve that goal in the present reality of the class struggle in Portugal. Therefore, such an orientation cannot win over the oppressed lower layers of the petty bourgeoisie into a political alliance with the proletariat.

In general, it is impossible to unify the proletariat as a class through reformism. It is therefore also impossible to draw the lower layers of the petty bourgeoisie strongly under the hegemony of the unified proletariat as a class. Unifying the proletariat as a class and drawing the lower layers of the petty bourgeoisie under the political hegemony of the proletariat is possible only in a revolutionary way, that is, through an anticapitalist transitional struggle with the perspective of establishing the power of the proletariat itself. This is precisely the method of Trotsky’s permanent revolution and Lenin’s April Theses, that is, the fundamental point of united-front tactics in the proletarian class struggle. The various divisions within the proletariat have a material basis in capitalist social relations themselves, and for that reason only a revolutionary anticapitalist struggle and a transitional struggle for the power of proletarian dictatorship can effectively accomplish the class unity of the proletariat. Here lies the essence of the Transitional Program adopted at the founding conference of the Fourth International. The method of the Transitional Program, which poses a revolutionary anticapitalist struggle of the proletariat as a transitional struggle for the establishment of a revolutionary workers government, is a unified strategic system of the proletarian revolution and of its class united-front tactic to unify the ranks of the proletariat as a class toward smashing the bourgeois state and establishing the power of proletarian dictatorship. In this sense, the method of the Transitional Program inherits the tradition of the Third and Fourth Congresses in the history of the Third International. In these two congresses, which aimed at arming the Communist parties of the European countries strategically and tactically, problems of the proletarian united-front tactic, the struggle for transitional demands, and the slogan of a workers government were posed. An intense discussion was carried on and theses on tactics were adopted. The proletarian united-front tactic, the struggle for anticapitalist transitional demands, and working-class struggle to bring down the bourgeois government and for a revolutionary workers government—these three together form an indivisible whole in the system of proletarian revolutionary strategy and tactics.

Now this is repetitious, but what fundamentally characterized the Portuguese situation after March 1975 were:

- 1) the collapse of the big bourgeoisie’s direct grip on the state and the political situation as a whole, which became conclusive with the failure of the Spínola coup, and thus the deeper and deeper political crisis of the whole bourgeois state system, beginning with the army, under the MFA governmental regime;
- 2) the overall rise in proletarian struggles, and the spontaneous development of a class anticapitalist

offensive, which can be seen in the spreading of factory occupations by masses of workers and of the movement for nationalization based on those occupations;

3) the development of inflation and the economic crises accompanied by economic strangulation by the EEC bourgeoisie and the economic sabotage by the bourgeoisie within Portugal;

that is, the extremely acute political crisis of the bourgeoisie, the spontaneous class offensive of the proletariat, and the unending crisis of the economy as a whole. The situation had clearly gone into a condition of prerevolutionary or revolutionary crisis, as we have repeatedly pointed out. In this kind of situation, it is simply out of the question to pose a precisely democratic struggle to bring about a government of the Constituent Assembly in opposition to the military government of the MFA as the fundamental class task for uniting the proletariat. What was demanded by the class was to clearly pose a class way out that would fundamentally overcome the general social crisis which was spreading through the political and economic structure: the extremely acute political crisis of the bourgeoisie, the spontaneous class offensive of the proletariat and the unending crisis of the whole economy. In this kind of situation of revolutionary crisis, there can be no possibility of uniting the proletariat and drawing the lower layers of the petty bourgeoisie politically under its hegemony except by the class perspective which clearly shows the definite way out. On this point, we must learn well from *The Impending Catastrophe and How to Combat It* which Lenin wrote pointing toward the October insurrection.

It is clear that a government of the Constituent Assembly in place of the MFA government or a "workers" government of the SP-CP in the Constituent Assembly in itself could not become a fundamental solution to the general social crisis in Portugal. It is out of the question to resolve the general social crisis through a democratic struggle. Moreover, a halfway development of the situation is dangerous in the acute crisis; for the masses as a whole, including the broad petty bourgeoisie, a radical way of overcoming this crisis is becoming their biggest concern. Along with the increasing ripeness of political conditions for a proletarian revolution, it is inevitable that if these conditions are not utilized, they will turn into the conditions for an all-out offensive by the bourgeois counterrevolution. The workers were already rising up spontaneously in a class offensive against capitalist social relations, deepening the bourgeoisie's crisis more and more. Thus, there is no decisive class way out of the general social crisis except by sweeping away the bourgeois state and capitalist social relations in the basic sectors of the economy, transferring all power into the hands of the working class, and basing the entire economy on a system of planned management led by the working class. Therefore, after March 1975 it had already become impossible to definitely realize the class unity of the proletariat in Portugal, except on the basis of the class perspective of proletarian revolution, the overthrow of the bourgeois state, and the establishment of revolutionary proletarian power.

Consequently, the LTF's Portugal resolution and the SWP leadership's democratic struggle orientation in the Portuguese revolution are not an orientation for class unity of the Portuguese proletariat. It must be called an orientation of anticclass divisionism which exacerbates the split between the active fighting sectors of the Portuguese proletariat and the relatively backward sectors still trapped in parliamentary illusions.

## VI.

The LTF's Portugal resolution and SWP leadership's democratic orientation on the Portuguese revolution are a deviation from start to finish from Lenin's April Theses, from the method of proletarian revolution leading to the October insurrection, from Trotsky's method of permanent revolution in the proletarian class struggle, and consequently also from the whole method of the Transitional Program along with the Fourth International's Bolshevik-Leninist tradition of strategy and tactics in the class struggle. It is nothing but a political capitulation to the method of anticclass betrayal of Menshevik "two-stage revolution."

The explosive growth of struggles of the Portuguese proletariat and the resulting revolutionary crisis in Portugal have now pushed the international debate and the political differentiation, which have opened up vehemently within the Fourth International since 1972, clearly to a new stage. The present international debate around the Portuguese revolution is a direct political extension of the debates leading up to the Tenth World Congress on the strategic line for the Latin American revolution and on the Theses on Western Europe, and of the debate immediately thereafter around the PST leadership's attitude toward bourgeois democracy, and represents the political conclusion of these debates. While we expressed our overall opposition to the IMT's Ninth World Congress Latin American revolutionary strategy, we maintained almost complete opposition to the basic strategy of the LTF, whose core is the SWP leadership. Within the Fourth International, we supported the IMT in general and opposed the LTF consistently. This has been our basic international position since about the time of the Tenth World Congress. Presently, in the situation where an extremely important dispute has broken out around the Portuguese revolution, the correctness of our international position has become completely clear. The differences between the IMT and the LTF, as the real international class struggle rises and becomes more and more fierce, are now clearly at the point of whether they themselves try to positively affirm the working-class struggle for proletarian power as a practical task, or whether they try to evade the question of power in the reality of the class struggle. The rapid development of the revolutionary crisis in Portugal has clearly led the LTF, and the SWP leadership in particular, to assert the Menshevik "two-stage revolution" anticclass right-wing revisionism. Our international struggle against the LTF's Menshevik "two-stage revolution" anticclass line has entered the stage of a struggle in defense of our Fourth International's theoretical and programmatic tradition itself.