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Contents

**Draft Theses on the Tactics of the
Fourth International in Capitalist Europe,**
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Draft Theses on the Tactics of the Fourth International in Capitalist Europe

Introduction

The following document has a precise function. It is not primarily an attempt to present a conjunctural analysis of the evolution of the economic and political situation in capitalist Europe, the modifications that are gradually occurring in the bourgeois camp and the workers movement, the manner in which the rising revolutionary crisis in southern Europe fits into the world situation and is related on an international scale to the crisis of Stalinism, especially in East Europe, the USSR, and the People's Republic of China. We will propose dealing with all these problems in the framework of the general political resolution the United Secretariat has to prepare for the Eleventh World Congress. Nor does it seek to synthesize the present practice of the European sections in the building of the party or the real turn toward mass work made by a number of these sections.

On the contrary, the following document must essentially prepare our European sections and our entire world movement for the specific tasks posed for the Fourth International, both in these countries and in the rest of Europe, by the ripening of a prerevolutionary situation in four countries of southern Europe. This preparation, which anticipates events somewhat (although this observation may be partially by the boards by the time the congress meets) appears indispensable to us in arming the Trotskyist militants and cadres in Europe. That is why we are deliberately orienting the discussion in this direction and not in the direction of conjunctural analyses of the objective situation, since a broad consensus exists in the Fourth International both on the probable synchronization of the revolutionary crisis in Spain, Portugal, Italy, and France and on the desynchronization of this crisis with the rest of capitalist Europe.

In its meeting of May 25, 1976, the United Secretariat voted on the general line of these draft theses. The vote was:

13 in favor

Aubin, Claudio, Duret, Fourier, Frey, Georges,
Ghulam, Jones, Kurt, Otto, Roman, Walter and Werner.

4 against

Adair, Galois (consultative), Johnson (consultative),
Marcel

1 abstaining

Julio (consultative)

This vote in no way implies that the elaboration of the document has entered its final phase. It means above all that the leadership of the International is opening the preparatory discussion for the Eleventh World Congress with a document on a key political problem, the members of the United Secretariat and the International Executive Committee as well as the leaderships of the sections having a very broad freedom to propose many amend-

ments and modifications of the document as the discussion progresses and as the evolution of the situation itself enables us to detail our tactics.

* * *

1. The document adopted by the Tenth World Congress of the Fourth International on the building of revolutionary parties in capitalist Europe correctly stressed the basic features of the modified objective and subjective situation in which the sections of the Fourth International have been developing their activity since the turn of May 1968. These features have been intensified by a series of recent developments.

a) The capitalist system in Europe is more than ever marked by a deep crisis of all bourgeois social relations, a crisis that has been further accentuated by the generalized economic recession of 1974-76, which shook the illusion that this system could at least guarantee a more or less regular rise in the standard of living of the masses.

b) The rise of workers struggles, which has not experienced serious retreat in any country except West Germany and which has gradually come to affect countries that had not been directly drawn into the post-May 1968 wave, like Denmark, Sweden, and Switzerland, increasingly serves to catalyze the most diverse expressions of this crisis, rendering little conceivable any solution other than the seizure of power by the working class in alliance with the other oppressed layers of society, even though all sorts of reformist combinations, or combinations with reformist participation, may still divert the working class from a direct struggle for power.

c) The political crisis of the bourgeoisie has taken especially virulent forms in Britain and Italy, leading to a paralysis of the bourgeoisie's ability to impose long-term strategic solutions. This crisis acquired new dimensions with the fall of the military-Bonapartist dictatorships in Portugal and Greece and the upsurge of the mass movement and disintegration of the dictatorship in Spain. Of all these countries, it is only in Greece that the bourgeoisie has been able to advance an alternative solution at all operative for any appreciable length of time.

d) The development of a new mass vanguard prepared to act independently of the reformist and Stalinist apparatuses and in a more clearly anticapitalist manner than the sectors still tightly controlled by these traditional apparatuses (although the level of consciousness of the militants of this new mass vanguard often oscillates between left reformism and ultraleftism) has powerfully stimulated the rise of workers struggles as well as new forms of struggle and self-organization of the masses. In the cases of Portugal and Spain, this vanguard has at certain times begun to contest the reformist and Stalinist apparatuses for leadership of the mass movement itself. In an atmosphere of often impetuous rise of workers struggles, the composition of this new mass vanguard—which must in no way be identified with the far-left political organizations, although these organizations are obviously

part of it—has gradually changed in several key countries, increasingly transforming it into a predominantly workers new vanguard. Nevertheless, the complex and molecular process of radicalization of this workers vanguard differentiates it into several sorts of militants, from the young rebel to the old worker cadre breaking with reformism. Seven years after May 1968, it is above all young worker cadres who are emerging, cadres who have participated in the leadership of local struggles and often hold trade-union responsibilities at the factory level. These young cadres are the main “target” in building the revolutionary party, in rooting it in the working class and stabilizing it socially. The working-class predominance of the new vanguard of a mass character does not exclude new explosions of the student and high-school movement; but, independent of the numerical size of the layers of youth who have newly entered the educational system, it places them in a different relation to the new workers vanguard from that which predominated during the 1968-71 period.

e) The emergence of the new vanguard of increasingly working-class composition accentuates the modification of the relationship of forces between the traditional bureaucratic apparatuses and the far-left organizations within the working class and the trade-union organizations. In several countries it makes possible both a growing number of strikes and mass mobilizations led or directly influenced by the far left and the adoption of advanced forms of self-organization by growing sectors of the working class: strike committees elected by and responsible to general assemblies of strikers; local coordinating bodies of strike committees; temporary experiences with workers control and factory occupations, and even temporary experiences in self-defense of the working class. This is the fundamental change in the situation compared with the previous workers upsurge in Europe in 1944-48.

f) At the same time, the reformist and Stalinist apparatuses preserve their preponderance over broad toiling masses and, through their diverse practices of class collaboration and integration into the bourgeois state apparatus, seek to limit the independence and upsurge of the mass movement; they often curb the generalization of struggles, block their outlet toward a victorious socialist revolution, and remain more than ever the major instruments assuring the bourgeoisie a chance of escaping the ongoing social crisis, exceptionally grave as it is. This role furthermore implies an adaptation to the upsurge of the mass movement, which can include extremely flexible maneuvers (the Portuguese CP between May and November 1975, the Communist party of Spain in regard to the workers commissions, etc.).

g) The interaction among the modification of the relationship of class forces (the crisis of the system, the new rise of workers struggles), the emergence of the new mass vanguard of increasingly working-class composition, and the maintenance of the preponderance of the reformist apparatuses over the majority of the working class determines a process of progressive recomposition of the organized workers movement, which in turn increases the possibilities for marked progress in the construction of the revolutionary party.

2. The totality of these factors finds its highest expression in the revolutionary crisis now ripening on the Iberian peninsula. Up to now, this crisis has been characterized by the combination of a revolutionary

process in Portugal and the crisis of decomposition of the dictatorship in Spain. It could rise to a qualitatively higher level if the fall of this dictatorship and the opening of a revolutionary situation in the Spanish state occur before the Portuguese revolution suffers a decisive defeat. In that event, the interaction of the two revolutions, with the Spanish proletariat assimilating some of the principal gains of the Portuguese revolution and the Portuguese revolution receiving a new impetus from the revolutionary upsurge in Spain, would create a powerful revolutionary pole for several other European proletariats, above all those of Italy and France. It would strikingly concretize the perspective of a simultaneous revolutionary upsurge in several key countries of capitalist Europe, as was sketched out in the document of the Tenth World Congress.

The unfolding of the Portuguese revolution up to now has been a real laboratory in which the revolutionaries of Europe and the entire world can study in real life the interaction among the major factors mentioned above, as the most lucid representatives of international big capital are likewise doing, with growing uneasiness. This process has been characterized by the spectacular weakening of the bourgeois state apparatus, the crisis of leadership of the bourgeoisie, the explosive character of class contradictions and antagonisms, the beginning of decomposition of the bourgeois army, tumultuous initiatives of the masses around the questions of workers control and factory occupations, and the emergence of bodies of self-representation of the masses of workers, poor peasants, and soldiers. All these factors, which dominated the Portuguese scene between November 1974 and November 25, 1975, reflected both the depth of the crisis of Portuguese bourgeois society and the inability of the reformist and Stalinist apparatuses to confine the movement of the masses within limits compatible with the reconstruction of a relatively stable capitalist economy and bourgeois state.

But 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 be at least generalized through the real centralization of organs of self-organization of the masses, or else the bourgeoisie would take the initiative in breaking up these organs, reestablishing a repressive striking force, rolling back the most advanced gains of the mass movement, and consolidating its state power, at first behind a “democratic” smokescreen. This is what has happened since November 25, 1975, following a political counteroffensive against these advanced gains of the proletariat, soldiers, and poor toilers of the countryside, unleashed at the initiative of the Soares leadership of the SP beginning in May with the avowed aim of reestablishing “order and discipline” against “anarcho-populism,” that is, of consolidating the bourgeois state against the tumultuous initiatives of the mass movement. At first, this offensive was beaten back by a new advance of the mass movement which was nevertheless too uneven and spontaneous to thwart a carefully worked out and applied bourgeois project.

The facts that the Portuguese vanguard—despite its breadth and astonishing sense of initiative in action—remained a minority among the masses, that the weight of the revolutionary Marxists within this vanguard was still

limited, and that the vanguard was permeated by the most diverse and confused ideological currents, with a predominance of raving sectarianism in regard to the Socialist and Communist workers (broad sectors of the far left treating one or another of these groups of workers as "social fascists"), placed additional obstacles in the path of the reestablishment of the unity in action of the working class, which had been broken by the counterrevolutionary offensive of Soares and the sectarianism of Cunhal. The result of this has been an ebb of the revolution since November 25, 1975, but without the living forces of the proletariat being injured or defeated. The ebb is only one of the successive convulsions the Portuguese revolutionary process will go through before a decisive test of strength between the proletariat and the bourgeois counterrevolution.

The center of gravity of the revolutionary process thus logically passes to Spain. Because of its numerical strength, its skills, historic memory, and revolutionary spirit, which is the most pronounced in all Europe, the Spanish proletariat is destined to play an exceptional role in the advance of the international socialist revolution. It is preparing to deliver the *coup de grâce* to the post-Francoist dictatorship, a stillborn attempt by the Spanish bourgeoisie to preserve its repressive apparatus and anti-working-class arsenal intact while simultaneously permitting a certain channeling of the democratic aspirations and immediate economic demands of the masses into "liberal" capitalist pathways. The reformist and neoreformist leaderships are preparing to fill the breach to guarantee "public order" and "social peace." But the formidable mass movement now unfolding in the Spanish state will most certainly trigger a process of permanent revolution, in the course of which the proletariat and its allies—the exploited masses—beginning from the conquest of democratic rights and the release of all the political prisoners, the dismantling of the repressive apparatus, and the fight for the right of self-determination of the oppressed nationalities, will increasingly tend to challenge capitalist exploitation and the bourgeois state, to place on the agenda the generalization of organs of direct power of the toiling masses and the advent of a government based on those organs, that is, the victory of a genuine socialist revolution.

3. Within the framework of this overall evolution, a number of precise stipulations are required as to the specific features of the ongoing evolution of capitalist Europe, the objective and subjective factors both favorable and unfavorable to the socialist revolution and the tasks facing the sections of the Fourth International.

Above all, it is necessary to detail the conditions of uneven and combined development of the proletarian revolution in capitalist Europe.

The notion of revolutionary crisis ripening in capitalist Europe preserves its full significance in that the combined effects of revolutionary explosions in several key capitalist countries on all the capitalist countries of this continent (and even on several of the bureaucratized workers states) will be real and profound. Capitalist Europe today possesses a much greater degree of economic, financial, monetary, political, and ideological integration than it did in 1918, 1923, 1936, or 1945. As a very consequence of that more advanced integration—in the final analysis an expression of the more advanced internationalization of the productive forces, capital, and class struggle—

revolutionary upsurges relatively isolated in a single country become less and less likely.

The most likely possibility, the one for which we must prepare both ourselves and the working class, is a revolutionary upsurge that rapidly spreads throughout a whole geographic region—the Iberian peninsula, Italy, and France incontestably being the ripest countries in this regard.

Moreover, experience confirms that the relationship of forces between labor and capital, like that between the traditional bureaucratic apparatuses and the new vanguard within the workers movement and the working class, are not *qualitatively* transformed overnight, although they are subject to sudden or rapid changes. In both areas, a whole cumulative movement of changes, first imperceptible and molecular and later visible but still limited, is required before a qualitative leap permitting us to envisage the ripening of a revolutionary crisis in the short run becomes possible. In this sense, the delay that has occurred in several countries over the past few years in the rise of broader and broader workers struggles, in the emergence of a broad vanguard of increasingly working-class composition, or in the capacity of revolutionary Marxists to intervene in and influence both this vanguard and the mass movement will not be able to be compensated for in the short run by some spectacular progress of the proletarian revolution in other countries. The countries of capitalist Europe may thus be classified in two categories:

a) Countries in which the objective and subjective conditions for the outbreak of a revolutionary crisis already exist or are maturing rapidly. These are: Portugal, Spain, Italy, and France.

b) Countries in which the greater stability of the reign of the bourgeoisie, the too low level of combativity and class consciousness of the proletariat, the weakness of the mass vanguard, or a combination of all these factors make the outbreak of a prerevolutionary crisis coincident with the revolutionary crisis in the four countries of the first category less likely.

There are some intermediary cases, especially Britain, Belgium, and Greece. In these countries the *objective* conditions for a prerevolutionary crisis are incontestably ripening. But either the economic reserves or political trump cards still commanded by capital, or the more pronounced weakness of the subjective factor (notably the pronounced predominance of Social Democratic traditions and ideology among the British and Belgian proletariats, or a combination of all these factors make a revolutionary crisis simultaneous with the countries of the first category less likely. Britain occupies a sort of hinge position between the two categories of countries; the scope of the reaction of the masses to the present bourgeois offensive (massive unemployment, the antiworker Healey-Wilson-Callaghan measures) in coming months will determine the degree of maturity of the crisis of capitalism and the bourgeois regime in this country.

Nevertheless, the fact that in none of these countries, West Germany included, have conditions been created that would allow for any of these countries being transformed into a new international cop for imperialism in Europe underlines the aspects of the revolutionary crisis now ripening in Europe that are exceptionally favorable for the revolution; it also highlights the opportunities and responsibilities of the Fourth International on this continent. *This revolutionary crisis for the first time raises*

the possibility of the sections of the Fourth International growing over into revolutionary parties rooted in the proletariat in the countries that stand at the head of the process of world revolution. The outcome of the crisis will depend in large measure on our ability to carry out this transformation successfully.

I. Central Tactical Problems in the Countries in Which a Prerevolutionary Situation is Ripening

4. A more detailed analysis is required concerning the interrelation between the revolutionary crisis on the one hand and the impetuous rise of workers struggles, the political crisis of the bourgeoisie, and the political solutions compatible with the maintenance of a bourgeois order on the other hand. (Such solutions include coalition governments of workers and bourgeois parties, popular-front-type governments, and even "pure" reformist governments that have no "bourgeois" ministers but are nevertheless integrated into the bourgeois state, such as the British Labour government or the Swedish Social Democratic government.) The history of all proletarian revolutions confirms that a revolutionary crisis is never the automatic result of mass strikes, or even a general strike, even when the capitalist economy and the stability of a given bourgeois government have been deeply shaken. Rather, it is the result of the interaction between the impetuous irruption of the masses onto the political scene through their own direct action and a deep crisis of all the mechanisms of the state power of the bourgeoisie, that is, a crisis of the bourgeois state and its institutions as a whole, as distinct from government crises properly so called.

Both the advent of a situation of generalized dual power during a future social explosion and the construction of a mass revolutionary party are powerfully stimulated by a series of factors: the growing synchronization of the prerevolutionary situation that has been taking shape in four countries of Europe since the beginning of 1976; the fact that, contrary to the period immediately after the second world war, American imperialism is neither able nor prepared to "bail out" ailing European capitalism through a second edition "Marshall Plan"; the inability of the most solid capitalist power (West Germany) to go it alone in substituting for American leadership monetarily or economically, politically or militarily; the very duration of the crisis, which permits a gradual ripening of the experiences of self-organization on the part of the workers and successive layers of the masses; the progressive recomposition of the workers movement before the relationship of forces can once again be tilted in favor of the bourgeoisie. But 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, at least in the countries in which bourgeois-democratic illusions are strong, the legitimacy of bourgeois parliamentary democracy in the eyes of broad masses cannot be shaken simply by abstract propaganda in favor of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

(All the countries of capitalist Europe may be classified in this category, those countries that have not experienced a long phase of bourgeois democracy during the recent past, like the countries of the Iberian peninsula and Greece, being apt to give rise to even greater illusions in this respect than the other countries of capitalist Europe.) This shaking 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 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 an infinitely greater number of workers to participate in political practice and the exercise of power, and that the immediate and burning needs of the masses can be satisfied only by their own initiatives and decisions, by going beyond the "sovereignty" of parliamentary institutions. The ideas of "popular sovereignty"—which in industrialized countries can only mean the sovereignty of the wage-earning masses, who constitute 70-90 percent of the active population—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.

The experience of Portugal confirms both the necessity of such a transformation of mass consciousness and the obstacles on the road to it. Among these obstacles must be classified notably the false dilemmas and exclusivities put forward essentially by Social Democratic reformism and Stalinism and encouraged by the ideological confusion of the centrists and ultraleftists of all stripes.

The workers democracy of councils that we call for does not exclude or restrict but on the contrary broadens freedom of the press, freedom of organization, of demonstration, and of assembly, for without challenging the plurality of political parties and their independence, it breaks down the obstacles of respect for private property and the institutions of the bourgeois state, which impede the enjoyment of these rights by the broad masses. It is therefore necessary to multiply the practical examples that demonstrate that the workers democracy of councils does not suppress the liberties of any popular sector but on the contrary qualitatively broadens the scope of these liberties. In the period of dual power any revolutionary practice that gives rise to doubt about this among the proletariat and its closest allies powerfully contributes to the maneuvers of the bourgeoisie and reformists aimed at maintaining among an important section of the proletariat the myth that the institutions of bourgeois democracy are the only institutions capable of assuring the toiling masses a minimum of democratic rights.

The fact that the revolutionary crisis 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 to 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, from the moment the revolutionary crisis breaks out and a situation of dual power develops. That is why, right from the present stage, they must encourage all those 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 organization of the masses). Without sowing any illusions about the possibility of “establishing socialism in one factory or one village,” without any let up in combating the corporatist features and dangers of “productivist” deviations inherent in such partial mobilizations, and without making any concessions to utopian conceptions of any alleged workers self-management in the framework of a market economy and a bourgeois state (that is, when the decision-making power over the big economic and political options is not in the hands of the working class as a whole, that is, when there is no socialist planning and no workers state), we must consider these movements as genuine training courses in tomorrow’s council democracy and we must therefore encourage them in this direction and toward this aim.

In the course of all these experiences, revolutionary Marxists will strive to fight for the strictest respect for workers democracy and the right of tendency. The struggle for this democracy and this right within strike committees and trade-union organizations (taking account of the federative character of these organizations) is part of the long-term battle to make the masses accept workers democracy as a form of democracy superior to bourgeois democracy. It goes without saying that the practice of workers democracy and the strict respect for the right of tendency, as well as the toleration of factions, within the Fourth International in the framework of genuine democratic centralism as well as the intransigent opposition of revolutionary Marxists to violence and bureaucratic practices within the workers movement, makes this battle all the more credible, first in the eyes of the workers vanguard and then in the eyes of broader masses.

5. The government formula that caps the action program of the revolutionary Marxists in each specific phase of the class struggle has the twofold purpose of teaching the workers to translate the great problems that concern them into terms of political power and of exposing the traditional parties of the working class as not respecting their own commitments before the class, as being incapable of either implementing their own program or, above all, working out and applying a program that can really satisfy the central concerns of the masses.

In the phase in which there is no prerevolutionary crisis, in which the rule of the bourgeoisie is not directly threatened by the action of the masses, the slogan that “the parties, or parties and trade unions, claiming allegiance to the workers movement and representing the majority of the working class, should break with the

bourgeoisie and take all power” without any additional stipulation conserves its full pedagogic value in this twofold sense. According to the circumstances, this slogan may be paired with nonultimatist programmatic stipulations: the demand for immediate elections on the basis of full proportional representation to form a Constituent Assembly conserves its full value on the eve of or just after the overthrow of a dictatorship; in a bourgeois-democratic country, the demand that the majority workers parties base themselves on the extraparliamentary mobilization of the masses, that this mobilization lead to a general strike or to early elections assuring the majority to the workers parties (the point being, without falling into ultraleftist anti-electoralism, to expose before the masses the reformist parties’ respect for the institutional bourgeois game, to the detriment of the interests of the working class and the workers movement). The essential thing is that the propaganda around such a slogan should lead to raising both the level of the class struggle and the level of consciousness of the working class; that is, it must not be limited to reflecting in a tailendist manner the given level of consciousness of the proletariat but must instead begin from this level of consciousness in order to lead it to a higher one. Such is the spirit and function of the Transitional Program of the Fourth International.

Things are otherwise during a prerevolutionary situation, when the bourgeois economy and state are already deeply shaken by mass action and mass strike (including a general strike), but when this struggle has not yet led to the emergence of dual power, that is, to the increasing emergence of organs of workers power counterposed in practice to the organs of power of the bourgeoisie. In such a situation, the government slogan must be formulated in such a way that it does not serve reformist and neoreformist maneuvers aimed at rechanneling the mass movement into paths compatible with the reconsolidation of the bourgeois economy and state, including through the vehicle of parliamentary elections. Under these conditions, revolutionary Marxists, taking account of the concrete circumstances and without falling into sterile and infantile antiparliamentary agitation, will at propitious moments formulate their government slogan in such a way as to progressively disassociate the idea of government power from bourgeois parliamentary institutions in the eyes of the masses: “Workers government based on the trade unions”; “workers government based on strike committees” (if such committees exist on a sufficiently broad scale); in the case of Britain, “Labour government responsible to the mass organizations of the workers movement” (with, as immediate proposals at given conjunctural moments, intermediary slogans like “election of the leadership of the Labour party by the Labour congress and not by the parliamentary group; congresses of the workers movement to hold decision-making power over the composition of the Labour cabinet,” and so on).

These formulas are cited only as examples and are not intended to exhaust all the possibilities. Obviously, they cannot cover the multiplicity of particular situations that have already come about in each country or that will come about during phases of prerevolutionary crisis. They should indicate a method of approach and point to the goals that should be aimed at by propaganda around the government formula during phases not yet directly marked by revolutionary crisis.

Generally speaking, the government formula in such a period will tend to remain algebraic, propagating the necessity for the working class to envisage the solution to all the burning problems of the day as problems of power and educating the workers in the spirit of the necessity of the seizure of power by the working class, without emphasizing the precise government forms, which depend precisely on the exact form taken by the emergence of organs of proletarian power, difficult to predict before the actual outbreak of the revolutionary crisis properly so called.

Finally, when we find ourselves in the midst of a revolutionary crisis proper, that is, when advanced decomposition of the bourgeois state apparatus and the emergence of a situation of dual power combine with the impetuous action of the masses, the government formula must cap the whole orientation of revolutionary Marxists toward the extension, coordination, generalization, and centralization of the organs of workers power. According to the circumstances, this may still be expressed in the demand that the parties representing the majority of the working class take all power, but then on the basis of the workers councils and within the framework of these councils. When such councils are not yet generalized, the government formula will necessarily assume an algebraic form, subordinated to the priority task of assuring this generalization. When this becomes a reality, the government formula must always have the real content of a transfer of power to the National Assembly of Workers Councils (whatever the precise name it may take in the specific circumstances of each country and each revolutionary crisis). During a revolutionary crisis, the governmental formula will tend to be agitational and must therefore be as concrete as possible and not purely algebraic.

In a general manner, it will have to take account of the priority imperative represented by the necessity of combating the mystifying identification of democratic rights with the parliamentary institutions of the bourgeois state. This identification constitutes both the ideological foundation of Social Democratic reformism and CP neoreformism and the most pernicious manifestation of class collaboration in a prerevolutionary or revolutionary period, since it is counterposed to breaking the workers movement from the politically most concentrated expression of the bourgeoisie: its state apparatus.

6. An analogous methodological procedure must dictate the tactics of revolutionary Marxists on the question of the emergence and rise of organs of self-representation of the toiling masses and their progressive transformation, first potential and later real, into workers councils, that is, into organs of power. We must reject the vanguardist illusion that such a process can be carried out essentially through the propaganda and activity of the revolutionary organizations apart from the mass movement and mass action or that it can even result from sectarian minority initiatives that tend to create non-elected "councils" representing only limited sectors under the hegemony of this or that grouplet or assemblage of grouplets.

Concurrently, we must reject the opportunist and tailendist deviation that such a process will be able to be carried through only when the "pressure of the masses" compels the leaders of the traditional reformist, Stalinist, and trade-union bureaucratic apparatuses to take the initiative in the construction or generalization of the

councils. With the exception of the situation in Russia in February 1917 (which was itself determined by the prior experience of the revolution of 1905 and by the reformist leaders' fear of the already very strong influence of the Bolshevik vanguard among the mass of workers), the whole history of revolutions in the twentieth century confirms that such a scenario is unlikely at best. It is infinitely more likely that the structures of self-organization of the masses will arise from great workers struggles and from the specific weight of a mass vanguard within these struggles without waiting for prior decisions by the reformist or Stalinist leaders and even clashing with the ferocious opposition of these leaders, at least in the beginning.

For the same reason that accounts for their semispontaneous emergence, it is not likely that these structures of self-organization of the masses (strike committees, factory committees, neighborhood committees, women's committees, student committees, peasant committees, etc.) will be homogenous from the outset, have the same names, or exercise the same functions. The sudden irruption onto the political scene of millions of workers previously little or not at all active politically will inevitably be accompanied by a confusion and chaos that may at first glance appear bewildering to dogmatists and to those who instinctively fear the action of the masses. In fact, though, this was the spectacle of the Russian revolution, in spite of the presence of a powerful Bolshevik party with two decades of great authority in the eyes of the masses. And such will inevitably be the spectacle of the proletarian revolutions in Europe (even more so, in fact), which will break out long before the building of the revolutionary party has attained a point comparable to that reached by the Bolshevik party in February-April 1917. The prerevolutionary and revolutionary crises that are ripening in capitalist Europe will be born under the sign of the uneven development of the class consciousness of the proletariat. Revolutionary Marxists must carefully and concretely analyze this uneven development in each country. From this analysis they must draw all the implications favorable to the objectively anticapitalist and revolutionary action of the masses.

This means, particularly, that the masses may create structures of self-organization that progressively exercise the 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. The example of Portugal is especially revealing in this regard. To try to deny this contradiction—that is, to deny the birth of dual power under the pretext that the majority of the masses are still following the SP and CP or to deny this still hegemonic political weight of the SP and CP among the toiling masses under the pretext that the masses are already going beyond these leaderships in action on certain key questions—is to condemn oneself to understand nothing of the real contradictory dynamic of the class struggle during a revolutionary crisis. It is also to render oneself powerless to resolve this contradiction in a direction favorable to the victory of the socialist revolution, to the seizure of power by the proletariat in alliance with other oppressed layers of the population.

It follows that, depending on the circumstances and the degree of maturity attained by the crisis of bourgeois society in each specific country, revolutionary Marxists,

acting within the framework of their overall activity among the working class and their struggle for the whole of the transitional program, will successively emphasize:

a) the self-management of the workers organizations and the self-organization of the workers struggles: trade-union democracy, with general membership assemblies at regular intervals, democratic election of all leadership bodies, statutory recognition and strict application of the right of tendency in the context of respect for the federative functioning of the union, elected strike committees responsible to general assemblies of strikers and recallable by them;

b) the coordination and generalization of scattered workers struggles, for the ineffectiveness of such struggles and the absence of any political outlet for them are especially striking to the masses during periods of deep social crisis of the type now racking a series of capitalist countries in Europe;

c) the emergence within broadening workers struggles of sectoral local, regional, and national coordinating bodies of strike committees, up to and including the convocation of a national congress (or assembly) of strike committees in the course of a general strike. The defense of this orientation without any ultimatism particularly implies that we do not oppose the convocation of a national assembly of such committees if some of them (or even a majority of them) are not yet democratically elected but are simple emanations of the bureaucratic apparatus of the trade unions; rather, as the struggle develops we agitate for a progressive modification of their composition in the direction of democratic elections. The maintenance and consolidation of unity in struggle depends above all on the strictest respect for workers democracy, which can be assured only by the democratic election of the leadership of the struggle;

d) the progressive assumption by factory committees, strike committees, ad hoc committees, trade-union committees, etc. of tasks that go beyond the simple management of struggles or ongoing campaigns for particular demands and move toward the exercise of functions of power outside the sphere of production properly so called, that is, functions that contest the power of the bourgeois state. While, in an initial phase this may still appear as relating to "economic" affairs (organization of some public services during a general strike, for example), in reality it already entails a clear dimension of contesting state power;

e) the local, regional, and national coordination of the various forms of committees having diverse areas of competence and representing diverse sectors of the popular masses into a single representative, democratic, and revolutionary organ of the masses as a whole: a national congress of workers councils, a National Workers Assembly progressively and increasingly appropriating de facto power and hence generalizing a situation of dual power. In effect, once a threshold of development of the committees is reached, the problem of their coordination becomes the major one, clashing with the will of the reformist leaderships to preserve the central power of the bourgeois state. Obviously, the existence of a mass revolutionary party and of a revolutionary trade-union tendency conscious of this necessity are decisive tools for stimulating the coordination and then centralization of the committees. But in their absence, it is necessary to avoid any dogmatic or ultimatic approach that would threaten to make the committees favoring centralization a minority, thus facilitating divisive and co-opting maneuvers of the

reformists in relation to the movement of self-organization of the class. It is therefore essential to base oneself on the objective needs of the workers which justify coordination and then centralization: the necessity of coordinating economic activity, of working out a plan; the necessity of coordinating the response to repression; the constitution of a central press, radio, and television for the committees, etc.

Between the modest germs of such a situation, which we sow through our tireless activity in favor of the democratic self-organization of the masses in each partial struggle, and its culmination in a generalized situation of dual power, numerous intermediary stages and hybrid forms will inevitably emerge; it is impossible to describe, catalog, and predict all of them. The essential thing is to maintain an overall view of the process, to grasp its fundamental dynamic as soon as the prerevolutionary crisis breaks out, and to intervene in the process with the aim of generalizing the situation of dual power, which is the necessary precondition for breaking the hegemony of the reformist and Stalinist apparatuses among the masses, for successfully building mass revolutionary parties in countries in which the workers movement is under reformist and neoreformist hegemony, and above all for winning the majority of the working class to the project of the seizure of power by the proletariat.

The distinction between real organs of self-organization of the masses and "revolutionary" pseudosoviets does not lie in their "majority" or "minority" character *in relation to the working class as a whole*, but rather in the degree to which they actually represent the *sector of the working class in whose name they speak*. A strike committee elected by the workers of a single factory is an organ that actually represents these workers. There is nothing sectarian or adventurist in an initiative aimed at electing strike committees first in some separate factories or even in a single factory. The working class as a whole learns only through propaganda and agitation based on living experiences and not simply through theoretical and doctrinaire arguments. On the other hand, it is sectarian and adventurist to impose on the workers nonelected "committees" that represent only a minority of strikers or to falsely present a committee elected by a single sector of the working class (one or several factories, a city, a branch of industry) as representing broader sectors not involved in the election of that committee or even as representing the working class as a whole. The uneven development of workers consciousness and the semispontaneous outbreak of the revolutionary crisis imply that the emergence of a situation of dual power may well not occur all at once and overnight through the simultaneous action of all the decisive sectors of the working class, but may instead come about progressively, as in Portugal, with the examples and experiences registered by the most advanced sectors stimulating and encouraging the entry of successive layers of the masses into objective anticapitalist and revolutionary action.

Revolutionary Marxists insist on two central ideas against the centrists, ultraleftists, and spontanéists. First, that the growing over of a revolutionary situation into an insurrectional situation in which the conquest of power is on the agenda is impossible unless the majority of the proletariat has broken with the reformists and has been won to the project of the power of the workers councils; the historic function of the phase of generalized dual power is

precisely to make this conquest of the majority of the proletariat possible. Second, that this growing over requires the successful building of a mass revolutionary party. The depth of the disintegration of the bourgeois order and the modified relationship of forces between the traditional apparatuses and the broad vanguard within the mass movement suggest that the prerevolutionary and revolutionary crisis will last long enough (even if interrupted by partial, non-decisive ebbs) for these two conditions to be progressively fulfilled.

While according the primordial importance it deserves to the preparation and emergence of organs of self-organization of the masses (because of the central place the emergence of a situation of dual power occupies in our revolutionary strategy as a whole), our sections will try to avoid insofar as possible any counterposition along the lines "rank-and-file committees versus trade-union structures," a counterposition that the trade-union bureaucracies on the one hand and various spontanéist and ultraleftist currents on the other hand have a parallel interest in fostering. This task is easier to accomplish to the extent that strong, radicalized tendencies arise within the trade unions themselves, tendencies that understand the necessity of associating the trade unions with the formation of the committees. This is also the surest way to prevent, or to make more difficult, the co-opting of the committees by the bureaucratic apparatuses, and in the event of the integration of these committees into the trade-union structures, to assure that they increase the striking force and consciousness of the workers through the democratic and unitary character of the union, assured notably by the election and revocability of the delegates by the general assemblies.

7. Because of the uneven development of the class consciousness of the proletariat in capitalist Europe under present conditions, the problem of the mass vanguard (under the impetus of revolutionary Marxists) taking a correct attitude toward the traditional parties of the workers movement will continue to play a key role in the determination of correct revolutionary strategy and tactics, not only during phases preceding the outbreak of prerevolutionary and revolutionary crises, but also during these crises themselves. This means that for revolutionaries the whole period opened in May 1968 by the aggravation of the structural crisis of capitalism in Europe remains characterized by the need for a correct application of the tactic of united front, for which we fight also within the broad vanguard. This especially implies:

a) systematic defense of the unity in action of the working class as a whole as the indispensable precondition for carrying out the central tasks of the hour, both defensive (defense of democratic rights and liberties that have been won wherever the bourgeoisie and the governments in the service of the bourgeoisie—including governments composed of representatives of the majority organizations of the working class—threaten, attack, or undermine them) and offensive (unification of struggles in order to impose anticapitalist, socialist solutions to the crisis, etc.).

b) propaganda for the united front of the mass political and trade-union organizations of the workers movement, which is a precondition for maintaining and consolidating the unity in action of the toiling masses in struggle.

c) moves by revolutionary Marxists toward agitation for the united front (including the revolutionary vanguard)

whenever such agitation becomes credible—that is, whenever the relationship of forces permits it—first for limited periods in given sectors and local areas and then, progressively, on a regional or national scale. This change in the relationship of forces must be conceived of as the result above all of the upsurge of the mass movement itself.

d) taking independent initiatives capable of creating a relationship of forces sufficient to impose unity in action on the reformists, unity in action that favors broad masses' becoming conscious of the necessity for the class independence of the proletariat as well as the amplification of mass mobilizations during which the relationship of forces is once again shifted, thus permitting the transcendence of the initially limited objectives set by the apparatuses and thus in turn entailing mobilizations and forms of organization of the masses on a higher level.

The example of Portugal confirms that during a revolutionary crisis the modification of the relationship of forces between the vanguard and the traditional apparatuses can occur so rapidly that the application of the tactic of the united front by the vanguard can become credible to the masses on a national scale, even in relation to the central political problems of the day. It also confirms that the absence of an audacious united-front policy on the part of important sectors of the vanguard toward one or several of the mass parties of the working class can entail disastrous consequences of division of the masses and become a decisive factor in consolidating the grip of the traditional opportunist leaderships on sectors of the proletariat.

In this context, it is important to maintain the distinction between intransigent opposition to any electoral, parliamentary, or governmental accord with bourgeois parties and the necessity of avoiding any sectarian attitude toward *rank-and-file action committees* composed essentially of militants of the working-class organizations, which can serve as a framework for the broad mobilization of masses and for embryos of organs of power, even if they nominally refer to alliances of the "Union de la Gauche" type or if representatives of the bourgeois parties are present within them. In 1935-36 Trotsky called for the formation of elected "action committees" in France, even if they were called "Popular Front committees."

e) This points up the importance of our sections having a correct understanding of this tactic, mastering its contradictions. In fact, a unitary initiative with other far-left organizations (especially centrist ones) is often necessary in order to create a relationship of forces such that the problem of unity in action, and even of united front, with the reformist organizations is concretely posed. But this unitary initiative must not, through its slogans and forms of action, be contradictory with the unity in action that we want to impose on the reformists. And sometimes, agreements with the reformist organizations may even precede those with centrist organizations, under the stimulus of impetuous actions by the broad masses.

This therefore implies simultaneously waging a battle for unity in action with the far-left organizations and for unity in action with the majority reformist organizations (and against their exclusion), a double battle that is needed in order to be able to take the necessary "tactical initiatives," taking account of the relationship of forces between ourselves and the other far-left organizations.

f) Even in prerevolutionary or revolutionary situations,

some democratic slogans can take on great importance under certain precise conditions, especially when the bourgeoisie seeks to maintain or reestablish forms of limiting or repressing the sovereignty of the masses which are particularly shocking for millions of workers of the cities and countryside who are entering into motion. Thus, against transitional or provisional governments, agitation for the immediate election of a Constituent Assembly can play an important role in politicizing broad masses. Likewise, the demand for the revocability of all those elected according to the will of the voters who elected them, for the election of judges and high functionaries, and for free access by all workers parties and any group of workers to privately-owned printshops can play a similar role. Nevertheless, by the force of circumstance, during a revolutionary process in an imperialist country the importance of democratic demands can be only episodic and secondary; their use must never cut the ground from under the priority of maximally assuring the breakthrough of anticapitalist actions of the masses, of their initiatives of self-organization, of their effort to spontaneously create a new structure of power of the soviet type. Never to confound the democratic demands of the masses with defending the structures of the bourgeois-democratic state against revolutionary initiatives by the proletariat is a decisive line of demarcation between revolutionary Marxists and centrists and neoreformists when a proletarian revolution is under way.

8. The correct application (that is, neither ultimatum nor tailendist) of the tactic of united front, which includes a correct estimation of the relationship of forces, is closely linked to a correct judgment of the inevitable process of political and social differentiation to which the mass reformist and Stalinist parties will be subject during the more radical phases of the class struggle and even prerevolutionary and revolutionary crisis that are ripening in many countries of capitalist Europe. The events of past years, especially in France, Portugal, and Spain, and even in Greece and Denmark, have once again confirmed that whatever the degree of bureaucratization or rightward evolution of the SPs and CPs, it is impossible for a period of acute radicalization of workers struggles and deepened social crisis of the capitalist system as a whole not to coincide with growing political differentiations within the parties that continue to represent important and even majority sections of the working class; these differentiations could lead as far as significant splits.

All our European sections must draw the lessons of the most advanced experiences in this respect and prepare themselves for similar phenomena in their own countries when the new rise of workers struggles reaches a certain level. They must be prepared to intervene in this process audaciously through a combination of external activities of the unity-in-action/outflanking type and internal interventions of the organized fraction work type as soon as the primitive accumulation of forces allows for implementing this combination without damaging the priority activity of building the party and strengthening its base in the working class. This is true both for countries in which a mass Social Democratic party exists or holds sway and for those in which Communist parties have hegemony in the organized workers movement.

The very depth of the crisis of the system that is shaking many countries of capitalist Europe and the fact that this crisis is increasingly accompanied by prolonged political

crises increase the importance of overall political solutions in the eyes of the working class and make less credible any workers struggles that aim at resolving partial economic and social aspects of the crisis without including an orientation toward overall political solutions. Hence, the central political position occupied by the mass parties of the organized workers movement is strikingly accentuated, both in relation to the current crisis of the system and in relation to the possible solution to that crisis, which even tends to become gradually transformed into an internal crisis of the mass parties.

Our sections will have to attentively study the development of the state of mind of the masses in this regard and put forward, according to the circumstances, those slogans and proposals most adequate for deepening this crisis and for making it result in raising the consciousness of successive layers of the proletariat. These proposals may vary, from the traditional government slogans mentioned above to the demand for the substitution of trade-union leaderships for the political leaderships most discredited by ministerial collaboration, to the replacement of the most "right-wing" political leaders by more "leftist" workers leaders (for example, to replace Callaghan with a "left" Labour leader in Britain, Soares by Cardoso in Portugal, etc.). Such proposals must always be linked to adequate programmatic foundations formulated on the basis of the central concerns of the masses and the central objective tasks of the workers movement at a given stage. Particular attention must be paid to the precise formulation of these slogans and proposals. They must not opportunistically divert the ongoing process of radicalization toward purely electoralist or parliamentary channels by generating illusions in the "left" bureaucrats, presenting them as capable of leading or centralizing struggles for socialist solutions. Likewise, organizations that are still small must avoid unilaterally deciding in a sectarian manner that the masses can get away with skipping over this or that intermediary experience; they must not cut themselves off from the central ongoing political struggles within the working class or seek to artificially limit these struggles to purely economic objectives, forgetting the increasingly central political dimension they inevitably acquire because of the very depth of the structural crisis of the capitalist system.

9. The evolution of the Communist parties of capitalist Europe has been marked by two basic contradictory forces. On the one hand, in the absence of a transitional program, the long-term political project of these parties means integration into a "left" or "center-left" government within the framework of the bourgeois state and respect for parliamentary democracy (a project that oscillates between the Union de la Gauche in France and the popular-frontist "historic compromise" in Italy, which involves an alliance with the major bourgeois party of the country). This accentuates the process of progressive Social Democratization of the CPs, which is also fueled by their current neoreformist practice (strikes for immediate demands plus electoral campaigns), by the modification in the composition of these parties (recruitment on the basis of this practice, reduction of the weight of the working-class or intellectual layers recruited on the basis of a program still verbally claiming allegiance to antireformist Communist tradition), by increasing access to the lower and middle levels of the state apparatus (municipal councils, regions), etc. On the other hand, the basic reactions of the

fundamental classes in a period of acute social crisis (continued suspicion of the CPs on the part of the bourgeoisie, in spite of the rightist policies of the CPs; accentuated radicalization of the proletariat, which cannot fail to influence the rank and file of the CPs, especially the mass CPs) prevent these parties from behaving in a manner identical to that of the Social Democratic parties today (their behavior is closer to that of the SPs before or immediately after the first world war). It also compels them to maneuver more flexibly in regard to the advanced workers, even if only to avoid a massive loss of influence among certain layers of the proletariat to the benefit of the far left. The need of the Communist parties to justify their existence by differentiating themselves from the Social Democracy to the left and the application of a correct policy of unity-in-action/outflanking by the revolutionary Marxists in regard to the CPs works in the same direction.

It follows that the leaderships of the CPs will probably be compelled to adopt a more nuanced attitude than they did in 1944-45 when they are confronted by powerful mass movements going beyond the framework of capitalist property and the bourgeois state. While attempting to channel these movements into paths compatible with the project of "peaceful transition to socialism," respect for parliamentary democracy, and the Kremlin's general strategy of "peaceful coexistence," and while seeking to maximally limit the extension of the influence of the far left within the new vanguard of increasingly working-class composition, the leaderships of these parties will be compelled to jettison some ballast, particularly in the realm of respect for proletarian democracy and an acceptance, even if constrained and forced, of a minimum of self-organization of the toiling masses. The less unconditional attitude toward the bureaucratic dictatorship in the USSR also acquires a contradictory character. While it fundamentally corresponds to the need to offer pledges of "parliamentary respectability" to the Social Democracy and the "liberal" bourgeoisie, it also broadens the possibility of revolutionary Marxists and the far left winning a more pronounced right of tendency within the organized workers movement and the bodies of self-representation of the masses, as well as a broader freedom of discussion with entire layers of Communist militants, especially among the youth and in the trade unions. Our sections must fully exploit these increased opportunities. The disarray provoked within the CPs by the growing diversification of their orientation acts in the same direction.

The same goes for the similar tendencies that will inevitably come to the surface among the Socialist Youth and the left wings of the mass SPs during phases of qualitatively heightened political activity by the working class.

In the debate that revolutionary Marxists conduct with the CPs on the question of the dictatorship of the proletariat two series of questions must be carefully distinguished. Our angle of attack on the theoretical and political revisionism of the neoreformist CPs is based on their liquidation of the problem of the destruction of the bourgeois state apparatus, with its specific institutions and repressive organs, as an indispensable precondition for the exercise of political power by the proletariat. By abandoning reference to the dictatorship of the proletariat, the CPs of capitalist Europe are linking up in the realm of theory with the Social Democratic illusion of a "gradual"

conquest of power in the framework of the institutions of bourgeois democracy. To these criminal illusions—whose tragic consequences have again been recently confirmed by the example of Chile—revolutionary Marxists counterpose the Leninist conception of the indispensable coincidence between the destruction of the institutions of the bourgeois state and the construction of a new state apparatus based on democratically centralized workers councils. For us, the essence of the problem of the dictatorship of the proletariat lies in this substitution of one type of state for another, of one class power for another.

The question of restriction of the political liberties of the bourgeoisie in the framework of the institutions of socialist democracy is completely different. This is not a question of principle but of tactics, as Lenin clearly explained in his polemic with Kautsky, even at the height of the Russian civil war. No social class abandons its power without resistance; this also applies to the bourgeoisie of West Europe. No revolutionary class can conquer and conserve political power without breaking this resistance of the class enemy.

From this standpoint, a victorious socialist revolution in countries in which the proletariat represents the immense majority of the nation will from the very outset find itself under infinitely more advantageous conditions in regard to the relationship of forces than did the Russian revolution during the period following the October socialist revolution. Now, the means of defense of workers power must be proportional to the strength and violence of the resistance to it. The effectiveness of these means depends as much on their effects on the revolutionary class as on their effects on the counterrevolutionary class. To the extent that the proletariat succeeds in militarily disarming the bourgeoisie and breaking its apparatus of legal and extralegal violence without the enemy being able to respond by a civil war, there is no reason to suppress enjoyment of political liberties and civil rights by bourgeois elements, who will be compelled to respect socialist legality *in real life*, even if they combat that legality in their propaganda. Bourgeois ideology and politics can and must be effectively fought with ideological and political weapons and not by repression. Any restriction on freedom of political affiliation within the workers councils on the pretext of the bourgeois character of the parties or associations in question threatens to limit soviet democracy, even for the working class, and to engage the workers regime in a dangerous chain of events that can only foster bureaucratization.

10. The situation in the far left of the workers movement has been modified during the past several years by the relative decline of the Mao-Stalinist organizations on the one hand and by the emergence of significant centrist formations on the other hand. Under the influence of the rightist course of the foreign policy of the Chinese bureaucracy, the Mao-Stalinist organizations have in turn sketched out a right turn, which has led them to adopt positions of objective support to the fundamental designs of the European bourgeoisie: support to the Common Market, the political and military unification of European capitalism, national defense with a view toward war with the USSR, strengthening of bourgeois military forces in Europe. Moreover, the position of "struggle against the two superpowers" thus drifts toward a position that regards the USSR as the number one enemy, with the

alliance between the European imperialist bourgeoisie and American imperialism no longer even being attacked openly by the Mao-Stalinists.

The ultimate political consequences of these positions, along with the extreme sectarianism that accompanies them (positions of support to Soares in Portugal and struggle against the MPLA in Angola, for example), are little attractive to either radicalized youth or advanced workers and have caused a progressive decline of the Mao-Stalinist organizations.

The centrist organizations that are emerging as the largest far-left organizations in several countries of capitalist Europe (notably Lotta Continua, PdUP, and Avanguardia Operaia in Italy, PT, MCE, and ORT in Spain, KBN in West Germany, FK in Sweden) have gone through a more complex trajectory. Although at the outset these organizations were subject to a strong Maoist influence, they were also marked by populism (often of Christian origin) and even spontanéism. In the course of the construction of better-structured organizations, the most pronounced spontanéist features were generally abandoned, along with the systematic alignment behind Chinese positions. What characterizes these centrist organizations is a progressive shift toward political positions conciliatory toward those of the SPs, the CPs, or the trade-union bureaucracies, that is, toward the political force holding hegemony within the working class of each country, and a confused or downright false conception of the strategy of the proletarian revolution and of the seizure of power, which is in any case not irreconcilable with temporary plunges back into adventurist and sectarian ultraleftism.

Alongside the centrist organizations of Maoistic origin or partial reference, there have also emerged some centrist organizations of left Social Democratic (MES in Portugal, SB in West Germany) or Trotskyistic origin (IS in Britain); there are also remnants of classical centrist organizations like the French PSU and the Dutch SP, "purged" by the return of a considerable fraction of their leaders and militants to the traditional parties.

We approach these centrist organizations, as well as leftist tendencies evolving toward centrism within the mass reformist organizations, primarily in the general framework of our conception of building a mass revolutionary party through the political and numerical strengthening of the present organizations of the Fourth International; this will necessarily require various regroupments, a restructuring of the whole of the workers movement, reassembling a considerable part of the advanced workers around the revolutionary Marxist program on the basis of their own experience. That is why revolutionary Marxists must adopt a flexible tactic in the case of all these centrist organizations in order to prevent them from being transformed into major obstacles on the road to the building of the revolutionary party. This tactic implies the combination of a consistent unitary approach, ranging from temporary experiences of unity in action to more systematic efforts at collaboration on a clear and correct political basis, with a tenacious struggle for programmatic clarification. In reality, we are dealing here with organizations which, under the impact of the revolutionary crisis, are adopting at least a part of our conceptions on revolutionary strategy, on the "model" of socialist revolution axised around the struggle for the power of workers councils, and on the "model" of post-capitalist society characterized by the democratically centralized power of

the workers (workers councils) in the socialized and planned economy and in the state. This permits an enriching programmatic and political discussion, different from the dialogue of the deaf that characterizes the polemic with sects. It is not out of the question that a part of the centrist formations of Maoist origin may evolve in the same direction, again under the impact of the revolutionary crisis. These processes could lead, at least in some cases, to the possibility of regroupments and fusions on the basis of the revolutionary Marxist program.

11. It is of vital importance that our sections begin now to prepare to take an attitude toward the "left governments" that will most probably emerge in coming years in Italy, Portugal, France, and Spain. Whether or not they include some marginal bourgeois ministers (like the "Left Radicals" in France), these governments will be identified by the immense majority of the proletariat and the international bourgeoisie as governments of the organized workers movement.

This attitude must begin from a correct characterization of these governments and of the role played by their accession to power in the context of the ripening of the revolutionary crisis in these countries. *In all cases*, these will be governments of class collaboration, even if no "bourgeois" minister holds a seat in them. Class collaboration is integral to the political project of the CPs and Social Democracies in these countries. It is above all collaboration *with the employers and the bourgeois state apparatus*. Understanding this, revolutionary Marxists must not attach excessive importance to agitation for the elimination of the marginal bourgeois ministers who may be part of these governments, although this agitation has not lost all its utility. The fire must be concentrated on the project and practice of class collaboration, which are themselves independent of the presence or absence of a few marginal bourgeois ministers in these cabinets. It would be otherwise in the case of coalition governments with substantial bourgeois parties. In these cases, asking the leaders of the SP and CP to break the coalition with the bourgeois parties in order to be able to respond effectively to the major concerns of the masses and satisfy their needs assumes its full pedagogic value in agitation. The same is true of the demand for the dissolution of the repressive apparatus when these governments use repression against the mass movement.

It follows from our characterization of these governments as governments of class collaboration that we cannot give them any support whatever, that we must not at all sow illusions in their ability to resolve the most burning problems faced by the masses, and *a fortiori* that we cannot present these governments as opening the way to a "transition to socialism." Obviously, this does not exclude critical support to this or that *practical measure* against the bourgeoisie that these governments may be led to take.

Any concession to pressure to support these governments—which will be very strong immediately after their installation in power—would entail an extremely high cost in a later phase, when the failure of the reformist project becomes clear to the masses, at which point there is danger of the masses becoming deeply demoralized if an alternative revolutionary pole to the reformist policy has not clearly appeared previously.

But equally as negative as an opportunistic attitude toward the so-called left governments would be a sectarian

attitude subsumed by pure and simple denunciation of the betrayal of the Stalinist and Social Democratic reformist apparatuses or an infantile ultimatum in regard to them. Such a sectarian deviation does not take account of the following facts:

a) In the eyes of the masses, these governments will be the bearers of a real hope of radical social transformation, even if this hope is combined with a growing distrust of the bureaucratic apparatuses within the expanding workers vanguard.

b) The accession of these governments to power will be accompanied by an exacerbation of class struggle and political polarization, which will lead the bourgeoisie, both domestic and international, to step up its measures of economic sabotage (accentuated inflation, flight of capital, factory shutdowns, probably even measures of economic blockade); these governments will be led to counter this with a mixture of responses that are not very effective (nationalizations and measures of import and currency control) and concessions that run counter to the interests of the workers.

c) After a certain delay, this atmosphere of exacerbation of class contradictions will inevitably lead to the *parallel development* of attempts of national and international reaction to overthrow these governments, including by violence (development of far-right terrorism, military conspiracies, etc.) on the one hand, and of increasingly pronounced and more and more impetuous direct mass actions and mobilizations on the other hand.

Under these conditions, any attitude on the part of revolutionary Marxists limited to "denunciation of the betrayal" of the reformist apparatuses implies a real retreat toward propagandism and a role as passive commentators, which would render the revolutionary Marxists incapable of either influencing the development of the class struggle in the direction of strengthening the proletariat against the bourgeoisie or of influencing the evolution of class consciousness in the direction of effectively and significantly reducing the influence of the reformist apparatuses within the working class.

A correct attitude toward these governments, avoiding the parallel reefs of opportunism and sectarianism, would thus consist above all of systematic effort to:

a) Demand that these governments implement the major demands of the mass movement, detailing the practical means by which to do this.

b) Point to the independent mobilization of the working class and the other toiling and oppressed layers of the population as the most effective means to win.

c) Make the emergence of organs of self-organization of the masses the central and centralizing aim of all these mobilizations.

d) Not formally counterpose these organs to the government but counterpose them to the bourgeois state, to the economic and political power of the bourgeoisie, including, if necessary, to bourgeois conspiracies against these governments, while at the same time not sowing illusions in the nature of the government, which the masses will learn to understand through the experience of struggles and conflicts and not through simple proclamations by the revolutionary vanguard.

e) Not limit the response to the economic sabotage of the bourgeoisie and the growing paralysis of the reformists simply to the economic level, but to extend it to domains in which the question of *political power* begins to be posed.

This means, notably, that the development of the practice of workers control, which is of capital importance in combating capitalist sabotage and outflanking the reformists, should not be limited to control in separate factories, but should lead to control that is coordinated locally, regionally, by industrial branch, and even nationally; it further means that this control must be extended to the public services and the credit system; that it must lead to a plan for the socialized reconversion of the whole economy, worked out by the representative organs of the working class and the organized workers movement; that it must be increasingly tied in with the projects for and implementation of a massive purge of the bourgeois administration and with workers self-defense against far-right terrorism and the conspiracies of big capital, etc.

The aim of such a tactic is clear: to transform both the hopes the masses place in the governments in which reformists predominate in an atmosphere of ripening revolutionary crisis and the will of the masses to oppose national and international capital reaction into a springboard for a revolutionary mobilization leading to the generalization of a situation of dual power and the placing on the agenda of the struggle for the conquest of power by the workers.

It is only if this transformation succeeds in real life that the inevitable failure of the reformist experiment can be prevented from leading to a grave defeat of the working class and even to a bloody counterrevolution.

II. Tactical Problems in Countries That Are Not Yet on the Brink of a Prerevolutionary Situation

12. The lack of synchronization in the ripening of prerevolutionary and revolutionary crises in the various countries of Europe is not the direct result of the varying strength with which the generalized recession has hit these countries (for the recession has occurred in a synchronized manner), nor is it solely the product of the fact that in certain countries the bourgeoisie commands greater reserves for avoiding a pronounced decline in the living standards of key sectors of the industrial working class, rather it results from the interaction of various factors, among which the following must be especially noted:

a) a still low degree of overall combativity of the working class, notably a function of all that has happened within the working class and the workers movement during preceding decades. This applies above all to West Germany, the Scandinavian countries, Switzerland, Austria, and the Netherlands;

b) a more fragmentary and limited character of the upturn in workers struggles, notably because of the fact that certain bastions have not been drawn in during the past few years. This applies to the countries mentioned above, plus Belgium and Greece;

c) a deeper predominance of electoralist and parliamentary illusions within the working class, a less contested influence of Social Democratic reformist ideology, the absence of extensive distrust of the bourgeois state. This applies to Britain, as well as to most of the countries mentioned above (except Greece and, in part, Belgium);

d) a strong desynchronization between the radicalization of youth at the end of the 1960s and the new rise of workers struggles, which results in the ebb of the mass

movement of student youth not being neutralized by a pronounced radicalization of layers of workers (especially working-class youth), which has reduced the capacity for action and political impact of the new vanguard and in certain countries has not allowed it to attain a mass character.

The interaction of these factors, combined with a lesser degree of economic instability in some of these countries (but not all of them!), has given the bourgeoisie in these countries a greater capacity for maneuver in relation to the working class compared with the bourgeoisie in countries like Portugal, Spain, Italy, and France. Illusions in the possibility of obtaining important reforms and new progress in the standard of living of the masses within the framework of bourgeois democracy have not yet been shaken in West Germany, the Scandinavian countries, Switzerland, Austria, and the Netherlands, as they have been elsewhere. Hence, the masses are even prepared to accept sacrifices in their standard of living when the reformists who impose them promise compensation and improvements at a subsequent stage. Because of this, the degree of political stability of the bourgeois order remains higher in these countries than in the countries of the first category and those countries that occupy an intermediary position.

13. The differing reactions of the European working class to the recession constitute one criterion for measuring the difference between countries in which the exacerbation of the class struggle is approaching an explosive point and countries that have not yet reached this stage. In the first category of countries the rise of massive unemployment has in general not curbed the new rise of workers struggles and has even partially fueled it. The working class in these countries has unleashed massive struggles against layoffs and threats of factory shutdowns, combining anticapitalist objectives for the defense of jobs with struggles in defense of real wages and extensive contesting of the bourgeois economic and social order. This is the case in Spain, Italy, Portugal, and France. In other countries the emergence of massive unemployment—in some countries for the first time in a decade or two—and the fear of job losses have provoked a pronounced ebb in workers combativity compared with the level that had been reached in the preceding phase. This is especially the case in West Germany, and temporarily at least, Britain. In other cases, such as Belgium and Denmark, the massive unemployment has not provoked an ebb in workers combativity compared with the level that had been attained during the 1969-73 period, but has incontestably limited the rise of struggles, with the sectors most fearful of job losses still remaining apart from this new rise.

It follows that in the countries of the second category clear priority must be lent to objectives of struggle with an initially defensive character: defense of employment and the living standards of the masses; defense of freedoms and rights that have been won against attempts by the bourgeoisie and its state (including those states with Social Democratic governments) to restrict them; defense against repression, which, even if it remains generally selective and limited has a formidable effect of intimidation and demobilization if people become accustomed to it (see, for example, the effects of the ban on "extremists" from the public service sector in West Germany). The point is to lend priority to these themes as objectives of

mobilization and mass action in the immediate period but not to lend them priority in general propaganda and explanations, which would amount to muzzling our anticapitalist propaganda and the defense of the Transitional Program as a whole, which are obviously tasks that are more burning than ever during a period of more pronounced crisis of capitalism.

More generally, it is clear that the workers movement of certain countries now finds itself under the gun of an employers' offensive which, seeking to cash in on the recession and unemployment, aims at a more long-term modification of the basic relationship of class forces to the detriment of the working class; this is above all the case in West Germany and Britain, and partially in Belgium. The manner in which the working class responds to this offensive, the capacity of our sections to promote energetic and unitary responses, and their ability to initiate some exemplary struggles in this direction will deeply influence the further march of the class struggle and the building of the revolutionary party.

14. Nevertheless, while there is a desynchronization between the ripening of a prerevolutionary and revolutionary situation in the countries of the first category and the other countries of Europe, this does not at all mean that the aggravated overall structural crisis of international capitalism, and particularly of capitalism in Europe, does not nonetheless influence the evolution of the class struggle, the consciousness of the workers, and the composition of the workers movement in the relatively more stable European capitalist countries. The following features appear common to all these countries and differentiate their social and political situations from the pre-1968 situations:

a) Everywhere a far left exists that is qualitatively stronger than before the beginning of the youth radicalization, even though its degree of penetration into the working class varies strongly from country to country. The Trotskyist movement itself has been strengthened everywhere, qualitatively in some of these countries, and is engaged in a political battle to become the most politically influential organization of the far left, having gone beyond an initial threshold of implantation in the working class.

b) Everywhere there exists a layer of advanced workers qualitatively broader than before 1968 whose critical attitudes toward the leaderships of the Social Democracy, the CPs, and the trade-union bureaucracies are more pronounced and who are therefore more inclined to engage in actions (either solely within the factories and unions or, in some cases, also on the political level) that escape the control of the traditional bureaucratic apparatuses.

c) Everywhere the possibility exists of certain advanced sectors of the working class taking up more advanced demands and forms of organization in exemplary strikes (punctual strikes for workers control and for nationalizations under workers control; strikes with occupations; strikes led by democratically elected strike committees and by democratic general assemblies of strikers, etc.).

d) Everywhere there exists an initial inclination on the part of broader sectors of the working class to understand the well-founded character of this radicalization of demands and forms of organization, since the exemplary actions are axised around questions that correspond to the objective requirements of the class struggle as a whole and envelop the central concerns of the broad masses. In this sense, it remains possible that these exemplary struggles

will play a detonating role, even in the most stable countries, even if the detonation takes more time in these countries and sometimes requires a change in the overall political atmosphere.

It follows that even in these countries our sections have an interest in orienting their workers work toward the preparation of these types of actions and toward an initiative of their own members in this direction, provided that these actions correspond to the real conviction of those workers our militants can influence and/or lead. The overall political credibility of our sections in the vanguard and among certain sectors of broader worker masses can arise or develop as a function of the success of such initiatives. But this is possible only if these sections have already attained and surpassed a minimum threshold of credibility by dint of a *continuous* activity in the class struggle, a regular political appearance, and a capacity to support these exemplary struggles nationally. To go beyond a minimum threshold of primitive accumulation of members and cadres is an indispensable precondition for attaining this goal.

15. Likewise, the process of slow recomposition of the workers movement which has marked the whole of capitalist Europe for several years now has not been halted or reversed in the relatively more stable capitalist countries or in those that are characterized by a systematic bourgeois offensive against the working class. The following features of this recomposition are common to all these countries, to varying degrees of intensity:

a) In all the countries in which it participates in the government, the Social Democracy has ignominiously given in to the employers' offensive against jobs and real wages, if it has not actually spearheaded that offensive, and has thus further accentuated the long-term tendency to transform the unions into more credible representatives of the immediate interests of the working class, not only economically, but even politically. It is from the trade unions, or from certain wings of the trade unions, that the only mass reactions of real scope against the employers' offensive have come, even though these reactions have been marked by extreme timidity, the desire not to cut the umbilical cord that links the trade-union bureaucracy to the Social Democratic leadership, and therefore an inherent tendency toward capitulation on the part of the "left" trade-union bureaucracy. This has especially proven to be the case in West Germany, Britain, Belgium, and partially in Denmark and the Netherlands. This indicates the great importance under these conditions of systematic and long-term work in the trade unions, and especially the creation of class-struggle trade-union tendencies centered on intransigent defense of the immediate material interests of the workers, of a credible program of anticapitalist transitional demands, and of a platform of reestablishing the broadest trade-union democracy, including the right of tendencies, since this democracy is a precondition for the unity and strength of trade unionism.

b) The long-term effects of the preceding phase of radicalization of youth, combined with the long-term effects of the proletarianization and radicalization of new layers, have in many countries of Europe created a favorable climate for the radicalization of milieus among the Christian worker youth, the Socialist youth, and freshly unionized layers of white-collar workers. These layers are generally disgusted with Mao-Stalinism. In spite of an incontestable propensity toward centrism, such

currents can make an important contribution to the building of a revolutionary Marxist party, provided our sections are able to combine audacious unitary initiatives in their direction, an invitation to programmatic debate around their essential concerns, and the indispensable firmness in political and ideological defense of our principles.

c) In the longer-term, a massive accentuation of the combativity of the workers cannot fail to stimulate a sharper opposition between the most militant trade unions and the political apparatus of the SP and CP, which will inevitably provoke deep divisions both within these apparatuses and between the leadership and sections of the rank and file of these parties. We must prepare to seize upon all the contradictions that may arise between Social Democratic demagogy on self-management and the real implantation of the Social Democracy in the trade unions on the one hand, and the strict respect for bourgeois institutions on the other hand, in order to enlarge the cleavages and combat the sectarian behavior toward the Social Democratic masses characteristic of many centrist currents.

d) The emergence of centrist and revolutionary Marxist organizations already having gone beyond an initial threshold of credibility through their systematic intervention in the working class and workers struggles is beginning to limit the freedom of maneuver of the bureaucratic apparatuses and is provoking a more extensive dialectic of "united-front/outflanking" between fractions of the traditional parties and trade-union militants on the one hand and the far left on the other hand, as well as a more pronounced differentiation within the traditional organizations. The whole difference between the centrists (and the ultraleftists) on the one hand and the revolutionary Marxists on the other hand is that the latter are capable of stimulating this dialectic in a direction that is both *unitary and revolutionary* (that is, without sacrificing either the immediate overall interests of the class or the indispensable permanent ideological battle against class collaboration), while the former alternate or combine sectarian practices that sacrifice the common interest of the class to the interests of a sect, and opportunist practices of capitulation to the class-collaborationist projects of the reformists and the CPs.

III. The Effects on the Rest of the Continent of the Ripening of the Prerevolutionary Situation in Southern Europe

16. While the desynchronization of the ripening of prerevolutionary and revolutionary situations in the various countries of capitalist Europe is an incontestable fact today, it is no less true that it is inconceivable that a part of the continent should be shaken by a profound revolutionary crisis without this exerting a real influence on all the neighboring countries and, beyond that, on Europe as a whole. Neither the capitalist countries of Europe that are most stable today nor the bureaucratized workers states will escape the effects of a real revolutionary crisis simultaneous in several European countries, not to mention the effects of a victory of the proletarian revolution in one or several countries.

This is the case both because of the more advanced objective economic, social, political, cultural, and military integration of capitalist Europe today than in the past and

because of the closer interaction of the workers movement on a European scale, including the reciprocal repercussions of the crisis of Stalinism, both in capitalist Europe and in the bureaucratized workers states. The presence in the temporarily most stable capitalist countries of a great number of immigrant workers coming from the most unstable capitalist countries; the heightened sensitivity of the working class of all Europe in regard to the destiny of Spain and the Spanish proletariat; the more direct knowledge of the southern European countries among the working class of western and northern Europe resulting from mass tourism—all these factors and many others work in a similar direction.

More generally, it is necessary to recall what Trotsky had already stressed in his critique of the program of the Comintern: The revolutionary character of the *epoch* lies not in the fact that the revolution is possible everywhere at every moment, but in the fact that the *sharpest leaps and turnabouts are always possible*, that is, rapid transitions from apparently stable situations to prerevolutionary situations and, in addition, rapid transitions from revolutionary situations to counterrevolutionary ones. In this sense, a sudden modification of the situation in the temporarily more stable European capitalist countries toward a situation in which the upsurge of mass struggles makes the maturation of a revolutionary crisis possible, notably following the outbreak of a revolutionary crisis in other countries of Europe, remains perfectly possible. This applies not solely to the countries classified in the “intermediary” category, although these are obviously the countries most apt to see sudden changes in their overall situations. But this modification does not necessarily have to result *mainly* from the ricochet effects of the outbreak of the revolutionary crisis in other countries of Europe. It may also result from a combination of factors, *among which a turn in the social conjuncture resulting from a turn in the economic conjuncture* may play a decisive role. Even though massive unemployment will undoubtedly persist in many countries of capitalist Europe after the upturn becomes accentuated, it is clear that up to now the “heavy battalions” of the working class have nowhere lost their objective capacity to respond to the offensive of the employers. This response could coincide with a serious upturn in economic activity and especially with a new rise in capitalist profits, which would stimulate desire among the working class to take revenge for the sacrifices that had been imposed by the crisis (with the complicity of and under the major responsibility of the bureaucratic apparatuses of the organized workers movement).

It is premature today to make precise predictions about the weight of each of these factors and each of these hypotheses. For our sections, their leaderships and militants, the essential thing is not to consider the present situation as fixed for a long period and to be able to react rapidly and adequately to sharp changes in the relationship of class forces. This means not to sacrifice today's struggles and tasks (especially the defensive ones) in order to concentrate on preparation for hypothetical future battles, nor to remain wedded to essentially defensive objectives and battles when the masses themselves are already beginning to move to the counteroffensive.

Let us once again forcefully stress that the *essential* difference between a potentially revolutionary situation such as is developing (or exists) in the Iberian peninsula, Italy, and France, and a situation in which capitalism is

still relatively more stable lies not in the degree of economic instability (which is on the rise everywhere) nor in the existence of workers struggles in themselves (which, even if they are still desynchronized today, may coincide in a large number of countries tomorrow), but rather in the impact of tumultuous workers struggles *on the qualitatively different degree of the crisis of the bourgeois order as a whole, above all the bourgeois state*. A revolutionary crisis is an expression not only of the proletariat's determination no longer to allow itself to be ruled as usual, but also and above all of the inability of the bourgeoisie to govern and of the massive drift of classes and layers intermediary between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat toward a benevolent neutrality in regard to the proletariat or even an alliance with it. It is these factors that must be analyzed and followed with great attention in each country in order to detect the signs that herald the end of relatively greater stability of these countries compared with those of southern Europe.

17. Revolutionary Marxists try to intervene in the process characterized by different rhythms of the crisis of the bourgeois order in the various parts of capitalist Europe in order to modify it in the interest of the proletariat and the international socialist revolution, that is, in the interest of a greater synchronization of the maturation of the consciousness and action of the proletariat in a growing number of countries. To do this effectively requires beginning from a rigorously realistic and scientific analysis of what is, without deluding oneself about the real state of the level of consciousness and combativity of the broad masses in each country, nor about the real state of the broad vanguard, nor that of our own forces. But a realistic intervention likewise requires an overall view of the situation of European and international capitalism and the bureaucracy, a view that must be dynamic and not allow itself to be impressionistically hypnotized by momentary and passing glimpses.

The broad vanguard, the most conscious layers within the mass organizations, and above all the revolutionary Marxists, command two principal levers with which to reduce the desynchronization of mass mobilizations and the ripening of prerevolutionary crises in different parts of capitalist Europe:

a) The growing international response awakened by vanguard initiatives of sectors of the working class of the Lip type, which response is stimulated by the growing weight of multinational trusts in the European capitalist economy, the growing consciousness of this weight on the part of the working class, and the inevitable response all this prepares by integrating an international dimension into it. The popularization of any international strike or action of workers solidarity (of which the solidarity of the Belgian printing workers with the strike at Parisien Libéré is an example) remains a key task for our European sections. These sections must establish the means by which to set up a beginning of international coordination of their workers and trade-union intervention in some sectors carefully chosen in order to aid the progressive transformation of the uneven development of the radicalization and workers combativity into a combined development, transferring examples of more radical demands and forms of struggle from one country to others;

b) The increasingly evident necessity of *counterposing an international policy and plans of the proletariat to the international policy and designs of the European bourgeoisie*, especially on the question of “European integration.”

The outcome of the British referendum on the Common Market once again confirmed that it is not only reactionary but also ineffective and illusory for the workers movement to try to fight against the capitalist Europe of the trusts on the basis of positions of withdrawal toward "defense of national sovereignty" or even "defense of the (capitalist) fatherland." Only a systematic campaign for the Socialist United States of Europe can represent a credible long-term alternative to European capitalist integration. It is urgent for the Fourth International to lend this slogan a more concrete and precise content which 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 assume this function.

18. But it is the bourgeoisie itself that will make the greatest contribution to the process that will wind up reducing the desynchronization of the prerevolutionary and revolutionary process among the various parts of capitalist Europe. Confronted by the outbreak of a revolutionary crisis in one or several of the countries of southern Europe, the European bourgeoisie cannot but react, and in a more or less concerted and comprehensive manner. The example of the Portuguese revolution has shown that while under present conditions and in the immediate future this reaction cannot take the form of a massive military intervention of the type of the German-Italian intervention during the Spanish civil war or the American intervention in the Indochinese civil war, it will nearly instantaneously take the form of a political-economic intervention of broad scope: halting of credits and the blackmail of an economic blockade; attempts at cutting off supplies of scarce raw materials and at diverting investments by international trusts; massive financing of the "democratic" and/or far-right counterrevolution; massive political pressure for a repression of the most radical mass movements threatening the survival of the bourgeois state and order; financing of police, parallel police, or underground terrorist shock troops and goons, etc.

Our sections must be prepared and must systematically prepare the vanguard and the most advanced layers of the working class for the necessary response to these attempts at counterrevolutionary intervention and pressure. Above all, they must work out the most correct tactics for involving ever broader sections of the organized mass movement in these actions of solidarity with the real revolutionary processes under way in Europe, relying upon the special sensitivity of the workers movement in each country, of the trade-union organizations, layers and cadres of the SPs and CPs, to certain themes of propaganda and agitation which they have been or still are advocating and which are suddenly put into practice in countries in which the revolutionary crisis is ripening.

"Are we going to stand by passively if the employers of Europe strangle an attempt by the Portuguese, Spanish, Italian, or French workers to put into practice in their countries the objectives that our workers movement is trying to achieve here?" That must be the theme, concretized in each country, that our sections must learn to combine with their general agitation in solidarity with the ongoing revolutions. Thus, the amplification of solidarity campaigns with the revolutions under way in some capitalist countries of Europe can become an increasingly

effective stimulant for the extension of the revolutionary process to other countries. *The European bourgeoisie must be confronted with a situation in which the price it will have to pay for any massive counterrevolutionary intervention against the revolutionary centers in Europe would be the extension of these centers right into their own most stable "bastions."*

In view of the decisive strategic importance of the coming Spanish revolution, our sections must begin right now to prepare themselves for a campaign of solidarity of exceptional scope with the Spanish proletariat and people. The place the Fourth International could win as the initiating force of such a campaign would contribute to the objective effects of the Spanish revolution in making the organizational strength and political influence of our movement take a leap forward throughout Europe. We must prepare for this systematically and in a coordinated manner.

IV. The Action Program of the Revolutionary Marxists

19. Because of the nature of the current crisis of the system, which will progressively spread to some of the countries in which a prerevolutionary crisis in the real sense of the term is not yet ripening, scattered struggles around sectoral and immediate demands are progressively losing their credibility in the eyes of the most politicized and conscious sectors of the proletariat. While resolutely supporting any fight for immediate demands, no matter how modest, within these struggles and within the whole of their intervention, revolutionary Marxists will propagate the necessity for an *immediate action program* that offers an overall solution to the many problems posed for the masses by the crisis of the system. Such an action program, worked out in each country on the basis of the specific conditions, will incorporate the essential elements of our transitional program, presenting them in the form that best corresponds to the immediate concerns of the masses and to the objective conditions that prevail at each given stage. Without falling into abusive generalization and taking account of the peculiarities of their particular situations, our sections will especially emphasize the following points in this action program at the present stage:

a) Against any inflation-induced attack on the standard of living, real wages, and social benefits won by the working class. For the winning or defense of an integral sliding scale of wages based on a price index worked out by the trade unions.

b) Against any limitations on the right of the trade unions to freely negotiate wages; against any statutory limitation on wage increases (whether by parliamentary decision or decree); against any limitation of the right to strike.

c) For a freeze on the prices of mass consumer goods and for price control by neighborhood committees of housewives and workers.

d) Against unemployment, trade-union veto power over any layoffs and factory shutdowns; for the reopening at state expense of any closed factory and for the reinitiation of production under workers control. Sliding scale of hours, implemented notably through the immediate and generalized introduction of the thirty-five-hour week (five days a week, seven hours a day) and the reduction of the retirement age to 60, with no reduction in weekly wages or pension payments.

e) Against any attack on the rights that have been won in the realm of social security, health insurance, and unemployment compensation. For indexed social security benefits equal to 100 percent of wages. For completely free health care and pharmaceutical products, including abortion and contraception. For equal, quality medical care for all. These social services must be financed by a radical reduction in the military budget and other unproductive expenditures of the bourgeoisie and by severe taxation on capital and rich inheritances.

f) Against any discrimination against immigrant workers in employment or social benefits; against any racism and xenophobia within the working class; for complete equality of economic, social, and political rights for immigrant workers, with respect for their national specificities.

g) For the nationalization without compensation of all big industry, banks and credit houses, large-scale transport systems, wholesale trade, and large retail stores and for their management under workers control.

h) For the elaboration by the workers organizations of an emergency economic plan aimed at rapidly reestablishing full employment and eliminating any decline in the standard of living of the masses. This plan must be centered on satisfying the priority needs of the masses (adequate food, comfortable housing, quality education and medical care, rational system of mass transportation, adequate sociocultural infrastructure, etc.). The list of these needs, as well as the material and human resources for satisfying them, must be drawn up by factory committees, neighborhood committees, sectoral committees, ad hoc trade-union bodies, and other mass organizations; this must constitute a great school preparing the masses for the planned socialized self-managed economy of the future.

i) For the establishment of a workers government, the only government capable of implementing such a program. This government will have to break with the national and international bourgeoisie, renounce all military and political treaties linking the country to international imperialism, immediately proclaim the independence of all colonial territories still ruled by the bourgeoisie, call upon all the workers of Europe and the world to support its fight for socialism, convoke a great European congress of labor to defeat all attempts at economic blockade by the international bourgeoisie and draw up before the world proletariat and the semicolonial peoples a project for the creation of the Socialist United States of Europe and the World.

This action program forms a coherent whole especially since during a period of grave economic recession and acute social crisis struggles for limited objectives—particularly the defense of real wages or the struggle against layoffs and unemployment—threaten to remain fragmentary in the absence of an overall orientation and comprehensive socialist response to the crisis. It must also contain a section devoted to demands concerning the major allies of the working class (youth, salaried petty bourgeoisie, peasant toilers, etc.). which we will not formulate here because the national situations are too diverse.

The same remark applies to our intervention in the women's emancipation movement. The very different character of this movement as a mass movement in the various countries of capitalist Europe and the differences in the experiences of our movement on this question make

it difficult at this stage to work out a common platform for all the sections, although a progressive centralization of the intervention through an international commission of women militants of the Fourth International in Europe must strive toward this goal. Most probably, the present priority remains initiatives centered on the concerns of wage-earning women as well as a broad united mass movement for free abortion on demand. A separate document is submitted to the World Congress on the women's liberation movement.

20. The bourgeoisie enters the prerevolutionary and revolutionary crisis now ripening in a series of countries of Europe lacking an effective instrument of international military intervention. Nevertheless, in most countries the bourgeoisie retains national apparatuses of repression and counterrevolutionary intervention that have been gradually strengthened and whipped into shape during the past several years; the effectiveness of these apparatuses must not be underestimated. The bourgeoisie also commands an arsenal of repressive laws and paralegal instruments, the initial use of which against "extremist" minorities must not make anyone forget that they can be used against the entire workers movement and the toiling masses as a whole.

Systematic propaganda and struggle against these repressive instruments and against all limitations and attacks on the freedom of action of the masses and the workers organizations must go hand in hand with a vigorous campaign for the democratic rights of soldiers as well as a systematic antimilitarist campaign. The example of Portugal shows just how far the repressive apparatus of the bourgeoisie can be weakened if not paralyzed when political life awakens in the barracks, when soldiers win in practice the same political rights as other citizens, and when they begin to discuss the orders of their superior officers instead of blindly carrying them out. Although this example is still the exception in capitalist Europe, there is no doubt that any serious progress in the conquest of political rights by soldiers (including the rights of unionization and mass organization, even if only for purposes of raising demands) paves the way for similar situations in the future. Henceforth, the deep influence of eight years of youth radicalization among the recruits suggests that the demand for the democratic election of commanders by the soldiers themselves will be one of the key transitional demands at the time of the future revolutionary crisis. It will stimulate the movement that will give rise to councils of soldiers, sailors, and airmen in the barracks, naval bases, and airfields in the wake of the emergence and then generalization of workers councils. The struggle against a return to a professional army—the preferred counterthrust of the bourgeoisie against the progressive politicization of soldier-militiamen—takes on special importance in this context.

The new rise of workers struggles in an atmosphere of increasingly acute social and political crisis under economic conditions in which the bourgeoisie is less and less capable of making economic concessions to the working class and in which it must even strengthen its arsenal of legal and extralegal antistrike and antiunion measures, lends clearly increased importance to the defense of the workers struggles and organizations against the repressive forces and the private armed gangs of capital. The use of massive strike pickets and flying squads will spread once again, even in countries in which these forms had

fallen into disuse during the preceding phase. Within the trade unions and assemblies of strikers revolutionary Marxists will tirelessly propagate the necessity of organizing workers self-defense against the intensification of repression and the reemergence of fascist gangs and armed employers' militias. They will inculcate the workers with the spirit of distrust in the will or ability of governments (even the most democratic ones), not to mention the bourgeois police or army, to protect them against the fascist danger that is reborn with the change in the economic and political atmosphere in capitalist Europe. Without falling into substitutionist errors, which would tend to have the party alone take on what can be

taken on only by the masses aided by the vanguard party, they will teach the masses to rely only on their own strength to crush the fascist vermin in the egg and to defend themselves effectively against intensifying state repression. The increasingly systematic use of strike pickets and workers self-defense detachments during strikes and in the protection of the demonstrations and headquarters of the workers movement will lead to the construction of workers militias, initially assisted by soldiers councils and then unifying with them. The working people in arms who will rise up during future revolutionary crises will be invincible against their enemies, both domestic and foreign.