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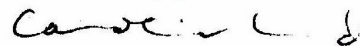
No. 9

To the Steering Committee of the Leninist Trotskyist Faction

Dear Comrades,

Enclosed is a document written by a number of LTF members in France and Spain which has been submitted for consideration by the LTF Steering Committee meeting scheduled for next month.

Comradely,



Caroline Lund

THE DEBATE ON EUROPE AND THE RESPONSIBILITIES
OF THE LENINIST TROTSKYIST FACTION

At its August 1976 meeting, the Steering Committee of the Leninist Trotskyist Faction unanimously adopted a statement (published in English in International Internal Discussion Bulletin, Vol. XIV, No. 2, April 1977) that, following a discussion on the current situation in the Fourth International, defined "the basic objectives of the LTF." Among them, this statement listed the "central goal of the LTF" as the attempt "to attain clarity on the main political questions facing the Fourth International, that is, the questions that have the most immediate implications for the current practice of the national sections." To that end, the following task, among others, was assigned to the LTF for the period ahead:

"c) The LTF will present a critical summary of the results of the IMT line in Europe as a whole."

As a matter of fact, this mandate--that followed one saying the LTF would "continue to press for discussion of the consequences of the IMT line in Portugal, the key test so far of the IMT line in Europe"--is presented too narrowly in its written form. The Steering Committee discussions led to the firm conclusion that the critical balance sheet of the majority's orientation that was needed ought to be accompanied by positive proposals from the LTF. These should present in summary form our analysis of the trends in the European class struggle and the tasks flowing from them, in order to reorient the activity of the national sections in conformity with the method of the Transitional Program. And that was the orientation of the drafting committee that met to apply this Steering Committee mandate during the second half of 1976.

However, a new element was introduced at the Coordinating Committee meeting in Brussels on April 29, 1977. Following a brief debate, a proposal formulated by Comrade Sheppard was adopted, that said the LTF members of the United Secretariat would state their intention to open the discussion within the Secretariat in order to "explore the possibility" of writing a common document on European perspectives with the other members of the United Secretariat, or with some of them.

This proposal was formulated orally, which allowed some ambiguities to exist about its scope. The most immediate consequence, and this was specified at the Brussels meeting, was to suspend drawing up a perspectives document in the name of the LTF, that had been worked on since last August. Thus, this tactical reorientation objectively meant calling into question a unanimous political mandate from an enlarged Steering Committee meeting, on a matter the faction itself considered "essential to steer the Fourth International back onto a correct course" (August 1976 statement).

Two members of the Steering Committee who were present at the Brussels meeting found the arguments put forward in support of this questioning to be unconvincing, and found the new course proposed

for the European discussion to be inadequate both tactically and politically. Comrade Carmen (LC, Spain) and Comrade Nemo (LCR, France) voted against Comrade Sheppard's position and proposed that the faction leadership pursue the attempt to apply point "c" of last August's statement. The objective of this document is to put forward the main arguments for the latter proposal.

It will take up the following questions:

1) How has the LTF up to now collectively estimated the basic stakes of the debate over European perspectives?

2) Do the new developments in the Fourth International concerning either the IMT perspectives documents or the practice of the sections offer a sufficient objective basis for concluding that the terms of the debate have significantly evolved, and for thinking there is the political possibility of a common orientation on Europe at the present time?

3. In view of the present conditions of the discussion, what ought to be the LTF's attitude toward opening the discussion on Europe before the next World Congress, in order to take advantage of all the positive elements that have arisen in the recent period, in order to move toward political clarity and the reorientation of the International?

1. The stakes in the debate on building the Fourth International in Europe since the last World Congress

To deal with the tactical matter under discussion correctly, our point of departure should be to recall the way the LTF has collectively estimated the differences in method and in perspectives with the IMT concerning Europe, and the practical tasks that flowed from them for our struggle to reorient the International. This reminder is even more important since--whatever disagreements there may have been among us over our theoretical characterization of the majority's line or over the respective weight of one or another of their errors--the LTF was able to demonstrate the principled character of the bases on which it was founded and of its fight within the International by being based on substantial agreement on the political criticisms to make of the application of the IMT's line, and on the alternative to counterpose to it.

This was especially important in the fight at the Tenth World Congress against the perspectives of the "European document," and during the decisive test for that orientation that was presented by the Portuguese revolution.

Thus, at the last World Congress, Comrade M.A. Waters' document correctly stressed the similarity of method between the IMT's European orientation and their errors at the preceding congress, as well as the seriousness of the political consequences flowing from them:

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

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

The disastrous results of "adapting to the political backwardness" of the so-called new vanguard have been amply demonstrated in the test of the class struggle during recent years. The ultra-leftism of "initiatives in action," ultraleftism in the mass movements, or dismembering of the Transitional Program (making a fetish of workers control and self-organization by isolating these slogans from the struggle for democratic and transitional demands as a whole and for the workers united front), have led to sharing the inability of the centrist and leftist currents to counterpose a clear political alternative to the class-collaborationist orientation of the traitorous leaderships.

This opportunist implication of the IMT's substitutionist orientation was manifested as early as 1973 by the French LCR's electoral support to the Union of the Left lists, and by their refusal to characterize that coalition as a popular front. It was fully shown as well in the test of the most important experience of the recent period: the Portuguese revolution. In our opinion, the minority resolution of the February 1976 IEC correctly expresses the political consequences of the course taken since the Ninth World Congress:

"This ultraleft deviation from a Marxist strategy was deepened and extended, and then codified by the IMT in its European perspectives document and other documents adopted by the IMT at the Tenth World Congress. The payoff came on November 25. That debacle also constituted a debacle for the IMT's European resolution. This was the verdict of a developing proletarian revolution. In practice, the IMT's ultraleft deviation, which signaled a turn away from the method and strategy of the Transitional Program, led the IMT to adapt to centrism and ultraleftism in Portugal. This in turn meant adapting to the Stalinists, and finally to the MFA itself."

Our common understanding of the totality of the errors the line of orienting toward the "new vanguard" objectively leads to was also laid out in the clearest possible fashion by Comrade Barnes in his report on the significance of the IMT's "Self-Criticism on Latin America" (International Internal Discussion Bulletin, Vol. XIV, No. 5, May 1977):

"One was toward adaptation to Guevarism and concessions to ultraleftism--opening the door to adventurism, sectarianism, workerism, which would, over time, make us vulnerable to New Lefters, centrists, and ultimately to the Stalinists. As Trotsky explained, centrists in the last analysis are either a left wing of the Social Democracy or of the Stalinists. There is no other place for them.... Democratic demands, according to this approach, were either ignored, as in the case of the peasantry, or down-played. This would disarm us in the face of the growing struggles of oppressed nationalities, the development and continuity of the youth movement, the deepening of an international antiwar movement, and what was soon to take place: the rise of the women's movement. There was a strong tendency to underestimate the mass reformist organizations. The Communist and Socialist parties were supposedly being bypassed by a new vanguard."

These lines deal with the 1969 turn; they could just as well be applied to the consequences in Europe of the orientation adopted by the Tenth World Congress pursuing the errors of the preceding congress. The IMT's European orientation could also be characterized with the same words Comrade Barnes uses in another passage in the same document, as a composite of "concessions to ultraleftism," of "pressures from petty-bourgeois milieux," and of "dangers of adventurism" that could "open the door to opportunist errors." That is why the LTF's August 1976 statement defined in a totally correct manner what should be the axes of a consistent political battle to reverse the majority's European line and to reorient the Fourth International:

"This document will show the results of the error of orienting to the 'new mass vanguard,' including errors made in election policy, such as adaptation towards popular frontism, confusion about the character of Stalinism, and errors in mass work in areas such as the trade-union movement, the women's liberation movement, the student movement, and national liberation movement."

But it is precisely this political mandate whose application was suspended as a result of the proposal adopted last April 29. It would be important for the comrades who proposed or voted for this turn to indicate to us in the most specific way the objective political justifications for it. Do they have reason to believe that the stakes of the debate in the International in relation to Europe have significantly changed in relation to the way the LTF characterized them at the time of the discussion on the IMT's first "European document"? Have these stakes significantly changed since the test of the Portuguese revolution? Have they changed since last August, when they were described in a way all the members of the LTF who were present agreed on? For our part, we must state that, at least up to the present, no argument has been put forward to

justify any of these hypotheses. For our part, we believe that there have been new, positive developments in the life of the International, but that these preliminary indicators are not sufficient to give an objective basis for the Coordinating Committee's recent decision, which will not truly allow us to effectively exploit the opportunities now offered by the debate.

2. The objective conditions of the debate on Europe today

We are all aware of the political importance of the developments in the life of the International since last August: publication by the IMT of a "self-criticism" dealing with several fundamental aspects of the Latin American line of the Ninth World Congress; reopening of an international discussion on the women's movement under conditions that allow us to hope that past differences may be diminished; commitments undertaken for democratic preparation of the next World Congress; opening of a political debate with the forces belonging to the "Organizing Committee," in spite of many maneuvers by some components of the IMT. Regardless of the limitations, we are all aware of the importance of these gains, which are the fruit of the LTF's struggle to strengthen the unity of the International and to correct its political course. Likewise, we are all watching for new possibilities that are presenting themselves for this same struggle, the growing differentiations developing among members of the IMT, whether over questions of the democratic functioning of the International or over questions of perspectives.

But all these factors do not justify a positive response to the one question that should determine our political and tactical stance in the debate on Europe: on this particular point in the international debate, and in its role as the leading political current in the International (and not as one or another individual member), does the IMT or does it not demonstrate in its theoretical and practical orientation an evolution that would allow us to seriously consider that from now on an objective basis exists for a significant rapprochement between our positions on the questions the LTF has defined as the fundamental stakes in the debate over Europe? It goes without saying that as materialists we must look at this question with respect to the present political realities--perspectives documents, the practice of the sections--eliminating in advance our subjective wishes or adventurous speculations about the future.

Let us begin with the perspectives documents the IMT has drawn up during the recent period. Concerning the questions under discussion here, the most important of them is obviously the one commonly called the "second European document," whose exact title is "Draft Theses on the Tactics of the Fourth International in Capitalist Europe" (International Internal Discussion Bulletin, Vol. XIII, No. 3, November 1976).

Even though its formulations are somewhat more subdued or more prudent than in the past, the goal of this document is es-

entially to reaffirm the correctness of the majority's orientation at the last World Congress. A detailed criticism of this document should be a collective effort by the LTF. Simply reading it makes it clear that it virtually repeats the basic errors we fought against in the past, whose consequences were dramatically illustrated in Portugal:

--the central reaffirmation of theories about the "new vanguard";

--analyses that make "the hold of bourgeois parliamentary traditions on the working masses" the chief explanation for the obstacles to passing over to a revolutionary situation, and at the same time minimize the actively counterrevolutionary responsibility of the treacherous leaderships;

--an inability to clearly characterize the role of the Stalinist parties and their popular front policy, which is being carried out in several European countries; reaffirmation of all the errors in analysis of the Portuguese CP's policy during the year 1975;

--bypassing of a consistent struggle for a political break with the bourgeoisie and its parties and for a workers government, in favor of an abstract fetish for "emerging organs of self-organization of the masses" as "the central and centralizing goal";

--continuation of a substitutionist, subjective concept of party-building that they define not as a process based on the mass movement to lead them against the policies of their leaderships, but as a kind of pedagogy aimed at using "initiatives by the new vanguard" to "demonstrate" by "practical example" to the masses--who are supposedly spontaneous parliamentarists--"the superiority of workers democracy";

--a tactical, restrictive conception of the struggle for the united front and of participation in the mass movements, actually subordinating the latter to the goal of "instrumentalizing the new vanguard" and to the needs of the policy of "unity in action with the far left."

The most recent developments in the debate have not produced elements that fundamentally change this state of affairs. As Comrade Barnes stresses, their recent "self-criticism" on Latin America, whose intrinsic importance no one underestimates, is limited by the fact that it leaves unresolved the most important methodological question that, in different forms according to the circumstances, has enabled the Latin American errors to be extended to the European continent, especially in Portugal:

"Another area that needs more discussion is the role of the 'new mass vanguard' and our orientation toward it--as it was projected in the 1969 World Congress documents and as carried over to the European resolution and the experience of the FUR in Portugal."

This allows the IMT to limit the scope of its "self-criticism" and to up to now evade having to reconsider their overall political course since what they themselves characterize as the "turn" of the Ninth World Congress. Comrade Barnes is thus correct in asserting that although the recent self-criticism allows us to take up the debate over Latin America on a new basis, "At the same time we can't hold back concurrent discussions on Europe, Portugal, and other pressing questions on which there are disagreements and that involve ongoing practice."

This last necessity remains entirely valid. The corrections that the IMT seems ready to make today to the formulation of its theory of the "new vanguard" remain superficial. In face of the reality of the movement of the masses, who turn toward their old organizations in order to begin struggling, the IMT is obliged to recognize that its schema that reduced the process of radicalization to "the appearance of a new vanguard escaping from the control of the traditional organizations" is onesided, to say the least; thus it attempts to differentiate its "new vanguard" from simply the organized "far left."

The political significance of such a correction remains, however, quite limited in relation to the requirements for a rectification of the erroneous method of party building that resulted from the theses adopted at the last World Congress. The IMT's corrections actually only specify the limits and socio-political characteristics of the so-called "new vanguard" but do not question the whole method that led to arbitrarily setting up the "new vanguard" as a priority "target" and special "lever" for building the European sections. This is illustrated by the fact that, for several years already, the French LCR has been able to put forward big theoretical refinements, substituting one after another for the "concept" of a "new vanguard," a "broad vanguard," a "broad working-class vanguard," or a "vanguard of increasingly working-class composition"... In this way, once its description is clarified, the so-called "new vanguard" is in fact put back into the commonly accepted category of "advanced" or "combative" workers. In doing this, the French leadership admitted, at least implicitly, that the radicalization could not be reduced to a phenomenon external to the old organizations and that it did not lead spontaneously to "the appearance" of a "vanguard" in the political sense of this term. However, the LCR did not break with an orientation that is aimed particularly at narrow layers and that consequently leads to political adaptation to the concerns of the "far left," any more than the IMT does today. Furthermore, the recognition of a radicalization "internal" to the old organizations, far from leading to restoring a correct understanding of the contradictory relations that exist between the objective movement of the masses (whatever their different levels of consciousness) and the treacherous policy of the leadership has, on the contrary, served as a new argument to cover up old opportunist and empirical theories: the illusions of the masses and the "broad vanguard" serve, for example, to justify the "social dynamic" attributed to the Union

of the Left (thus minimizing its immediately and actively counter-revolutionary character) or the refusal to clearly and actively wage a struggle for the formation of a government without bourgeois ministers (this question being judged as unimportant "in the eyes of the advanced workers"). Likewise, the refinements in socio-political analysis now introduced by the IMT do not correspond to a serious reconsideration of the substitutionist and adaptationist method adopted at the Tenth World Congress, that broke with the requirements of the transitional method and the struggle for the united front.

"The weakness of the Trotskyists" and not the errors of orientation inspired by the IMT are held responsible for the grave political defeats in Portugal and Italy. This too-convenient explanation allows the IMT to fully pursue its line of winning "hegemony within the new vanguard," in the form of systematically seeking "unity among revolutionaries" in France or in Spain. There as elsewhere, even if the Trotskyists are stronger, the same method cannot lead to anything but the same results: programmatic confusion, adaptation to ultraleft and centrist currents, and bypassing of a consistent struggle for the united front clearly breaking with the class-collaborationist formulas of the Stalinists and Social Democrats.

The recent practice of the European sections under majority leadership still offers only limited signs of a political rectification. Thus, in several countries, "turns" or partially positive corrections have been made in certain areas of activity. Under the impact of events and the pressure of the political discussion, breaks have begun with the most outrageously sectarian or manipulative aspects of the orientation toward various mass movements. For example, one could point to the rectifications made in several sections on the student movement (the abandonment of the practices following from the famous thesis of the "Second Breath"), on the women's movement (the failure in France of the "Pétroleuses" project) or on the question of the oppressed nationalities. But, at least up to the present these empirical evolutions have been made in great methodological confusion and have not led to a consistent political reorientation toward work to mobilize the masses. This is expressed in phenomena of various types. On the one hand, the past sectarianism is paid for today by the emergence of currents tending to adapt politically to the dominant ideological tendencies in the mass movements. This is manifested in particular in the discussions on the national question and especially the women's movement. On the other hand, the absence of a complete break with the maneuvering and substitutionist orientation toward "regroupment of the broad vanguard" within the various movements is expressed in practice by an inability to wage mass campaigns in a consistent way for particular objectives (for example, on political repression in Eastern Europe, on southern Africa, or on elementary women's demands) and by a pursuit of "tactics" that contradict a real mass orientation (for example, the disastrous entryism practiced by the French LCR in the "Union Action Movement," the MAS, in the university).

In addition, even as the rhythm of the political crisis accelerates in most of the countries of Europe, the orientation put forward by the IMT's "European document" more and more concretely demonstrates its consequences in the practice of the class struggle. The generalization of the substitutionist line of "unity of revolutionaries" turns many sections away from elementary tasks of party building and a consistent defense of the program of the Fourth International, intensifies all the harmful effects of political adaptation to the concerns of the so-called "far left" and consequently creates impotence and increased confusion in face of the class-collaborationist policies of the treacherous working-class leaderships.

This political course was clearly analyzed and vigorously fought by the LTF around the Portuguese and Italian elections of 1976. (See IIDB, April 1977.) Concerning the Portuguese presidential elections and support to the Carvalho candidacy, the LTF very correctly stated:

"The ultraleft course followed by the IMT with regard to the Portuguese revolution led it to fail to project an independent class line. The opportunist position the IMT leaders took of supporting Carvalho's electoral campaign was an extension of their wrong course in relation to the Portuguese revolution as a whole."

Concerning Italy, the statement of the faction ends by stressing: "The critical support of the centrists' politics disarmed us in front of both the centrists and the reformists."

In his report to the SWP convention in 1976, Comrade Sheppard fully argued in favor of this severe judgment by showing how the program of the "Italian FUR" included "downright reactionary planks" and "called for a more left version of the popular front."

The recent political developments in Europe only illustrate, however, a similar "disarming" of the European sections "in face of the centrists and reformists," a similar failure, in face of major developments in the class struggle, to "trace a line of class independence" and to consistently fight for the workers united front. The recent electoral examples are sufficiently eloquent:

In the municipal elections in France, the formation of "unity of the revolutionaries" slates was obtained at the price of the gravest political confusion in relation to the Union of the Left. While most of the campaign was waged around local questions and themes of "control," no political alternative was really outlined in opposition to the popular front. The LCR refused to carry out agitation around the slogan of a "CP-SP government without bourgeois ministers" and called for a vote, in most districts, for the Union of the Left slates, including their Radical and Gaullist candidates. This was a serious setback in relation to the self-criticism that followed the vote for the Union of the Left slates in 1973. Moreover, the desire to preserve the "unity" achieved in the municipal elections led the leadership of the LCR to accept as one

of the slogans of the "revolutionary" contingent on May Day, "Right government, left government, the workers can rely only on their own struggles." This slogan, underneath its rank-and-filist and ultraleft formulation, is profoundly opportunist: it denies both the fact that the question of power is posed and the need to oppose the policy of popular frontism with the demand for a government independent of the bourgeois parties.

In Belgium, the LRT campaign had the aim of "working-class unity to the left of the PSB leadership, around the LRT-PC axis," a policy on which the following comment was published in Inprecor (April 28, 1977): "The CP finds itself in a political impasse, for its unity approach to the PSB corresponded neither to the relationship of forces...nor to the political conjuncture. In Antwerp, an RAL-CP-Left Christian bloc was on the point of being concluded when the national leadership of the CP intervened to stop it."

Can such a strange initiative on the part of a section of the Fourth International contribute to the clarity of our programmatic confrontation with the Stalinists? Does it go in the direction of a struggle for the workers united front? In reality, this policy merits the same criticism as the one formulated by the LTF concerning the Mexican presidential elections in 1976: "It is not correct to seek vague common programmatic formulations with the Stalinists, which the Stalinists interpret in accordance with their opportunist line. To claim that such formulations advance the class struggle and that the Trotskyists are in programmatic agreement with the Stalinists amounts to giving opportunism a left cover."

Finally, the discussions on the opportunity to participate in the elections to the Spanish Cortes cannot excuse us from the task of critically assessing the method and program advanced by the LCR on this occasion. The formation of a "FUT" in common with two ultraleft organizations comes fundamentally from the same method as the one that inspired various "blocs" formed in Europe since the unhappy experience of the Portuguese FUR, a method that the LTF vigorously criticized for all its substitutionist and confusionist characteristics. These characteristics are evident in the strange conclusion of the electoral campaign: according to the June 17 Rouge, "The Communist Action Group withdrew at the last minute, explaining that it had 'only used the elections as a speaking platform.' With similar arguments, to which was added the idea that it was necessary not to 'divide the working class vote,' the local sections of the LCR in certain provinces (Cadiz, Asturias) called for a 'working-class vote,' even a 'PCE vote.'"

On the programmatic level, the FUT platform supported by the LCR is hardly any better than the ones defended in Italy and France on the key questions of the governmental slogan and class political independence. Is it outlining a clear alternative to the policy of National Union and all the more or less "left" versions of the popular front to say: "The struggle for all the demands listed in this program can be developed only on the basis of the independent action of the workers' and people's (?) movement, without

any strategic (?) agreements with bourgeois forces.

"It is through this road that it will be possible to establish a workers' government (?), the only government capable of advancing a solution to the present crisis favorable to the workers." (Inprecor, No. 8, May 1977. Our emphasis.)

It is highly positive that the LCR is today reconsidering some of the harmful consequences of such a policy. Likewise, we should consider it a not negligible gain that within the French LCR a minority of the IMT members took a position in favor of the agitational use of the slogan of a "CP-SP" government. Our role is precisely to base ourselves on such changes in order to make broader layers of members understand the root of the errors -- the orientation to the new vanguard -- and to combat the concrete form which the policy of the IMT has tended to take in all countries: the "fetish" of "the unity of revolutionaries," a systematic search for blocs with the "far left" to the detriment of programmatic clarity on the decisive political questions. The reorientation of the Fourth International in Europe requires a complete break with the "doctrinaire continental schema in which some standard formula promises a shortcut to success." The IMT has not up to now shown its intention of making such a break.

3. "Our main goal: political clarity"

In view of the considerations presented above, the course adopted by the majority of the Steering Committee on the attitude of the LTF in the discussion on Europe appears to us to be without an objective political basis, and therefore incorrect from the standpoint of the methods of discussion which should be -- and have until now always been -- used by the LTF in its fight to reorient and strengthen the Fourth International.

From this standpoint, we want to reaffirm our complete agreement with the LTF as a whole on two points:

In the first place, we consider that the political struggle in its factional form cannot be an aim in itself. It was justified at a particularly difficult time in the international discussion and has precisely the aim of establishing conditions for overcoming the political differences and restoring more satisfactory conditions of functioning, discussion and leadership. From this standpoint, we think that the faction was correct to reaffirm last August the position already expressed a year earlier: "The Leninist Trotskyist Faction will seek to subordinate organizational questions to the goal of achieving clarity on the political questions. Accordingly, the LTF Steering Committee reiterates what it said in its August, 1975, statement: ...the Leninist Trotskyist Faction proposes that both of the organized factions dissolve themselves.

"We urge the IMT leadership to study this proposal once again and reconsider its rejection of this proposal."

In the same spirit, we share the opinion of Comrade Barnes when he affirmed our desire to "reorient the Fourth International through an objective and collective effort and not through factional polemics aimed at scoring points."

This political aim implies in particular that we seek to restore in the International and its leadership, an open and loyal discussion that is not made artificially rigid by past lines of cleavage. It implies that we fight all practices that would risk creating inside the various ideological groupings a separate discussion from that carried on before all the members of the International. It also implies approaching the discussions that occur on new questions without factional prejudices. As Comrade Barnes stresses, the return to "Bolshevik norms" of functioning presupposes that we admit "the possibility of different lineups on different questions."

The course adopted on the debate on Europe appears to us to go precisely against the two concerns recalled above that all the members of the LTF share.

In this particular aspect of the international discussion, our desire to restore a discussion inside the leadership of the International without factional prejudices cannot ignore a material fact: "draft theses" on Europe exist, were approved by the majority of the United Secretariat, and are circulating throughout the International as "opening the discussion preparing the Eleventh World Congress" as a "document on a key political problem." It is to be noted that this same document, after being adopted at the United Secretariat by the members of the IMT, was the subject of a discussion separate from that of the whole leadership. (In this way, the IMT considered including this draft among its basic documents while announcing its intention to make several amendments resulting from its own factional discussion).

Furthermore, it will be admitted that if we "seek to subordinate organizational questions to the goal of achieving clarity on the political questions," this principle should apply in several ways: it forbids any artificial hardening of the debates and should lead us not to prejudice the lines of cleavage on new questions; but conversely, it forbids us from sacrificing political clarity to our wish to overcome the old lineups when it is obvious that on a particular question, major political differences remain and that they largely follow the old lines of cleavage from the previous debates. Even though we have every reason to deplore this, no one can deny that both the basic documents of the IMT and the current practice of the European sections prove that this is indeed the case, at least on this aspect of the international discussion.

As Comrade Barnes correctly recalled, the attitude of the LTF has never been to demand "self-criticisms" as a precondition for discussion. But we must point out that contrary to what has happened concerning Latin America, the leaders of the IMT, despite

the failure of their orientation on Portugal, are deliberately turning their backs on their most elementary responsibility in helping the European discussion to open up on a politically healthy basis: "to initiate a process of drawing a critical balance sheet that is long overdue and required to help move the Fourth International forward." In these conditions, the only correct and responsible method by which the LTF can "explore the differences" that exist today in the International on Europe and to contribute to to their eventual surmounting in the course of the discussion preparatory to the Eleventh World Congress, is the following:

--To begin from what is (and not what we might hope for), that is, the present draft theses published by the United Secretariat, and the practice corresponding to it, in order to precisely assess on this basis the present state of differences and agreement.

--To begin the drawing up of a summary document expressing the main criticisms formulated by the LTF of the theoretical and practical orientation of the majority in Europe and its alternative proposals. This document -- and obviously all the eventually different positions that its elaboration could bring to light -- should be brought to the attention of all the members of the International and constitute one of the elements for the opening of the general orientation discussion for the next World Congress.

It can be noted that such a course would simply amount to applying the mandate approved in August 1976. Its aim would be to let the whole International appreciate, in all political clarity, the present state of the differences on orientation on the European questions. In no way does it oppose a later evolution of the terms of debate and of the lines of cleavage in the International. On the contrary, such a document would enable all the members or leaders of the International -- particularly those who have already begun a critical reassessment of the IMT's orientation -- to appreciate on a concrete and current basis what are the LTF's proposals for reorienting the International and its European sections, as well as the continuity of its struggle for this aim since the discussions for the last world congresses and the discussion on Portugal. There could be no better starting point for taking organizational or political initiatives, during the discussion for the next congress, that would appear to be capable of facilitating the positive evolution of at least part of the present members of the IMT. In this way -- that is, in seeking to promote clarity at each stage of the discussion on the real state of the positions concerned -- that we can contribute in a politically effective and educational way to the success of the objective that Comrade Barnes outlined when he spoke of trying to forge, through a sincere political discussion, "a new majority on a whole series of key questions."

In our opinion, a useful way to work for this objective would be to proceed as Comrade Barnes does concerning the discussion on Latin America. In this matter, a new fact has appeared: the publication by the IMT of a "self-critical" document on its line at the Ninth and Tenth World Congresses. Whatever the limitations of this document may be, Comrade Barnes is correct to underline its importance and to base himself on its existence in order to get

the international discussion to pass into a new stage. It could be noted, however, that while Comrade Barnes correctly states that "our aim should be a single document on Latin America" (for the next World Congress), his first initiative in this direction is to write a detailed document recalling in the clearest way the origins of the Latin American debate and the positions the LTF defended in it, making a responsible assessment of the present stage of the debate, taking into account both the positive aspects of the recent self-criticism and the "unresolved political questions and the contradictions." This is an entirely exemplary method of discussion. We regret that a different method is applied on the European question: whereas in this area, the IMT, far from correcting its errors, reaffirms them in a document known to all the members, the LTF refuses to use the means of discussion necessary to make its assessment of the stakes in the discussion and its own proposals known. Quite the contrary, it adopts a course that, whatever its real results may be, today gives many members the impression that a common "European document" seems politically possible given the present positions held, that it could be enough to collaborate loyally in the United Secretariat in order to achieve this, and that the result of such a process could be something other than a collection of vague formulas open to contradictory interpretations without any relation to the real practice of the sections as it is inspired by the IMT.

Such a course leads, in our opinion, to sowing political confusion and disorientation in the ranks of the International. This is further aggravated by the fact that up to now no document has appeared to explain to the members what are the justifications and political objectives of the proposal formulated in the United Secretariat. The latter can thus be the subject of all sorts of misinterpretations, intentional or not. In regretting the absence of any written argumentation and given the information that we have, we consider for our part that the tactical reorientation decided on last April does not go in the direction of helping the LTF to "attain its main goal, political clarity."

For this reason we propose that the Steering Committee reconsider this decision of the Coordinating Committee and affirm the mandate approved last August.

July 1, 1977

Carmen, Gabriel, Letourneau, Melan, Nemo, Raul, Seldjouk, Ulysse