No one will deny that capitalist society has entered a period of permanent crisis, which induces it to reassemble its weakened forces and to concentrate, more and more, all political and economic power in the hands of the state, by means of nationalizations. To this concentration of capitalist power, are we going to continue to oppose the scattered forces of the workers? To do so would be to run into definitive defeat. And one of the principal reasons for the present apathy of the working class resides in the interminable series of defeats suffered by the social revolution throughout this century. The working class no longer has confidence in any organization because it has observed them all at work, here and there, and seen that all of them, including the anarchist organizations, have revealed themselves to be incapable of resolving the crisis of capitalism - that is to say, of assuring the triumph of the social revolution. One must not be afraid to say that all of these organizations are outdated and no longer valid. On the contrary, only this very realization - the importance of which should not be reduced by more or less circumstantial considerations, nor by blaming others for the consequences of one’s own errors - provides a point of departure from which we can truly prepare ourselves to revise all doctrines (which today share a substantial portion of outdatedness), perhaps resulting in a fundamental ideological unification of the workers’ movement in the direction of the social revolution. It goes without saying that I do not by any means dream of a movement whose thought would be monolithic, but a movement unified from within, and in which diverse tendencies could enjoy the most ample freedom to manifest themselves.

On the other hand, it is no less true that action is called for immediately. This action must obey two general principles: first, it must facilitate the ideological regroupment mentioned above; and second, it must cease considering the revolution as the work of future generations for whom we are supposed to make the preparations. We are faced with this dilemma: either the social revolution and a new impetus for humanity, or war and a social decomposition of which the past offers only a few pale examples. History is granting us a breathing space the duration of which we do not know. Let us make use of it to reverse the course of the present degeneration and to bring about the revolution. The present apathy of the working class is only temporary. It indicates, at this time, both the workers’ loss of confidence in all organizations, and a certain detachment on their part. It depends on us, as revolutionaries, to draw the lessons, which will enable this detachment to be transformed into active revolt. The energy of the working class asks only to exert itself. Nevertheless, it is necessary to give it not only an end - it has had a presentiment of this for a long time - but also means of attaining this end. If the task of
revolutionaries is to bring about a fraternal society, this necessitates, beginning immediately, an organism in which this fraternity can form and develop itself.

At the present time, it is on the factory level that workers’ fraternity attains its maximum. Thus, it is there we must act, but not in clamouring for a trade-union which is chimerical today, in the actual conditions of the capitalist world, and which, moreover, could only come forward AGAINST the working class, since the trade unions represent now only different tendencies of capitalism. In fact, a “united front” of the unions could happen only on the eve of the revolution - and would act against the revolution since the major unions would all be equally interested in torpedoing it to assure their own survival in the capitalist state. Henceforth, as integral parts of the capitalist system, they defend this system by defending themselves. The interests of the union are essentially their own and not those of the workers.

Moreover, one of the most powerful obstacles to a workers’ regroupment and a revolutionary renaissance is constituted by the apparatus of the union bureaucrats, even in the factory, beginning with the Stalinist apparatus. The enemy of the worker, today, is the union bureaucrat every bit as much as the boss, who without the union bureaucrat, would most of the time be powerless. It is the union bureaucrat who paralyzes workers’ action. And thus the first watchword of revolutionaries must be: Out the door with the union bureaucrats!

But the principal enemy consists of Stalinism and its union apparatus, because it is the partisan of state capitalism - that is to say, the complete fusion of the state and unionism. It is therefore the most clear-sighted defender of the capitalist system, since it outlines, for this system, the most stable state conceivable today.

Meanwhile, one should not destroy an existing organization without proposing another in its place, better adapted to the necessities of the revolution. And it is precisely the revolution that has taken upon itself to show us, each time that it has appeared, the instrument of its choice: the factory committee directly elected by the workers assembled on the shop-floor, and the members of which are revocable at any time. This is the only organization which is able, without alteration, to direct the workers’ interests within capitalist society while looking to the social revolution; and which is also able to accomplish this revolution and, once having attained victory, to constitute the base of future society. Its structure is the most democratic conceivable, since it is directly elected in the workplace by all the workers, who control its actions from day to day and are able to recall a member of the committee, or the entire committee, at any time, and choose another. Its creation offers the minimum of risks of degeneration because of the constant and direct control that the workers are able to exercise over their delegates. Furthermore, the constant contact between elected and electors favours a maximum of creative initiative in the hands of the working class, which is thus called upon to take its destiny in its own hands and to directly lead its own struggles. This committee, which authentically represents the will of the workers, is called upon to administer the factory and to organize the workers’ defence against the police and the reactionary gangs of Stalinism and traditional capitalism. After the victory of the revolution, it is the factory committee which must indicate to the regional, national and international leaders (these also are directly elected by the workers), the productive capacities of the factory and its needs of raw materials and manpower. Finally, the representatives of each factory would be called to
form, on the regional, national and international scale, the new government, distinct from the management of the economy, and whose principal task would be to liquidate the heritage of capitalism and to assure the material and cultural conditions of its own progressive disappearance.

At once economic and political, the factory committee is the revolutionary organism par excellence. That is why even its establishment represents a sort of insurrection against the capitalist state and its trade-union branches, because it assembles all the workers' energies against the capitalist state, and even assumes the latter's economic power. For the same reason one sees it burst forth spontaneously in moments of acute social crisis. But in our epoch of chronic crisis, it is necessary for revolutionaries to passionately defend and advocate this conception starting now if they wish, in the first place, to put an end to the meddling of union bureaucrats in the factories, and to restore to the workers the initiative of their emancipation. Let us therefore destroy the unions in the name of the factory committees, democratically elected by the workers in the plant, and revocable at any time.