

POLITICAL COMMITTEE MEETING, No. 60, May 28, 1973

Present: Barnes, Breitman, Britton, A. Hansen, J. Hansen,
Horowitz, Jenness, Jones, Lovell, Morrison, Rose,
Shaw, Stone, Waters

Consultative: Kerry

Visitors: Scott, Seigle

Chair: Lovell

AGENDA: 1. World Movement
2. Letter to Communist League
3. Detente

1. WORLD MOVEMENT

Waters reported.

Discussion

2. LETTER TO COMMUNIST LEAGUE

Waters reported.

Discussion

Motion: To approve the proposed letter to the Political
Bureau of the Communist League of France (see attached).

Carried.

3. DETENTE

Breitman opened discussion.

Discussion

Meeting adjourned.

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on French
elections
& Uruguay
appendices

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14 Charles Lane
New York, N.Y. 10014
May 28, 1973

Political Bureau
Ligue Communiste

Dear Comrades,

We are very sorry that Comrade Delfin was unable to attend the recent plenary meeting of our National Committee. We had hoped he would be present to participate in the discussion. We were also hoping to have the opportunity to raise with him some questions relating to the recent legislative elections in France.

In the course of our plenum several comrades expressed opinions critical of the line adopted by the Ligue Communiste in the elections. It would have been useful if a leading French comrade had been there to present your views on this as well as other questions.

Since this did not prove possible, the Political Committee has asked me to communicate our views to you and solicit your comments. We realize that our information may be sketchy on some points and would welcome your corrections of any factual errors on our part as well as an explanation of how you arrived at your line.

As you may have noted, The Militant's coverage of the French elections focused on two things: the scope, importance and character of the Ligue's campaign, and your denunciations of the program of the Union de la Gauche.

We also reported on the debate between the parties and organizations of the French "far left" concerning the character of the Union de la Gauche and what attitude revolutionary Marxists should adopt towards it. We deliberately refrained from making any editorial comment about this debate. However, on the basis of the information available to us, we found we could not agree with the totality of the positions advanced in this debate by any group, including the Ligue Communiste. We refrained from commenting on this in the pages of The Militant as we preferred to raise our criticisms in the context of the internal discussion preparatory to the coming world congress.

We would like to get your thinking before taking the discussion further.

* * *

In our opinion, the decision of the Ligue to enter a large slate of candidates in the elections, and use the opportunity afforded by the campaign to present the program of the Ligue Communiste to broad layers of the working class was an extremely positive step. Under the current conditions in France any other decision would have been either ultraleft abstentionism (as demonstrated by Révolution!) or factional opportunism (as demonstrated by the Lambertists who ran only a token campaign while calling for a vote for the candidates of the CP and SP on the first round as opposed to the Trotskyist candidates of the Ligue Communiste.

Your ability to carry out a campaign of such large scope is a gauge of the advances the Fourth International has made towards the construction of a mass revolutionary Marxist party in France.

Our differences with the policy you adopted center on three questions: (1) the decision to call for a vote on the first round for all candidates of the "far left," i.e., those whom you defined as "candidates who reject the electoral and peaceful roads to socialism" (Political Resolution, Rouge, December 16, 1972); (2) the decision to call for a vote on the second round for the candidates of the Union de la Gauche, as opposed to the candidates of the Communist Party and Socialist Party only; and (3) the ambiguity of your attitude towards the Socialist Party as expressed by the decision taken at your last convention against characterizing the Socialist Party as a working-class party with a bourgeois-reformist program.

* * *

1. As outlined in the political resolution adopted at the Ligue's December 1972 convention, your aim on the first round of the elections was to promote programmatic clarification. One aspect of this was the sharp criticism you directed at the program of the Union de la Gauche. You also criticized the line of the other groups on the French "left."

However, in our opinion, to call for a vote for all candidates who reject an electoral or peaceful road to socialism, cuts across the goal of achieving programmatic clarification. It establishes a new criterion for determining to whom we give critical support in elections.

The Marxist movement has always had definite criteria for determining whether it is correct in principle to support the candidates of any party or group other than our own. One criterion is program. If a candidate or party is putting forward a program that helps advance political consciousness and explain the need for independent action by the working class, a program that calls for an unequivocal break with all forms of class collaboration, then it is within our principles to call for a vote for that candidate.

Our second criterion is class composition. While the Stalinist and Social-Democratic parties do not break programmatically with class collaboration -- indeed their programs are based on class collaboration -- they are historical currents long recognized as established tendencies in the international working-class movement. Their base is in the mass organizations of the working class. It is within our principles to call for a vote for such parties and their candidates, despite their programs, if doing so helps advance the concept of the need for counterposing class against class, if such action helps draw the line in the electoral arena between the working class and the bourgeoisie.

The criterion which the Ligue Communiste used in the first round in this election campaign -- rejection of the electoral road -- is new to Leninism.

It leads to the conclusion that there is some acceptable minimal "far-left" program with one and only one point: rejection of the electoral road to socialism. In our opinion, such a one-point minimal electoral platform does not constitute an adequate

basis to justify voting for certain candidates nor does it contribute to programmatic clarity.

One can reject the "electoral or peaceful road to socialism," and still engage in class collaborationist maneuvers -- as the Vietnamese Stalinist leadership does, for example, or as the anarchists did in the Spanish civil war.

The explicit rejection of popular frontism, and all other forms of class collaborationism, should be the basis of any limited electoral platform in France today. But even on that basis, a one-point program would hardly be adequate to achieve programmatic clarity. And at this stage in our development the sections of the Fourth International have no other reason for participating in elections than to utilize the electoral arena for propaganda purposes. Our primary purpose is to take our program to the broadest possible layers of the working class.

Under certain circumstances it is in order to try to reach an electoral agreement with organizations like Lutte Ouvrière and the OCI. Since the programs of the Ligue Communiste, Lutte Ouvrière and the OCI reject all forms of coalitionism, it would be entirely principled to support each others candidates on the basis of a common, limited platform for the elections, if one could be agreed upon. But in the absence of a more rounded common platform than the one-point criterion of rejecting the electoral road to socialism, a call for a vote for the "far left" on that basis can only lead to confusion rather than programmatic clarification.

Your attempt to reach an agreement with Lutte Ouvrière and the Organisation Communiste Internationaliste (OCI) not to run candidates against each other was an entirely different matter from establishing an electoral bloc on a limited program. Such a "non-aggression" pact was, we believe, a correct initiative to take. It is a recognition on our part that the biggest obstacle today in the path of the French working class is the Stalinist Communist Party. Such an agreement in no way indicates programmatic preference for the OCI or Lutte Ouvrière. It is simply in our interests at the present time to focus our fire on the bourgeoisie and the Stalinist misleaders of the working class, and avoid what would seem to the masses of French workers like a sectarian squabble between Trotskyist factions.

* * *

Under the circumstances, it seems to us that it would have been wiser to call for a first round vote for the candidates of the Ligue Communiste alone.

In our opinion, the tactical error on the first round of trying to put together a "far-left" electoral bloc on the basis of rejecting the peaceful road to socialism is not unrelated to the concept of trying to regroup the so-called "new mass vanguard" and transform it into a revolutionary party, as projected in the United Secretariat majority document on "Building Revolutionary Parties in Capitalist Europe."

* * *

2. On the second round, we believe it was an error to call for a vote for the Union de la Gauche per se, rather than for the candidates of the working-class parties, the CP and the SP. This error was more serious in our opinion than the tactical mistake

on the first round.

The Union de la Gauche began as an electoral bloc between the Communist Party and the Socialist Party, on a common program based on the reformist programs of those two organizations. However, from the beginning it had a different character, a different class character, than either of the two parties making it up. The Union de la Gauche was not an action coalition but a programmatic, electoral bloc, that solicited the participation of parties and groups not part of the working-class movement.

From the beginning, its perspective was to draw in bourgeois and petty-bourgeois forces as soon as possible. That is, its orientation was to transform itself into a vehicle of class collaboration involving real, as opposed to potential, bourgeois forces, as rapidly as objective circumstances would permit.

The crisis of French capitalism is not yet so acute as to impel any major bourgeois forces to turn to the CP as a savior of the nation. Thus, only a few, relatively peripheral bourgeois figures accepted the bid of the Union de la Gauche. Therefore, it would, in our opinion, probably be correct to designate the Union de la Gauche an embryonic or incipient popular front.

There are obviously important differences between the 1936 popular front and the Union de la Gauche, or between the Union de la Gauche and the Liberation government in which the Stalinists took key posts. The Ligue Communiste has pointed out many of the differences. But all three were similar in essence, that is, in their character as class-collaborationist electoral coalitions and/or governmental blocs. The relative weight of the various forces within such blocs is secondary. The fact that the CP or the SP may be the dominant force within such a bloc for a period of time in no way negates its fundamental character as a class-collaborationist electoral bloc.

We are not interested in the semantics of the question. Whether we should put the label "incipient popular front" on the Union de la Gauche, or some other designation can be put aside as long as we agree on the essence: that the Union de la Gauche was, from its very inception, an electoral class-collaborationist project of the Stalinists.

It seems to us that many times during the campaign the Ligue Communiste correctly emphasized the similarities between the program of the 1936 Popular Front, the program of the Liberation government, and the Common Program of the Union de la Gauche. The account of the meeting at the Palais des Sports, written by Comrade Pierre Frank for Intercontinental Press, for example, (February 26, 1973, pp. 198-99) pointed out that this was one of the themes of Comrade Krivine's speech on that occasion.

The problem with the Union de la Gauche was not simply the presence of the Left Radicals, as the Lambertists claimed. The fatal flaw of the Union de la Gauche lay much deeper. Even if the Left Radicals had not joined the Union de la Gauche, we believe it would have been an error to call for a vote for it per se.

The key question was not when some section of the bourgeoisie, or as in Spain some "shadow" of the bourgeoisie, might decide to participate in the Union de la Gauche. From its very inception it represented a projected electoral bloc with bourgeois forces, the ultimate goal being a coalition government. Its essence, its purpose was to prepare for this.

Under those circumstances a vote for the Union de la Gauche per se did not represent a vote for independent working-class political action. It was a vote for a petty-bourgeois electoral bloc with a popular front perspective. A call to vote for the Union de la Gauche was qualitatively different from a call to vote for the CP and SP as a way of voting against the bourgeois candidates by voting for candidates of parties of the working class.

We vote for Stalinist and Social-Democratic parties in some circumstances not because of their programs, but despite their programs and in opposition to their programs. We do this in order to draw a line in the electoral arena between our class and the enemy class. With this in mind, it is not incorrect to vote for candidates of the Stalinist and Social-Democratic parties. Whatever their relative weight in any particular country, whatever their conjunctural ups and downs in size and influence, they represent historical currents within the international working-class movement. They are working-class parties with bourgeois-reformist programs.

Calling for a vote for the Union de la Gauche was not the same as calling for a vote for the CP and SP as parties of the working class, despite their programs. It meant calling for a vote for a petty-bourgeois electoral bloc extending beyond the CP and SP. It meant voting for the structure (admittedly a rickety one) set up by the CP and SP in the electoral field.

The fact that the Left Radicals did come into the Union de la Gauche well before the elections was simply an early confirmation of the perspective of the Union de la Gauche.

We agree with the position taken by the comrades of the Ligue Communiste that the Left Radicals did not represent a major bourgeois force, and in that sense the Union de la Gauche was different from the 1936 Popular Front and from the Liberation government. But a coalition with the bourgeoisie does not necessarily begin with major bourgeois forces.

Or, to put it another way, the embryo of a class-collaborationist coalition looks quite different during the first month and the ninth month.

* * *

3. The error of calling for a vote for the Union de la Gauche appears even more serious if the position of the Ligue Communiste on the character of the Socialist Party is taken into account. At the time of the December 1972 convention of the Ligue, the delegates refused to take a position characterizing the SP as a working-class party with a bourgeois-reformist program.

According to the Political Resolution published in the December 16, 1972, issue of Rouge, in face of the weakness of its working-class base, the "SP can be defined today as neither a bourgeois party nor a bourgeois workers party." In short, the Ligue Communiste has no position on the class character of the SP.

Although this was one of the main issues in dispute during the preconvention discussion, and more than 25 percent of the delegates stated unequivocally that they believed the SP to be a bourgeois party, the majority of the convention took the position that it was irrelevant whether the SP was a bourgeois party

or not, because the class character of the Union de la Gauche was determined by the dominant weight of the CP within it.

In other words, the position adopted by the Ligue was that it is permissible from the point of view of class principles for revolutionary Marxists to call for a vote for candidates of the SP even if it might not be a working-class party. Also, the Ligue obviously believes it is correct to support an electoral or governmental bloc between the CP and SP even if the SP is not a workers party.

If this is indeed your view, we believe it would amount to a revision of the fundamental Marxist position on this question, negating all the lessons that have been learned by the revolutionary workers movement since the time of Millerand.

In our opinion, it is a violation of principles to vote for or support the Union de la Gauche. This is doubly true if you believe that the SP is no longer a component of the workers movement.

It seems to us that the correct position in the March elections would have been to call for a vote for the CP and SP candidates on the second round, as opposed to calling for a vote for the candidates of the Union de la Gauche. By counterposing the two we could have more clearly explained the nature of the Union de la Gauche.

* * *

The questions raised by the French elections are important to revolutionists throughout the world. The issues and problems involved are relevant to the work of the Fourth International in numerous countries. They will become even more so in the coming period as the rising pressure of the class struggle forces the ruling class in more and more countries to try to gain time and room to maneuver by utilizing popular front type blocs with the Stalinists and Social Democrats.

Many of the same questions have come to the fore in Chile, for example, where the "Chilean Union de la Gauche," the Unidad Popular, illustrates one variant of popular frontism.

In the recent elections in Chile, held on March 4, our comrades of the Partido Socialista Revolucionaria called for a vote for the candidates of the Socialist Party, but did not call for a vote for the Communist Party or the Unidad Popular. This seems to us to have been a correct decision under the particular circumstances and given the issues over which the SP and CP were divided.

In Vietnam the call of the Provisional Revolutionary Government for the formation of a government of national accord and reconciliation raises similar questions.

In Uruguay, in 1971, the formation of the Frente Amplio posed problems not unlike some of those raised in the recent French elections. As you know from the article written by Joseph Hansen at the time ("The Broad Front Suffers Defeat," Intercontinental Press, December 13, 1971, pp. 1086-88), and from the letter he sent to the Uruguayan comrades, which the United Secretariat received a copy of, we believe the comrades of the PRT-U made an error that resembles the error made by the Ligue Communiste in the recent elections in France.

It is precisely because class-collaborationist electoral

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and governmental blocs can appear in so many different forms and variants that they often pose difficult problems for us. It is sometimes difficult to combine tactical flexibility in responding to the challenge they represent while maintaining absolute inflexibility in our principles. But that is all the more reason to discuss out the problems and issues and try to clarify the differences.

* * *

Despite the error made by the comrades of the PRT-U we did not believe them to be popular frontists, class collaborationists, or anything of the kind.

Nor do we today characterize the comrades of the Ligue Communiste as class collaborationists. Your criticisms of the program of the Union de la Gauche clearly demonstrated your rejection of a popular front program.

However, we do think a serious mistake was made in calling for a vote for the Union de la Gauche. If left uncorrected, the error could miseducate the ranks of the Ligue Communiste and other sections of the International on our fundamental class criteria in electoral tactics.

* * *

We have tried to state our views briefly, without unduly elaborating or developing them. But we are anxious to know your thinking concerning the points we have raised.

Comradely,
s/Mary-Alice Waters
for the Political Committee

P.S. For your convenience we are enclosing two items referred to in this letter: (1) a copy of the letter from Joseph Hansen to the comrades of the PRT-U; and (2) a copy of the article from Intercontinental Press.

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January 28, 1972

Political Committee
Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores
Montevideo, Uruguay

Dear Comrades,

In the December 13, 1971, issue of Intercontinental Press I offered some comments on your election campaign, praising it as a whole but criticizing what appeared to me to be some negative aspects. These comments, of course, reflected the views of the Political Committee of the Socialist Workers Party. I have been asked to further explain the reasons for these views in hope of removing any possible misunderstandings and of facilitating a fruitful exchange of opinion.

From the discussions that various members of the SWP have held with members of the PRT, it appears to us that the key difference lies in our judgments as to the nature of the Broad Front. You saw it as an anti-imperialist movement in the main, whereas to us it appeared to be a popular front.

Before considering the question in detail I should like to reiterate that on all fundamental questions we consider your approach to have been correct. You rejected the illusion that there can be a peaceful electoral road to socialism. You rejected supporting bourgeois governments, including varieties like those headed by Allende in Chile and Torres in Bolivia. You recognized the need for independence from all bourgeois and petty-bourgeois currents. You stressed the imperative necessity of building a Leninist-type party rooted in the mass movement.

The PRT deserves special recognition for its clear rejection of the ultraleftism that has plagued the new generation of revolutionists in Latin America. This firm stand has enabled you to withstand the pressure from such formations as the Tupamaros. Your rejection of ultraleftism also enabled you to avoid the error to be seen on all sides in Latin America in which former ultralefts capitulated overnight, shifting from guerrilla war to support of the bourgeois government of General Velasco Alvarado in Peru and of the current leading advocate of a peaceful road to socialism, Salvador Allende.

Our common struggle against ultraleftism, which has been the predominant problem faced by the Latin American vanguard for the past decade, must now include its opposite, class collaborationism. This political and ideological struggle requires the clearest possible analysis of such formations as the Broad Front.

Let me take up first the nature of the struggle against imperialism in the colonial and semicolonial countries.

In that area today, the national bourgeoisies will not conduct a consistent struggle against imperialism. Trotsky long ago explained the reasons. First of all, if the working class and peasantry are mobilized, they tend, in following their own class interests, to break through the framework of capitalism. This tendency has become an increasingly paramount feature of the political scene. Secondly, the main class interests of the national bourgeoisie are the same as those of the imperialists, and they serve as their agents.

Leadership in this struggle thus passes to the working class. In any vigorous and massive struggle it can win the majority of the peasantry and either bring in the lower middle classes or neutralize them. In such a combat, the national bourgeoisie will inevitably side with imperialism.

Trotsky taught us nonetheless that the national bourgeoisie is capable of taking actions that are objectively anti-imperialist. A recent example was the nationalization of the International Petroleum Company by the Peruvian government in 1969. While such actions must be supported by the working class, they do not change the fundamental nature of the regimes that undertake them. The working class must not grant them an iota of political confidence. The anti-imperialist actions, whatever their progressiveness in and of themselves, remain within the orbit of continued imperialist relations in which the national bourgeoisie seeks only a more substantial position. This was proved to the hilt in the case of the Mexican bourgeoisie, which undertook some rather spectacular anti-imperialist actions in 1938.

At present, in bending to the pressures of the general upsurge that has marked the colonial world since the end of World War II, the national bourgeoisie has generally felt compelled to give itself an anti-imperialist and even "socialist" coloration that is particularly evident in its propaganda. The objective, of course, is to confuse the masses and to contain the struggle they seek to develop independently against imperialism.

This is often seen to a high degree during electoral campaigns. However, when a national bourgeois party includes democratic and anti-imperialist planks in its platform, this does not change the fact that such a party remains an agency of imperialism. Of course, it is possible that the need to appear anti-imperialist in face of a mass upsurge can bring a national bourgeois formation to endorse, or seem to endorse, mass actions against imperialism. This has occurred in the past but has become rare in recent times in correspondence with the bourgeoisie's increasing fear of the masses. In these cases, actions must carefully be distinguished from electoral promises.

It is perfectly permissible -- in fact, necessary -- for a Leninist-type party to endorse, participate in, or initiate an action front against imperialism that includes petty-bourgeois or national bourgeois formations so long as it does not give up its political and organizational independence, including the right to offer criticisms and to warn the workers on the basically proimperialist nature of the national bourgeoisie and the need for a socialist revolution to win the struggle against imperialism.

Thus the existence of an "anti-imperialist front" hinges on actions that are undertaken and not on mere declarations, that is, propagandistic assertions. Both the July 26 Movement in Cuba and the National Liberation Front in Vietnam projected programs that were confused and even dead wrong on many fundamental issues, including the role of the national bourgeoisie, but they constituted fronts that engaged in actions in the struggle against imperialism.

A popular front is different. This involves an effort by the bourgeoisie, or part of it, to establish a coalition government committed to maintaining capitalism with the support of the workers and plebeian masses. In the colonial world this necessarily includes continuation of imperialist domination. The essence of such a

coalition is class collaborationism.

The problem of such class-collaborationist coalitions has faced the socialist movement since the time of Eduard Bernstein and before. Its practitioners have always sought to give it attractive guises. In the thirties, the Stalinists and Social Democrats presented it as an "antifascist front." In China in 1936 it was offered as an "anti-Japanese national united front." In Ceylon in 1964 it was ballyhooed as a "socialist front," as it is today in Chile.

In China in 1936 both a class-collaborationist front and a real anti-imperialist front existed at the same time. Insofar as a concrete struggle was being conducted against Japanese imperialism, it was perfectly correct and necessary -- as the Trotskyists insisted -- for the Communist party to reach understandings with the regime of Chiang Kai-shek concerning actions against the imperialist invader on the battlefield and elsewhere. However, the Stalinists engaged in something else that hampered the struggle against imperialism. They pressed for a "new democratic republic," a "joint dictatorship of several anti-imperialist classes," that is, a coalition government in which the workers and peasants would be tied to the national bourgeoisie.

The name "popular front" or "people's front" can be a source of confusion. It was the "high-flown name," as Trotsky called it, used by Thorez in 1934 when the French Stalinists set out to form a bloc that would include the Radical party. They succeeded in doing this in May 1935. Several months later at the Seventh World Congress of the Comintern, the Stalinists pointed to this class-collaborationist formation as a model. Trotsky said of the congress:

"It is important if only for the fact that by legalizing the opportunistic turn in France, it immediately transplants it to the rest of the world. We have a curious specimen of bureaucratic thinking in that while granting, on paper at any rate, a liberal autonomy to all sections, and while even issuing instructions to them to do independent thinking and adapt themselves to their own national conditions, the Congress, immediately thereupon, proclaimed that all countries in the world, Fascist Germany as well as democratic Norway, Great Britain as well as India, Greece as well as China, are equally in need of the 'people's front,' and, wherever possible, of a government of the people's front." ("The Stalinist Turn" in Writings of Leon Trotsky (1935-36), p. 13.)

When Trotsky was still alive, our entire movement used the term "popular front" or "people's front" in referring to the class-collaborationist blocs between workers' parties and bourgeois parties seeking governmental power at the time, such as those in Chile, Brazil, China, India, etc. Actually there was little choice in the matter. The term selected by Moscow was universally used in the world press in those years. Trotsky himself, accordingly, used the term in a sweeping way that included the popular front formations in the colonial world.

In arguing on this question, some of the comrades have contended that at least one quotation shows Trotsky to have been of the opinion that a popular front signifies solely a coalition between the imperialist bourgeoisie and the workers of an advanced country. From this, the argument goes that Trotsky did not believe a popular front could exist in the colonial world. As a consequence, it was deduced by these comrades that the Broad Front in Uruguay could

not be properly classified as a popular front and to call it that only confused matters.

Whatever the exact interpretation may be of the quotation found in Trotsky's writings (it is in "For Committees of Action, Not the People's Front" in Writings of Leon Trotsky (1935-36), page 56), the truth is that he would not want us to place so much weight on the interpretation of a single sentence in an article dealing with the popular front in France. He would have asked us why we did not take other things he wrote into consideration, why we did not proceed to a concrete analysis of the Broad Front in Uruguay, and why we did not seek to compare the Broad Front with previous formations of a similar nature.

As an example of Trotsky's way of thinking on such questions, his answer to a request to distinguish between the united front and the popular front is of interest:

"Yes, we make concrete the difference between the two notions. During 1917, all the politics of the Bolsheviks consisted in fighting against the popular front -- not so called -- in favor of the united front. The Russian bourgeois party, the Kadets -- it is from the words Constitutional Democrats which became abbreviated to Kadets -- remained as the only bourgeois party. All the bourgeois parties merged with the Kadets in 1917. The Kadets were in an alliance with the Social Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks. It was named at that time the coalition, not popular front as now, but coalition. We addressed the workers, and said to them: 'You must ask of your leaders, the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries, that they abandon their alliance with the bourgeoisie and that they enter into an alliance with us, and the Bolshevik workers are ready to fight with them together in a united front.' It was our policy. Every worker by and by understood our policy. They abandoned the Mensheviks and the Social Revolutionaries, and we became a genuine party of the masses at the turning point." (The Case of Leon Trotsky, p. 386.)

From this it is clear that Trotsky drew a straight line from the class-collaborationist bloc called "the coalition" that sought to derail the revolution in backward Russia and the "people's fronts" initiated by Moscow throughout the world in the mid-thirties.

It is true that Trotsky did not write a great deal about the specific problems of Latin America or about the differences that might be found between popular front formations in the imperialist countries and popular front formations in the colonial countries. What mainly concerned him was their similarities because it is precisely in these that the essence of the matter lies.

A few examples can be cited. In speaking of the decline of popular front governments in the imperialist countries just before the outbreak of World War II, Trotsky wrote:

"But in the colonial and semicolonial countries -- not only in China and India, but in Latin America -- the fraud of the 'people's fronts' still continues to paralyze the working masses, converting them into cannon-fodder for the 'progressive' bourgeoisie and in this way creating an indigenous political basis for imperialism." ("Manifesto of the Fourth International on the Imperialist War and the Proletarian World Revolution" in Writings of Leon Trotsky 1939-40, p. 39.)

It should be carefully noted that Trotsky viewed the popular front in the colonial and semicolonial countries as a vehicle for creating a political basis for imperialism. This is a specific aspect that ought to be explored. An illuminating paper might be written on it based on the experience in various countries in Latin America. Trotsky made his comment following the election of a popular front government in Chile in December 1938 in which Allende served as a minister. Some instructive lessons could be drawn from a comparison of the program, composition, and course of the popular front that was formed in Chile in 1936 and the program, composition, and course of the Broad Front formed in Uruguay in 1971.

Again in the alleged "special national situation" in Spain which the POUM used to justify entering the people's front there, Trotsky wrote:

"The Spanish bloc of the tops of the working class with the left bourgeoisie does not include anything 'national' for it does not differ in the least from the 'People's Front' in France, Czechoslovakia, Brazil or China." (New Militant, February 15, 1936, p. 3.)

Trotsky's concept is quite clear. He speaks rather sharply, saying that "it does not differ in the least." He was pointing to what was similar in the blocs -- their class-collaborationist essence and their aim of duping the workers and diverting them from independent struggle.

Trotsky's inclusion of the popular front in Brazil is of particular relevance from the viewpoint of our own discussion. The "National Liberation Alliance," formed in 1935, was proclaimed by the Stalinists to be an anti-imperialist front. Their claims sounded plausible since the front was organized under illegal conditions. Yet Trotsky disregarded even that in light of the concealed purpose of the bloc -- to create an indigenous political base for imperialism.

I hope that this is sufficient to show that Trotsky made no fundamental distinction between popular fronts in the imperialist countries and in the colonial world. To him, as to all of us at the time, they were class-collaborationist blocs, the essence of which was far from new.

Now what about the Broad Front in Uruguay? To analyze its nature, we must consider its program, its actions, its composition, and its leadership.

The program of the Broad Front was adopted at a meeting held February 5, 1971. The Broad Front took as its goal the formation of a multiclass coalition, including the "progressive sectors" of the bourgeoisie, on a common program. The objective of the coalition was stated to be the establishment of a new government via the electoral road. The projected government, according to the authors of the program, would carry out a series of reforms of a democratic and anti-imperialist nature. Later the Broad Front adopted an electoral platform promising a long list of reforms. The essence of the program and electoral platform was pure class collaborationism.

As to class composition, the Broad Front brought together "workers; students; professors; priests; Protestant ministers; small and middle producers; industrialists and businessmen; civilians and members of the armed forces; intellectuals and

artists...."

In political composition, the Broad Front included Stalinists, Social Democrats, various bourgeois and petty-bourgeois formations, including the Christian Democratic party, and split-offs from the Colorado and Blanco parties.

The leadership was placed in the hands of bourgeois elements, loyally and energetically supported by the Stalinists, trained since 1935 in the school of popular frontism.

As for its actions, the Broad Front was designed as an electoral bloc. Although its program talked about "permanent political activity" going beyond the 1971 election, the nature of this "activity" was not specified. A primary objective of the Broad Front was to instill or reinforce electoral illusions among the masses. This required painting the participation of the Broad Front in the bourgeois electoral process as an action of great moment, the manifestation of a movement of the people against "the imperialist power" and against the domination "of the oligarchy of middle men, bankers, and big landowners."

The campaign unquestionably aroused considerable enthusiasm. Unfortunately a good part of this was based on illusions, on confidence that something might be accomplished at the ballot box, on false hopes of winning the election. The truth is that the Broad Front was set up by a collection of petty-bourgeois leftists, trade-union bureaucrats, Stalinist and Social Democratic reformists, and bourgeois politicians on the make, who were dazzled by Allende's success in Chile and thought it might be repeated in Uruguay.

They played for the stake of emerging as saviours of Uruguayan capitalism in its hour of need. They deliberately established the Broad Front not to struggle but to contain the struggle of the masses by diverting them into the electoral arena. They did not form an action front projecting specific actions requiring specific agreements on the part of the participating organizations.

Of course it can be argued that the Broad Front was formed in response to an upsurge, in response to the fact that the workers, students, slum dwellers, and plebeian masses generally were intensifying their struggles. Precisely. This has always been the basis for popular fronts of any scope. They are formed to co-opt the mobilization of the masses, to advance the careers of reformists and bureaucrats, and to maintain the status quo.

In Uruguay the break with the two-party system is an indicator of the deep economic and social crisis racking the country and of the growing radicalization of the masses. The rejection of the two old parties is a sign of rising political consciousness among the masses. These are welcome developments. But it was the tendency to break from the two-party system that provided an opening for deployment of the Broad Front as an instrument of the national bourgeoisie and of imperialism. Real progress will begin when the masses break from the capitalist two-party system. That would mean rejection of a capitalist three-party or multiple-party system. This is what will give reality to the slogan of the revolutionary socialists calling for independent political action.

This brings me to the inconsistencies or ambiguities in the position taken by the PRT toward the Broad Front. You called on the Broad Front to undertake actions going beyond the electoral arena. This was correct from several points of view. Here I will

note only that it followed logically from your judgment that it was an anti-imperialist front. The urgings of the PRT met with no response, since the leaders of the Broad Front held a quite different view of its nature and its purpose.

The PRT at the same time proceeded as if the Broad Front were not an anti-imperialist front but could possibly be converted into one -- moreover one that would follow a line of independent political action. To achieve this would require wresting the leadership of the Broad Front from the hands of its bourgeois backers and their agents and placing it in the hands of leaders of the workers committed to independent political action. An appropriate slogan for this would have been "Throw out the bourgeois elements!"

The feasibility of such an attempt can be questioned, inasmuch as the founders of the Broad Front made sure -- as is always the case in such formations -- to keep a tight grip on the organizational machinery, and they were acutely alert to possible challenges from the left. To advance the slogan of throwing out the bourgeois elements would, however, have proved advantageous as part of the propagandistic efforts to expose the real nature of the Broad Front.

Nevertheless the PRT did not raise a slogan of this nature. No doubt that was because of the assumption that the Broad Front was an anti-imperialist front.

A further inconsistency was that in a certain way the PRT acted as if the Broad Front were a popular front. We noted with satisfaction that you leveled sharp attacks against the bourgeois leadership. You exposed the diversionary aims that motivated the formation of the Broad Front. In opposition to the program of the Broad Front calling for a coalition government, you called for a government of the workers and plebeian masses, that is, a government of the working class, the slum dwellers, and poor sectors of the petty bourgeoisie.

Yet, in contradiction to this, the PRT held that the national bourgeois candidates of the popular front were anti-imperialist and that "the electoral victory of the Broad Front would unquestionably create a more favorable situation in the interest of the working class."

The truth is that such a situation would prove highly ephemeral without the development of the working class's own independent mass struggle. And if the electoral victory were gained at the cost of that independent struggle, this would signify a disaster! Against any and all electoral blocs with the national bourgeoisie, the workers must develop their own independent struggle. This brings democratic gains for the masses and setbacks for imperialism as by-products.

The fact is that the anti-imperialist propaganda of the bourgeois candidates of the Broad Front amounted to a cruel hoax. Had these candidates won the election and been permitted to take office they would have conceded reforms only under heavy mass pressure, while they carried out their real task of derailing the mass movement.

Although the quotation is rather long, Trotsky's projection of what could happen in the case of India is worth considering in connection with this.

"The Stalinists cover up their policy of servitude to British, French and U.S.A. imperialism with the formula of 'People's Front'. What a mockery of the people! 'People's Front' is only a new name for that old policy, the gist of which lies in class collaboration, in a coalition between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. In every such coalition, the leadership invariably turns out to be in the hands of the right-wing, that is, in the hands of the propertied class. The Indian bourgeoisie, as has already been stated, wants a peaceful horse trade and not a struggle. Coalition with the bourgeoisie leads to the proletariat's abregating the revolutionary struggle against imperialism. The policy of coalition implies marking time on one spot, temporizing, cherishing false hopes, engaging in hollow maneuvers and intrigues. As a result of this policy disillusionment inevitably sets in among the working masses, while the peasants turn their backs on the proletariat, and fall into apathy. The German revolution, the Austrian revolution, the Chinese revolution and the Spanish revolution have all perished as a result of the policy of coalition.... The self-same danger also menaces the Indian revolution where the Stalinists, under the guise of 'People's Front', are putting across a policy of subordinating the proletariat to the bourgeoisie. This signifies, in action, a rejection of the revolutionary agrarian program, a rejection of arming the workers, a rejection of the struggle for power, a rejection of revolution.

"In the event that the Indian bourgeoisie finds itself compelled to take even the tiniest step on the road of struggle against the arbitrary rule of Great Britain, the proletariat will naturally support such a step. But they will support it with their own methods: mass meetings, bold slogans, strikes, demonstrations and more decisive combat actions, depending on the relationship of forces and the circumstances. Precisely to do this must the proletariat have its hands free. Complete independence from the bourgeoisie is indispensable to the proletariat, above all in order to exert influence on the peasantry, the predominant mass of India's population. Only the proletariat is capable of advancing a bold, revolutionary agrarian program, of rousing and rallying tens of millions of peasants and leading them in struggle against the native oppressors and British imperialism. The alliance of workers and poor peasants is the only honest, reliable alliance that can assure the final victory of the Indian revolution." ("An Open Letter to the Workers of India" in Writings of Leon Trotsky (1938-39), p. 38.)

In still another way, the PRT proceeded as if the Broad Front were a popular front. Against the slate of Broad Front candidates committed to class collaborationism and the objective of putting a coalition government in office, the PRT proposed a slate of worker candidates under the control of workers' organizations. The logic of this, naturally, was to run an alternative slate in opposition to the slate nominated by the class-collaborationist leaders of the Broad Front.

The PRT did considerable along this course, actually putting up a slate of worker candidates. Precisely here, however, the ambiguities of the PRT's electoral campaign became most clearly expressed. The slate of worker candidates for which the PRT campaigned was headed by the three top bourgeois candidates of the Broad Front.

I appreciate that the comrades of the PRT found it very distasteful to include these bourgeois candidates on their slate

and that they did so only because it was the price demanded of them by the organizers of the Broad Front if they wanted their permission to continue to work within the front. In short, the PRT considered it to be a tactical matter and felt that the price was not too high.

The determination of the PRT to take advantage of every possible opening and to avoid a sectarian or dogmatic attitude that could result in isolation from the masses is completely within the spirit of Trotskyism. However, on the particular decision to accept the terms laid down by the organizers of the Broad Front, I would like to advance three considerations:

1. It has been argued by way of analogy that Trotsky favored the tactic of the Chinese Communists entering the Kuomintang and that in the first stage of this experience he was opposed to them leaving. If the tactic was proper in relation to the Kuomintang why not in relation to the Broad Front?

Trotsky's real views on this question are, unfortunately, not well known. The following quotation from a letter that Trotsky wrote to Max Shachtman on December 10, 1930, makes clear what his stand was:

"You are quite right when you point out that the Russian Opposition, as late as the first half of 1927, did not demand openly the withdrawal from the Kuo Min Tang. I believe, however, that I have already commented on this fact publicly somewhere. I personally was from the very beginning, that is, from 1923, resolutely opposed to the Communist party joining the Kuo Min Tang, as well as against the acceptance of the Kuo Min Tang into the 'Kuomintern'. Radek was always with Zinoviev against me. The younger members of the Opposition of 1923 were with me almost to a man. Rakovsky was in Paris and not sufficiently informed. Up to 1926, I always voted independently in the Political Bureau on this question, against all the others. In 1925, simultaneously with the theses on the Eastern Chinese Railway which I have quoted in the Opposition press, I once more presented the formal proposal that the Communist party leave the Kuo Min Tang instantly. This was unanimously rejected and contributed a great deal to the baiting later on. In 1925 and 1927, I had uninterrupted conflicts with the Zinovievists on this question. Two or three times, the matter stood at the breaking point. Our center consisted of approximately equal numbers from both of the allied tendencies, for it was after all only a bloc. At the voting, the position of the 1923 Opposition was betrayed by Radek, out of principle, and by Piatakov, out of unprincipledness. Our faction (1923) [the faction formed in 1923 that made a bloc with the Zinovievists in 1926 -- JH] was furious about it, demanded that Radek and Piatakov be recalled from the center. But since it was a question of splitting with the Zinovievists, it was the general decision that I must submit publicly in this question and acquaint the Opposition in writing with my standpoint. And that is how it happened that the demand was put up by us so late, in spite of the fact that the Political Bureau and the Plenum of the Central Committee always contrasted my view with the official view of the Opposition. Now I can say with certainty that I made a mistake by submitting formally in this question. In any case, this mistake became quite clear only by the further evolution of the Zinovievists. At that time, the split with them appeared to the overwhelming majority of our faction as absolutely fatal. Thus, the manifesto [of the International Left Opposition on the Chinese question, issued late in 1930] in no way contradicts the facts when it contends that the

Russian Opposition, the real one, was against the Communist party joining the Kuo Min Tang. Out of the thousands of imprisoned, exiled, etc., hardly a single one was with Radek in this question. This fact too I have referred to in many letters, namely, that the great majority of the capitulators were not sure and firm in the Chinese and the Anglo-Russian questions. That is very characteristic!..." (Problems of the Chinese Revolution, 1932 edition, p. 19.)

2. When the organizers of the Broad Front laid down their anti-democratic proscription against any of the participants in the formation running an independent slate offering workers' candidates as an alternative to the top three bourgeois candidates, I anticipated that the PRT would surely denounce this stricture -- which was intended to muzzle and block any independent currents in the Broad Front -- and find a way to challenge the decree in a dramatic way, publicly refusing to obey it. Naturally, I could not visualize from a distance what tactical steps might be required to dramatize rejection of the decree. It was a considerable disappointment to learn that the PRT took the opposite course of merely protesting it and then abiding by it.

Was this a case of tactical considerations determining politics and even theoretical appreciation of the true nature of the Broad Front? In any case I think an error was committed that can prove costly, particularly if it goes unrecognized. Placing the names of Seregni, Crottogni, and Villar on the ballot of the PRT outweighed the verbal criticisms leveled against the three, for including them on the ballot was a way of telling the workers that it was correct to vote for these bourgeois candidates. In short, it was an action that signified political confidence in them and their campaign propaganda.

3. Rejection of a class-collaborationist electoral bloc with the bourgeoisie does not necessarily mean isolation from the masses. So long as the cadres of the PRT participate in the unions and other organizations of the working class, remain with the workers in the plants, and participate in their day-to-day struggles, they cannot be isolated.

If the cadres of the PRT gain a solid reputation as militants, their political opinions will be listened to with respect, even if what they say clashes with enthusiasms of the moment that are based on illusions fostered by the betrayers of the working class.

The main current task facing the PRT is to recruit potential cadres. In this the utmost clarity is required on all programmatic questions, above all on the class collaborationism that served as cement for the Broad Front.

To summarize: When the Broad Front was formed, it was completely correct for Trotskyists to say, "Yes, we will participate in all actions of a democratic or anti-imperialist nature." In saying this, however, it was just as imperative to say, "No, we will not participate in any electoral bloc designed to advance the interests of bourgeois candidates."

Our criticism is based on the failure to make this differentiation clear.

Let me repeat that we are fully in agreement with your determination to explore and take advantage of all possible openings. This includes your persistence in seeking discussions before the ranks of the Broad Front and in making specific proposals to the

Broad Front.

We also consider the intensity of your effort during the campaign to be a model. Particularly notable was the way you got out literature and improved your newspaper both in frequency, size, and appearance.

Comradely yours,
s/Joseph Hansen

Uruguay

The "Broad Front" Suffers Defeat, by Joseph Hansen

(From Intercontinental Press, December 13, 1971, pp. 1806-88.)

As of November 30, the outcome of the November 28 elections in Uruguay was still in doubt. The Colorado party held the lead with 575,690 votes as against 565,556 for the National party (Blancos) and 252,534 for the Broad Front (Frente Amplio).

Of the seven presidential candidates of the Colorados, Juan María Bordaberry, the successor handpicked by President Jorge Pacheco Areco, was in the lead. Wilson Ferreira Aldunate held the front position among the three candidates running on Blanco slates. With 10 percent of the vote still to be counted, it may take several weeks to determine which of the twins in Uruguay's two-party system won the presidency and control of the 129-seat parliament.

Although he quickly conceded defeat after seeing the early returns, General Liber Seregni Mosquera was perhaps the one most surprised by the defeat of the Broad Front. On November 26, the presidential candidate of the popular-front formation went on television and radio to give a victory speech, so certain was he that he would be swept into office.

Seregni's confidence evidently stemmed from his estimate of the meaning of the giant demonstration in Montevideo November 24 behind the banners of the Broad Front.

By all accounts it was the biggest turnout yet seen in Uruguay. The Montevideo press reported that half a million persons had joined in the march.¹ The Paris daily Le Monde reported 200,000 while the New York Times cut the figure to 100,000.

It was also an extremely spirited demonstration, reminding observers of the fervor at rallies in Havana in the early days of the Cuban revolution.

Slogans chanted by the more radical participants were readily picked up by tens of thousands of voices, swelling into a roar as they passed for miles along the line of march. Here are some of them:

"El pueblo armado jamás engañado!" (People in arms are never cheated.) "Por la tierra con Sendic!" (For land with Sendic [the leader of the Tupamaros].) "Al gobierno fascista el pueblo te responde con la revolución!" (The people reply to the fascist government with revolution.) "Ni yanquis ni fascista, América socialista!" (Neither Yankees nor fascist, for a socialist America.) "Lucha! Lucha! Lucha! No dejes de luchar por un gobierno obrero y popular!" (Fight! Fight! Fight! Don't stop fighting for a workers' government, workers' and people's.)

The size of the demonstration and its militant tone appeared to be in direct answer to the flood of lies and red-baiting that partisans of the Pacheco regime had engaged in to intimidate supporters of the Broad Front and to influence the vote.

However, the enthusiasm of the Montevideo demonstrators, who were quite youthful in the majority, was not registered at the polls. This was to be expected. The electorate, even when it includes the bulk of the working class, generally lags behind events, tending to register past moods and past relationships in the class struggle rather than the current reality. The voters in Montevideo who waited for hours in long lines to cast their

ballots on Sunday were noticeably older than the contingents that marched in the streets on Wednesday.

Another reason for the high hopes of the organizers of the Broad Front was the victory last year of a similar formation in Chile, the Unidad Popular (People's Unity) headed by Salvador Allende Gossens. In October 1970, a month after Allende's triumph, the first trial balloons were floated in Montevideo on making a similar try; and the response, particularly among intellectuals and circles influenced by the Communist party, showed that the effort would gain considerable support.

The main components of the Broad Front consisted of the Communist party, two factions that broke away from the Colorado and Blanco parties, the Christian Democrats, the Socialist party, a number of prominent intellectuals, and a gamut of groupings, ranging from unions to cultural associations.

Among the participating vanguard organizations were the Movimiento de Independientes "26 de Marzo" ("March 26" Movement of Independents, a formation representing the viewpoint of the Tupamaros), the Partido Obrero Revolucionario (Revolutionary Workers party headed by Juan Posadas, which is sometimes mistaken as Trotskyist because of its claims), and the Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores (Revolutionary Workers party, a Trotskyist grouping that has proclaimed its adherence to the Fourth International but that has not yet been accepted as a section).

The main architect of the Broad Front was the Communist party. Its objective was to divert the current upsurge into safe electoral channels. As proof positive that it hoped to play the role of saviour of the capitalist system rather than its destroyer, the Arismendi leadership of the CP made sure that the three leading candidates of the Broad Front would be acceptable to ruling circles in Uruguay. The ex-General Líber Seregni and Dr. Juan José Crottogini were nominated for the presidency and vice-presidency, and Dr. Hugo Villar for mayor of Montevideo.

As the Buenos Aires Trotskyist weekly La Verdad correctly noted in its issue of September 29, these nominations, to which "bourgeois circles reacted favorably," represented "another step" in structuring the Broad Front "as a variant of reformism, acceptable to the bourgeois system."³

In its political purpose and main structure (its subordination to a bourgeois leadership), the Broad Front constituted a Latin American variant of the popular front long utilized by the Stalinists and Social Democrats in wheeling and dealing with bourgeois parties in the electoral arena.

It is true that the Broad Front was not a mere replica of the popular fronts seen in Europe in the thirties. Like every political formation in Latin America that seeks popular support today, it stressed anti-imperialism.

Its thirty-point platform included the following planks: An "agrarian reform," the "nationalization of private banks," the "nationalization of the main firms engaged in foreign trade," and "energetic industrial action by the state, including nationalization of the meat-packing industry."

But fitting its platform to the radical mood of the Uruguayan

masses did not change the essence of the Broad Front. Like the popular fronts seen elsewhere in the world, it was designed to divert the masses from the road of revolutionary struggle.

The role played by the Tupamaros was of special interest. During the latter part of the electoral campaign, they desisted from guerrilla warfare so as not to embarrass the Broad Front.

La Verdad said of this: "The immediate strategy of the Tupamaros would itself seem to help open up and smooth the road to an electoral triumph for the popular front."

Quite a few of the groupings participating in the Broad Front ran their own slates of candidates (save for the presidency and vice-presidency), which was possible under Uruguay's democratic electoral system. But the Tupamaros, although under heavy pressure to follow the others in this, refused to run a slate of their own.

Through the Movimiento de Independientes "26 de Marzo" they stated publicly on several occasions that they were leaving it up to their followers to vote for whatever slates they wanted to.

For instance, in the November 26 issue of the Montevideo weekly *Marcha*, they explained why they were not running their own candidates. "We are independents. And we are organizing in that way. We do not aspire to electoral burdens. We merely support the common candidates of the Front."

They called attention to a previous declaration in which they had explained that they consider it "more important to organize and train the ranks of the people for the coming decisive struggles than to divert forces in selecting figures to be proposed for consideration in the electoral contest."

The Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores (PRT) followed a different course. The PRT began only two years ago as a very small grouping of Trotskyists. The intensity of their activities would do credit to a group many times their size, and they have made encouraging progress, including establishing a press of their own. During the latter part of the election campaign, besides huge quantities of leaflets, they published their paper Tendencia Revolucionaria (Revolutionary Tendency) as a six-to-eight-page weekly.

When the Broad Front was first projected in October 1970, the PRT decided to take an active attitude toward it. In the first phase, in the numerous meetings that were held all over to discuss the issues on which the proposed front should take a stand, the PRT militants did two things: (1) They argued that the platform should be decided through a democratic discussion among the ranks. (2) They presented the program of Trotskyism, stressing democratic and transitional demands in particular.

They gained a favorable hearing, but were not strong enough to block the Communist party from imposing on the Broad Front the kind of platform it wanted.

Similarly on the question of the candidates of the Broad Front, the PRT advocated nominating workers. They stressed the need for labor to run its own candidates and strongly criticized the Communist party for not appealing to the Convención Nacional de Trabajadores (National Workers Convention, the big trade union) to join the Broad Front and run a slate of its candidates

on an independent basis.

Again, the PRT was not strong enough to carry its position, although it received a favorable hearing at the meetings where its speakers took the floor.

When the architects of the Broad Front had settled on Seregni and Crottogini, the PRT decided to run a slate of its own. Under the Uruguayan electoral system this was possible only as a sub-slate (sub-lema) of the Broad Front.

Here the PRT ran into a snag. The top committee of the Broad Front ruled that while any grouping could run what candidates it wished for local offices or as senators or deputies, all groupings were barred from running any candidates for president and vice president of the country and mayor of Montevideo except Seregni, Crottogini, and Villar.

This meant that in contrast to the Colorado party with its seven presidential candidates and the National party with its three, the Broad Front would appear on the ballot with only one presidential candidate -- Seregni.

The ruling was highly undemocratic. Its purpose was purely factional, since all votes cast for rival candidates of the Broad Front would have counted against the Colorado and National parties. The ruling was intended to block vanguard groupings like the PRT from exercising their right to gain a line on the ballot that would indicate their proletarian opposition to Seregni, thereby complicating things for the publicity experts engaged in converting the nondescript figure of Seregni into the "choice of the people."

The PRT decided to bow to this decision since to defy it would have meant exclusion from the ballot. On the ballots listing their slate of workers' candidates, they included the names of Seregni, Crottogini, and Villar under the slogan, "La liberación de los trabajadores es obra de los trabajadores mismos" (The freeing of the workers is the task of the workers themselves).

In my opinion, this was an error. More than a tactical question was involved, since objectively to issue a ballot with Seregni's name on it was to ask voters to vote for him, that is, vote for the bourgeois leadership of the Broad Front. It would have been better to try to make a scandal over the undemocratic ruling and to avoid issuing a ballot that included the name of a figure whose program was in complete opposition to that of the PRT.

It is true that from abroad it is difficult to determine what weight Seregni's name actually represented in Uruguay. Among the groupings that ran slates of their own candidates in addition to Seregni, Crottogini, and Villar, one notices the stress they place in their political advertisements on the candidates identifying their grouping as such and the completely subordinate position they give to Seregni. In many instances his name is not even included.

It seems, too, that the ballot designations are discounted to a certain extent by the voters. The Broad Front itself appeared on the ballot only by courtesy of the Christian Democratic party, which made its standing place on the ballot available to the Broad Front. Thus every ballot of all the Broad Front slates

starts out with the line: "Partido Democrata Cristiano."

But the Christian Democrats were so far from thinking that this meant an automatic vote for their party, that they ran their own slate, designating it in big type as Partido Democrata Cristiano, Lista 808; and they campaigned for votes on that basis.

In addition, it must be noted that in its election literature, the PRT did not campaign at all for Seregni. A good example of what they said can be found in the article from Tendencia Revolucionaria published on the eve of the election, which is included elsewhere in this issue.

Nevertheless, the objective meaning of including the names of Seregni, Crottogini, and Villar on the slate of Candidatos Obreros (Lista 1968) remains.

In Wall Street, the defeat of the Broad Front was received with a sigh of relief. The New York Times in an editorial December 3 saw the outcome as giving "one of the traditional parties a new five-year opportunity to transform the country." As an afterthought the editors added: "It may be the last chance for the Uruguayan democracy."

It is doubtful that Uruguayan capitalism will win a five-year breathing space. The deep economic crisis that has racked the country for the past fifteen years continues unabated.

The Uruguayan workers will hardly wait for a half a decade to go through another experience with a broad front. It is much more likely that they will pour into the streets by the hundreds of thousands as they did on November 24 -- but this time to change the entire system. And they will do it in perhaps less than the ten days that it took the Russian workers in 1917.

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1. The impressiveness of this figure can be judged from the fact that Montevideo's estimated population in 1968 was 1,348,000. The estimated population of the entire country in 1970 was only 2,900,000.
 2. This was listed erroneously in an article that appeared in translation in our October 25 issue (p. 916) as "July 26 Movement."
 3. See the October 25, 1971, issue of Intercontinental Press.