

Answer to "Let's Discuss Political Differences, Not Old Wives' Tales"

Introductory ~~Notes~~ Preface

[On August 17, 1973 the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction issued a declaration entitled "The New Situation in the Fourth International." This statement, explaining the reasons why the previously-formed Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency had converted itself into a faction, was published in the International Internal Discussion Bulletin, vol. X, no. 15, October, 1973.

The IEC Majority Tendency reply to the ITF declaration was published in IIDB, vol. X, no. 20, October, 1973. It is entitled, and is sometimes referred to in the article below as "Let's Discuss..." "Let's Discuss Political Differences, Not Old Wives' Tales,"

The following article by Gus Horowitz is based on a report given to the SWP Political Committee on November 5, 1973, in response to the IEC Majority document. It was prepared for publication in January, 1974, but publication was deferred in order to concentrate In the article below, a attention on the disputed political questions. few references are

made to events that transpired between the November 5, 1973 meeting of the SWP Political Committee and the February, 1974 world congress. These are

enclosed within brackets.]

[The Content of the IEC Majority Document]

PART I The content of the IEC Majority Document

~~The careful reader of the IEC Majority Document~~

A. The IEC Majority Avoids Answering the LTF.

~~Majority Document is not a reply to the LTF's~~ # / For

Leninist Trotskyist Faction,

a document purporting to be a reply to the ~~document~~ "LTF's Discuss. . ."

spends remarkably little time replying to the actual substance of

the serious charges made in the LTF declaration. In fact, in its

the IEC Majority document

entire 10 pages, ~~the document~~ completely avoids

(cited by) (to prove)

discussing the main evidence ~~the LTF~~ that the

IEC Majority, or at least a key part of it, has been operating

as an undeclared faction in the Fourth International; that part

of this secret faction was pursuing a split course; and that this

development posed a grave danger to the unity of the International.

Yet it was for these very reasons that the Leninist Trotskyist Tendency decided to convert itself into a faction.

~~the existence of the secret faction~~

~~existence of the secret faction~~

The Barzman letter ~~showed~~ showed that the IEC Majority, without openly saying so, has an organized structure that goes far beyond the norms

of an ideological tendency: ~~it screens applicants~~
for membership; it requires discipline; it has a steering committee
empowered to take action in the name of the IEC Majority Tendency
as a whole.

Such a structure is the distinguishing mark of a faction.

[The IEC Majority document does not speak to this point. Not so much
as one word. All it does is issue a simple denial. "We have
never dreamed of forming a faction. We are and we remain a tendency.
We are a tendency that refuses to recruit widely. . ." (page 2?).

Reading this, one can only conclude that either the IEC Majority
leaders do not know the difference between a tendency and a faction,
or else they deliberately choose to misrepresent the facts.

~~Instead of responding forthrightly to the evidence presented
in the IEC declaration, the "Let's Discuss. . ." document
attempts a double-polemical maneuver: a diversionary tactic coupled
with an attempt to turn the tables.~~

(The IEC Majority document mounts)

a vigorous defense
of Comrade Barzman's right to hold discussions and correspond with
the other members of his grouping in the SWP, and for the right of all SWP members
to adopt any position
[and for the right of all SWP members]

United Secretariat members of the IEC Majority to collaborate with the SWP minority in producing documents on American questions. That too was perfectly in order. ^(But it) ~~was~~ impermissible ~~to~~ to have done ^{this} without informing the leadership of the SWP, ~~_____~~

^(There) had been no previous expression of differences on ^(American) ~~_____~~ questions within the United Secretariat. ^(It was deceitful to let us go on thinking that) no such differences existed.

Such dissimulation violates Leninist norms, which require open, straightforward functioning ^(on political questions) by all members, tendencies and factions.

The IEC Majority's method of operation cut across trust and collaboration. If ^{it} ~~_____~~ were to become the usual standard of conduct, it would breed continual suspicion, sub rosa clique formation, and ^{cut across the atmosphere of} ~~_____~~ principled discussion.

Instead of attempting to respond to the serious charges such as the above, the IEC Majority document sidesteps the issue and defends what has not been challenged: the right of the SWP minority to collaborate internationally. Such diversionary tactics may be appropriate in a debating society, where all sorts of polemical tricks are employed as a substitute for serious discussion.

They have no place in the Fourth International.

Furthermore, ^(The IEC Majority document) ~~_____~~ borders on deliberate
^(by implying)
misrepresentation ~~_____~~

~~_____~~ that the SWP opposes the right of its members to
collaborate internationally if they have a minority point of view.

~~_____~~ ^{Even} worse is the insinuation that the SWP is
xenophobic and that its membership is incapable of discussing political
questions objectively. [#] The SWP majority is accused on page 20 ^{of "Let's Discuss..."} of

having ~~_____~~ attacked the SWP minority for "entering into a so-called
'foreign alliance'" and for having considered the development of an
opposition point of view the result of "'foreign scheming.'" The
SWP leadership is accused of having used the Barzman letter "to evoke,
on the eve of the SWP convention, passionate, irrational reactions,
a closing of the ranks around the leadership in the face of a
threat that allegedly confronted the party, a threat created by an
international 'secret factinn' that supposedly found unscrupulous
people in the SWP who would agree to form an alliance with foreigners
and engage in a plot against the leadership and the party." (My
emphasis.)

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It is inconceivable that anyone could believe this. Even without firsthand knowledge of the SWP, how could anyone believe that Marxist internationalists, members of a Trotskyist party, would be swayed by xenophobic demagogy and refuse to listen objectively to the views of comrades in other countries? Yet this is precisely what the IEC Majority charges.

Of course, this malicious insinuation is completely groundless. Even the word, "foreigners," and the quotation marks placed around it in the IEC Majority document are ~~fabrications~~ ^{fabrications --} they are entirely the product of the imagination of the author of "Let's Discuss..." The fact that the leaders of the IEC Majority would stoop to such a low level of argument surely testifies to the poverty of their response to the LTF. (It also testifies to the low ~~esteem~~ ^{esteem} in which they ~~must~~ ^{must} hold the members of the SWP.)

As it does in the case of the Barzman letter, the IEC Majority ignores the three other major pieces of evidence cited in the LTF declaration as proof of the IMT's secret factional activity: 1. the decision

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- on recognition of the PRT(Combatiente) at the last world congress;
2. the "Domingo letter" written by Livio Maitan in November, 1970;
 3. the "Letter to the PRT(Combatiente)" written in October, 1972.

These items show the origin and development of the ~~secret~~
~~secret~~ faction. It began first as a rather loose and informal leadership grouping which made certain key decisions and took some important actions without informing the International leadership as a whole. The logic of such a grouping -- and this is a law of politics -- is to assume a more and more organized form. That is what happened ^{as} the international debate deepened.

~~It breached Leninist organizational principles for this activity to be kept hidden from the international whole. The Leninist norm of open, collaborative functioning was disregarded. This is the characteristic mode of operation of a secret faction.~~

At the last world congress, the PRT (Combatiente) was recognized as the official section in Argentina. Although the PRT(C) was not a Trotskyist organization, the leaders of the majority position on Latin America hid this fact from the delegates at the Congress, in the hope that over time they would be able to progressively assimilate the PRT(C). The LTF declaration has pointed out the gravity of this leadership default: ". . .the majority leaders acted in the manner of a secret faction, not informing the delegates at the Ninth World Congress of their real views and calculations. This unprincipled way of proceeding helped pave the way for the subsequent disaster. . ."

~~_____~~

The IEC Majority reply does not ^(respond to) ~~_____~~ this. It does not state whether or not it considers secretive methods of leadership functioning ~~is~~ permissible in a Leninist organization.

The "Domingo Letter" of 1970 and the "Letter to the PRT (Combatiente)" of 1972 are very similar. In both cases, a section of the International leadership, without consulting or even informing the leadership as a whole, undertook the circulation of important political documents concerning Latin America to a privately selected group of comrades. These documents included factional attacks on Comrade Moreno ^{and his party} (the PRT(Verdad), and ^{later} the PST of Argentina). Neither the IEC nor the United Secretariat nor the Argentine sympathizing section were informed about the existence or contents of these documents, although the IEC was meeting for discussions about Latin America only days after these documents were written.

If selective circulation of such "private letters" was permissible, then the leadership bodies of the International could never function on the basis of mutual trust and collaboration. There would always be the lurking suspicion that some were secretly maneuvering behind the backs of others. And retaliatory preventive action" would become ~~the~~ the normal state of affairs. Warring cliques, secret factions, and unprincipled combinations would all be encouraged.

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Such methods of leadership functioning are alien to Leninism; and in both cases, the SWP wrote letters to the United Secretariat, pointing out what was wrong, and calling for a reversal of the dangerous methods that were being employed by the United Secretariat majority.

Long experience in the workers movement has shown the need for scrupulously high standards in a Leninist organization. We were particularly concerned that the leaders of the United Secretariat Majority would fail to learn from these past mistakes, and thus ~~might~~ repeat and exacerbate them.

It is now clear that instead of calling a halt, a grouping within the United Secretariat continued to operate in the same manner. This

reached the point, as revealed in the Barzman letter, [of the IMT becoming] a structured grouping with membership requirements, financial commitments, discipline, and a formally established steering committee.



These are the main pieces of evidence pointing to the existence, origin and development of the secret faction. On all of these points the IEC Majority document is either completely silent or evades giving a plain reply.

Nor does the "Let's Discuss. . ." document respond to the evidence, as revealed in the Barzman letter, that at least a part of the secret faction is favorable to a split in the Fourth International.

The evidence is incontrovertible.

In fact, since the publication of the LTF declaration, further verification of this evidence has come to light, ~~in the event that~~

~~Particularly revealing is the planned split from~~
Particularly revealing is the planned split from the Canadian section by supporters of the IEC Majority. ~~Particularly~~

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B. The IEC Majority Attempts to Turn the Tables

Sidestepping the central issue is not the only polemical trick employed by the IEC Majority document. Another of its favorite devices is the attempt to turn the tables, accusing

the supporters of the LTF of ^{being the ones} conducting themselves in an improper factional way. The SWP is singled out for the brunt of the attack. In fact, the IEC Majority document unabashedly suggests an identity between the SWP and the LTF; this is a gratuitous insult to the supporters of the LTF in other countries who ~~are the majority~~ form a majority of the LTF.

Rather than answering each of these accusations against the SWP, I will respond only to four of the most important. These accusations are the following: 1. that the SWP leadership attempted to prevent an objective political discussion in the SWP; 2. that the SWP ^{branded} ~~is~~

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~~its minority disloyal for adhering to the IEC Majority Tendency,~~
 and violated Trotskyist norms by refusing this minority representation
 on the ^(SWP) National Committee; 3. that the SWP has formally associated
 the entire party to the LTF, violating the rights of the minority
 party members who do not wish to be part of the LTF; 4. that the
 SWP's committment of resources to the world movement is minimal,
 falling far below its potential.

Each of these accusations is false. Let us take them up one
 by one.

1. The IEC Majority document accuses the SWP leadership of dealing
 with the Barzman letter in a way designed to evoke "passionate,
 irrational reactions" on the eve of the SWP convention for the purpose
 of "preventing the great majority of SWP members from studying the
 political positions of the SWP minorities and the international
 majority." (pp. 20-21)

The facts show the exact opposite. Far from trying to prevent
 the membership from studying the International debate, the SWP leadership
 has made a vigorous effort to maximize the political discussion in the
 party.

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For example, the SWP has taken responsibility for the publication of the International Internal Discussion Bulletin in English. It is well known in the world movement that articles submitted to the IIDB are translated promptly, published and circulated to the entire SWP membership and to the English-speaking organizations of the world movement. In addition to new material, the documents from the last world congress and all the ~~the~~ discussion since then have been reprinted to make them available to the many new ~~members~~ ^{Comrades} who would not have had the opportunity to obtain them before. The members of the SWP are continually encouraged to study this material and make up their own minds about it.

In addition, the SWP publishes an Internal Information Bulletin, which often includes informational documents relevant to the discussion in the world movement, but which are not published in the IIDB. The SWP members are also encouraged to read Intercontinental Press, which carries news of the world movement regularly, and which is an indispensable aid in giving comrades access to information on world politics, which is necessary for a thorough discussion in the ^{Fourth} International.

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[redacted], The circulation of this large bulk of material was no hasty, last-minute affair, ^{as is all that can be hoped for in other languages. The English language material} [redacted] has been circulating for years, ^(and) [redacted] the comrades have had a chance to study the question at length.

Organized discussion on the questions facing the International has also been ^(substantial) [redacted] in the SWP. [redacted] In fact, the August, 1973

SWP convention was the third SWP convention since the last world

congress where international questions were on the agenda and dis-

cussed. And a fourth, special convention ^(has been scheduled for) [redacted] December, 1973.

When the ^(internal bulletin was opened up) [redacted] for written pre-convention discussion [redacted]

[redacted] by ^(call) [redacted] SWP [redacted] members, it was obvious

that the membership had assimilated this large volume of material, had thought about it, and had discussed it seriously. Thirty-five

[redacted] internal SWP discussion bulletins were published prior to the

August, 1973 convention. These 35 bulletins contained 194 articles

totalling 1,033 printed pages -- the equivalent of ten books of 250

pages each! The vast majority of articles were written by rank-and-file

members of the party. Ninety-one of these articles dealt with issues

relevant to the dispute in the world movement, and more than half of

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these (47) represented minority positions held by a very small percentage of the party membership.

It is ^{worthwhile to note} [redacted] how favorably this compares with the ^{grossly deficient} record in French, [redacted] especially since supporters of the IEC Majority have been in the leadership in the French-speaking sections and bear the responsibility for organizing a serious discussion

in the membership. [To learn the truth on this matter, [redacted]

[redacted] ^{see} the document ^{entitled} [redacted] Against the Stream: A Contribution to the International Debate.

[This document has been translated into English and appears in SWP Internal Information Bulletin ^{no. 2 in 1974} - G.H., September, 1974.]

The discussion of the Barzman letter [redacted]

[redacted] did not cut across the political discussion in the SWP. To the contrary, ^(appearing in bulletin no. 27) it came very late in the debate, after most of the oral discussion had taken place in the local party units, after most of the written preconvention discussion had been circulated, and after the political issues had been made thoroughly clear to all. Only then was the Barzman letter raised in the discussion. The Barzman

letter brought to the fore an important question for the International.

The question of Leninist organizational norms.

[redacted] could not be ignored. It had to be discussed. But discussion of

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th s question by no means overshadowed the political discussion.

2. The IEC Majority says that the SWP leadership accused the SWP minority of having committed disloyal acts for collaborating with the IEC Majority Tendency ("entering into a so-called 'foreign alliance,'" is the way the unrestrained author of "Let's Discuss. . ." puts it.)

Yes, the SWP minority was accused of having committed disloyal acts; but joining politically with the IEC Majority Tendency was never put in this category. The disloyal acts of the SWP minority consisted of such niceties as refusing to give financial support to the party; refusing to accept assignments or otherwise engage in political activity under the direction of the party; as a group, refusing to function internally in an open manner according to party norms (for example, their previously cited refusal to inform the party that several comrades of the SWP minority were on the steering committee of the IEC Majority). All of these acts of the SWP minority are out of keeping with SWP standards of loyal conduct, and specifically violate the organizational principles of the SWP, as adopted in 1965 and reaffirmed ever since.

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Do the IEC Majority leaders approve of this method of functioning by ~~the~~^{their} American supporters? Do they consider such conduct to be proper for loyal party members? Those are the questions that should have been answered before hurling their unfounded accusations at the SWP.

These facts about the conduct of the SWP minority lie behind the decision not to give them representation on the SWP National Committee, a decision vehemently denounced by the IEC Majority.

This decision was out of the ordinary. It is the usual practice in the SWP to give National Committee representation to minority views, even if the minority is very small -- 7.5% of the membership in this case. The SWP fully intends to continue that tradition.

But holding a minority view does not automatically give one a right to representation in the elected leadership. One must also merit election to the party's leading body. One must maintain a standard of conduct and have a record of party-building activity and leadership to warrant being chosen to such a responsibility. The delegates ~~to~~^{to} the SWP convention felt that the long and well-documented record of disloyal acts by this minority -- inactivity, financial

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sabotage, repeated violation of [redacted] party norms, etc.--

Of particular concern was the ^{ET} secret factional methods of operation.
disqualified them as party leaders. Despite this, the convention

was willing to give this minority representation on the National

Committee if they had indicated in any way that they would conduct

themselves henceforth according to the standards set down in the

party's organizational principles. The SWP minority comrades

refused to do so. That is the basis for the decision not to place

them on the National Committee. [These decisions are documented in

the "Report From the Nominating Commission," presented by Wendy

Reisner, SWP Internal Information Bulletin, December 1973 [redacted]
(no. 7 in 1973) -- G.H., September, 1974]

A final word is in order on this point. The presiding committee

[redacted] of the SWP convention discussed this matter after it

became known that the Nominating Commission would recommend to the

delegates that nobody from the minority be elected to the new

National Committee. The party leadership was well aware that if

this were done, some supporters of the IEC Majority might try to

manufacture a scandal in other countries, where the facts about

the SWP convention were not known, and the convention decision

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could be misrepresented as a vindictive measure taken against dissenters. The SWP leadership considered whether it would be wise to recommend placing these comrades on the National Committee, simply to avoid having to answer a horror story. It was our considered opinion that it was ^{far} more important for the education of Trotskyist cadres to maintain proper Bolshevik standards of conduct as a prerequisite for election to the SWP National Committee than to avoid the unpleasant business of answering gossip.

^(Sure)
[redacted] enough, the IEC Majority has published its horror story and tried to create a scandal over this matter. ^(We will publish) [redacted] the Report from the Nominating Commission and ^(comrades can) judge for themselves.

3. Next in the litany of unfounded accusations against the SWP is the charge that the SWP has formally associated the entire organization to the Leninist Trotskyist Faction, violating the rights of SWP members who disagree with the LTF, or who do not wish to adhere to it. (page 25) This charge is deduced from the following motion passed at the SWP convention:

"The convention proposes to the Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency that in the light of the new developments it discuss converting itself from a tendency to a faction."

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The IEC Majority document recommends a rereading of this motion. Fine. But no matter how often you read it and reread it, the motion is perfectly in order. It stands as a statement of position on the political and organizational questions facing the International. That is all. It is not a declaration of organizational affiliation. The IEC Majority's deduction is unwarranted.

The IEC Majority, however, goes much further than this,

^(accusing) ^(leadership) ^(party)
[redacted] the SWP of utilizing [redacted] resources [redacted]
[redacted] for factional purposes.

This accusation is truly base.

The SWP does not have a policy of putting party resources at the disposal of any tendency or faction. And "resources," by the way, is not the same as "finances." We rate cadres as our most important resource.

The resources of the SWP are used only for party activity, that is, to implement the political line of the SWP as decided upon by majority vote at SWP national conventions and as carried forward on that basis by the elected national leadership bodies of the party. Party resources are used for normal party activities such as office space and equipment, publications, staff, travel, etc.

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Travel includes international travel for the purpose of observing the activities of the world movement, observing the activities of the world movement, observing the activities of other groups in the world movement, engaging in public speaking tours, reporting important events for the publications, engaging in leadership consultations, and other such activities which are part of the normal functioning of any revolutionary party. This type of activity has been the standard practice of all groups in the world Trotskyist movement, and remains so!

The SWP convention also adopted the following motion: "The convention instructs and empowers the incoming National Committee to use all the forces and resources at its command to struggle for a democratic world congress and a Trotskyist Fourth International."

The IEC Majority quotes this motion and concludes that it amounts to factional use of party resources. That is completely and totally false. This motion means precisely what it says, and no more.

For example, in addition to publishing the International Internal

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Discussion Bulletin in ^(English) ~~English~~ for use throughout the world

(some 4,000 copies of each issue, published without cost to the world movement), the SWP is also putting resources into the publication of the Spanish-language edition of the IIDB, the publication of which is a prerequisite for a democratic world congress. Activities such as that fall within the scope of the convention motion. ^{We} consider these activities part of our moral obligation to the world Trotskyist movement.

What about expenses specifically incurred by any of our cadres in support of the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction? This would include expenses for faction mailings and faction meetings, and similar faction activities. The SWP does not devote any finances to this. Many SWP members have joined the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction, and have pledged financial support to the faction. It is from voluntary contributions like these that the faction expenses are met, not from the SWP budget.

In regard to this latter point, our policy is in conformity with the declaration of the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction. Point no. 5, listed under the heading, "Structure of the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction," says the following: "Members of the faction must conduct themselves in a completely loyal way in sections of the Fourth

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International or sympathizing organizations, maintaining their activities and financial obligations in an exemplary way."

~~_____~~ I stress that in the SWP the supporters of the LTF must not lower their financial obligations to the party in order to contribute to the faction. They must continue their pledges to the party, just as before joining the faction. Any contributions they make to the faction are in addition to their obligations to the party, not in place of such obligations.

This policy stands in marked contrast to that of the supporters of the IEC Majority in the SWP. These comrades have lowered their pledges drastically -- on the grounds that they had to contribute to their own tendency. In other words, their ~~_____~~ ^{fraction} contributions came first, and the ~~_____~~ ^{SWP} came second.

As long as the IEC Majority ^{has} raised the subject, it might ^{make} throw some light on what they consider to be proper if they would explain to the entire world movement just how they find the resources for their international "tendency" activities. And they will have to do a little better than to repeat the ingenuous theme of "Let's Discuss. . ." I hope they don't expect us to really believe that

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a group which "never dreamed of forming a faction" and which "refuses to recruit widely" naturally has no need to worry about resources for its activities.

4. Finally comes the scurrilous accusation that the SWP is "devoting resources to ~~the~~ their world activities that are not in accord with their considerable total resources." (page 24) The IEC Majority sums up its allegation about the SWP policy as follows: "no resources for an effective international center, no resources to ~~enable~~ enable a tendency to meet, but plenty of resources to the minority's faction struggle." (page 25)

The IEC Majority offers not a shred of evidence to prove this most serious charge. They cannot. Their accusation is totally false.

Moreover, for obvious reasons, this subject cannot be discussed ^(in detail). The accusers cannot publish any "evidence," nor can the accused reply. So why bring up an allegation like this? All it does is insinuate the existence of a scandal and poison the atmosphere -- hardly conducive to a discussion of political differences.

Even though comrades around the world have no access to documented records on such matters, there is one verifiable fact that should be

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noted. Up until now there has been no mention, in United Secretariat minutes or any other formal records of the International that there was ever any openly stated disagreement on this matter. There has been no formal challenge to the present allocation of resources by any group in the world movement. Surely, if there was a serious default of Bolshevik norms on such a serious matter as this, one would expect at the minimum that someone would have previously registered their disapproval of what was happening.

It is well-known in the International that after the last world congress, unnecessary frictions had begun to develop in the functioning of the international leadership. The minutes of the 1971 IEC meeting indicate that this matter was discussed, and steps were taken to rectify the situation and reestablish collaborative relations in the international center, which had broken down in the previous period. The attempt began to work well for a while. In that atmosphere of improving collaboration there was no problem in reaching agreement about the obligations of each section and sympathizing organization. While nobody since then has changed the level or nature of their contribution to the work of the world movement, the leaders

The moral credit that the SWP has received for its activities such as publication of the Journal of Intercontinental Press has not been challenged!

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of the IEC Majority now make a factional interpretation of a situation which they had previously found to be satisfactory.

The organizational friction on this point is just a reflection of the deepening political differences. In other circumstances, the leaders of the IEC Majority would surely be able to see ^{this.} It is a regrettable disservice to the entire Fourth International that they now publish such shameful factional charges as ^{their} contribution to the international discussion.

The IEC Majority's attempt to turn the tables ranges around the world, from Spain to Australia, from Uruguay to Britain. In trying to divert attention from the main points of the LTF declaration, the IEC Majority throws up a smokescreen of horror stories, all designed to shift the blame for any factionalism onto the LTF. Yet most comrades cannot possibly be familiar with the facts in each specific situation. How are they to judge?

An accurate judgment can be made by contrasting the two methods. The main contention in the LTF declaration is that the IEC Majority Tendency, or at least a core of it, has functioned as an organized grouping, whose existence, structure, and aims have still not been

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fully revealed to the International, and that this secret faction includes a split-minded wing. The main evidence backing up these assertions is contained in documentation available to all comrades.

The main evidence remains ~~unanswered,~~ and is irrefutable.

By way of contrast, the IEC Majority cites several dozen incidents of alleged wrongdoing by supporters of the LTF -- without even bothering, in most cases, to offer a semblance of proof for its allegations.

Every single one of the IEC Majority's accusations against the supporters of the LTF is false. But it ~~is~~ fruitless and time-consuming to ~~attempt to respond to~~ horror stories ~~(point by)~~ point, since the devotees of this kind of argument merely throw up new horror stories whenever the old ones wear out.

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[The Significance of the IEC Majority Document]

Part II

The Significance of the IEC Majority Document

[The Significance of the IEC Majority Document]

The IEC Majority document

~~is~~ ^[s] represents a retreat from the spirit of the

unanimous 10-point statement adopted by the United Secretariat on

September 19, 1973. That statement, taking note of the fear of a

potential split in the International, ^(itemized) ~~the~~ [itemized] the preconditions

for an authoritative world congress and made a series of recommendations designed to prevent any undue sharpening of the atmosphere.

Among these recommendations were provisions for continuing the discussion on several questions after the world congress. Given this

leadership initiative by the United Secretariat, it should have

been obvious that all comrades were called upon to conduct themselves,

in their polemics as well as in their actions, in the most responsible

manner. [#] Instead of following that ^(guideline) ~~the~~ IEC Majority ^(responded) ~~the~~

^(by) ~~pouring out~~ ^(this deluge) ~~of~~ unfounded accusations and misrepresentations

against the LTF. The effect of this document is contrary

to the intent of the unanimous United Secretariat statement. Its

extremely factional tone threatens to ^(heat) ~~heat~~ up the atmosphere, to

close minds to the ^(need) [need] of continuing political debate, and to encourage those who have few scruples about provoking a split.

To grasp how serious the matter is, one need only stop and consider what would happen if the international discussion were to degenerate into a series of charges and counter^[c]charges along the lines of the IEC Majority document.

Another very disquieting sign in the IEC Majority document is its concept of democratic centralism.

The IEC Majority has raised this issue ~~_____~~ from time to time, but unfortunately ^(it has) ~~_____~~ ^{never} ~~_____~~ clearly ^{spelled} ~~_____~~ out ^(its position.) ~~_____~~

~~_____~~
(The differences are somewhat obscure, because) both sides state that they favor democratic centralism and a strong international center. Yet the IEC Majority accuses the LTF of holding a federalist and administrative concept of international organization.

On certain aspects of this debate, particularly concerning the nature of the international center, the IEC Majority document

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[introducing clarity]

(introducing clarity)

makes very little headway in [redacted] They charge

the LTF with having an administrative concept of the center; but

nowhere in "Let's Discuss..." do they spell out ~~concrete~~

the differences between

[the differences between]

and the LTF concepts

their own concept of the center. In fact, the

the closest they ^(ever) come to presenting

[and the LTF concept]

concrete proposals is [redacted]

[the closest they ever come to presenting]

[redacted] in the concluding section of the IEC draft

political resolution, which outlines "Specific tasks of the Fourth

International in the forthcoming period." (IIDB, vol. X, no. 20, pp. 18-19)

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[What do we read here? That the

International should carry out solidarity campaigns with various

struggles around the world, should campaign in defense of ^victims

of repression and in defense of workers' rights, should expose be-

trayals by Moscow and Peking, should carry out theoretical analysis

on some important questions, and should expand ^{its} publications program,

~~Confidential~~

(Fine) [Fine.]

~~the LTF political position~~ But if that is all that the IEC

Majority can say when it gets specific, then ^(what is) ~~what is~~ [what is]

all the fuss about? ^(How does this show that the IEC Majority stands) ~~for~~ for a strong center while ~~maintaining~~

^{holds} the LTF federalist and administrative concepts? [How does this show that the IEC Majority stands]

So, unfortunately, the differences expressed by the IEC Majority on this issue ~~are~~ still remain somewhat obscure. Hopefully the IEC

Majority will clarify its position in some future document. Until

then, however, we should at least expect them to refrain from ^(raising) ~~raising~~

unsubstantiated ^(charges) ~~charges~~ about the LTF's allegedly administrative

concept of the center.

There is one point that should be noted, however, in connection

with the ^(way) ~~way~~ that the "Let's Discuss..." document attempts to answer

Joe Hansen on this point. Comrade Hansen stated that it was not

within the province of the international center to lay down tactics

for the sections, much less for entire continents. He said ~~that~~ "The

o 34...

central team should concentrate on broad analysis, on assembling and circulating information, on taking up political questions within the framework of congress decisions...in general, the central team should not try to 'run' the international or intervene in the internal life of sections.

("The Underlying Differences in Method,")

["The Underlying Differences in Method," IIDB. Vol. 10, No. 12, p. 43]

One would think that there would be no disagreement. But the

IEC Majority document does express disagreement--if only in a

"Let's Discuss..."

roundabout way. refers to Comrade Hansen's view of a center

that concentrates on broad analysis as one that "limits itself to

the generalities on which everyone can agree." And it takes Comrade

Hansen's admonition not to intervene in the sections as a refusal

"to concern itself with the sections" or to "assist them in their

day-to-day activities."

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

This can only

The IEC Majority's [the IEC Majority's]

engender speculation about real positions. Does the IEC

35...

favor an [redacted] international center that elaborates

the application of tactics for sections? Does it favor a center that

If not, then why object to

intervenes in the internal life of sections? [redacted]

Conrad Hansen's statements?

[redacted]

Whatever else can be said about the responsibilities of an international center, one thing is indisputable: given the depth and scope of the political differences in the International, and the importance of the questions involved, absolute top priority has to be given to preparing the International discussion. Of all leadership responsibilities, this ^{*(is now)*} [redacted] the most important.

^{*An*} [redacted] authoritative political decision on the disputed question ^{*(can be made only if)*} [redacted] the ranks of the world movement have access to all-sided information, and to all the internal discussion documents, ^{*so that they can*} [redacted] ^{*in the discussion*} participate and register their opinions, ~~[redacted]~~ To prepare this, naturally, ^{*f*} requires time, expense, cadres, and leadership.

~~Rather than seeing it this way, the IEC Majority talks of the~~

~~36~~ 36...

Rather than seeing it this way, the IEC Majority talks of the resources devoted to ~~the~~ translation and publication of the international internal discussion documents as "disproportionate in relation to expenditures made during the same period for external activities." (page 22) ~~██████████~~

The future course of the world Trotskyist movement is at stake, and yet the discussion on these matters is ~~██████████~~ treated by the IEC Majority as ~~██████████~~ ^{an} inconvenience, or as some sort of irritating administrative problem getting in the way of more important things! What more important things?

What is more important than this discussion?

No wonder the record of the international center has been far less than adequate in organizing the internal discussion. No wonder that the advocates of a "strong center" never talk of strengthening this area of work -- where there ~~are~~ ^{are} indeed ~~are~~ glaring weaknesses.

This revealing attitude enables us to better understand why in the French-speaking sections, where supporters of the IEC Majority bear the main leadership responsibility, the

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preparation of the internal discussion did not measure up to the size, strength, and capacities of these sections.

For self-professed defenders of a strong center, the IEC Majority treats this serious problem in a remarkably cavalier way. There were, the comrades put it so delicately, "some delays" in translations. But now, they assure us, these have all been overcome; the LTF and other tendencies have all been able to get a full hearing -- all they could demand; there has been adequate discussion; ~~_____~~ behind ~~_____~~ so let's leave this question and get on to other matters.

~~_____~~
~~_____~~
~~_____~~
~~_____~~

4# Not so. Steps forward have been taken. But the problem is far from resolved. There still exist delays and gaps in translations. Time is still needed for the comrades to study the newly-published documents in French and Spanish and to

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[organize the internal discussion so that the]

organize the internal discussion so that the

ranks as a whole, and not just the leaders, [can] participate.

It was for reasons such as these and in order to overcome other outstanding problems in organizing the discussion that the LTF supporters on the United Secretariat proposed at the September 1973 meeting that the world congress be postponed for a few months more. (For some inexplicable reason, the "Let's Discuss..." document accuses the LTF comrades of proposing an indefinite postponement and tries to make a big hullabaloo over this, going so far as to question insinuate that the LTF does not want the congress to be held at all. The minutes of the meeting clearly show that this accusation is unfounded.)

For all its assurances about democracy, the IEC Majority really does protest a bit too much. How revealing are its statements about which is, the "avalanche" of documents, "to some, extent, prejudicial to democracy." Where is this the case? Can they possibly have in mind the French-speaking sections, where the last minute publication of documents was indeed an "avalanche."? And if last-minute "avalanches" do prejudice democracy, then why was the IEC Majority opposed to extending

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~~the~~

the time for the discussion so that the comrades would be able to give the documents the study they deserve? Could it be ^(that they are afraid of further discussion? I suspect so.) ~~that they are afraid of further discussion? I suspect so.~~ [that they are afraid of further discussion? I suspect so.]

~~endency point out that from the beginning the leadership of the organization was afraid of these debates. Could it be that the lack of internal debate in the section has been a result of the present relationship of forces between the majority and the minority, a relationship which has been brought about by the development of disagreements in the French party. One is led to suspect that this is the case.~~

The IEC Majority speaks ~~so~~ loudly about the need for democratic centralism in the Fourth International. But its actual practice ^(in this) regard ~~is~~

~~is~~ is less than exemplary. It ~~has~~ dragged its feet and failed to prepare an adequate discussion; ^{now} ~~it~~ ^(voices) irritation and nervousness about the limited

discussion that has taken place. These signs can only be ^(noted with) ~~noted with~~ apprehension. ~~what do they portend?~~

what do they portend?

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~~40~~

[REDACTED]

Further cause for disquiet is evidenced in the IEC
Majority's [REDACTED] ^{hints about its view of centralism,}
The SWP is accused of arrogating to itself the right "to
publicly attack members or organizations of the International."

(page 22)

[REDACTED] # The unity of the world movement would
certainly be undermined if [REDACTED] the ^(national) [REDACTED] organizations
made of practice of "attacking" each other.

It ^(seems) [REDACTED] like an ominous situation -- until the IEC
Majority gets down to specific cases. ^(Let us briefly) [REDACTED] examine four of
those that the IEC Majority considers most scandalous.

1. Tariq Ali publishes an article in his book The New
Revolutionaries saying that "Mao's stature as one of the
greatest revolutionary leaders of this century is beyond question."

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~~42~~

International Socialist Review

Tom Kerry writes an article in the ~~1952~~ taking issue with this view.

The IEC Majority denounces Tom Kerry and says nothing about

Tariq Ali.

2. The PRT (Combatiente) commits an act of terrorism by kidnapping Sallustro. The Militant, while defending the PRT(C) against the bourgeois repression, explains the traditional

Marxist view that terrorism is not effective. The IEC Majority while remaining silent after several of its assails the SWP for its "attack" on the PRT(C) ~~and~~

leading adherents hail the ~~the~~ while remaining silent after several of its leading adherents hail the PRT(C) action.

3. Pierre Rousset writes a book advancing the thesis that the Vietnamese CP has "as a whole, assimilated the decisive implications of the permanent revolution for the colonies and semi-colonies." His views, which have never been formally adopted by the Fourth International, are published by several

European sections and given wide circulation. The International ~~1952~~

Socialist Review

publishes a long, critical review of Pierre Rousset's book.

The IEC Majority rebukes ~~the~~ the SWP for "attacking" Pierre

Rousset, but says nothing about the propriety of Comrade

Rousset publishing his book.

42...

International

4. Peter Camejo publishes an article in the Socialist Review [International Socialist Review]

criticizing Che Guevara. The IEC Majority complains that this is in reality a use of the magazine "as a factional organ." It does not state what it finds objectionable in Peter Camejo's criticism of Guevara.

Four specific cases. Four outrageous scandals! Four clear examples of of what? The IEC Majority, believe it or not, says that these are examples of the SWP's double standard!

Comrades can judge for themselves who is employing a double standard. [For further discussion on these and a few other cases raised by the IEC Majority, ~~the~~ ^(see) the article by Tom Kerry, aptly titled, "Old Husband Yarns Hamper Discussion of Political Differences." (SWP Discussion Bulletin, vol. 32, no. 1 December 1973) -- G.H., Sept. 1974]

The IEC Majority's citation of these specific examples would border on the ludicrous, were it not for the fact that the underlying issue is quite serious. Just consider the implication of the IEC Majority's allegation: ~~the~~

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that ~~the~~ public discussion of political differences is impermissible under all circumstances in the Fourth International!

Does this mean that comrades like Tariq Ali or Pierre Rousset are free to write whatever they please, but those who disagree must keep quiet? Is that the IEC Majority's concept of

~~the concept of democratic centralism?~~

If so, they should say so directly. For ~~this would~~ ~~be~~ not a strengthening, but rather a change in the application of democratic centralism in the International today. As the world movement has been functioning so far, each national organization has the duty to publicize the resolutions and statements adopted by formal gatherings of the International. But in addition, each national organization has not only the right, but the responsibility to analyze new events as ~~it~~ sees them. It is not expected that there will be identical views on all questions, especially on theoretical questions. Agreement

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on basic programmatic questions is essential, but monolithism in public on subsidiary questions is neither normal nor desirable in the International. So long as a comradely tone is maintained, differences such as those expressed between Tariq Ali and Tom Kerry or between Pierre Rousset and George Johnson and Fred Feldman are perfectly permissible in a democratic centralist International. That certainly was true of the Bolsheviks.

And the clear expression of differing views from both sides is

(more) far preferable (than) encouraging dishonest Albanian polemics.

If the IEC Majority's intent is to prevent such discussions, then the centralism they have in mind will do no good for the unity of the International.

Another very disturbing note is sounded when the IEC Majority document speaks as if it were possible to apply some sort of facile organizational solution to the deepgoing political differences.

The LTF has maintained that time is needed to define more clearly the nature of the crisis in the International and to fully clarify the political issues, as well as to organize

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A14

the discussion. Our view is that the crisis in the International is fundamentally a political crisis and can only be resolved on a political basis. That too is the only way that the unity of the International can be preserved and the dangerously escalating splitting process be reversed.

The IEC Majority takes a diametrically opposite approach. It is almost as if the comrades view the debate itself as the cause of the problems -- "prolonging the debate well beyond the limit provided by the statutes is now provoking a cumulative tension that is resulting in national splits." (page 23) And if the debate is the cause of the problem, then the solution is obvious: stop the debate! "It is now necessary to pull the emergency cord on this dangerous process, reverse the engines, and open up a period of detente in which public activity and building the International will take precedence over internal debate." (page 23)

But the differences will remain. The different national

parties

will not change their views or their pattern of

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~~46~~

activity. And they will not refrain from expressing their views on events as they see them. If by pulling the emergency cord and reversing engines the IEC Majority has in mind some sort of decision to stop the internal discussion (which, incidentally, is contrary to the United Secretariat recommendations) then all they will do is force more of the discussion more out into the public. That is all that can result from a shortsighted attempt to solve political questions by organizational means.

Perhaps most revealing ~~part~~ of the mood of the IEC Majority is the following passage: "For more than two years, the members of the international leadership have seen their external activity largely paralyzed; they have had to devote most of their time to internal struggles and to seeking compromise agreements; they have been unable to take positions on some political problems; they have ^(scarcely) ~~scarcely~~ been able to follow the activities of the sections. Such a situation is intolerable and cannot be prolonged without

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~~me~~

engendering grave danger for our entire world movement." (p.25)

And then they go on to explain that a world congress will settle matters.

How revealing! The IEC

~~_____~~

Majority leaders ^{apparently} view the LTF itself as the problem, ^{almost} ~~_____~~

^{as if our very}

existence acts as some sort of albatross around their necks, preventing them from functioning. The logic of that view is that there should be no further discussion, that further discussion is a danger, that it is essential to find some way to keep the LTF from expressing its views, and that the world congress is needed to settle accounts.

~~_____~~

~~_____~~ The expression of such a mood by the IEC Majority as a whole encourages ^{the} ~~_____~~ wing of the secret faction that has no qualms about a split, that would in fact prefer to find a way to get rid of the LTF.

^{This} danger should be ^(noted) ~~_____~~ in connection with ~~_____~~

^{another indication} ~~_____~~ that despite the United Secretariat agreement in September,

the split minded wing of the IEC Majority has not pulled back from its course. ~~Developments in these circumstances~~

~~_____~~
~~_____~~

At

In Canada, the RCT (Revolutionary Communist Tendency), the supporters of the

On October 4, 1973

IEC Majority, walked out of the Canadian section, the LSA/LSO

The IEC Majority document, written before the walkout, claims that "the Canadian section has begun expulsion proceedings against comrades in the ^(minority) there who are accused of having publically defended the line of the Ninth World Congress on Bolivia, which is contrary to the line of the last Canadian convention." (p. 23)

That accusation was a complete fabrication. Nobody has been expelled from the Canadian section. Nobody was charged with publically defending the line of the last world congress. What happened was that the supporters of the IEC Majority position took the initiative in splitting from the LSA/LSO.

Here is what they themselves wrote: "We will no longer respect the authority or actions of the Political Committee of

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~~49~~

League for Socialist Action. We also wish to inform you that we are terminating all financial commitments to the LSA. . ."

This statement of refusal to abide by the constitutional requirements of membership was quite properly treated by the leadership of the Canadian LSA/LSO as a letter of resignation. Nevertheless, the convention of the LSA/LSO has kept the door open to these splitters to return to the section, the only condition being that they abide by the LSA/LSO constitution. How can anyone ask for more? But so far, the splitters have evinced no desire to rejoin the section and in fact have joined and accepted leadership positions in the RMG, a group which has come into political opposition with the LSA/LSO in many of the major areas of political activity in Canada today.

[Documentation on the split in Canada is available in SWP Internal Information Bulletins no. 5 and no. 9 in 1973 and in SWP Discussion Bulletin vol. 31, no 27, July 1973.]

This walkout was not entirely unanticipated. Just

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[tone]

[RCT's polemics]

tone

RCT's polemics

from listening to the [redacted] of the [redacted] in the Canadian section, one could tell that they were having a hard time restraining themselves. [redacted]

[redacted]

The fact that the factionalism

of the RCT had reached such a fever pitch imposed a special responsibility on the IEC Majority to try to prevent their Canadian supporters from following through on their split course.

All evidence is that they made no effort to restrain their supporters in Canada. Not can the IEC Majority leaders say that they were uninformed as to the danger. To the contrary, the LTF declaration had even pointed to the warning sign in the document by Ernest Germain, which soft-pedalled the Michel Mill split in Canada a couple of years earlier.

~~the~~ Just prior to the split, in Canada, the LSA/LSO leadership had talked to Comrade Mandel several times, warning him of the danger, and urging him to intercede so as to save the situation.

51...
~~all right~~

But Comrade Mandel did nothing. Nor did any of the other leaders of the IEC Majority. That inaction could only be taken as a go-ahead sign by the split-minded factionalists. Furthermore, the "Let's Discuss. . ." document indicates an attitude throughout the IEC Majority that clearly encouraged the splitters: They say in their document: "we therefore serve warning that we will not accept the expulsion of these [RCT] comrades from the Fourth International for the sole crime of having adhered to its statutes. If the comrades of the minority sink to such senseless measures which clearly violate international democratic centralism, we will be obligated to propose appropriate measures to the Tenth World Congress so that those who are expelled remain members of the Fourth International . . ." (page 23) And to top it all off, the IEC Majority, after the split, continued to include the splitters on the list of members of the IEC Majority Tendency.

The experience in Canada shows that the LEEF was entirely

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correct in its contention that the IEC Majority secret
faction contained a split-minded wing. In fact the evidence
indicates that the split in Canada was consciously prearranged
and prepared for, with at least the tacit complicity of the
IEC Majority leaders. Unless the leadership of the IEC
Majority pulls back and takes a more responsible attitude, the
danger of other national splits -- both conscious and
unplanned -- will increase.

[brackets
ital.]

inserts
ital.

[Note: the following remarks in brackets were intended for publication
along with the report; they refer to incidents that occurred after Nov. 5, 1973 - G.H.
A further sign of the uncontrollable forces set into Sept. 1974.

motion by the secret faction has been the IEC Majority's
tendency to take the debate beyond the normal bounds of the
sections. Consider the experience in Germany, where a left
wing grouping has recently split off from the German Spartakus
organization and is moving politically closer to the GIM, the
German (of the Fourth International.) section. The Central Committee (of the GIM) naturally made plans
to discuss this promising situation. But then, a surprising
development came to light. Here is how the steering committee
of the Germany Kompass tendency reported that development in
a letter to the United Secretariat dated November 28, 1973.]

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["In fact, even before this CC meeting and before these decisions were made, an organized discussion with this group [the left split from Spartakus] took place, although not with the Fourth International and the GIM as a whole, but rather with a tendency in the Fourth International and a tendency in the GIM. On the occasion of Comrade Pierre Frank's visit to the Berlin GIM group, where he spoke as a representative of the IEC Majority Tendency in the international discussion, a candid discussion took place with the Berlin section of this grouping that split with Spartacus, in which besides Pierre Frank (IMT) a number of comrades in the "Internationalist Tendency" of the GIM (supporters of the IMT within the GIM) took part, among them CC members of the GIM who belong to the IT (and the IMT). The CC, the PB, and the organizational secretary of the GIM were not informed about the discussion that had taken place at its November 24 meeting. The CC accepted this report without taking a position."]

[The lack of restraint on the part of the IEC Majority shows through clearly in this case also.]

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[~~the~~ ^A third verification of the IEF declaration ~~should~~

(also) should be mentioned; that is, the rather widespread acceptance

within the IEC Majority of a concept that the Barzman letter

ascribed to Vergeat: "Vergeat sees the international majority

as the real place for discussion, the real international, is

(See "The Barzman letter," I I D B, vol X, no 15, p. 13)

therefore not that concerned about homogeneity."]

[That concept is particularly irresponsible. For those who

accept it fully, a split in the FI is inevitable. The

discussion in the authorized bodies of the International is

reduced to a formality, without genuine significance, while

the "real" discussion occurs elsewhere.]

[Yet that very concept has now been accepted ^{(not only by Vergeat, but} by the

leaders of the Majority tendency in the ^{(French-speaking} Walloon section, who

form a major component of the IEC Majority. ~~the~~ In

November, 1973 the internal discussion bulletin of the Walloon

(entitled "Concerning the Debate")

section contained an important document on Latin America,

presented by "the ^(Leadership of the Majority Tendency of the Walloon section.) ~~the~~ Attached to the document was a

(Foreward)

which said the following:]

(SWP Internal Information Bulletin NO. 2 in 1974)

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["The international majority is not a faction [they protest this so much!], and within the framework of a common problematic intends to continue the debate now underway. For numerous reasons this debate, which affects the entire International, is only beginning. It parallels the political battle against the international minority, which is challenging fundamental orientations on which we have stated our position by adhering to the international majority."]

[So, the debate which affects the entire International is now underway -- and it takes place within the IEC Majority (which, never dreamed of forming a faction). That, presumably, is the "real" discussion. It parallels a "battle" against the LMF.]

[One of the consequences inherent in such a conception is the pressure placed on comrades to line up in support of the IEC Majority, not on the basis of votes in support of ~~a common problematic~~ specific resolutions, which is the Leninist way, but on the basis of accepting an undefined "common problematic." This leads to

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the formation of unprincipled combinations joined together solely to do "battle" with the LTF. It encourages those who would like to be rid of the LTF in order to enable the "real" debate to take place more freely.]

[These conceptions of political discussion are alien to the Leninist tradition. It is time for the leaders of the IEC Majority to call a halt to the miseducation of its supporters.

Only a responsible, well-organized, principled political discussion can reverse the debilitating process set in motion by the IEC Majority.]

[Part III]

[Let's Discuss the Political Issues]

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Part III

Let's discuss the political issues

~~After~~ After ~~the~~ long and tortuous ^{recitation} ~~of~~ of grievances against the LTF, the IEC Majority document finally does get down to a discussion of political differences. ^(pages 26-27) In addition to ~~the~~ the question of democratic centralism, ^(already discussed) it lists six other points as the fundamental issues ~~in~~ in dispute.

~~One can argue whether these are indeed the central issues,~~ One can argue whether these are indeed the central issues, whether something has been left out, or whether ~~greater~~ greater stress should be placed on a few of these issues. But at least ~~the~~ the IEC Majority ^{proposes} ~~proposes~~ to raise the discussion to a higher level.

Alas! Although the subject of ^{these six points} ~~the~~ ~~is~~ is political, ~~the~~ ~~IEC~~ ~~Majority~~ ~~utilizes~~ ~~much~~ ~~the~~ ~~same~~ ~~polemical~~ ~~method~~ ~~as~~ ~~in~~ ~~its~~ catalogue of complaints against the LTF: it distorts the truth about the positions of the LTF; it fails to back up its contention with any documentation. A brief summary of these six points is necessary to redress the situation.

1. The International situation and its perspectives. Here the IEC Majority admits that its summary of the differences ^{was} ~~is~~ tentative,

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~~59...~~

Nor can the IEC Majority claim that the LIF Political Resolution
mark a shift. Comrade Barnes' speech says ~~the same thing~~ [exactly] the same thing.

In the section entitled, "No Peace in the Class Struggle," the ~~change~~
~~is~~ ^{detente [detente]} is assessed as ^{signifying} a major alteration
in international political relations: among the imperialist nations and
blocs; between the imperialist powers and the workers states; among the
workers states; between imperialism, the colonial and semicolonial

countries and the workers states. Despite this changed political
framework, Comrade Barnes points to a ^{recent} series of major class battles
as the continuing trend that ^{to} anticipate, and he concludes
by saying, "The class struggle has not been halted, reversed

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a...

or annulled by Nixon, Brezhnev and Mao; it continues but within an altered set of conditions." (page 6).

So the IEC Majority's treatment of the differences on the international situation ^{is} unfounded, and is in fact a ^{misrepresentation} ~~distortion~~ of the LTF views.

however, at least one

There is, ^{an} important difference in assessment of the world political situation. The LTF views the Vietnam settlement as a setback for the revolution, while the IEC Majority views it as an advance.

The LTF ^{political resolution will} ~~caution~~ that ~~within~~ within a broad framework of ascending revolutionary prospects, a realistic ~~view~~ view must be taken of

conjunctural defeats ^{or} setbacks. It ^{will} also emphasize the turn in the pattern of revolution back towards the classical norm.

In general, however, ~~there is little basis for considering~~ the

~~analysis~~ ^{present} of the world political ^{conjuncture} ~~as~~ a major area of disagreement.

~~More important~~ More important are some important questions of basic political ^{principle} ~~principle~~ -- such as the attitude of our

movement to present-day popular frontism ^{and} terrorism, ^{questions involving} ~~and~~ the practical ~~tasks facing our movement.~~

2. The orientation in Latin America. So much has been written

on this key question that the issues should be clear to all.

Yet the IEC Majority manages in a three paragraph synopsis to distort completely

the position of the LTF; The IEC Majority dismisses the question of guerrilla warfare and tries to manufacture a case for claiming that

the LTF foresees the gradual and peaceful development of the class in Latin America. struggle

note out of

critics. But this is not the position of the LTF. The LTF says, and the

of the last world congress line on Latin America have said all along, that the national bourgeoisie in Latin America is incapable of granting long term concessions to the masses, and that the upsurge of the class struggle would lead to violent confrontations in relatively short order. The differences on Latin America lie elsewhere.

How, then, does the IEC Majority justify its misrepresentation?

By quoting two sentences out of context from the report by Jack Barnes to the SWP National Committee plenum. It is easy to see that the IEC Majority has presented a false picture by turning to the relevant section of that report, the part dealing with the colonial revolution on pages 10-11. Comrade Barnes makes three points:

a. The detente gives the indigenous ruling classes more room

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for maneuver.

b. Nevertheless, there remains "the native bourgeoisie's fundamental incapacity to meet the most pressing needs of the masses..."

c. "In all probability, we shall see the continuing rise of classical patterns of class struggle in the colonial world. This means further confrontations between the massive and growing urban proletariat of the major colonial and semicolonial countries and their ruling classes and the bourgeois state."

Rather than presenting our views ^{and raising whatever arguments they have} objectively -- particularly

on the ~~question~~ question of whether or not the pattern of revolution is

turning toward the classical norm (there is a documented difference on this) ⁽⁻⁻⁾ the IEC majority tries to ^{twist} a remark ^(by Comrade Barnes about the favorable conditions for advancing the class struggle in Chile and Argentina) into an allegation that he anticipated a long period of bourgeois democracy there. ~~That~~ That is simply untrue. ~~That~~

^(author of "Let's Discuss...") If the ~~wished~~ wished to get into a debate about such matters,

he ~~could~~ could have done better to turn closer to home -- to Pierre Frank's letter to the 1971 SWP convention, for example. (IIDB, vol 6 in 1971).

Comrade Frank told us that "for the time being, but for how long no one can say, ~~the~~ the armed struggle is not today on the agenda in Chile or

63...

Bolivia..." Comrade Frank's error in prognosis (the coup in Bolivia

occurred right after he wrote this) is not so important. [What] what is

is what this passage tells about his concept of [is what this passage tells about his concept of]

revealing [redacted] armed struggle [redacted]

treats [treats]

Comrade Frank [redacted] armed struggle [redacted] it

[We disagree.] we disagree.

comes on the agenda only when the ruling class launches repression.

In

the broad sense, the development of prerevolutionary situations put

armed struggle on the agenda in Bolivia and Chile -- and also

Argentina -- much before that. Nevertheless, revolutionary Marxists

were not strong enough to prepare the organization of an insurrection.

The key problem remained that of resolving the crisis of leadership

by building the party in those situations -- through participation in

strikes, election, student or peasant struggles, through intervening

in the mass workers organizations, and any other way. The fact that

in a [redacted] sense [redacted] armed struggle was on the agenda did not change

the immediate tasks before the Trotskyist [redacted] movement.

(We believe that the)

[redacted] PST in Argentina affords us a good example of how to build

the party under such circumstances. The IEC Majority, by contrast,

defends the example of the POR in Bolivia and the PRT-ERP in Argentina.

Both of the latter organizations followed the IEC Majority [redacted]

ans 64.11

~~_____~~
document's recommendation of "calling on the masses to be vigilant and
to take up arms." ^(page 26) [(page 26)] The counterposed experiences offer a good means of
judging the debate.

3. Stalinism. On this point, the IEC Majority's summary does
deal with the important differences. But it still does not present
~~our~~ view objectively.

(First of all, it should be noted for the sake of accuracy that the
LTF as a whole does not have a document on this question. So the
IEC Majority is presumably referring to the articles on China submitted
by Joseph Hansen and Les Evans and the resolution on China submitted
by the United Secretariat minority.)

A.65...

The IEC Majority says, "according to them, Stalinism is allegedly petty bourgeois in nature..." (page 26) along with Trotsky, We say that the

bureaucratic castes in the workers states are ^{sociologically} petty bourgeois. That the

Stalinist parties, ^{(i.e. those parties whose} political line is subordinate to the interests of these petty bourgeois ^{castes,} ~~the~~ ^{can thus be considered as} petty bourgeois tendencies

in the workers movement. Generally the Stalinist parties are workers parties ^{(using the same criteria as in analyzing the} ~~the~~ social democratic parties). But in

~~the~~ China, we ~~do~~ agree with Trotsky's analysis that the CCP ~~is~~ had become a peasant party ^(in composition, as well as having a petty-bourgeois Stalinist program.) [in composition, as well as having a petty-bourgeois Stalinist program.]

The IEC Majority says Stalinism "is a unique historical phenomenon ^{(flowing from the} bureaucratic degeneration of the first workers state in its long

isolation; it is not a universal phenomenon." We disagree. To consider Stalinism only as a phenomenon in the USSR produces confusion rather than clarity. We do ~~not~~ think, however, that each specific case must be analyzed concretely, and that the social and political physiognomy of the bureaucracies in the workers states must be examined to determine if a crystallized case exists. (In Cuba, for example, we have not said so.)

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The key theoretical questions, all of which are interlinked, are the following:

a. How can a party, previously analyzed to be a Stalinist party, be at the head of a revolution culminating in the creation of a workers state? For example, Yugoslavia, China and Vietnam.

b. How can a party, previously analyzed as a petty bourgeois party, *in composition and program* be at the head of a revolution culminating in the creation of a workers state? For example, Cuba or China.

c. How ^{was} the counter-revolutionary Moscow-based Stalinist bureaucracy *capable of overturning* capitalist property relations in Eastern Europe?

d. When, and through what process were workers states established in the postwar period? In particular, East Europe, China, and Cuba.

e. What criteria define a workers state?

Needless to say, the answers to these questions are complex.

There is no need to summarize the differing views here. The counterposed positions are presented in other bulletins. This question, which is exceedingly important, should be conducted without distorting the views of either side.

[This question, which is exceedingly important, should be conducted without distorting the views of either side.]

4. The national question. The IEC Majority specifies that its disagreement on this question is with the SWP. And it list two points of difference. Both points ~~mis~~misrepresent the SWP position.

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The IEC Majority attributes to us the "concept that a 'consistent' defense of democratic slogans leads to socialist revolution. To be a 'consistent' nationalist, say the members of the minority, is to enter the road toward socialism." (page 26)

This is a complete fabrication. In fact, the article entitled "Comrade Germain's Errors on the National Question," ~~the volume 10, no. 10,~~ ^{argues} ~~the program~~ explicitly against that concept. Here is what I said:

"Comrade Germain makes the point that it is mistaken to think that 'consistent nationalism' ~~the nationalist movement~~ would automatically lead to a struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat..." This is correct. The nationalism of oppressed nations does not automatically lead the masses to socialist consciousness and to a socialist revolution. But who says it does? We say that the fight for the nationalist demands of the oppressed, to be carried through consistently to the end, must become part of the socialist revolution. But we do not say that it automatically leads in that direction. That is where the revolutionary Marxist party comes in. That is our role. It is the role of the party to participate in the nationalist movement with its revolutionary

~~the nationalist movement~~

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Marxist program and pose an alternative leadership to the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois currents in the nationalist movement." (IIDB, vol. X, no. 10 pp8-9)

The second misrepresentation of our position is the allegation that the SWP identifies a national liberation movement with nationalism, which, the IEC Majority says, is a bourgeois or petty bourgeois ideology.

~~_____~~

No. The SWP supports national liberation movements and opposes bourgeois and petty bourgeois parties and ideology in the national liberation movements. But we do support the ~~_____~~ nationalist demands of the masses that are directed against oppression. For example, we support the demand for Arab national unification -- a nationalist demand. We support the demand for an independent Quebec -- a nationalist demand. We support the demands of colonial peoples throughout the world calling for an end to U.S. interference in their internal affairs -- ~~_____~~ these are nationalist demands. That is what we mean when we say we support the nationalism of the oppressed. If the IEC Majority objects to this, let ~~_____~~ ^{it} say so.

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It should be obvious that there is a terminological difference.

The IEC Majority defines nationalism as a form of bourgeois or petty

bourgeois ideology. We use the term differently. The IEC Majority

(pretends to ignore) ~~the difference in terminology~~ *(in order)* to misrepresent our

political position *and obfuscate the issues.* [and obfuscate the issues.]

The real differences on the national question lie elsewhere, primarily in two errors of the IEC Majority, document by Ernest Germain, In Defence of Leninism. In Defence of the Fourth International. (IIDB vol X no 4).

Comrade Germain's document tends to belittle the importance of the national question in the world socialist revolution. And it fails to stress the importance of

raising democratic demands, including nationalist demands, as a means of mobilizing the masses in national liberation struggles. Instead,

it tends to view these demands as playing into the hands of the

bourgeoisie. *I have documented these errors in my previously cited article.*
[I have documented these errors in my previously cited article.]

5. Womens liberation. The IEC Majority rightly says that the

differences on this point are similar to those on the national question.

We need only add that its misrepresentation of our position is similar

too. ~~the IEC Majority~~ *(in the LTF)* [in the LTF]

The IEC Majority makes the charge that we "have maintained that

'consistent' feminism leads to socialism." This is simply *false.*

The IEC Majority presentation of its own concept is confusing, to

say the least. *(on the one hand)* They say that our comrades "cannot align themselves

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~~70...~~

(page 26) [(page 26)]

with the slogans of the feminist movement." They follow this immediately by saying that "they must defend the demands of women." What do they mean? Should we align ourselves with the demand for legalized abortion or not? Should we align ourselves with the demand for the right to divorce or not? Should we align ourselves with the demand for the right of women to vote or to have full legal rights or not?

Presumably, the IEC Majority would support each of these demands. If so, then what do they mean by saying our comrades "cannot align ourselves with the slogans of the feminist movement?"

Possibly they are simply trying to emphasize that we do not accept the ^{Overall} political views put forward by anti-Marxist feminists, such as the notion that the fight against the oppression of women is unrelated to the class struggle. If that is what they mean, then of course there is no argument. But since nobody in the Trotskyist movement has proposed abandoning Marxism in favor of pure and simple feminist concepts, the IEC Majority must undoubtedly have something else in mind.

Perhaps they ^{meant} that we should not wage campaigns of action

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mas

around democratic demands, such as the right of abortion, but should single out for importance only those demands that are of concern to

proletarian women, but not to bourgeois or petty bourgeois women?

Perhaps that what lies behind their criticism of the SWP for allegedly participating in the women's movement "without introducing class differences."

Now, the SWP raised a whole series of demands that spoke to the needs of women, including demands that were of concern specifically to proletarian women. And the SWP also pointed out in its progaganda how a socialist revolution was necessary to end the oppression of women. But the SWP waged its major campaign of action around the

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demand for legalized abortion. The reason was very simple. Under the
specific conditions in the United States, this was the issue which had
the greatest potential to mobilize large numbers of women in struggle.
Perhaps the IEC Majority is uncomfortable with the fact that some
bourgeois and petty bourgeois women supported this demand; if so, it
might be helpful to point out to them that the demand for legalized
abortion was in the ~~bourgeois~~ interests or proletarian women even more ^{so} --
because the proletarian women were the ones who suffered ~~the~~ most from
the reactionary legislation against abortion.

~~Hopefully~~ the IEC Majority will spell out its position on this
question clearly. Otherwise we are left with the impression that they
view democratic demands as intrinsically somehow second rate, not worthy of waging
campaigns of action around unless they are coupled with other demands
~~introducing~~ "introducing class differences."

6. Building revolutionary parties and mass work. The IEC Majority
devotes more attention to this point than to any of the others -- and not
without some justification, for the differences on this question are very
important.

Nevertheless, the IEC Majority (employs) ~~its~~ its standard operating

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procedure of misrepresenting the positions of the LTF and of the SWP specifically. The IEC Majority alleges that our position is the following one: "According to the minority, to build revolutionary parties, Trotskyists must combine mass work -- carried out in the mass movements, in the name of these movements and at their level --with general socialist propaganda." (page 27) And this is repeated: that our position is "to be content with general propaganda and to remain on the level of the mass organizations..." The IEC Majority states that it differs because in addition to favoring work in the mass organizations, it "believe it is necessary for the Trotskyist organizations to intervene in the struggles with its own slogans."

No. The SWP does not believe for one moment in remaining on the level of the mass organizations. The SWP believes it is absolutely essential to intervene in the class struggles with its own ^(revolutionary Marxist) slogans.

What are the Trotskyist slogans in the mass movement? That is where the difference lies. We believe in beginning with the objective needs of the class struggle, and raising slogans that speak to these objective needs in a way that the masses can understand. The IEC Majority, on the other hand, at least in its document on Europe,

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begins with the "concerns of the vanguard". The campaigns that it

~~proposes~~

organizing and the slogans that it ~~proposes~~ to be ~~raising~~ are ~~determined~~

~~by~~ by the concerns of the vanguard, provided that these ~~do~~ do not

run against the current of mass struggles.

~~the~~ the SWP ~~approach~~ approach) [approach] ~~was to begin~~ was to begin

~~with~~ with the ~~needs~~ objective needs of the masses. From that flowed our orientation to

building mass actions in the streets and raising the slogan for immediate

~~These were the Trotskyist slogans.~~ withdrawal of U.S. troops. Rather than ~~remaining~~ remaining "on the level of

the antiwar movement," as the IEC Majrotiy contends, we had to fight

continually ~~to~~ to raise the antiwar movement to this level. There were even many occasions when we had to fight for this perspective

despite the fact that the "vanguard" found it of little concern. But

we always maintained ~~our orientation~~ our orientation based on the needs of the masses.

We had to fight the liberals and Stalinists who tried to ~~divert~~ the mass

~~movement into~~ electoralism centered around support for the capitalist Democratic Party. We had

to fight the ultra-lefts who preferred organizing small "minority

violence" demonstrations rather than ~~huge~~ huge mass mobilizations.

We had to fight all other political currents who ~~wanted~~ wanted to

drop or downgrade the ~~immediate~~ principled immediate withdrawal demand in favor of less

~~radical~~ radical

demands like "negotiations" or "support the Paris accords."

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In the early years of the antiwar movement our views were accepted

by a small minority. Later we were able to win the antiwar movement

to our perspective on many occasions. That helped advance the class struggle. Does the IEC Majority think that

whenever a mass movement supports slogans that the Trotskyist movement

has raised that it becomes for us time to raise new, "more radical" slogans

acceptable to a small vanguard? That is not the method of party building and mass work

outlined in the Transitional Program .

We did not have two sets of slogans: one for the mass movement

and one for the vanguard. We ~~we~~ focused on slogans and methods of

struggle designed to advance These were the Trotskyist slogans. the needs of the masses. And we attempted

to win the most conscious militants ~~the~~ real vanguard of

the antiwar movement consisted of those forces who held our mass-action / immediate with demand perspective.

The various opponent ~~we~~ such as the Maoists and New Left SDSers radical groups who often rejected our line

in the guise / greater of militancy or radicalism, were politically less advanced than the

antiwar activists who do something effective to defend the Vietnamese revolution.

mobilize masses in demonstrations around the slogan for immediate

U.S. withdrawal.

~~On~~ This new document of the IEC Majority describes the

4.76... movement and other mass movements as an example of our line in the antiwar SWP's "retreat in relation to

This contrasts the orientation defined at the Ninth World Congress... with what

in the past -- how we had always been told our antiwar work was an example of the

"turn" of the last world congress. For example, Pierre Frank's letter to the 1971 SWP convention accurately described the SWP line

as favoring "mass mobilization increasingly large and increasingly

firm to 'Bring the GIs home now' and then he the SWP's said that "antiwar

activity and your other activities (Afro-American movement, Chicanos,

women's liberation) inscribe themselves in the turn that the international

(International Information Bulletin, no. 6 in 1971, p. 20.) Trotskyist movement began to effectuate since May 1968."

What is the significance of this new shift in line towards the activity of the SWP? Under the smokescreen of accusing the SWP of

retreating from the "turn" of the last world congress, the IEC Majority is moving further and further away from the methods of party building and mass work outlined in the

Transitional Program. It has

denoted this new course with the rubric, of "taking initiatives

in action," and "engaging in" "minority violence." This is expressed clearly

this section of in the new IEC Majority document:

"By retreating from this turn and by reducing the role of our

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sections, as such, to a propaganda role, the minority actually denies
them the right to take any action on their own, includin, of course,
any action of minority violence."

So, the initiatives of the SWP in the antiwar, Black, ~~and~~ Chicano
~~and~~ and women's moveent no longer ~~fit~~ fit the IEC Majority's
view of "initiatives in action." It is becoming more and more clear that
IEC Majority conceives as the "turn" of the last world congress; ~~is~~
In that way, the error on ~~the~~ guerrilla warfare and the error on
minority violence in Europe shown to be related.

Space

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The world congress is scheduled to be held in a few months. The discussion is perhaps the most important ever. To resolve the deep differences requires that all comrades have the opportunity to study the debate and participate in it. And this, in turn, requires that the international leadership set the pace. It is necessary to break with the past practices of the IEC Majority and set an atmosphere conducive to carrying out a thorough international discussion. The IEC Majority is now called upon to stop the methods of secret factionalism that have so poisoned the atmosphere and to stop its misrepresentation of LTF political position so that comrades the world over can best judge for themselves and decide where they stand. Only then will the Fourth International be able to fully resolve the disputed questions.

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