

14 Charles Lane  
New York, N.Y. 10014  
July 8, 1977

No. 8

To the Steering Committee of the Leninist Trotskyist Faction

Dear Comrades,

Enclosed are the following items:

- 1) The minutes and attachments of the April 30-May 2, 1977 United Secretariat meeting.
- 2) Minutes and attachments of the June 1-3 United Secretariat meeting.
- 3) A "Declaration of the International Majority Tendency" issued in April 1977, and "A Reply to the International Majority Tendency Declaration" by Barry Sheppard, which was approved by the National Committee meeting of the Socialist Workers Party (U.S.) in April.
- 4) A report by Barry Sheppard on decisions of the meeting of the LTF Coordinating Committee which was held at the time of the April 30 to May 2 United Secretariat meeting.
- 5) An April 26, 1977, letter and attachments from Peter Camejo to Mercedes of the Workers Tendency in the LCR of Spain concerning the call for a republic.
- 6) A March 19, 1977, letter from Trotskyists in Argentina to the United Secretariat requesting that a point on Latin America be placed on the agenda for the next world congress.
- 7) Correspondence concerning the Healy slander campaign against the Fourth International.
  - a) April 2, 1977, letter to Ken Coates from Michael Banda, General Secretary of the Workers Revolutionary Party.
  - b) April 8, 1977, letter from Ken Coates to Joseph Hansen.
  - c) May 8, 1977, letter from Joseph Hansen to Ken Coates.
  - d) April 6, 1977, letter from Alan Jones of the IMG in Britain to Joseph Hansen and George Novack.
  - e) April 22, 1977, letter from Joseph Hansen to Alan Jones.
- 8) January 10, 1977, letter from the International Revolutionary Marxist Tendency to the Political Committee of the SWP (U.S.).
- 9) March 15, 1977, letter from Barry Sheppard for the Political Committee of the SWP to the International Revolutionary Marxist Tendency.



2

10) Letter from John Benson concerning the next Steering Committee meeting of the Leninist Trotskyist Faction.

Comradely,

Caroline Lund

MAY 25 1977

MINUTES OF THE UNITED SECRETARIAT MEETING  
April 30, May 1-2, 1977

PRESENT: Adair, Aubin, Brewster, Carmen, Claudio, Domingo, Duret, Fourier, Frej, Galois, Georges, Jaime, Johnson, Jones, Julio, Marline, Otto, Roman, Romero, Walter

IEC PRESENT: Dunder, Petersen, Raul, Stateman

GUESTS: Ana, Charlie, Dugger, Elizabeth, Gabriel, Harpo, Pola, Roberto

AGENDA:

1. Socialist Democracy
2. Belgrade Conference
3. Policies of the Carter Administration
4. Lutte Ouvrière
5. OCRFI
6. Greece
7. Hong Kong
8. Australia
9. Socialist Workers Party National Committee Plenum
10. Spain
11. Colombia
12. Mexico
13. Argentine Defense
14. Bureau Report
15. Revista de America
16. Correspondence

Chair: Johnson

1. Socialist Democracy

Discussion of final draft.

MOTION: to adopt the general line of the draft resolution.

For: 11 (Adair, Aubin, Duret, Fourier, Frej, Galois, Jaime, Johnson, Jones, Otto, Walter)

Against: 1 (Claudio)

Abstentions: 3 (Carmen, Julio, Romero)

Comrades Brewster, Domingo, Georges, Marline, and Roman who were not present for the voting stated that they support the general line of the resolution.

AGREED to refer the final editing to an editing committee of the Bureau.

AGREED to publish the document publicly as a resolution for the pre-world-congress discussion and to invite contributions on it.

2. Belgrade Conference

Georges reported on plans for activities at the time of the Belgrade conference to protest violations of human rights in both the capitalist countries and Eastern Europe. (See appeal sent out by the Bureau dated May 11, 1977.)

Discussion.

3. Policies of the Carter Administration

Galois reported on the domestic policies of the Carter Administration.

Discussion.

4. Lutte Ouvrière

Duret reported on the most recent discussion and correspondence with Lutte Ouvrière. (See Attachment A.)

Discussion.

5. OCRFI

Aubin reported on the most recent meeting with the OCRFI and the congress of the French OCI.

Discussion.

AGREED that the next meeting will discuss which contributions the United Secretariat will present to the discussion with the OCRFI.

6. Greece

Claudio reported on the convention of the Organization of Communist Internationalists of Greece. The convention decided to begin a process of unification with the Revolutionary Communist Front. The Communist Internationalist League, a group which broke with Healy about one year ago, states that it wants to join the Fourth International. (See Attachment B.)

Discussion.

MOTION: that Claudio be the United Secretariat representative to the coming convention of the RCF and that while there he help facilitate the process of unification of all three groups.

CARRIED

7. Hong Kong

Dunder reported on the convention of the Revolutionary Communist Party of China.

Discussion.

8. Australia

Dunder reported on relations between the Socialist Workers Party and the Communist League.

Discussion.

9. Socialist Workers Party (United States) National Committee Plenum

Stateman reported.

Discussion.



10. Spain

Jaime, Gabriel, and Ana reported on the political situation and the coming elections. Jaime reported for the LCR. Gabriel reported for the LC. Ana reported for the Tendencia Obrera of the LCR.

Discussion.

AGREED that a draft resolution be prepared for discussion at the next meeting of the United Secretariat.

AGREED to refer to the Bureau the organization of an international campaign of solidarity with the two Spanish organizations. (See Bureau mailing dated May 11, 1977.)

MOTION: Le S.U. de la Q.I. a discuté de la situation en Espagne, en particulier en relation avec les prochaines élections aux Cortes de juin 1977. Le S.U. approuve la présentation de candidats défendant le programme trotskyste lors de ces élections. En conséquence, indépendamment de l'appréciation des dispositions tactiques (alliance électorales), le S.U. appelle toutes les sections à appuyer les candidats de la LCR d'Espagne dans les élections.

MOTION (TRANSLATION): The USFI has discussed the situation in Spain, particularly with respect to the coming elections to the Cortes in June 1977. The US favors the presentation of Trotskyist candidates upholding the Trotskyist program during these elections. Consequently, regardless of assessments of tactical arrangements (electoral alliances), the US calls upon all sections to support the candidates of the LCR of Spain in these elections.

For: 12 (Adair, Aubin, Claudio, Duret, Fourier, Frej, Galois, Jaime, Johnson, Jones, Otto, Walter)

Against: 3 (Carmen, Julio, Romero)

11. Colombia

Roberto reported on the political situation.

Domingo reported on the process of unification among the organizations supporting the Fourth International now taking place.

MOTION: (See Attachment C.)

CARRIED

MOTION: to refer to the Bureau the drafting of a statement clarifying that the Fourth International has no relations with the POR-C of Colombia.

CARRIED

12. Mexico

Stateman reported on the Central Committee meeting of the Liga Socialista and its decision to begin a discussion for a convention of the LS to decide on unification with the Mexican PRT.

Discussion.

AGREED that while Comrade Domingo is in Mexico he will discuss the situation in the PRT with the comrades there and prepare an informational report for the next meeting of the United Secretariat.

### 13. Argentine Defense

Duret reported.

AGREED to participate in a solidarity campaign for imprisoned trade unionists and to refer the organization of our support for this campaign to the Bureau.

### 14. Bureau Report

A. Petersen reported on the progress of the Southern Africa solidarity activity.

B. Pola reported on a European women's liberation meeting scheduled for the end of May.

C. MOTION: To elect IEC member Sylvain to the Bureau.

CARRIED

D. Aubin reported on the central committee meeting of the Portuguese LCI and relations with the PRT.

### Discussion.

E. Appeal of disciplinary measures by two comrades of the Lebanese RCG.

MOTION: to establish an ad hoc fact-finding commission of two or three comrades and refer its composition to the Bureau.

CARRIED

### 15. Revista de America

Discussion of articles in the April 1977 issue of Revista de America concerning France and Spain. (See Attachment D.)

MOTION: The USFI notes with regret that the April 1977 issue of Revista de America has published articles criticizing the positions of the LCR of Spain in a harsh and slanderous manner and discussing the internal situation in the LCR of France. The United Secretariat considers that public polemics of this type should be avoided, and urges the editorial board of Revista de America to refrain from a repetition. The USFI asks the editors of Revista de America to give equal space for reply to the LCR of Spain and the LCR of France.

For: 11 (Adair, Aubin, Carmen, Duret, Frej, Galois, Jaime, Johnson, Jones, Otto, Walter)

Against: 2 (Julio, Romero)

Abstentions: 1 (Claudio)

### 16. Correspondence

Replies to the December 21, 1976, letters from the United Secretariat to the Bolshevik Tendency, Revista de America, the PST of Argentina, and Comrade Capa have been received. (See Attachment E.)

Correction to March minutes

There is an omission in the minutes of the March 22, 23, 24, 1977, meeting of the United Secretariat. Under agenda item number 13, Special Commission, the following motion was adopted:

MOTION: After having heard the report of the commission of enquiry and considered the written statement of Amador and other submitted materials, the United Secretariat declares:

1. That the United Secretariat considers that the actions of Amador in 1969-73 objectively aided the Nicaraguan dictatorship in its struggle against the Nicaraguan people. Such actions are incompatible with the defense of the interests of the working class and therefore incompatible with membership in the Fourth International.

2. The commission of enquiry has found no evidence that Amador has been a police agent of the dictatorship or of imperialism. The United Secretariat therefore states that such accusations are unfounded.

3. Only after a clear public rejection made by Amador himself (specifically for the Central American public, and among other things, to be published in the paper of the OST, Que Hacer?) could the United Secretariat rediscuss the modalities of his integration in the Fourth International.



ATTACHMENT ACorrespondence between Lutte Ouvrière and the LCR1. Lettre de Lutte Ouvrière à la LCR

Paris, le 13 avril 1977

Chers camarades

Les propositions nouvelles que vous nous avez faites lors de notre dernière rencontre - et notamment celle d'adopter une déclaration commune à LO et à la LCR chaque semaine, avant de décider définitivement d'un supplément hebdomadaire commun à nos deux journaux - nous incitent à reprendre la discussion sur nos démarches respectives elles-mêmes.

L'ensemble de vos propositions, sans être inacceptables pour nous en elles-mêmes, révèlent cependant une démarche qui ne correspond pas à la nôtre.

Vous semblez partir du principe que nos deux organisations parviendront facilement à un accord politique ou alors, que nos désaccords ne seront pas importants, pas au point en tout cas d'empêcher à envisager dès maintenant des interventions politiques communes.

Ainsi que vous le savez, nous considérons pour notre part qu'il existe deux problèmes majeurs qui rendent extrêmement difficile une intervention politique commune de nos deux organisations dans la situation politique française actuelle.

En premier lieu, il nous semble que nos deux organisations sont en désaccord politique profond à propos de l'Union de la Gauche et la signification d'une éventuelle victoire électorale de celle-ci. Nous pensons qu'aucune considération tactique ne peut permettre aux révolutionnaires de cacher aux travailleurs, ne fut-ce que partiellement, qu'en cas d'une victoire électorale de l'Union de la Gauche, celle-ci utilisera son crédit auprès des travailleurs pour mener une politique anti-ouvrière, une politique de droite; et que les travailleurs n'ont rien à espérer de ministres de gauche. C'est une position qui, nous semble-t-il, n'est pas partagée par les camarades de la LCR, du moins tel que nous pouvons en juger par les prises de positions dans "Rouge" ou, plus généralement, dans toutes les formes d'interventions publiques. Prises de positions, qui, même lorsqu'elles sont critiques à l'égard de l'Union de la Gauche, propagent l'idée que l'arrivée au gouvernement de celle-ci serait un avantage pour les travailleurs.

Le deuxième problème majeur sur lequel nos divergences nous semblent profondes concerne la façon d'intervenir de nos militants dans les entreprises, aussi bien dans le domaine politique que dans de domaine syndical. Nous avons en particulier des optiques très différentes dans nos attitudes respectives vis à vis des centrales réformistes. A notre avis, il est indispensable que les organisations révolutionnaires dénoncent sans cesse les illusions des travailleurs sur les directions syndicales réformistes, même - et nous dirions presque surtout - lorsque leurs militants sont présents, voire occupent des postes de responsabilité dans telle ou telle organisation syndicale.

Voilà pour les deux problèmes politiques majeurs sur lesquels nous avons des divergences. Nous ne pensons pas, pour notre part, que ces divergences soient secondaires. Nous ne pensons pas non



Attachment A, cont'd.....2

plus qu'elles puissent être gommées et encore moins résolues, par l'adoption de formulations à mi-chemin entre les deux positions.

Si des interventions politiques communes à nos deux organisations se font, dans la situation française actuelle, dans les domaines politiques ou revendicatifs importants - et non pas sur des questions secondaires et marginales - elles ne peuvent se faire que sur l'une ou l'autre des options politiques représentées par les politiques actuelles respectives de LO et de la LCR. Pas sur les deux options à la fois - car elles s'excluent.

Vous pouvez évidemment apprécier les divergences de façon différente, penser qu'elles sont moins importantes que telles que nous les voyons, et fonder votre démarche unitaire sur cette conviction. Mais il vous appartient alors d'en faire la démonstration convaincante, non seulement dans la discussion, mais à toutes les occasions politiques qui se présentent.

Nous avons d'ailleurs une possibilité de vérification en ce moment même, à l'occasion des discussions entreprises pour un cortège unitaire, ~~par~~ prévu pour le 1er mai. Nous nous sommes ralliés, par souci unitaire, à votre choix tactique de défiler derrière le cortège unitaire de la gauche, bien que c'est là un choix erroné. Mais nous avons précisé que ce ralliement nous était possible qu'à la condition expresse que nous soyons capables de trouver des mots d'ordre communs qui expriment l'orientation politique que nous considérons comme seule juste vis à vis de l'Union de la Gauche. Si nous ne parvenons pas à un accord sur les mots d'ordre, comment ne pas constater que les discussions pour élaborer une plate-forme politique unitaire pour les législatives, voire même pour parvenir à une déclaration politique commune hebdomadaire, seront nécessairement oiseuses, tant nos positions politiques respectives sont incompatibles?

Compte tenu de l'état actuel de nos discussions, ce que nous voudrions vérifier, c'est si vous êtes prêts à vous engager dans une démarche unitaire même s'il se révèle - ce qui nous semble tout de même l'éventualité la plus vraisemblable - que nos désaccords sur les problèmes majeurs de l'heure nous empêchent de parvenir à un accord politique. Autrement dit, si vous êtes prêts à rechercher à faire ensemble tout ce qu'il est possible de faire ensemble et qui permettrait d'accroître le rayonnement global de notre mouvement, malgré les divergences importantes.

Les seules propositions qui nous semblent réalistes, c'est à dire susceptibles d'être suivies de réalisation, sont celles qui partent de l'existence de ces divergences au lieu de les considérer par avance comme résolues.

En matière de presse commune par exemple, c'est l'hebdomadaire commun qui est le plus facilement à notre portée immédiate. Sur l'ensemble des problèmes politiques, sociaux, culturels, etc., sur lesquels nous sommes amenés à prendre position semaines après semaines, il existe un grand nombre sur lesquels nous écrivons des choses très voisines. Ces problèmes où nos positions sont voisines, constituent même probablement la majorité. Créer un hebdomadaire unique entre nos deux groupes, avec une rédaction, une administration, des réseaux de distribution et de vente uniques, permettrait d'additionner nos forces militantes pour faire vivre un hebdomadaire dans lequel ce que nous avons de différent à dire,



Attachment A, cont'd.....3

et qui porte assurément sur des problèmes politiques importants, pourrait cependant être dit. Chacun des articles serait susceptible de toucher un ensemble de lecteurs plus vaste et plus varié que nos publications actuelles respectives.

Il en résulterait un accroissement d'efficacité pour nos deux groupes, sans que nous ayons à abandonner quoi que ce soit d'important de nos idées politiques. Il en résulterait également une démonstration et une vérification publiques de notre volonté unitaire.

La contre-proposition initiale du Secrétariat Unifié d'éditer un supplément hebdomadaire commun est un succédané moins démonstratif de notre proposition, et surtout, elle est en réalité plus difficile à réaliser. Il est évident en effet que si l'hebdomadaire embrassait nécessairement l'ensemble de l'actualité, y compris tous les aspects de cette actualité où nos désaccords sont mineurs, le supplément, lui, devra obligatoirement embrasser les aspects importants de l'actualité. Autrement dit les domaines où nos divergences sont à priori les plus importantes.

Nous avons accepté cependant cette contre-proposition, là encore par souci unitaire. Mais ce compromis n'est réaliste et réalisable que si nous avons, de part et d'autre, le but de créer un hebdomadaire commun, autrement dit si le supplément est une étape transitoire dans le cadre d'une démarche unitaire similaire. Mais c'est précisément de cela que nous fait douter votre dernière proposition de déclaration hebdomadaire commune, qui est encore plus difficile à réaliser que le supplément si l'on tient compte des divergences, et qui risque de poser d'emblée devant la poursuite des négociations des obstacles insurmontables.

Il nous semble donc que, ou bien vous n'avez pas encore défini avec précision votre propre démarche - ou alors que nous n'avons décidément pas la même.

C'est ce qui ressort d'ailleurs également de ce que vous ne semblez pas envisager la participation des révolutionnaires aux prochaines législatives autrement que sur la base d'une plate-forme politique unique et sous la forme d'une campagne unique. Autrement dit, sur une base qui, à moins de considérer nos divergences politiques comme mineures, est impossible sans que l'une ou l'autre de nos organisations abandonne ses positions actuelles (croyez-vous sérieusement que nous pouvons faire une campagne unique en disant des choses différentes, voire contradictoires, par rapport à l'Union de la Gauche?). Il n'est ni unitaire, ni responsable de fonder ces propositions sur l'idée que nous abandonnerons nos propres positions pour nous aligner sur les vôtres. Vous êtes évidemment seuls juges de savoir si vous pouvez abandonner les vôtres - auquel cas en effet il ne serait pas difficile d'élaborer une plate-forme politique unique et de suivre votre démarche - mais si tel n'est pas le cas, et nous n'en demandons justement pas tant, la seule proposition qui nous semble réaliste dans l'immédiat, et sur laquelle peut porter un accord éventuel, est bien celle de répartir l'ensemble des circonscriptions, en appelant à voter les uns pour les autres, afin d'assurer la présence des révolutionnaires partout, et d'éviter les affrontements entre les candidats de nos organisations respectives, tout en menant une campagne sur nos axes politiques respectifs.



Attachment A, cont'd.....4

Voilà, chers camarades, les observations que nous suggèrent vos dernières propositions. Au-delà des propositions particulières ou des problèmes de formulations susceptibles de figurer dans un éventuel protocole d'accord, nous ne pouvons pas faire l'économie de définir nos démarches respectives. Nous voudrions donc savoir quelle est exactement la vôtre.

Salutations révolutionnaires

LUTTE OUVRIERE

## 2. La réponse de la LCR à cette lettre de LO

Paris le 21 avril 1977

Chers camarades,

Votre lettre représente un changement par rapport à nos discussions antérieures. En effet vous expliquiez dans ces discussions que la seule façon de tester l'importance exacte de nos divergences était la réalisation d'une presse commune dans le but déclaré d'essayer de les dépasser. Vous insistez pour que des articles communs soient faits sur des sujets essentiels de l'actualité et en conséquence vous sembliez favorables à notre proposition de commencer par écrire ensemble des articles avant d'annoncer le quatre pages commun.

Maintenant vous affirmez que les divergences sont très profondes et parfaitement connues et que rien ne laisse présager leur dépassement. En conséquence vous proposez une presse "commune", unitaire pour l'accessoire et divergente pour l'essentiel, dans le simple but d'accroître l'efficacité de nos deux groupes". Evidemment alors, plus il y aura de pages, plus nous pourrions accorder de place à des articles d'information rédigés en commun, les éditoriaux et les articles de fond étant distincts. Mais du coup, nous ne voyons plus très bien pourquoi votre demande s'adresse à la Ligue plutôt qu'à l'OCT ou une autre organisation d'extrême gauche, vu l'importance des divergences qui nous séparent et sont selon vous, insurmontables.

Votre proposition semble aussi connaître un glissement sur les législatives. Lors des discussions préparatoires à la campagne municipale, vous nous aviez déclaré oralement qu'en cas de législatives anticipées, votre démarche de candidature commune serait la même. Dans le projet de protocole, vous n'écartiez pas la possibilité d'une campagne commune prolongeant la campagne municipale. Mais maintenant vous donnez des arguments de principe qui ne peuvent conduire qu'à une conclusion : vous êtes d'ores et déjà convaincus qu'une telle campagne politique commune est exclue pour les législatives. A tel point qu'on se demande comment nous avons pu signer sans grande difficulté une plate-forme politique commune pour les municipales! Cette plate-forme politique commune était-elle un compromis politique sans principe de votre part? Il est donc essentiel de clarifier nos démarches respectives pour effectivement ne pas signer un protocole où les uns et les autres ne mettaient pas la même chose. Notre démarche est la suivante. Contrairement à ce que vous semblez croire, nous ne pensons pas que pour l'unité, il faut être d'accord sur tout ou alors on ne peut rien faire ensemble. Mais contrairement à vous, nous pensons qu'il

## Attachment A, cont'd.....5

faut un minimum d'accord permettant une intervention commune soit pour une activité de masse soit pour des campagnes politiques. En effet si cette activité commune existe, alors le quatre pages, puis l'hebdo sont un moyen non pas de photographier des divergences mais d'oeuvrer à leur dépassement. C'est pourquoi nos propositions sont les suivantes:

1) Quatre pages hebdo commun pour commencer avec une série de tests préalables (série d'articles n° 0). Sur ces quatre pages, trois pages au moins doivent être rédigées en commun et une page au plus pourra être réservée au débat. Le nombre de pages du supplément hebdo sera accru au fur et à mesure de l'avancée des positions communes.

2) Discussions entre nos militants et sympathisants à tous les niveaux.

3) Activités communes. Et puisque l'intervention de masse commune (syndicats, CET) semble hélas aujourd'hui très difficile, nous vous proposons une campagne législative commune prolongeant l'accord des municipales, ce qui nous semble possible.

Ces trois propositions nous paraissent liées entre elles. En effet, un 4 pages hebdo commun serait un cache-misère pendant la campagne législative si nous n'arrivions pas à mener une campagne commune. Pire, il risque de ne pas résister longtemps à la justification polémique de nos divergences. Il suffit de rappeler les articles des uns et des autres au moment des législatives partielles!

Si nous vous faisons ces trois propositions, c'est que nous sommes conscients comme vous de la profondeur de nos divergences, mais qu'il nous semble que vous les situez mal:

1) Sur l'Union de la Gauche, il n'y a pas divergence d'analyse. Il s'agit pour nous d'un front de collaboration de classes. Un gouvernement PS-PC, y compris sans radicaux et sans gaullistes, serait un gouvernement de collaboration de classes dans la mesure où il gérerait l'Etat bourgeois. Le PS et le PC se préparent à appliquer une politique d'austérité, soeur jumelle du plan Barre. Tout cela, camarades, nous le faisons et nous l'écrivons. Mais nous ne sommes effectivement pas d'accord avec vous pour réduire la politique des révolutionnaires vis à vis du PS et du PC à une politique de dénonciation comme vous semblez le proposer. Nous ne pensons pas, en effet, qu'on fait avancer d'un millimètre la conscience des travailleurs non déjà convaincus, en avançant, comme les maoïstes, le slogan "gouvernement de droite, gouvernement de gauche, blanc bonnet et bonnet blanc". ou "PS-PC, au service de la bourgeoisie". Nous pensons que les révolutionnaires doivent avancer des mots d'ordre répondant aux exigences de la situation et susceptibles d'être repris par les larges masses. C'est à dire des mots d'ordre qui s'opposent ouvertement à la politique du PS et du PC sans apparaître comme une simple dénonciation verbale de ces organisations. C'est le cas des mots d'ordre sur les revendications, sur la centralisation des luttes contre le plan Barre, sur la rupture avec les institutions de la Ve République et la nécessité de chasser Giscard, sur la rupture avec les partis bourgeois, sur la rupture avec l'économie capitaliste par la nationalisation de tous les secteurs clés de l'économie sans indemnités, ni rachat et sous contrôle ouvrier...



## Attachment A, cont'd.....6

En cela, nous sommes fidèles à l'esprit et, en l'occurrence, à la lettre du Programme de Transition: "De tous les partis et organisations qui s'appuient sur les ouvriers et les paysans et parlent en leur nom, nous exigeons qu'ils rompent politiquement avec la bourgeoisie et entrent dans la voie de la lutte pour le gouvernement ouvrier et paysan".

Nous vous proposons simplement d'exiger avec nous du PS et du PC qu'ils rompent politiquement avec la bourgeoisie et entrent dans la voie de la lutte pour le gouvernement ouvrier!

2) Sur les syndicats, la divergence ne porte pas sur l'appréciation de la nature des directions syndicales réformistes. Ni sur la nécessité de dénoncer leur capitulation. Nous avons le sentiment de le faire copieusement, même si, encore une fois, il nous paraît important de mettre l'accent sur les tâches sans se contenter de la seule dénonciation verbale. Notre divergence porte en premier lieu sur la façon dont vous assimilez les syndicats, organisations de masse, et leurs directions. Ainsi, vous estimez que le cortège syndical du 1er Mai est un cortège de l'Union de la Gauche. Et, en conséquence, vos militants syndicaux, au lieu de mener la bataille avec ou dans leur section syndicale contre l'orientation réformiste au sein du cortège du 1er mai, manifestent seulement dans le cortège de Lutte Ouvrière. En second lieu, nous divergeons très profondément sur la compréhension des rapports entre parti et syndicat. En effet, si les révolutionnaires cherchent à gagner la majorité du syndicat au programme révolutionnaire, ils doivent respecter l'autonomie organisationnelle du syndicat par rapport au parti. Au contraire, vous traitez le syndicat comme un simple outil au service du parti et non comme une organisation de masse autonome au sein de laquelle les militants du parti défendent évidemment la ligne de leur organisation, mais tout en ayant le devoir, s'ils ont des responsabilités, de respecter scrupuleusement les mandats reçus démocratiquement. Ainsi vous ne voyez pas de différence entre fraction et tendance. Ainsi votre choix de militer dans tel ou tel syndicat ou hors du syndicat ou de créer une section syndicale est seulement guidé par les commodités que cela procure à vos militants indépendamment du caractère de masse du syndicat.

Nous estimons que cette divergence sur l'intervention de masse est beaucoup plus profonde et beaucoup plus grave que nos divergences sur l'Union de la Gauche. Et c'est pourquoi nous croyons difficile, dans les conditions actuelles, une intervention de masse commune alors que nous pensons possible des campagnes et initiatives politiques centrales communes.

Mais si vous refusez notre triple proposition, dont le but clair est d'oeuvrer à surmonter nos divergences actuelles pour accroître notre activité commune, nous serions néanmoins d'accord pour l'aide mutuelle que vous proposez, mais alors sans développer aucune ambiguïté. Dans cette hypothèse limitée, nous vous proposerions:

1) un 4 pages hebdomadaire commun (testé préalablement) dont 1 page serait réservée au débat

2) répartition des circonscriptions électorales afin qu'il y ait un seul candidat révolutionnaire par circonscription, ce qui suppose de discuter avec les autres organisations d'extrême-gauche qui souhaitent se présenter.

En espérant avoir clairement expliqué notre démarche, recevez, chers camarades, nos salutations communistes.

LIGUE COMMUNISTE REVOLUTIONNAIRE



## ATTACHMENT B

Correspondence between the Communist Internationalist League  
and the Organization Communist Internationalist of Greece1. Letter from the Communist Internationalist League to the  
Central Committee of the OCIG

February 24, 1977

Dear Comrades,

The C.C. of the Communist Internationalist League (CIL) is appealing to you to put in the agenda of the coming convention the question of the unification of the Trotskyist forces in general and our two organizations especially. We also ask the permission for a delegation of our organization to attend your convention. We would like copies of your internal pre-congress material for distribution to our members. From our side, we are willing to give you the documents of our internal discussion which you can distribute to your membership if you want to.

Our proposal can be considered as a continuation of our former proposals regarding a discussion between our organizations on the disputed questions of the Trotskyist movement, which as a matter of fact are problems of the labor movement in general. For us, the purpose of this discussion is the unification of the Trotskyist forces in our country and it is part of an effort that, in our opinion, Trotskyists must undertake today for the unification of our movement internationally.

Our organization is also taking all the proper steps in purpose to participate in the pre-congress discussion of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International and the 11th World Congress as well, as observers, if the unification will not have been completed until that time in Greece.

We still believe that the objective and subjective preconditions are ripe for the solution of the theoretical and political problems that disoriented and split our movement in the past. Today we can draw the balance of all our past experience and go ahead to reestablish our unity on a higher level - based on principles.

Obviously, no discussion between us, even the most thorough, can solve automatically all the problems and differences. We believe, that with the existing differences we can and must coexist in one and the same organizational framework, functioning with democratic centralism. We want the discussion in purpose to realize the unification with the best possible conditions: to include the possibility to achieve the highest possible political homogeneity in the future. We don't put a precondition for an agreement on all questions in purpose to unify with you.

Finally, we find it necessary to stress that the unification of the Trotskyist organizations in our country in the present conditions -- those organizations that are ripe to realize this step today -- will strengthen politically the position of Trotskyism inside the labor movement to a multiplied degree, much more than the numerical concentration of our forces, which by itself will be also very important.

We wish the entire process of your convention go to on in the most fruitful way and will consist an important step forward, to-

Attachment B, cont'd.....2

wards the building of a united and politically and organizationally strong Trotskyist movement.

Comradely,  
The C.C. of the CIL

2. Letter to the CIL from the Organization Communist Internationalist of Greece, Greek section of the Fourth International

Athens, March 3, 1977

Dear Comrades,

At first, we consider your proposal to open a discussion aiming to the unification and your desire to participate in the pre-congress discussion of the Fourth International as well, as a very positive step towards the concentration and the unification of all the Trotskyist forces in the world under the banner of the Fourth International, that is one of our main targets today.

We believe that a long period of splits is closed. Today, the situation imposes this task of unification, and the Trotskyists have got enough maturity, so that we are able to discuss and have disagreements without having necessarily a split as happened in the past, even when the differences were not so basic and determinant and, worst of all, without having a deep and thorough discussion on the differences that would help to develop the problematic and the theoretical level.

In this situation with the decomposition of the other currents of the labor movement and the rapid course of the Stalinist parties toward the Social Democratization the process of recomposition and unification of the Trotskyist movement will become a powerful attractive pole for every vanguard militant. This will open the way toward the growth of our movement and will strengthen our lines with the living movement of the working class and its daily struggle.

Of course, we can open a substantial discussion through the mutual exchange of the internal discussion documents. Since we are already in a pre-congress period, we can start it immediately. We consider it also positive and there is no reason to refuse your proposal to send a delegation as observers to the convention of the OCIG. On the agenda of our convention there is already the issue of the unification concerning the unification with the FCR and the mutual circulation of our internal discussion bulletins inside the two organizations.

Since we consider the opening of this discussion as part of the efforts taken on a world scale for the unification of all Trotskyists, copy of your letter and of our reply will be sent to the United Secretariat of the Fourth International.

The agenda of our coming convention has been decided by an assembly of the entire membership of the OCIG and only the convention itself has the authority to change it or to add an issue. For this reason we cannot assure in advance that the convention will accept to put the unification issue with the CIL on the agenda. If the delegates consider adequate the discussion and the exchange of views that can take place, during the short time that remains, we think there is no other reason for the convention to refuse to discuss the issue or to determine a further procedure.



Attachment B, cont'd.....3

Because of the time limits and the large number of issues on the agenda, it is impossible for us to extend the discussion to issues other than those on the agenda and at least for this period the exchanging of our views will be necessarily limited on those issues, which we believe are covering the most basic problems that our movement is facing today.

Enclosed is also the resolution of our assembly concerning the norms and the agenda of our coming convention.

Comradely,  
The C.C. of the OCIG

### ATTACHMENT C

#### Resolution on Colombia

Le Secretariat Unifié de la IVème Internationale, après avoir discuté de la situation colombienne et du développement des organisations se réclamant du trotskysme et de l'Internationale dans ce pays :

1) Note que la convergence des positions programmatiques et politiques exprimées notamment dans "l'accord politique", base du processus d'unification entre Espartaco (section colombienne de la IV Internationale), les Commandos Camillistes et la Ligue Ouvrière Communiste (LOC), a facilité cette unification.

2) Se félicite également des progrès de ces processus d'unification qui vient de donner naissance à la Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire de Colombie.

3) Reaffirme la nécessité déjà exprimée dans une résolution antérieure (novembre 1976) de l'unité de l'ensemble des forces qui en Colombie se réclament de la IVème Internationale, c'est à dire la Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire (fusion de Espartaco, LOC et Commandos Camillistes) et le "Bloque Socialista" qui après avoir exprimé son accord avec les bases programmatiques de l'Internationale s'est lors de sa conférence de Septembre 1976, formellement et publiquement revendiqué de la IVème Internationale.

Dans la mesure où ces organisations se revendiquent des mêmes bases programmatiques, celles de la IVème Internationale, il n'existe aucun argument de principe sérieux, quelles que soient les divergences sur la tactique en Colombie, allant à l'encontre de l'ouverture dans les plus brefs délais d'un débat politique en vue d'une unification. Parallèlement, et chaque fois que cela est possible, activités commune et interventions communes doivent être discutés et concrétisés.

4) Le Secretariat Unifié prend note que des propositions allant dans ce sens ont été faites à plusieurs reprises, tout par la Bloque Socialista dans son organe "Revolucion Socialista" que par les trois organisations aujourd'hui fusionnées dans la L.C.R. (Résolution sur le Bloque Socialista de la réunion conjointe des comités centraux Espartaco, LOC, Commandos; lettre du 14 février publiée dans Poder Obrero, n° 13, Avril 1977.)

Mais, jusqu'alors ces propositions parallèles n'ont amené aucune réponse de la part des organisations fusionnées aujourd'hui dans la LCR et réciproquement.



Attachment C, cont'd.....2

Cet état de fait est d'autant plus paradoxal et inexplicable que l'enjeu politique d'un rapprochement et d'une fusion entre les forces se réclamant du trotskysme en Colombie est considérable, tant pour les militants colombiens eux-mêmes, que pour l'ensemble de la IVème Internationale.

Une telle fusion permettrait de créer un pôle marxiste-révolutionnaire implanté et crédible face au centrisme et au maoïsme toujours puissant en Colombie.

Une telle fusion permettrait, sur la base d'un accord politique, de traduire rapidement dans la pratique toutes les possibilités ouvertes par l'adhésion au marxisme révolutionnaire de secteurs significatifs de l'avant-garde colombienne.

5) Face à cette situation, le Secretariat Unifié appelle de la manière la plus insistante, à l'ouverture d'une véritable discussion sur la base des propositions non-contradictoires sur le fond qui ont été formulées de part et d'autre.

Pour ce faire, le SU recommande que les polémiques publiques se fondant sur des appréciations erronées et inacceptables, comme la caractérisation de centriste appliquée au Bloque Socialista, prennent fin. (Voir l'accord politique CC, LOC, Espartaco de Décembre 1976.)

6) Enfin, le Secretariat Unifié, sur la base de la proposition faite au Bloque Socialista par Espartaco, LOC, et Commandos Camillistes aujourd'hui fusionnés dans la LCR de publier en commun INPRECOR en Colombie (voir lettre publiée dans Poder Obrero No 13) et de l'accord manifesté par la direction du Bloque Socialista lors d'une réunion avec deux membres du Secretariat Unifié en Novembre à Bogota, et confirmée depuis lors, propose que soient immédiatement discutées les modalités concrètes d'une telle publication afin qu'elle puisse commencer dans le plus brefs délais possible.

\*\*\*

(English version of the Resolution on Colombia)

The United Secretariat, after having discussed the situation in Colombia and the development of the organizations adhering to Trotskyism and the International in that country:

1) Notes that it was the programmatic and political convergence of views expressed particularly in the "political agreement" that forms the basis of the process of unification of Espartaco (Colombian section of the Fourth International), the Comandos Camillistas, and the Liga Obrera Comunista (LOC) that facilitated unification.

2) Welcomes as well the progress made in this process of unification, which is giving birth to the Liga Comunista Revolucionaria of Colombia.

3) Reaffirms the necessity, already expressed in an earlier resolution (November 1976), of the unity of all the forces claiming allegiance to the Fourth International, that is, the Liga Comunista Revolucionaria (fusion of Espartaco, LOC, and the Comandos Camillistas) and the Bloque Socialista. After having expressed its agreement with the programmatic bases of the International at its February 1976 congress, the Bloque Socialista formally and publicly pro-



## Attachment C, cont'd.....3

claimed itself for the Fourth International at its national conference in September 1976.

Insofar as these organizations claim allegiance to the same programmatic bases, those of the Fourth International, there exists no serious principled argument -- whatever differences there may be on tactics in Colombia -- that goes against opening a political discussion as rapidly as possible with a view to unification. In a parallel way, and every time agreement is possible, common activities and interventions should be discussed and concretized.

4) The United Secretariat notes that proposals in this direction have been made on several occasions, both by the Bloque Socialista and by the three organizations which today are fused in the LCR. (Resolution on the Bloque Socialista by the joint meeting of the central committees of Espartaco, LOC, Comandos; letter of February 14, 1977, published in Poder Obrero, No. 13, April 1977.)

But up until now these parallel proposals have not been followed up any significant response. The proposals of the Bloque Socialista have not provoked any response on the part of the organizations which today are fused in the LCR and vice versa. This state of affairs is even more paradoxical and inexplicable given that the political stakes of a rapprochement and a fusion among the forces claiming allegiance to Trotskyism in Colombia are considerable, both for Colombian militants themselves and for the entire Fourth International.

Such a fusion would create a strong revolutionary Marxist pole with an implantation and credibility in face of the still powerful centrists and Maoists in Colombia.

Such a fusion would enable, on the basis of political agreement, the rapid transformation into concrete practice of all the real possibilities opened up by the adherence to revolutionary Marxism of significant sectors of the Colombian vanguard.

5) Faced with this situation, the United Secretariat calls in a most insistent manner for the opening of a real discussion on the basis of the noncontradictory proposals of a basic nature that have been formulated by both organizations.

In order to facilitate this, the United Secretariat recommends that public polemics containing erroneous and unacceptable appreciations, such as the characterization of the Bloque Socialista as centrist, should cease. (See the political agreement of Espartaco, CC, and LOC of December 1976.)

6) Finally, on the basis of the proposal made to the Bloque Socialista by Espartaco, LOC, and the Comandos Camillistas now fused in the LCR to publish INPRECOR in Colombia as a joint effort (see the letter published in Poder Obrero, No. 13) and the agreement with this proposal expressed by the leadership of the Bloque Socialista during a meeting with two members of the United Secretariat in Bogota (November 1976) and confirmed as of this date, the United Secretariat proposes that the concrete modalities of such joint publication be discussed immediately in order that it would be able to begin with the least possible delay.



## ATTACHMENT D

Translation of an article that appeared  
in the April 1977 issue of Revista de America

'Combate' . . . But Not Against Reformism - by Nahuel Moreno

I have carefully read through the special issue of Combate, the publication of the Spanish LCR (Liga Comunista Revolucionaria), which appeared in February 1977. It is an extraordinary, exceptional issue that seeks to sum up and symbolize what kind of journal they would like to publish. More than anyone else in the Fourth International, these heroic and self-sacrificing Spanish comrades deserve to be spoken to frankly. This special issue will prove to have great importance for the International, inasmuch as it is the confirmation in reality of the prognosis we made about the danger of a slide toward total capitulation to the European Communist parties.

On this account, with deep sadness, I find myself compelled to denounce this special issue of Combate as one of the worst expressions of centrism and opportunism that I can remember. It is thousands of kilometers from Nin and light years from Lenin and Trotsky. It is so opportunist and centrist that there is not a single criticism of the national policies of the PCE (Partido Comunista de España) and the PSOE (Partido Socialista Obrero Español). Even to say that there are no criticisms is not going far enough -- there is not a single critical sentence or comment. The only three comments on the reformist parties concern regional or sectoral questions.

1. On page 7, they make a "harsh criticism" of the CP-controlled Movimiento Democrático de Mujeres (Democratic Women's Movement) for two organizational derelictions in building and carrying out the first demonstrations of the working women of Madrid.

2. On page 8, they criticize the "PCE and PSOE" for their electoral tactics in Euskadi (only in Euskadi?), which led them into making deals with the Basque rightists.

3. On page 9, they say, referring to the "Round Table of the Political and Trade-Union Forces of the Valencian Country": "The bourgeois organizations within it, and the working class forces that are participating actively in the Negotiating Commission dealing with the regime -- the PCE and PSOE -- have capitulated to the central government and aggravated the crisis."

Silence Means Assent

Does Combate have nothing to say, not even a word, about the policies of the PCE and the PSOE toward the "democratic opening" offered by the government of Suarez and King Juan Carlos? Is the treacherous policy of the PCE and the PSOE in the Basque country an exception to the rule? Did the local party organizations break the discipline of their national parties, or is their course part of a nationwide policy? What about the PCE's policy toward the assassination of the lawyers, was that correct or a betrayal? What about the lines the PCE and the PSOE are following in the union movement, do these represent a class-struggle position or an opportunist one? Are the leaderships of the reformist parties working in an underhand way for a social pact in the service of the bourgeoisie or aren't they? Are the big working-class parties taking a consistently republican stance or are they ready to make a pact with the



Attachment D, cont'd.....2

monarchy? Are they or are they not in favor of building a general strike against the regime?

A special issue of a revolutionary newspaper that fails to raise and to answer these politically fundamental and decisive questions has nothing to do with Leninism or Trotskyism. Such a paper is a wretched sheet that does nothing but offer some news about trade-union struggles and the oppressed nationalities; it is not a revolutionary Marxist organ.

Thus it is not by chance that the following sentence can be found in the Manifesto of the LCR to Public Opinion as a Whole: "The LCR is an organization that in the worst years of the dictatorship combined its efforts with those of the other workers parties and of the nationalities in the fight for freedom and against capitalist exploitation."

Similarly unsurprising is the lamentable explanation that the LCR is internationalist "because we believe in the necessity of international working-class solidarity against the power of the trusts and the multinationals, and we maintain close fraternal relations of the Fourth International."

Nowhere in the entire journal or the manifesto is it explained that we maintain an independent national and international organization precisely because the PCE and the PSOE on a national scale, like the CPs and the SPs on an international level, are parties that betray the working class, that practice a policy of class collaboration and therefore do not struggle against capitalist exploitation, parties that as a result have created a crisis of leadership in the workers movement both internationally and in Spain.

In its manifesto, the LCR says exactly the contrary: "the . . . (Spanish) workers parties" are "united" "in the fight" "against capitalist exploitation." A word to the wise is sufficient -- the LCR has only tactical differences with the PCE and the PSOE, since they have been united for long years "in the fight" "against capitalist exploitation."

#### Why and in What Way We Are Internationalists

According to the special issue of Combate and the manifesto, the LCR is internationalist for the same reason as the Stalinists: out of "international working-class solidarity against the power of the trusts and the multinationals."

This non-Marxist conception of internationalism, meaning a common front against the trusts and the multinationals, is used by the Stalinists to oppose permanent revolution on a national and international scale, since limiting the struggle to a fight against the multinationals leaves open the possibility of popular fronts with the supposedly "nonmonopolistic" and "national" bourgeoisie.

And this is not far-fetched speculation. Anyone familiar with "Eurocommunist" propaganda knows that its favorite camouflage is "antimonopolistic" verbiage, which appears very radical but which serves as a justification for popular fronts with the supposedly "nonmonopolistic" bourgeoisie. The way "internationalism" is formulated in the manifesto of the LCR is nothing but a "Trotskyoid" echo of this key point of the demagoguery of "Eurocommunism," and it in no way exposes this demagoguery.



Attachment D, cont'd.....3

Trotskyist internationalism flows from a conception of the world revolution, from the permanent revolution. This internationalism is embodied in the World Party of the Socialist Revolution, the party of the revolution against all exploiters, from the multinational to the regional bourgeoisie. For this reason Marx and Engels founded the first and second internationals when trusts and multinationals did not yet exist, because they wanted to make the international socialist revolution.

We are inheritors of this program of the international socialist revolution and therefore we denounce the betrayals of the second and third internationals, which abandoned forever this program of the international revolution. We point out the betrayal of the Communist parties, which conceal their implacable struggle against the international socialist revolution and their class-collaborationist politics under the mantle of "international working-class solidarity against the power of the trusts and the multinationals."

2. Letter from the Political Bureau of the French LCR to the United Secretariat

Paris, le 28 avril 1977

au Secrétariat Unifié de la IV<sup>o</sup> Internationale

Chers camarades,

Nous venons juste de prendre connaissance du contenu du dernier numéro de Revista de América. Les articles consacrés à notre organisation, la section française de la IV<sup>o</sup> Internationale, et à notre organisation soeur, la LCR, en Espagne, constituent une attaque publique inadmissible, tant par la forme que par le contenu, qui ne peut être interprétée que comme une attaque contre la IV<sup>o</sup> Internationale dans son ensemble.

En ce qui nous concerne, nous pouvons vous assurer que nous avons rarement fait l'objet de critiques aussi insultantes, y compris de la part de nos adversaires les plus acharnés dans l'extrême-gauche révolutionnaire en France. Cela nous paraît d'autant plus inadmissible que c'est le fait d'une revue qui apparaît sans conteste comme le porte-parole d'une fraction de notre Internationale.

La gravité de ces faits, et leur rejaillissement inévitable sur l'ensemble de l'Internationale, nous conduisent à vous en saisir sur le champ. Sans préjuger de l'ensemble des décisions que de tels agissements ne manqueront pas d'impliquer, nous comptons exiger un droit de réponse immédiat auprès des responsables de Revista de América.

Salutations fraternelles,

pour le BP de la LCR  
Daniel Bensaïd

TRANSLATION

TRANSLATION

TRANSLATION

JANUARY 27, 1977, LETTER TO THE UNITED SECRETARIAT FROM THE LEADERSHIP OF THE BOLSHEVIK TENDENCY

Bogotá, January 27, 1977

To the Comrades of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International  
Dear Comrades,

We received your letter of December 21, 1976, which puts a series of questions to us. Along with other letters, resolutions, and draft resolutions concerning our tendency or its components, these questions are part of an aggressive campaign against our tendency in violation of the statutes.

The objective of this letter is to expose the majority's campaign against our tendency, our leaders, and some of our organizations. It is time for these comrades to begin to treat our tendency in a fraternal way and to stop these sly threats and low maneuvers, to promote a fraternal atmosphere that would make it possible to hold a serious political debate within our International.

Such a turn is all the more necessary since while the United Secretariat spent November and December creating this situation, one of its most prominent members, Comrade Mandel, was making public statements to a Spanish magazine (see the November and December 1976 issues of Viejo Topo) that are among the most serious errors ever made by the Fourth International, since they were in fact semiofficial statements.

I. The Resolutions and Questions Aimed Against the Bolshevik Tendency

1. The November Meeting of the United Secretariat.

In the November United Secretariat meeting, a resolution was adopted criticizing the Bolshevik Tendency. It was written and supported by the most prominent leaders of the IMT. This resolution was nothing more than a stupid attack on our tendency. It showed a total lack of a sense of Trotskyist proletarian solidarity and responsibility toward the PST, the Trotskyist party that at present is suffering the worst persecution at the hands of the reactionaries. This criticism insinuates that the BT is refusing to present a tendency platform and constitutes an unprincipled grouping. But let us look at the facts: The comrades of the majority who proposed this motion are well aware of the difficult circumstances the PST is going through, as well as those experienced by some of the parties that make up the BT. These comrades know about the difficulties with files and documents and realize that the conditions we have faced are totally different from those enjoyed by the comrades of the LTF and the European comrades of the IMT in drawing up their documents.

There is the concrete fact (which the IMT leadership is well aware of) that the document on Europe adopted in May and published in June 1976 by the United Secretariat was not sent to any tendency in Colombia. The result of this was that the tendency document approved by the BT at the Bogotá conference was improperly documented as regards the IMT's definitive position on Europe. Thus, as we were preparing to deliver our tendency document to the United Secretariat, we became aware, purely by chance, that the authors of the resolution



(along with everybody else in Colombia and in Latin America, to the best of our knowledge) knew nothing about the document approved by the United Secretariat in May. This forced us -- out of a sense of responsibility toward the IMT and all the rank and file of our world party -- to redraft our document and make a study of the material we did not know about before, because as we saw it this was to be the axis of the tendency debate.

It was because of this organizational default of the United Secretariat majority that we decided to postpone delivering the document for a month or two.

Despite all these problems, a resolution was passed trying to paint the BT as a maneuverist, unprincipled tendency based on organizational questions alone, when precisely the opposite is true. We broke with the LTF on very clearly defined questions having to do with the Portuguese question. We called for the formation of a tendency based on key questions in the Portuguese revolution, such as our position on the embryos of dual power. Subsequently, despite all these vicissitudes, despite the persecution the PST had to face, the final programmatic documents were drawn up, definitively establishing our tendency.

## 2. The United Secretariat resolution and Comrade Mandel's letter referring to public publication of "A Scandalous Document."

Two letters arrived, one from Comrade Mandel and another from the United Secretariat (dated respectively, November 27, 1976, and December 21, 1976). Both were addressed to Comrade Moreno. In these letters -- despite a fraternal tone -- a question was raised about whether, according to the statutes, minorities and leaders of the International have the right to publish old polemical documents that have appeared in internal bulletins.

These two letters touch on the question of possible public publication of "A Scandalous Document" (possible, since the tendency has not adopted any resolution calling for this; there was only a proposal to Comrade Moreno that this be done, without specifying whether this should be public or not). They flagrantly contradict one another. Comrade Mandel, showing his knowledgeableness and sense of responsibility, points out that we have the right to publish this document publicly. At the same time, he points out the grave political problems that exercising this abstract right could raise at the present time in Spain. However, the United Secretariat resolution insinuates exactly the opposite of what Mandel says: that the authors have no right to publish old documents if these have been partially published in internal bulletins of the Fourth. We ask: Where in the statutes does it say this? Where does it say that old polemical documents published in the internal bulletins cannot be published unless the leadership of the Fourth authorizes this?

We think that Comrade Mandel is right: Such documents can be published. Those parts that might endanger the internal security of the Fourth can be censored, but not the rest, because it is already becoming part of the history of the International. We think that as soon as a congress is over, all the documents become part of history. The comrades may have some other criterion, but they cannot impose it, because in order to do this they would have to have a statute to back up their view. Comrade Mandel has understood this very well, and therefore, he recognizes our right to publish this document. We hope that he will be consistent and vote in the United Secretariat in support of our right to do this. We will not allow any restriction



of statutory rights or any limitations of our tendency rights or the intellectual rights of leaders and members of the Fourth International.

### 3. The editorship of "Revista de América" and the PST's position on the Mexican elections.

Both with regard to the question of the editorship of Revista de América and the PST's position on the Mexican elections, some of you already have all the answers to these questions. You ask us this question in order to lay a trap for us. If you don't know the answers, it is only because you do not want to. All you have to do to get the answers would be to ask some fraternal questions in the United Secretariat and take it down in the minutes, or else ask the leaders of our tendency directly, to their faces. Why are you asking for a written answer? What crimes are tied up with these questions that you need an answer in writing?

For example, you have been informed orally in detail that the editor of Revista de América is Comrade Moreno, and that it is only for legal reasons that he cannot be listed as such. Aren't you satisfied with that? Do you have some doubts about the answer? If not, why are you asking again? What kind of trap do you want to lay for our tendency?

Your question about the PST's position on the Mexican elections is another example of this approach. Several comrades on the United Secretariat are fully informed about this question. Our entire tendency knows about this, as well as a large part of the IMT and the LTF. Why don't you ask this question orally in a United Secretariat meeting, and Comrade Mario will answer it with supersonic speed. Why do you put this question in writing? What kind of organizational maneuver are you carrying out against the BT to avoid political debate?

There was a meeting of the Central Committee of the PST in December 1975, at which the comrades of the Colombian Bloque Socialista were present, among others, where a resolution was adopted on this question. Comrade Mercedes of the editorial board of Revista de América and the PST International Commission was assigned to write an article that was to be published in the final issue that appeared of Revista de América. It was because of the length of the article needed to deal with the Mexican question that it was decided to put off publishing this piece until the next issue, which did not come out. Moreover, during the IEC meeting last February, in the sessions of the Mexican Commission (including Comrades Hansen, Mandel, and Moreno) it was explicitly reported in the name of our party that the official stand of the PST coincided with that of Comrade Mandel and not with that of Comrade Hansen, who thought that the position of the Mexican comrades was completely revisionist. In general, we agreed with Comrade Mandel that their position constituted an error but not a betrayal, nor was it a policy of total revisionism. Thus, it represented a tactical error within the context of a correct attempt to intervene in the electoral process and not abstain from it. This is common knowledge.

### II. The Acceptance of Ricardo H.'s Letter by the United Secretariat.

In Mexico, a maneuver was plotted, and skillfully orchestrated by a leading member of the Mexican IMT, to whip up a witch-hunt against the PST and two of its members. In response to the letter the United Secretariat sent him (included here as an appendix), Comrade Moreno



took up the launching of this witch-hunt in some detail. We are not going to repeat Comrade Moreno's arguments. Instead, we will stress the formal, statutory aspect.

In the letter he sent to the United Secretariat raising charges against the PST and Comrade Moreno, Comrade Ricardo indicated that he thought his accusations were proven by a so-called letter from Capa to Greco. But this so-called letter says in so many words: "The other day, when I talked with Ricardo by telephone, I was really thrown for a loop, because they had worked out the same tactic as ours right down to the details." That is, Ricardo's tactic was exactly the same "right down to the details" as that worked out by the PST leadership or by the PST's International Commission, or by Comrade Moreno.

In accordance with the statutes, why does Comrade Moreno have to give any explanations? If there is any provision in the statutes that requires him to give an accounting, this point applies as well to Comrade Ricardo. What's wrong with this letter? You cannot raise irrelevant questions. A Bolshevik organization cannot waste any of the time needed for revolutionary work and building the party. If some irresponsible persons spend their time getting hold of correspondence between leading comrades or taping telephone conversations and sending transcripts to the United Secretariat, these persons must be selective and say whether what is involved is against the statutes, whether it goes against proletarian morality. Concretely, what is there about this letter that violates the statutes? Only once this is clarified can any relevant questions be put to Comrade Moreno, and the same questions must be put to Comrade Ricardo. Moreover, Comrade Ricardo must prove that the letter in question actually describes an intervention by the PST and actions on its part that contravene the statutes, instead of whipping up a whole witch-hunt atmosphere.

When this letter was sent on December 15, 1975, the PST's break with the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction was already public in the Fourth International. As a result, a realignment of forces was taking place, in which the tendency including Comrades Ricardo and Orestes lined up with the PST. That is, there had been a whole process in which a current of opinion had formed along tendency lines. These are the facts. Where in the statutes does it say that every step in the development of tendency or pre-tendency relationships, every step in the formation of a tendency, must be reported in detail and at the very moment it occurs to the United Secretariat and the section leadership? And in Mexico, there was no section. We want the comrades to tell us: What is wrong with what happened?

But there is a factor that makes the attitude of the United Secretariat still worse. The SWP and LTF were informed in detail by the PST, as was the leadership of the LTF comrades in Mexico, because this has been a tradition of the PST and is going to become one in the Bolshevik Tendency to maintain open and fraternal relationships, based on communist morality and good will, with all tendencies and all comrades in the Fourth International and its leadership. There are many who can testify to this, but two are particularly well qualified to do so, Comrades Ed Shaw and Horacio of the leadership of the LTF in Mexico. Nothing was hidden from these comrades. However, what is gravest about all this is that the IEC and the United Secretariat were fully informed of the general lines of what happened. Comrade Moreno pointed out openly in the United Secretariat that his party's position, as well as his own, was to fight right from the start to separate Comrade Josefina from the ranks of the Fourth International,



and that they would not rest until she was expelled. He made clear that what had happened was supported by Comrades Livio and Jean Pierre. So, why does the United Secretariat have to ask about what it already knows? Was not the United Secretariat informed that as soon as the PST and Comrade Moreno found out that Comrade Josefina had contacted the police, that is, one of our most terrible class enemies, to make inquiries about a leader of her own organization, we took the stand of fighting by any means necessary for separating her from the Fourth International. And in meetings with our pre-tendency during the International Executive Committee Plenum in February 1976, Comrade Mandel asked us to postpone the discussion on the case of Comrade Josefina, saying that we were perfectly right but that such a postponement was necessary because if this comrade was expelled, the SWP would split the International. While this might be a question of principle, that did not mean that it was pressing. We agreed that the International Executive Committee did not have to discuss it right then.

### III. What Is the Objective of All This?

Your own statement in November, your letter in December, as well as your acceptance of Ricardo Hernández's maneuver, have one obvious objective -- to try to show that we are breaking away on our own, that we are factionalists and that we are violating democratic centralism, when exactly the opposite is true. Of the three tendencies existing in our International at present, the one the other tendencies know most about, the one whose internal moves, resolutions, and steps are most well known, is the Bolshevik Tendency. And this is not the result of any naiveté on our part. It is the result of a clear policy, one of maintaining an attitude of good will to the end toward the other two tendencies, toward the membership of the Fourth International, as well as toward our international leadership. We may make mistakes, but we hide nothing, we do not maneuver, we do not make secret telephone calls. We publish resolutions and letters on everything we do because we are not ashamed to show it to the entire International. There are no maneuvers, no questionable operations, no Machiavellian methods. What we want is a full political discussion and fraternal relations among all the comrades until we come to a conclusion that it is impossible to live and work together any longer inside the same organization. And it is because of this, precisely because of our good will toward the other two tendencies and toward our International leadership, because everyone is being fully informed about what we are doing -- it is because of this that the IMT (with the support or not of the LTF, we do not know) wants to take advantage of our apparent naiveté to wage a whole smear campaign against our tendency. All of this -- as we have already said -- has one clear objective -- to avoid political debate and divert the attention of the ranks. Your letter fits into this context.

### IV. And If Any Doubts Remain About This, Let's Take a Look at the Actions of the United Secretariat and Comrade Mandel With Regard to the Unification in Colombia

All your resolutions are of the same type. But what gives away these factionalist maneuvers, what reveals the lack of seriousness of the United Secretariat and of the majority, are their actions in Colombia.

On October 18, 1976, the United Secretariat adopted a resolution calling for the unification of the three organizations that claim to represent the IMT and the Bloque Socialista (BS). It says: "Accord-



ingly, to aid in this process, the Bureau assigns its members, Comrades Mandel and Riel, who will soon go to Colombia, and Comrade Moreno, who is living in Colombia, to participate in the discussions and negotiations in order to facilitate them and help them along." This was signed for the United Secretariat Bureau by Riel and Julio.

In the November 13-14 meeting, the majority of the secretariat adopted the following motion, which is an obvious maneuver and drastically alters the October resolution: "Comrades Walter and Domingo, in consultation with the members of the IEC resident in Colombia, can represent the United Secretariat in discussions with the organizations in Colombia adhering to the Fourth International. The aim of these discussions is to help facilitate the process of unification under way between Espartaco, the Liga Obrera Comunista, and the Comandos Camilistas. Overall, this may involve extending the process of unification to include the Bloque Socialista and the other organizations in Colombia that support the Fourth International." Despite the hedging in its formulations, this resolution is diametrically opposite to the one adopted in October. The objective of the first resolution was to unify the four organizations. The present one has as its immediate objective the unification of Espartaco, the Liga Obrera Comunista, and the Comandos Camilistas. The October resolution says that it is the members of the United Secretariat Bureau who are to apply this line. In the November resolution, a member of the United Secretariat disappears from the picture, precisely the one who lives in Colombia, Comrade Moreno. The resolution refers to "the members of the International Executive Committee resident in Colombia" only as consultants and not as members of the commission.

This factional maneuver, as dirty as all the rest, the elimination of a member of the United Secretariat from a commission of this body, was carried through. Comrade Moreno was not consulted nor did he play any part whatever in the process of unification. The official leaderships of the three organizations adhering to the IMT consistently refused to talk to this member of the United Secretariat. For months after the resolution was adopted, Comrade Moreno continued being put off by the leaderships of the Liga Obrera Comunista, the Comandos Camilistas, and Espartaco (the official section). Graver still is the fact that he was put off by Comrade Mandel, who had meetings with these three organizations without taking Comrade Moreno along, without consulting him, without discussing the tactics of any of his actions. That is, belonging to a minority, to the BT, clearly makes you a fifth-rate activist in Comrade Mandel's eyes, and being a leader of the BT as well as of the United Secretariat makes you a tenth-rate leader, as far as he is concerned.

This is the sad truth of what happened in Colombia. None of Comrade Mandel's actions was discussed. There was never any discussion among the members of the United Secretariat to see what steps would be taken, nor was Comrade Moreno ever invited to any of the meetings in the process of unification among the three organizations of the IMT. He was only invited to the meetings that had to do with the BT or with the Bloque Socialista.

The most distressing thing is Comrade Mandel's factional cynicism. He assured the BS that they were going to demand that Comrade Moreno go to the plenums of the three IMT organizations as he had gone to the plenum of the Bloque. In front of the leadership of the BS, he said that he would not allow the other organizations not to talk to Comrade Moreno. But everything continued as before.

## V. Conclusion

This attitude on the part of Comrade Mandel, these changes in the resolutions on the unification in Colombia, have the same meaning as your letters, resolutions, questions, and proposals. The intention was to smear our tendency, to maneuver against it, and to attack it. We hope, comrades of the United Secretariat, that both with respect to the negotiations in the Colombian case and your dealings with the Bolshevik Tendency that you will return to normal relations, to relations among comrades in which the majority respects the rights of a minority.

None of the foregoing remarks will be an obstacle to our answering all your questions in separate letters, in the same spirit we have always observed in our relations with leaders of the International and with the members of the other tendencies. However, one point should be made clear. We want a discussion around fundamental political points, and we will not let anyone tie us down and prevent us from exercising our rights as a tendency by byzantine discussions around petty organizational questions that can be solved fraternally by a ten-minute discussion among comrades in the same organization and the same leading body.

With orthodox Trotskyist greetings,

The leadership of the Bolshevik Tendency



Letter from Capa

Bogota, January 27, 1977

To the Comrades of the United Secretariat  
of the Fourth International

Dear Comrades,

With respect to resolution No. 11 of the Bolshevik Tendency, as published by the Portuguese PRT, I must note the following:

1. Any organization in the Fourth International, as well as any tendency or faction, in my opinion, has the right to publish, either internally or in public form, any internal discussion document dealing with questions no longer current. That is, they have the right to do this a few years after the documents in question have been published internally.

2. No article in the statutes prohibits the public issuance of documents such as described in point No. 1.

3. Issuing this document publicly is not a question for me to decide, nor do I think that resolution No. 11 talks about doing this. Therefore, this question should be addressed to the leadership of the tendency or the organizations considering publishing it. For example, the Cali organization of the Bloque Socialista decided to put it out in a run of 300 copies, and personally I am against prohibiting this organization or any other from publishing it.

4. Since the time it came out, various parties, comrades and publishing houses in the movement have considered printing it publicly. I have always opposed this, and refused to cooperate with any such attempt.

5. I think that this document is an important element in the history of the present tendency struggle, and therefore for the first time I am going to cooperate with such a project in order to improve the editing of this document and facilitate its publication.

6. Before saying that it is part of a discussion article published in the Internal Bulletin of the Fourth International, you have to be clear about the fact that only a section of it was published in English and Spanish, and not a line of it in French. Therefore, except in Spanish, its circulation was minimal. Thus, it is exaggerated and false to say that it was published in the Internal Bulletin.

7. Part of this document was published in a Spanish edition of several thousand copies, and as naturally occurs in such cases, no party could control its circulation. Likewise, the majority has the complete draft of this document, which also got out of the PST's control, even though only a few hundred copies of it were published.

8. We made a proposal to Comrade Mandel to establish a means of supervising the public work of the various movement publishing houses throughout the Hispanic-speaking world--to set up a parity committee representing the various publishers linked to the Hispano-

Capa to USec, January 27, 1977/222

American Trotskyist movement. This parity commission should decide on a publishing plan that all the publishing houses would have to follow. It has to be an honest agreement in good faith. We do not know why you are looking for organizational procedures to accomplish what can be decided fraternally among comrades and among the publishing houses of the movement.

For all the reasons I have explained above, for statutory reasons as well as principled political and organizational reasons, and for personal ones, I inform the United Secretariat that if the tendency or any of the groups or publishing houses linked to the international want to put out "A Scandalous Document" in public form, I will not lift a finger to prevent it, because I think that to do so would go against every principle of the Trotskyist and revolutionary movement.

None of the foregoing remarks means that as of today I have firmly decided to issue this document publicly. This is a question that will be discussed and decided by our tendency. In the event that the Publishing House Parity Committee is formed, it will be decided in connection with it.

With Orthodox Trotskyist Greetings,

s/Capa



TRANSLATION

TRANSLATION

TRANSLATION

Letter from Marcela

Logota, January 27, 1977

To the Comrades of the United Secretariat  
of the Fourth International

Dear Comrades,

After a little delay, we received your letter of December 21, 1976. We are hastening to respond.

The electoral tactics of the comrades of the Liga Socialista of Mexico were thoroughly discussed at a Central Committee meeting in December 1975. Foreign comrades from four countries were present-- Colombia, Brazil, Uruguay, and Faraguay. A strong criticism of the tactics was made.

The Political Bureau of the PST, and later the Central Committee gave Comrade Mercedes the task of preparing a long article about the electoral problem in Mexico, to be published in Revista de America. The object was to explain exhaustively to the entire Latin American and world Trotskyist movement, and especially to the Latin American vanguard, our serious tactical differences with the policy of the Liga Socialista in Mexico. The editors of Revista de America felt it would be too much to publish Comrade Ricardo's article on electoral tactics in Mexico together with the response and analysis of Comrade Mercedes that the CC had decided on. So the editors decided to publish Ricardo's article in one number and Mercedes' in the next, along with an explanation voicing the opinion of the Editorial Board and the PST Executive Committee.

All these documents (the minutes of the CC meeting and the article by Comrade Mercedes) are in our archives, which are inaccessible at the time owing to our having to work under clandestine conditions. We are ready to give a full oral explanation of the case, so that the comrades can be totally satisfied. If necessary--if there is the least doubt about what we have said concerning the present situation of our archives--we are prepared to finance a trip to our country by some comrade from the United Secretariat to thoroughly corroborate everything we say in this letter, especially the fact that we are unable to use our archives at the present time. We believe that before long, in a few months, the situation will change radically. Then we will be able to append all the documents proving what we are telling you.

On the other hand, Comrade Moreno, on his return for the February 1976 Executive Committee meeting, reported that the official position of the PST was very similar to the one Comrade Mandel had maintained at the meeting of the Mexican Commission of the ILC. He had therefore supported Comrade Mandel's position at that meeting.

Although you didn't ask us about it, we want to point out that Comrade Greco--in letters that are also in our archives--systematically noted a slight pro-Stalinist deviation in Comrade Ricardo. He believed this deviation to be incipient, and, if memory serves

Marcela To USec, January 27, 1977/222

us right, considered its first manifestation to be the pact signed with the Stalinists. All this was said in the context of Comrade Greco's very enthusiastic defense of Comrade Ricardo's tactical audacity in favor of intervening in the elections--even though there were tactical errors or deviations that tomorrow could be transformed into truly revisionist deviations with respect to Stalinism. All the members of the EC and of the International Commission agreed with this position of Comrade Greco's in general terms, although with various differences about the nuances. As soon as we can use our archives, we will corroborate that this supplementary information we are fraternally providing to the comrades of the United Secretariat, conforms to the letters that Comrade Greco conscientiously sent us when he had the chance.

With Orthodox Trotskyist Greetings,

For the EC of the PST in exile,

s/Marcela



TRANSLATION

TRANSLATION

TRANSLATION

LETTER FROM MARCELA, CAMILO, EDUARDO TO THE UNITED SECRETARIAT

Bogotá, January 27, 1977

To the Comrades of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International  
Dear Comrades,

As we told you in our other letter, in which we criticized your resolutions and proceedings against the Bolshevik Tendency, we are going to respond to the various points and questions that you raised with us in your letter of December 21, 1976.

1. We take note of your "dissatisfaction" with our resolution No. 1, that refers to "the formation of a parity leadership of the Fourth International." We regret profoundly and reject as pedantic and professorial your argument about the "normal practices of democratic centralism." We already know that our proposition is exceptional and completely abnormal, but this is precisely because the situation in our international is also absolutely abnormal. Instead of responding politically, telling us that that situation does not exist except in our imagination, you tell us that our proposal is not in accordance with the norms. We already know that. But we are discussing what must be discussed: the normality or abnormality of the situation in the International.

Hard facts have demonstrated in an immediate way that we are right. These hard facts are the scandalous statements made by Comrade Mandel to the Barcelona magazine Viejo Topo. Acting in an official or semiofficial capacity, he compromised the United Secretariat and practically the entire International. These statements denied the entire analysis, characterization, and policy of Trotskyism and the Fourth International concerning Stalinism. The possibility was left open -- especially for France and Spain -- that the Stalinists might transform themselves into revolutionary parties.

This has nothing to do with the tradition, the policy, the analysis, or the history of Trotskyism. It has been said -- we emphasize again -- in a semiofficial capacity in the name of our entire International. This is totally abnormal. That one of the foremost leaders of Trotskyism makes totally and absolutely anti-Trotskyist statements is not -- for us -- a normal situation. Our organizational proposal justifiably tries to avoid situations such as this. If it were accepted, no member of the International could make public statements like those of Comrade Mandel, without reaching an agreement beforehand. Thus these statements would not have been made -- statements that require our tendency to publicly dissociate itself from them in the clearest way. Neither would a crisis in our International have become evident -- in public.

2. The tasks of resolution No. 4, points d and e, were not carried out, since Revista de América did not come out and the congress of the PST was postponed indefinitely.

If our attitude were not fraternal, our response would be limited to what we have already told you. But we want to go far beyond formal and statutory requirements. We want to have a fraternal relationship with the United Secretariat and with the other tendencies, one of mutual respect. For this reason we will tell you of the movement of



comrades in the two countries you asked us about. At the request of Comrade Manuel, we exerted as much moral pressure as possible to get Comrade Greco to leave Mexico. He offered no resistance -- on the contrary, for some time he had been indicating a desire to leave there for personal reasons. A comrade from the Bloque Socialista (Socialist Bloc), Comrade Dario, was asked to replace him in his editorial work. Dario was given the responsibility of representing the Socialist Bloc and the tendency at the unification congress of the Mexican Trotskyists. At the end of the year, Comrade Greco returned to Mexico, and Comrade Manuel again asked our tendency that, "given the factional characteristics of the comrade," we do everything possible to get him to leave Mexico right away. The request was carried out immediately. The comrade was asked to leave Mexico without delay and to try not to stay in the country past January 15. Comrade Greco had no difficulty leaving by the date that was suggested to him.

The following comrades have gone to Ecuador on various occasions for about a week's time: Socorro (from the Socialist Bloc) and Lidia and Mercedes (from the Argentine PST, who are living in Colombia).

3. With reference to resolution No. 5 and your question about the organizations and tendencies affiliated to the Bolshevik Tendency, we must point out that we don't really know the object of your question. But we are responding without delay:

We know that many comrades have criticized us, pointing out that (national) tendencies or organizations can't affiliate to an (international) tendency. We disagree with this conception because of the situation in our International, in which there are public organizations that are -- in fact -- factions or tendencies. To say otherwise would be to fail to recognize the reality. For example, in Colombia all of the IMT is organized into three groups. All of the LTF is in another group, and all of the BT is in yet another. In other words, they are public factions. We think it would be quite hypocritical to deny this fact. In Spain the LTF has one organization and the IMT has another, so it would be a farce for these organizations, that are actually public factions, not to belong to the international faction of which they are the national expression.

It is good to recognize this situation for another reason: It means that all of these groupings are part of the same international, and should behave that way toward one another. Our Bolshevik Tendency would think it anomalous if all the official sections that make up the world Trotskyist movement, the Fourth International, adhered to a single tendency. However, this is also a relative situation. Where there is a majority of 95 percent, they can also join, but in general we are against this. That is why the Venezuelan section, which is the only organization belonging to the International in Venezuela, is not part of the Bolshevik Tendency. Instead, its militants join as individuals. But in the countries where there are a number of Trotskyist organizations we accept the membership of whole tendencies. While this is an abnormal situation, it is what exists. In other words, concretely, we don't see anything in the statutes preventing an international tendency from accepting the membership of national tendencies. We have read the statutes from cover to cover and we have found nothing that corresponds to what some comrades are saying. When there are national factions and tendencies in one organization, why can't they join an international tendency? And if that national tendency or faction has split and has become a public faction, why can't it join an international tendency?



4. Also with reference to resolution No. 5, and your question about the names of the comrades and organizations to which they belong: We see a repetition here of the question about organizations. We can't give you a list of the sixty-five members (of the leadership) because the places have not all been filled yet. So we are only going to give you a list of the comrades that already form part of the leadership of the Bolshevik Tendency, and the organizations to which they belong.

5. Publication of the main reports adopted at the founding meeting of the BT hasn't been implemented, because these texts haven't been transcribed from the tapes. As soon as they are, we will have no problem sending them to you comrades. That will show you why it may not be possible for us to carry out resolution No. 8, owing to the time and effort the length of the reports would require. Publishing them would mean in effect putting out a book and that was not taken into account when the resolution was adopted.

With respect to the founding meeting, it took place in Bogotá, but definitive approval of the documents was postponed for a meeting to be held in Europe. In other words, there have been two founding congresses, connected to each other. This is due to our functioning in clandestine conditions, to our connections with the PST, and to difficulties within the organization. The meetings took place in Bogotá August 24-30, 1976, and in Lisbon in October of the same year.

For the reasons previously noted, it was actually in these two meetings that the definitive document was elaborated. Since most of the BT leadership was unfamiliar with the official United Secretariat document on Europe, the Bogotá leadership completed work on the document during October and November.

6. Of the four documents you requested we are sending the following:

\* The letter from Comrade Moreno to the Spanish comrades of the LSR.

\* The criticisms of the "Key Issues" document that were published in a PST bulletin, and that are quite well known among Trotskyists in Latin America. We are surprised that the comrades of the United Secretariat -- or at least the LTF comrades on the Secretariat -- don't have it. We are also surprised that one of those critical reports on the "Key Issues" document, the oral criticism by Comrade Moreno, was not published by the SWP leadership, despite its publication in a PST internal bulletin, as the SWP leaders well know.

Regarding the other two documents, the following is to be said:

\* The document on Angola is an article Comrade Moreno wrote last April. Due to our functioning under clandestine conditions and other well-known difficulties, it was not published in a separate issue of Revista de América, which had by then ceased publication temporarily. This article will be published as a book, along with the SWP resolutions on Angola and the revolution in southern Africa. It is fundamentally a criticism of the SWP's positions on Angola and especially their official resolution on this theme adopted in January 1976. We will send it to you comrades as soon as it is published. We don't think there is any point in making a lot of photocopies when you will be receiving the book in a few weeks.

\* Regarding the contribution on the Barnes document "Europe vs. America and the Erosion of World Stalinism," we inform you that it was suggested to the comrade charged with preparing it that the rough draft be extended so that it could be incorporated as a basic document of the tendency. It is of secondary importance in the present debate, since our tendency agrees with Barnes and the SWP that the European CPs continue to be Stalinist. The criticism focuses on questions of methods and form, clarifying our basic agreement.

If the explanations we have given don't satisfy you, amplify your questions and requests so that we can respond as rapidly as possible and thus satisfy your curiosity.

With orthodox Trotskyist greetings, for the leadership of the Bolshevik Tendency,

s/ Marcela, Camilo, Eduardo



TRANSLATION

TRANSLATION

TRANSLATION

Letter from Capa

Egota, February 2, 1977

To the Comrades of the United Secretariat  
of the Fourth International

Dear Comrades,

This is in response to your letter of November 21, 1976, in which you asked me several questions.

First of all, you asked me if I could confirm the authenticity of the letter from Capa to Greco dated December 15, 1975. I have no reason to doubt that it is a letter from me. In general terms, the form and style are mine. However, I cannot confirm that I actually wrote it. The precise phrasing and full authenticity of this letter could only be confirmed by consulting my files in Buenos Aires. For obvious reasons, they are not accessible. Moreover, when I received your letter, Comrade Greco had already left Columbia and I could not consult with him before his next trip here.

You also ask me if I could send you the memorandum mentioned in the letter. I cannot comply with this request because this document is also in my files in Buenos Aires. Thus, I cannot confirm its authenticity either, for the same reasons I could not do this for the letter. If the letter is authentic, the memo exists. I think that the PST leadership will soon be able to send it to you.

Furthermore, we are prepared to help the comrades obtain all the information necessary to confirm that what we said about the situation of our files is true.

Finally, you ask us if we have any comment to make about Comrade Ricardo's letter. In fact, we have some comments to make.

1. The so-called letter from Comrade Capa and the charges and contradictions in the letter from Comrade Ricardo

Underlying Comrade Ricardo's letter are a series of big lies. The comrade charges us with creating divisions, with recommending several times the expulsion of comrades from the leadership, and with recommending the expulsion of Cristina from the organization. However, his whole story is highly contradictory. Let's take a look: Who drew up the draft resolution liquidating Cristina? Capa or Ricardo? This is the nub of the question. This draft resolution is the one Ricardo chose to consult Capa about by telephone. It calls for Cristina's liquidation from the leadership, not from the party. According to the letter, the only thing Capa did was send a memorandum supporting this draft resolution. The confusion that Comrade Ricardo wants to create is this: he wants to present the draft resolution as if it was Capa's and to use the expression "liquidate Cristina" as if this meant liquidating her from the party and not from the leadership.

February 2, 1977 Capa to USec/222

There is still another grave contradiction. Does or does not Comrade Ricardo maintain that there was agreement on the draft resolution? We note that he says, no, that "This step was rejected by the majority of those in the leadership of the Tendencia Militante." According to the so-called Capa letter, there was complete agreement, "down to the details."

As can be seen, comrades, contradictions abound in what Comrade Ricardo says. My account on the other hand is perfectly consistent.

2. A clarification that explains the contradictions between Ricardo's letter and the so-called Capa letter

We would like to make another clarification, one that explains the contradictions between Ricardo's letter and the so-called Capa letter. It is the following: When Comrades Ed Shaw and Horacio of the Mexican LTF came through Buenos Aires at the beginning of 1976 before the IEC plenum, a meeting was held including foreign comrades, as well as the International Commission and the Secretariat of the PST, to discuss the whole Mexican problem. In this meeting, Comrade Capa gave a very lengthy report to the two comrades. The following clarifications are only a very brief resume of the documented explanations that were given to these comrades. The clarifications revolve around three fundamental points.

a. When Comrade Capa passed through Mexico in August or September 1975, he was put up for two days in the home of Comrade Ricardo. The first day he was there, Comrade Ricardo told him that he differed with the SWP and the PST on four fundamental points. One was that he thought the Fourth International was a mess and that we should get out of it as soon as possible. He went so far as to say that he was considering the possibility of forming a faction to break from the Fourth International, denouncing it for bureaucracy and betrayal.

Ricardo also pointed to other fundamental differences with the PST but he stressed one: The PST had overestimated the SWP. It was really a racist sect or something like that. He told a story about a so-called maneuver by which the SWP leadership and its agent Cristina had gotten him to go to New York. There, a lot of friction developed between him and these comrades because of their racist methods. They persecuted him and did not treat him fraternally. As a result of this situation, Cristina, who was an agent of the SWP, took a series of measures against him that involved removing him from the leadership and taking him off the party staff on his return from the U.S. Comrade Ricardo said that he was going to put up a fight against Cristina's bureaucratic methods, and that if the comrades who sympathized with the PST came to an agreement with him, he thought it would be possible to get a comfortable majority and liquidate Cristina.

Confronted with these proposals, I told him that we did not make any unprincipled agreements and that we disagreed totally with his violent attacks on the SWP and the Fourth International, and with chauvinistic methods, which we thought could not lead anywhere.



February 2, 1977 Capa to USec/333

We told him that the only point we could agree with him on was the one about one of the so-called bureaucratic measures by Comrade Cristina. This was, concretely, that by taking advantage of his absence from the country on a party assignment she had removed him from the party staff, condemning him to perish from hunger. We told him that except for this one point of agreement, we would wage a fierce fight against him on everything else.

We rejected the four points he raised, especially the one concerning the international. We told him that there might be serious differences between the SWP and us as regards the orientation of work and organizational forms. We said that we were more and more strongly opposed to generalizing the branch form of organization for the entire Trotskyist movement. We thought that the proper organizational form was cells and that there were profound reasons for this. We told him that in fact we had quotations from Trotsky giving a political explanation of the need for this form of organization. We also mentioned the question of going to the workers movement and the need for leaderships that have gone through real experience in struggle, and not propagandist, intellectual leaderships. We also told him that we had raised these criticisms of the SWP in a fraternal way in the first meeting we had with the SWP National Committee.

The next day, Comrade Ricardo told me that he had been thinking over the sharp criticisms I had made of him, and that he was convinced on three of the points in question but that he had reservations about--or more concretely, did not agree--on one. In contrast to my view, he thought that the SWP was a party hopelessly lost to the revolution. He agreed that there was no other solution than to be part of the Fourth, and that he had been wrong to take the chauvinist and nationalistic standpoint he did, provoked by the mess made by the other tendencies. He agreed with the PST on the organizational question and proposed forming a tendency against the SWP based on the differences over Portugal and the organizational question. He called a meeting for that night with a group of comrades from the leadership to declare this publicly. He said that if we accepted this principled agreement, he would win the majority. I told him that I myself could not agree to anything, that they could hold this meeting and I would go to listen and offer my fraternal opinion. The only thing I told him was that I was going to be blamed for his fight against Cristina, that this was long since predetermined because there was a mania for blaming us for all the struggles that arose, and that I would leave Mexico the night before the big brawl got underway, since I did not want to have anything to do with it, and I would only give my opinion.

At noon that day I had a meeting with Comrade Cristina. Her attitude was impeccable. She did not make any violent or factional attack on Comrade Ricardo. She explained to me the political problems she thought there were with him. She pointed out that she thought he might be showing an increasing tendency to opportunism.

That night I had a meeting, which was also attended by Comrade Greco, with a group of five or six major leaders of the Liga. The meeting was called by Comrade Ricardo. He said that he agreed with



February 2, 1977 Capa to USec/444

us on three points, although he did not agree with the very high estimation we had of the SWF and Comrade Cristina. And this was what led him to invite the PST to enter into a principled agreement that would go beyond the fight for his reinstatement on the party staff. He also said that he thought that if such a principled agreement could be reached on the question of the leadership and all the problems, he could easily win the majority in the Liga Socialista. I told him that the PST had not defined an international orientation and that therefore, for the moment, I was not accepting his invitation.

The Mexican comrades were coming to an agreement, after an intense discussion. Ricardo said then that he was absolutely sure of winning the majority and that he was going to liquidate that "bitch," as he called Comrade Cristina.

In response to this statement, I told him (and I was strongly supported by Comrade Greco and the other comrades present) that we were not engaging in any maneuvers against anybody. I said that we thought that Comrade Cristina was the most capable person in the Mexican leadership (including Ricardo), despite the friction there had been between us. Comrade Greco said, moreover, that she was a very loyal comrade who acted very correctly, and that she had not persecuted him in any way. Quite the contrary. She was the most capable person in Mexico, and should certainly continue in the leadership. This point of view was shared by all the comrades and they told him that they disagreed completely with his intention of persecuting the comrade. In fact, she should be pushed forward, since she was the best leader in Mexico.

In the face of this universal opinion, Comrade Ricardo kept silent. He did not even say anything when Comrade Greco sharply attacked the bureaucratic and factionalist methods Comrade Ricardo might use against Cristina, pointing out in contrast, the fraternal methods she used.

b. Later we got information--I think it was a brief telephone report, followed up by a letter from Comrade Greco--that the big brawl had started after my departure, when it was learned from confidential reports of a comrade that Comrade Cristina was waging a campaign against Comrade Ricardo, claiming that he was a police agent. Cristina said that a high SWF leader had told her this in New York, and that she had been able to confirm it through contact with the police themselves. These are the general lines of the report we received. Needless to say, it left us devastated. In his report, Comrade Greco stressed that he had broken off all relations with Cristina because of these methods, that he had been educated in our party and that there such an attitude was not permitted, not even at a rank-and-file level.

As soon as we found out about this, both the PST leadership and I personally began a fierce campaign to get the comrade out of the Liga Socialista. We raised a hue and cry that she should be expelled immediately and publicly, that she could not remain a moment longer in the ranks of the international. In our view, Cristina had crossed the class line on a moral question, because that is what it amounts to when a leader contacts the police without informing



February 2, 1977 Capa to USec/555

the party leadership and acting against a member of the party.

We told this emphatically to Comrades Ed Shaw and Horacio. We also told them that the Mexican comrades acted in a way that was completely and absolutely out of line with what we advised them to do, which was to inform the entire party from the beginning, to hide nothing from the party, and to expel her immediately, of course, without saying that the comrade was an informer or a traitor.

Nonetheless, everything about what we did was always clear. We told Ricardo, when he consulted us, that as soon as the opportunity presented itself, we would make public our disagreement with him on this point. For this reason, we informed Ed Shaw and Horacio in detail about our position and our differences with Ricardo. We expressed our differences again in the February 1976 United Secretariat meeting, where we pointed out that we would not rest until we got Cristina expelled, because this is a question of principle for us. And we were supported in this by Comrades Jean Fierre and Livio.

The tactic followed by Ricardo and the other Mexican comrades was different. They thought nothing should be said to the ranks of the party because this would obstruct the political and organizational discussion. They thought this question should be used to remove her from the leadership and from the International Executive Committee but not to expel her from the party and the international.

There was one point on which we did agree. There was a final agreement after all the disagreements already mentioned. This was that at some point on the agenda of the congress, the "lid had to be taken off," the ranks had to be informed of this problem. We agreed on proposing that the international form a control commission to try the comrade. I repeat, this was a final agreement we reached, after we failed in repeated attempts to get the comrades to adopt a more principled policy on this question--that is to inform the party immediately and expel her without any "ifs," "ands," or "buts."

c. Finally, there was another point on which we disagreed with the Mexican comrades, and we explained this to Comrades Ed Shaw and Horacio. We expressed our opposition to removing Comrade Cristina from the IEC, even though the statutes permit such a measure. We thought that the statute in question should be changed, and we were going to vote in accordance with our standpoint on this. We believed that a comrade elected as an individual to a position in a region, section, or in the IEC itself could not be removed from this post except for overriding reasons such as death, imprisonment, etc., and for no other cause. That is, if the comrade remained in the international, she could not be removed from the IEC, since she was elected to this position as an individual. The proper procedure, therefore, was not to expel her from the IEC, as the Mexican comrades proposed. As we saw it, the way to proceed was to expel her from the Mexican organization of the international, and then she would automatically be expelled from the IEC. As long as she had not been expelled and the Mexican comrades continued to think she should not be expelled, she should remain a member of the IEC.

February 2, Capa to USec/666

Another point we made clear to Comrades Shaw and Horacio was that if she was expelled tomorrow, we would not let her be anathematized. Our characterization would still be the same: she was a very capable comrade, but she had a problem with her nerves, and that was dangerous. Because of the threat posed by her nervous problem, she could not be a member or leader. So, she should be separated from the international for two or three years. But ties should be maintained with her that would facilitate her rejoining on a new basis, with the objective of bringing her back into the movement on a serious Bolshevik basis.

To the best of my recollection, this is all I have to report. The files and time will determine who is right.

In closing, I would like to caution the comrades. Having a majority does not mean that they have a clear field for arbitrary action. I will not keep on giving reports unless I know why I am being asked to do so.

Orthodox Trotskyist greetings,

s/Capa



MINUTES OF THE UNITED SECRETARIAT  
Meeting of June 1, 2, 3, 1977

PRESENT: Adair, Aubin, Claudio, Domingo, Duret, Fourier, Frej, Galois, Georges, Johnson, Jones, Otto, Roman, Walter.

IEC PRESENT: Gerardo, Peterson, Stateman.

GUESTS: Elizabeth, Jorge, Pola.

AGENDA:

1. Belgrade Conference
2. Spain
3. Greece
4. Portugal
5. Mexico
6. Colombia
7. Argentina
8. Socialist Democracy Document
9. Functioning of Center
10. Memorandum from Comrade Moreno
11. World Congress Preparations
12. OCRFI
13. Bureau Report

CHAIR: Johnson

1. Belgrade Conference

Georges reported the development of support for activities at the time of the Belgrade Conference in defense of political liberties. (See enclosed material)

Discussion.

2. Spain

Gerardo reported on the elections and an outline for a resolution on Spain.

Discussion.

Agreed to try to have a draft of the resolution for the June expanded Bureau meeting.

3. Greece

Claudio reported on the conference of the Revolutionary Communist Front and the progress of discussions among the OCIG, the RCF and CIL for unification. The OCIG and FCR will hold a unification conference in July.

4. Portugal

Jorge reported on the political situation and the progress of discussions between the LCI and PRT. Common activity between the LCI and PRT has broken down. The LCI requests that the United Secretariat send a letter to both organizations restating and explaining its support for a unification on a principled basis of the two organizations.

Agreed to refer drafting of this letter to the bureau.

5. Mexico

Domingo reported on the political situation and the activities of the PRT, relations between the PRT and LS and the situation within the PRT.

Discussion.

Domingo reported on a request of the PRT for material aid.

Discussion.

Agreed that the bureau prepare a reply to the PRT along the lines of the discussion.

6. Colombia

Domingo reported on discussions with the LCR and the Bloque Socialista concerning the unification of the two organizations. A part of the LCR leadership is opposed to a unification, on the grounds that it considers the BS to be centrist.

Agreed that the bureau write the LCR explaining why the United Secretariat favors a unification on a principled basis. Comrade Walter will also write a letter in collaboration with the bureau.

Motion: that Domingo be the United Secretariat representative to the LCR congress and that while there he help facilitate the process of unification.

CARRIED7. Argentina

Domingo reported on reports from the PST concerning their activities.

8. Socialist Democracy Document

Duret reported on the editing of the document.

Discussion.

Agreed to publish in at least French, English and Spanish and urge publication in other languages. Agreed to open a public discussion on the document, inviting comments from all in the workers movement.

9. Functioning of the Center

Duret initiated a discussion.

Discussion.

Agreed to continue the discussion.



10. Memorandum from Comrade Moreno

Domingo reported on a memorandum from Comrade Moreno and presented a draft reply (See attachment A).

Discussion.

Motion: to adopt the reply and refer it to the Bureau for editing. (See attachment A).

CARRIED

11. World Congress Preparations

Galois reported that in response to the poll of IEC members concerning the date of the world congress, a plurality of 57 comrades voted in favor of May 1978 and 46 voted in favor of December 1977. A proposal on scheduling will be made at a coming meeting of the United Secretariat.

12. OCRFI

Duret reported on correspondence concerning articles for the discussion. (See attachment B.)

Discussion.

Agreed that the first United Secretariat contribution be a two part article, the first part to be the document, "Socialist Democracy and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat," and the second part to be prepared by a commission of the bureau based on the articles, "Three Facets of Eurocommunism" by Ernest Mandel and "Europe versus America and the Erosion of World Stalinism," by Jack Barnes.

13. Bureau Report

A. Galois reported that the composition of the fact-finding commission on the two disciplinary actions in Lebanon is Comrades Otto and Williams.

B. Motion: that the United Secretariat delegation to the GIM convention by Comrades Fourier, Johnson and Sylvain.

CARRIED

C. Discussion on dates of the coming meetings of the United Secretariat.

D. Motion by Aubin: to concur with the request concerning the assignment of comrade Domingo.

CARRIED

E. Agreed that if necessary the bureau can publish a United Secretariat statement on the Panama Canal.

F. Domingo reported on work among Latin American exiles in Europe.

G. Motion by Petersen: the United Secretariat empowers the Bureau to discuss Mozambique in light of the situation created by the recent Rhodesian attack on Mozambique with a view to making a statement if necessary.

CARRIED

Meeting adjourned.



Attachment A

## Material Relating to Moreno Memorandum

June 13, 1977

Bogota

Dear Comrade Moreno,

We have discussed your memorandum of May 20, 1977, at the June 3 meeting of the United Secretariat.

Concerning the first point you raise, that of the April 1977 issue of Revista de América, we note that you recognize the "factional character" of the articles concerning the French LCR and the Spanish LCR, and decided to transform that issue into an internal bulletin.

Of course, the comrades of the French LCR and the Spanish LCR have the right to answer these articles. In order to guarantee that these answers receive the same circulation as the April Revista de América, we ask that the PST leadership arrange to publish a special internal information bulletin and that this bulletin be given the same circulation as the number "0" of Revista de América.

We will inform the leaderships of the French LCR and the Spanish LCR of your more general proposal to give them space in forthcoming issues of Revista de América to present their views publicly on the political situation in France and Spain.

Concerning your proposal to incorporate the contents of Intercontinental Press and Inprecor into Revista de América, of course we are ready to consider favorably any proposal which is aimed at expanding the circulation of the positions of the International. We have initiated in the Bureau a discussion of the modalities of the production of a single organ of the International, in French, English, and Spanish. We suggest that comrades who can represent the editorial board of Revista de América participate as soon as possible in these discussions with the objective of reaching a common agreement on this question.

Concerning the request of the leadership of the Argentinian PST about "what is incumbent upon them in terms of dues to the International," we agree that the factors you outline on the conditions of the country, the minimum wage, etc. must be taken into account. It is difficult for us to make a precise proposal based on those factors as well as on the concrete situation of the PST at the present time. However, we think the guideline to use is contained in the statutes: "In principle, international dues should be set at one-sixth of the regular national dues." (Section VI, Article 28.)

Comradely,

**Riel**

For the United Secretariat  
cc: LCR (France), LCR (Spain)

TRANSLATION

TRANSLATION

TRANSLATION

Memorandum

Bogota, May 20, 1977

The purpose of this memorandum is to state precisely the suggestions and proposals that I expressed to comrade Jean-Pierre during our conversation.

1) In his presence, I insisted on the fact that the last issue of Revista de América must be considered as an internal bulletin for distribution to the militants. This decision was taken by me the other day on my return from Europe when I read this issue and when I ascertained its internal and factional character. My article was dictated on the eve of my departure and it had been arranged that the editorial staff would give it the serious and public tone that is characteristic of Revista de América. This did not happen. I also consider the article on France to be internal and factional. For these reasons, I decided to withdraw the issue from circulation. I have not been able to do this because it had already been distributed and I was thus obliged to send a note spelling out its character as number 0 and as an internal bulletin.

I do not know if the Bureau of the US has received this note. Comrade T, who arrived yesterday from Spain, has brought me a copy of a letter sent by our comrades who are members of the US in Brussels which explains the same thing.

It is a long-standing position of Revista de América to open its columns to all comrades of the International who wish to polemicize with its positions. It is for this reason that we have made it known to comrade J.P. that Daniel or any other comrade of the French Ligue who wishes to polemicize with us will find the pages of Revista de América wide open.

We have informed the two comrades of the LCR (of Colombia -- translator's note) that we plan to publish Revista de América weekly, printing 20,000 copies, for distribution in all the Spanish-speaking countries.

In order to carry out this project, we calculate that the basis of Revista de América would be:

- a. all of INPRECOR without additions or commentary
- b. all of Intercontinental Press, without additions or commentary;
- c. between 10-20% of every issue composed of articles and commentary by the editorial staff of Revista de América.

In order to have more journalistic agility, we would want a telex contact with Paris and New York in order to transmit articles.

This project can be fortnightly or even monthly on the same basis, although we think that it would be ideal to publish it weekly.

We wish a written and urgent reply to this proposal.

3) I informed comrade Aldo by telephone that the leadership of the PST (of Argentina) had asked me to furnish them with a statement signed by the Bureau of the US concerning what is incumbent upon them in terms of dues to the International per militant, taking into consideration the statutes of the International, the conditions in the country, the minimum wage of the Argentine workers and employees, and the letter from five comrades of the IMT in which they recognize de facto the PST (Argentina) as offi-



cial section (a recognition which we accept as a right, but also as an obligation, with profound joy). The leadership of the PST reserves the right to make suggestions and counterproposals to this statement.

Comrade Aldo also informed me by telephone that given the atmosphere of "witch-hunt" created against us by comrades Livio and Jaime, he did not judge it opportune to pose this problem, and he put it off until the next meeting of the US.

4) I have authorized comrade J.P. or any one of the five signators of the letter that they managed to send me to utilize this memorandum as they see fit. This is a supplementary recognition -- personal and political -- on my part and for myself of the courageous self-critical position of these five comrades, who recognize de facto the PST (Argentina) as official section.

N. Moreno

Attachment B

Materials Relating to OCRFI

TRANSLATION

TRANSLATION

TRANSLATION

TO: United Secretariat of the Fourth International  
FROM: Organizing Committee for the Reconstruction of the  
Fourth International

Paris, April 27, 1977

Dear Comrades,

We are writing to you to confirm the agreement reached at our last meeting on how to proceed with the political discussion you had proposed.

The discussion will focus on the question of Stalinism. The documents will be published in three languages -- Spanish, English, and French. The United Secretariat will provide for publishing the discussion documents in Spanish and English, and the Organizing Committee will be in charge of the French edition.

The first set of documents for this discussion should be ready for publication by June 15.

As it had been agreed that we would exchange preparatory material in order to allow for the fullest possible discussion -- and although this letter is not a detailed outline of our text -- we wish to point out that in our first document, we intend to concentrate on the question of Stalinism today.

## OCRFI Letter/2

In fact, we feel it is necessary to connect an examination of the role played by the Kremlin bureaucracy and its satellite regimes, and the Chinese bureaucracy, as well as an analysis of the current policy of the Communist parties, to an assessment of the international situation.

Our views on the latter are well known. To summarize the main points: we have entered a period of revolutionary upsurge of the world proletariat, broader and deeper than ever before, which threatens to upset the European and world order established by American imperialism and the Kremlin bureaucracy between 1943 and 1947, in face of the revolutionary wave at the end of World War II. As a consequence of worldwide developments, the purest reflection of this upsurge today can be seen in Europe.

Therefore, Stalinism and the policy of the Stalinist parties confronted by this situation must play a central role in the discussion.

(a) On this point, we intend to begin by showing that the worldwide advance of the class struggle, as it is reflected in the current international situation, reveals all the features of the Stalinist bureaucracy that the Trotskyist analysis has brought out. Stalinism's counterrevolutionary character as an agent of imperialism inside the workers states and on an international scale is being exposed more clearly than ever before, together with the fact that it has no historic future, that the bureaucracy is not a social class, and that the restorationist course dictated by its counterrevolutionary character will lead to its being shattered.

There lies the roots of the crisis of Stalinism and of its international apparatus. Ultimately, the combined crisis of the bureaucracy and of imperialism stems from the international drive of the proletariat toward the socialist revolution, of which the political revolution is an integral part. The organic unity of the political and social revolutions, which are concretely taking shape through their own specific forms in Europe, gives full meaning to the slogan of the United Socialist States of Europe.

(b) Revolution and counterrevolution -- the development of the world situation, and of the European situation in particular, is leading more and more in the direction of precisely this alternative. This is the context in which the character of Stalinism and the policy of the Stalinist parties become visible.

Confronted by a revolutionary upsurge, how do the international apparatuses subordinated to the Soviet bureaucracy, and its various components, play their counterrevolutionary role in line with the interests of this bureaucracy, in a situation where the very conditions for the bureaucracy's existence are being undermined?

Only if this question takes priority can we begin to tackle the problems posed by the policies of the various Communist parties, the forms of their subordination to the bureaucracy, and so on.

This counterrevolutionary response is chiefly concretized in the revival of the popular-front policy on a larger scale than ever before.



### OCRFI Letter/3

(c) It seems to us to be wrong to reduce the current problem of popular fronts to just another type of class collaboration. It is even more wrong to base the definition of popular fronts on the "representation" granted to the bourgeois parties included in a coalition with workers parties (Spain in 1936, the alliance with "the shadow of the bourgeoisie"). Popular fronts are a crisis solution. The apparatuses and the bourgeoisie do not arbitrarily choose this variant, but are forced into it as a last resort for saving the bourgeois state. The essence of a popular front is that the workers parties are pushed to the forefront of the governmental coalition, so that a popular-front government can be presented to the masses as "their government." In this sense, there is no contradiction whatever with the Trotskyist definition of a popular front if the participation by bourgeois parties in the coalition appears to take a secondary form.

Popular fronts, along with fascism, are imperialism's last resort for holding off proletarian revolution.

Accordingly, the "popular front" policies of the various Communist parties are not a matter of national policy, but rather the particular reflection of a counterrevolutionary strategy, just like the forms of their dependency relations with Moscow.

(d) In this context, we will come back to the label of "reformist" or "neoreformist" sometimes applied to the Western European CPs, and to the assertion that these CPs, which are tending to diverge from Moscow, are becoming "social-democratized."

On this point, we will call attention to the following questions. On the one hand, the reasons why applying the term "reformist" to the Stalinist parties skirts the issue of the concrete historical content of these formations and the role of the Stalinists and reformist parties; on the other hand, the fact that the tendencies to challenge monolithism, which are becoming apparent today in the context of the undeniable crisis of the Kremlin's international apparatus and its various components, are not tendencies toward "social-democratization" of the CPs, but to the disintegration of the Kremlin's international apparatus, and, ultimately, of the Stalinist parties themselves.

(e) It is only from this angle that the question of so-called "Eurocommunism" can be approached. If there are issues that apply specifically to the policy of the Western European CPs, they are not determined by the "nature" of these parties, but by the strategic position occupied by Western Europe, and by the need for all counterrevolutionary forces to address themselves to it.

For that matter, the content of "Eurocommunism" is not European, but international. It consists of popular frontism. The policy of the Chilean CP was not substantially different from that of the European CPs.

Thus, the question that this initial document will take up is the fact that the policy of these CPs corresponds exactly to the basic needs of the Soviet bureaucracy and concretized their relation of dependency on it.

(f) In particular, the document will reexamine the Portuguese revolution from the standpoint of the policy of the Portuguese CP, as well as Stalinist policy in Spain as it is manifested in the activity of the Spanish CP, in order to show that, above and beyond differences in application resulting from the different conditions that the apparatus has to face, the same counterrevolution-

**OCRFI Letter/4**

ary strategy is being applied. This strategy flows essentially from the interests of the bureaucracy, and not from an attempt on the part of the Portuguese or Spanish CPs to play an independent "national" role.

Through exploring these questions, we think that our document will make it possible to delimit some of the issues and disagreements that we think are fundamental to the discussion.

We hope that, as soon as it is convenient for you, a meeting can be held between delegations from our two international organizations, in order to settle the technical problems involved in publishing these documents.

Trotskyist greetings,

s/ F. de Massot

For the International Bureau of the  
Organizing Committee for the Reconstruction  
of the Fourth International



June 9, 1977

TO: Political Bureaus of sections and sympathizing organizations;  
Directors of East European work and the initiatives around  
the Belgrade Conference

As a follow-up to the two earlier circulars, here is where things stand now.

I. The initiative in which we are working is beginning to take shape in France. Attached to this letter you will find:

-- the definitive public call and the list of the initial signators. This list will be added to before its anticipated publication in Le Monde during the first week of June.

-- the letter which the coordinating group that initiated this call has sent to the signators, spelling out the proposed initiatives and timetable.

II. Some comments on these results:

The traditional signators of the French "left" are now involved in this call. We are waiting for a response from union leaders (FEN, CFDT, CGT). In this present list, Julliard is a leader of the CFDT and there are several intellectuals who are close to the CP. Taddei generally commits the SP. There are also several leaders of the PSU and of the LCR.

The participation of Plyushch and Fainberg (USSR), Pomian (Poland), Alain Paruit and Tsepeneag (Rumania), Yannakakis (Czechoslovakia) guarantees the support of the left dissidents and a link with those who are in East Europe. Michnik had given his signature, but we will not make this public before having some contact with Poland.

The list also contains important signators from the Committee of Mathematicians, the League for Human Rights, the Biermann committee, the Committee for the Defense of the Polish Workers, the Committee to Support Charter 77, and the Rumanian committee.

The OCI, even though it has been asked, has stayed out of this initiative and, as a result, has done everything possible to see to it that the International Committee Against Repression does not involve itself. This committee will be holding a plenary meeting on May 31 and will decide where it stands on this call.

The French Committee Against Repression in West Germany has been contacted (and will undoubtedly give its support), as has the Committee for Amnesty in Spain.

III. Our Tasks

1) The committees in which we work that are concerned with this call must be asked to support it. They can coordinate this through the address listed on the call, as well as indicating the dossiers that they can provide for the white papers, sending delegations and messages to the events that are planned (see attached letter).

The contacts we make now and this timetable allow us to test out the possibilities for more long-term coordination among the committees that work on Eastern Europe.

2) There will be a meeting of the secretariat of the East Europe Commission of the USec Bureau on June 11-12 in Paris. Reports must be sent to Paris on the defense activities of the sections and on their involvement in the activity around Belgrade.

3) Concerning Western Europe, the countries that have a particular interest in preparing dossiers during the initiative around Belgrade are, besides France

- Germany (Berufsverbote)
- Spain (amnesty, prohibitions)
- Ireland (torture, repression)

The sections concerned should discuss the possible utilization of the call emanating from France in their work, make proposals and take initiatives that enable the involvement of the workers movement.

4) Comrades who are Latin American refugees are working to collect the signatures of refugees on a call to support the Belgrade initiative. Examples of this type are able to be generalized and are useful coming from the countries not directly concerned by the Helsinki accords. The attached call explicitly expresses its solidarity with victims of repression in the other areas of the world; conversely, positions stated on this coming from the workers movement outside of Europe are welcome.

5) For now, only the Swiss and Belgian comrades have sent reports on their activities. We are awaiting others.

6) Given the broad character of this call, it is obviously important not to neglect our independent propaganda and the denunciation of the Helsinki accords in our press.

Revolutionary greetings,

Catherine Verla



ON THE EVE OF THE BELGRADE CONFERENCE

CALL

FOR THE DEFENSE OF HUMAN RIGHTS

It is to be feared that at Belgrade the governments concerned, which are simultaneously judges and interested parties, may drop a coy veil on the violations of democratic rights in their own countries and in those of their partners and may agree to mutually satisfy one another according to their economic and diplomatic interests.

That is why we believe it necessary, in face of the Belgrade of the governments, to illustrate the reality of violations of democratic rights: civil rights; political, economic, social, cultural rights; freedom of opinion, of religious practice, of expression, organization, and demonstration; the right to work, trade-union freedom, and the right to strike; free circulation of people and ideas; the right of peoples to determine their own future.

In the countries of Eastern Europe and in the Soviet Union the defenders of human rights are waging a difficult struggle for freedom and have created committees such as the surveillance groups on the Helsinki accords among the various nationalities of the USSR, Charter 77 in Czechoslovakia and committees in solidarity with this charter in the other Eastern European countries, the Workers Defense Committee in Poland, etc. Frequently these committees have asked for support from the workers and democratic organizations of Western Europe. We hail these initiatives and express our full solidarity with all those struggling for this cause and facing repression.

Although repression in Western Europe is not presently of the same order as it is in Eastern Europe, we express the same vigilance in regard to all attacks on democratic rights in this region (bans on exercise of profession in Western Germany, expulsion of foreigners from France, etc.); we also stress the gravity of the repression in Turkey, also affected by the Helsinki accords.

On the occasion of the Belgrade conference we solemnly call upon public opinion to mobilize to defend human rights throughout Europe and we propose the formation of a Committee 77 which will take all the necessary initiatives in this direction.

In doing this we affirm our full solidarity with the victims of repression -- often of the cruelest variety -- in the rest of the world, in Latin America, Asia, and Africa and we assure them that the struggle waged in the countries that have signed the Helsinki accords is an integral part of the worldwide battle for democratic rights.

We ask all those who agree with this call to send their signatures to:

Alain Hersokovits: Groupe de Coordination (Belgrade)  
34 rue Clisson, 75013 Paris, France  
Tel. 584 84 29

and to address financial support to the same name,  
BNP 186 rue Nationale, 75013 Paris  
Compte bancaire no. 794-40

Dear Friends,

We were gratified to receive your signature for the call for the defense of human rights issued on the occasion of the Belgrade conference, and we thank you warmly.

In this letter we would like to propose to you:

-- A project for initiatives to achieve our objectives;  
-- A very urgent appeal for financial support in order that these projects may be implemented.

Here is the proposed plan of activities:

-- At the beginning of June publication of the call and the initial list of signatures in Le Monde.

-- June 8, meeting of signatories to examine proposed initiatives and establish the staff needed to implement them.

This meeting will be held at 20:30 at the headquarters of the Human Rights League (Ligue des Droits de l'Homme), 27 rue Jean Dolent, 75014, Paris. During this meeting the following target dates, among others, will be confirmed:

-- June 10, or thereabouts, a press conference which will present brief dossiers on democratic rights in the major countries concerned by our call and will detail planned initiatives.

-- June 29, "Six hours for democratic rights," at the Mutualité, during which there will be, among other things:

\*forums by country (possibly organized by the specific committees that support the call);

\*forums by theme around various types of violations of democratic rights;

\*a round table to coordinate the activities in the various countries and the existing committees;

\*a program of entertainment around the themes of the call (Biermann has been invited); suggestions are desired on this point too;

\*a central meeting in which international messages can be read out and international delegations can take the floor.

-- In September-October we may envisage a conference-discussion around the publication of white papers.

We must also discuss the means by which to make such dossiers available in Belgrade.

The working meeting planned for June 8 is very important in making the necessary decisions in the limited time remaining. In particular we would like the committees in France or elsewhere which want to support our call in one form or another to be present at this meeting. In order to publish an initial succinct dossier without delay and release it to the press and to organize the publication of the white papers, it would also be desirable for the committee delegates to come to this meeting with the dossiers they have and a brief summary (two pages maximum) of the major violations of democratic rights and major cases of repression in the country they work on. If they cannot come they can send these summaries to us by mail, before the meeting if possible, along with precise information about the contributions they think they can make to our work.

In general, any suggested initiatives would be welcome from any of the signers and may be sent in advance to our post box in the case of all those who will not be able to attend the planning meeting and in general to permit better preparation of this assembly.



All these projects need financing if they are to be carried out. That is why we ask you for immediate support in this domain as well, by sending by return mail:

100 francs to the account of  
Alain Herskovits-Groupe de coordination (Belgrade)  
BNP, 186 rue Nationale, 75013 Paris  
Compte bancaire no. 794-40

or to  
Alain Herskovits (Groupe de coordination-Belgrade)  
34 rue Clisson, 75013 Paris. Tel: 584 84 29

Thanking you in advance for your prompt support,

Coordinating group

LISTE DES PREMIERS SIGNATAIRES DE L'APPEL

D. BERGER, J. BRUNSCHWIG  
M. CALES, H. CARTAN, H. CHATELAIN, M. CLAVEL  
P. DALX, J.-J. DE FELICE, S. DEPAQUIT, J.-M. DOMENACH, Pasteur A. DUMAS  
V. FAIMBERG  
R. GARAUDY  
J.-P. HAMMER  
D. JACOBY, W. JANKELEVITCH, L. JOINET, J. JULLIARD  
G. KIPNIS, A. KRIVINE  
V. LEDUC, L. LEPRINCE-RINGUET, A. LONDON, L. LONDON, F. LUSSET,  
A. LWOFF  
S. MANDELBROJT, L. MATARASSO  
H. NOGUERES  
A. PARUIT, F. PERRIN, J. PICASSO, L. PLIOUCHTCH, G. POMIAN, J. PRONTEAU  
M. REBERLOUX, P. RICCEUR, G. ROSENTHAL, J. ROUS  
L. SCHWARTZ, P. SEGHERS  
D. TADDEI, J. THIRAUT, C. TILLON, D. TSEPENEAG  
C. VERLA, J. VERNE, J.-M. VINCENT  
I. YANNAKAKIS

N.B. Avant publication de cette première liste, nous escomptons encore quelques réponses importantes.



DECLARATION OF  
THE INTERNATIONAL MAJORITY TENDENCY

The changes that have occurred both in the world situation and within the Fourth International require that the International Majority Tendency (IMT) redefine its political platform. The following statement represents a definition in this direction. This platform may be rounded out if necessary in light of the results of the discussion that will take place in the leading bodies of the International preparatory to the Eleventh World Congress on the draft general political resolution, the resolution on the Indochinese revolution, and the future draft resolution on Latin America.

1. The evolution of the world situation during the past several years has been marked by a new deterioration of the relationship of forces for imperialism, a deepening of the favorable conditions for the rise of world socialist revolution. The defeat of American imperialism in Vietnam and the reunification of Vietnam into a new workers state; the defeat of Portuguese colonialism in Angola, Mozambique, and Guinea-Bissau and the outcome of the Angolan civil war, which further extended the crisis of the system of imperialist domination toward southern Africa and Portugal, the first generalized recession of the international capitalist economy since the second world war and the grave crisis of political leadership of international imperialism which has coincided with it; the conjunction of this economic crisis with the rise of workers struggles and a generalized social crisis in a number of countries of southern Europe, which has led or will lead these countries to the brink of revolutionary crisis (Portugal 1975) or of prerevolutionary situation (Spain, Italy, France) -- such are the factors that have especially contributed to this evolution. Generally speaking, the general instability of the system is much more pronounced than it was during the 1950s and 1960s, even though there are notable differences from country to country, and even though American imperialism on the one hand and West German imperialism on the other have been much less shaken than most of their partners/competitors.

The import and objective consequences of the emergence of imperialist relays in the form of bourgeoisies in semi-industrialized countries commanding capital wealth and formidable military strength (Brazil, Iran, South Korea) must not be underestimated. Nevertheless, their capacity for counterrevolutionary action is undermined by explosive social contradictions in their own countries.

It may thus be concluded that if there have not been more victories for the socialist revolution during this phase, it is not primarily due to the intrinsic strength of the capitalist system, its

IMT statement . . . . .2

reserves, and its ability to maneuver (factors which, of course, are involved to varying degrees in explaining world evolution), but more than ever to the crisis of proletarian leadership, to the disorienting, demobilizing, and divisive role of the traditional leaderships of the workers movement: Social Democratic, Stalinist, CPs of Stalinist origin, various trade-union bureaucracies, and to the "peaceful coexistence" policy of the Soviet and Chinese bureaucracies. It is these leaderships whose policies have once again wasted excellent opportunities for revolutionary "breakthroughs," particularly in Chile and Portugal, where the proletariat had exhibited remarkable combativity and revolutionary energy. In the present phase these leaderships are trying to repeat the same counterrevolutionary operations in Spain and Italy, and they will repeat these attempts in France in the future.

The new wave of the crisis of Stalinism in the USSR and Eastern Europe and the crisis of Maoism in China, parallel to the accentuated crisis of the capitalist system, indicate that the forces working toward a political revolution in the bureaucratized workers states are also developing, albeit at a pace which remains slow and in political forms which are not very advanced. There is, however, growing interaction among the manifestations of this crisis (particularly the repression in the USSR and the "people's democracies"), the development of consciousness within the workers movement in the capitalist countries of the phenomena of bureaucratization of the workers states, the political evolution of the CPs of Western Europe and elsewhere (Japan, Mexico, etc.), and the development of new opposition tendencies within these states, oppositions more oriented toward the working class and the international workers movement.

2. The trend toward the shift of the center of gravity of the world revolution to the imperialist countries (already stressed in the documents adopted at the Ninth and Tenth World Congresses) has intensified further during the past three years. It is combined with the greater weight of urban and proletarian struggles in the semicolonial and dependent countries themselves, at least in the most developed of them. The remarkable resistance of the Argentine proletariat to the military junta, the shift of the center of gravity of the Arab revolution from the Palestinian resistance to the Egyptian proletariat, and the explosions in the proletarian townships of South Africa constitute the most spectacular confirmations of this trend, which is also stimulated by advances in industrialization and urbanization in a whole series of semicolonial and dependent countries. What is involved,



IMF statement . . . . .3

then, is a new stage in the dialectic of the world revolution, one which in no way implies a weakening of the possibilities for revolution in these countries.

This entire evolution culminates in the trend toward a more or less combined revolutionary upsurge in southern Europe (Spain, Italy, France, Portugal). Because of the increased social weight, higher level of organization, and degree of combativity of the proletariat of these four countries, and because of the gains in experience and capacity for self-organization that have been made in the past few years, this revolutionary crisis already promises to be one of the most serious in the whole history of the capitalist system. It will last for an entire period. Since this is the first time that the world's major revolutionary crisis will occur in countries in which the Fourth International commands organizational strength and a real capacity for intervention, the International's future development will depend in large measure on the successes or failures of its intervention in these revolutions.

For a series of both historical and structural and conjunctural reasons, the outcome of these revolutionary upsurges will depend jointly on the proletariats of these countries undergoing genuine experiences of a period of dual power -- during which the superiority of proletarian democracy over bourgeois democracy will be assimilated by the majority of the workers -- and on the transformation, in this context, of revolutionary Marxist organizations already rooted in the class into genuine revolutionary parties fighting to win the majority of the proletariat to their program and project of the conquest of power by workers councils.

The struggle for the realization of the transitional program as a whole, the struggle for the generalization of organs of self-organization of the working class, and the struggle to build mass revolutionary parties are but three aspects of one and the same reality: the transformation of the proletariat from a class still under the hegemony of the reformist leaderships into a class capable of successfully taking its fate into its own hands in order to reorganize the entire society on a socialist basis.

Within the workers movement, the major obstacle to the socialist victory remains the class collaborationist policy of the CPs, SPs, and trade-union bureaucracies, whatever particular forms it may take at one or another stage, in one or another country. The form of electoral or governmental alliances with significant bourgeois parties (the policy of the popular front) is only one of

IMT statement. . . . .4

these possible forms. It must be vigorously denounced, but only as one variant of a more general orientation and political project, otherwise the workers could be disoriented if suddenly confronted with other variants of the same project of collaboration with the institutions of the bourgeois state and the employers. Is it necessary to recall that three of the cases in which policies of betrayal of the interests of the proletariat are now being applied in Europe by parties which hold a majority within the class are instances of "bourgeois workers" governments without representatives of bourgeois parties (Britain, Portugal) and support for a purely bourgeois government "from the outside" (Italy)? Our major attack must be directed against the basis of the betrayal (maintenance and consolidation of the bourgeois state apparatus, efforts to patch up the capitalist economy at the expense of the workers, while respecting the rules of the profit economy) and must place the denunciation of the alliance with the bourgeois parties in this more general framework.

3. But while betrayal of the interests of the proletariat and the proletarian revolution by the leaderships of the SPs, CPs, and trade-union bureaucracies has been a constant feature of the workers movement for half a century (for sixty years in the case of the Social Democracy) and remains the major threat to the rising revolution in southern Europe, a new factor must be underscored which seriously modifies the present situation compared to that of the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s. The grip of the traditional bureaucratic leaderships over the working class as a whole has weakened appreciably. The relationship of forces within the organized workers movement (particularly in the factories and trade unions) between these bureaucracies and the forces that escape their control at least partially and periodically has improved considerably for the latter. Granted, the traditional leaderships retain broad majorities within the class and still hold political hegemony. There has thus been no qualitative change in the situation. But the quantitative changes that have occurred are of such scope that they seriously improve revolutionary Marxists' chances to prevent prerevolutionary struggles from being stifled by the traditional leaderships.

In this conjuncture, marked by the depth of the crisis of the political, social, and economic system, the modification of the relationship of forces within the workers movement does not at all rule out phases during which the reformists and neoreformists, because of their preponderant weight within the class, may even gain an increased audience for their overall political projects. This makes a policy of united front on the part of our organizations more necessary and timely, a



policy which must be concretized particularly by proposals for united action around the major needs of the masses at each given stage. The application of such a united front policy, even during such phases, is made possible by the modifications in the relationship of forces previously underlined. This means that the temporarily greater credibility of the reformist political projects does not at all imply that they will succeed as they have in the past in imposing respect for all the implications of their class collaborationist policy on the workers. On the contrary, it suggests that there will be extensive instances of the reformists' being outflanked, instances for which our organizations must be prepared.

The IMT has been calling attention to these changes and their consequences since the pre-Tenth World Congress period. There were many misunderstandings and false counterpositions in the subsequent discussion, which provoked errors in the practice of sections. In order to overcome these problems, let us clarify a number of points:

a) What is involved in the emergence of a mass vanguard is a social phenomenon and not an assemblage of the so-called far left organizations. This social vanguard began to mature during the mid-1960s and has played an important role in the explosions of 1968-69 in France and Italy, in the Portuguese events of 1974-75, and in the reconstruction of the workers movement and successive waves of struggle in Spain, a country in which, because of the lack of legal structures of mass organization, this vanguard encompasses the essential portion of the workers cadres recognized by the class at the factory and neighborhood level at the present stage.

b) Precisely because of its social character, the broadening of this mass workers vanguard is also expressed in a process of differentiation within the traditional parties (a part of this vanguard began to emerge within the Socialist and Communist youth organizations, as well as within the SPs and CPs), in possible splits and left trade-union currents.

c) This vanguard's lack of programmatic and political coherence, like the partial character of its break with the projects upheld by the bureaucratic leaderships, does not at all negate the reality and importance of this phenomenon: at key moments in political, social, and economic life, hundreds of thousands of workers refuse to follow the line of their traditional leaderships. Such is the balance-sheet of Portugal in 1975, Spain at the end of 1976 and the beginning of 1977, Italy

IMT statement . . . . .6

since Berlinguer agreed to support Andreotti's austerity policy. The same phenomenon will occur again in the future, on a grand scale in France and perhaps Britain, just as it has already occurred on a more limited scale in Denmark, Greece, Argentina, Chile, and elsewhere. (The pace and scope with which it will spread to other countries will depend primarily on the pace and scope of the new rise of workers struggles.)

In fighting against the consolidation of the state and army of the bourgeoisie and against the projects of austerity and step by step liquidation of the major gains of the working class of the years 1974-75, the broad vanguard of the Portuguese proletariat (not grouplets, but hundreds of thousands of workers and poor peasants) were defending the interests of the entire class, the interests of the Portuguese revolution. The weakness of the Trotskyists (who were but a handful as of April 25, 1974) resulted in the political leadership of this social vanguard falling into the hands of centrists and ultraleftists, which did not enable control of the majority of the working class to be wrested from Soares and Cunhal and facilitated the maneuvers of these traitors in maintaining the proletariat divided and bound to the project of reconstituting a capitalist Portugal.

Likewise in Italy, because of the weakness of our section compared with three centrist organizations which hold hegemony in the far left, the enormous potential of hundreds of thousands of workers in the big factories who in practice refused to follow the traitorous policy of Berlinguer and the tens of thousands who rejected it was not transformed into a political springboard for shaking the hold of the bureaucrats over the members and voters of the Italian CP.

We must fight with all our might to prevent this from happening again in Spain and France, and to make sure that positive experiences in these countries, combined with a growth of our sections, can have repercussions in Portugal, Italy, and possibly other countries of Europe, where a similar evolution may occur sometime after it does in the most unstable imperialist countries.

This requires constant political and ideological battle against the confusionism and political deviations of the ultraleftist and centrist formations, combined with a policy of united front which lends credibility to our orientation toward replacing, in practice, the traditional bureaucratic leadership of the working class with a new alternative leadership.

Understanding the uneven advance of the class consciousness of the proletariat, we try to grasp the reality of the workers movement in all its complexity and motion. We understand that it



IMT statement. . . . .7

is possible for the electoral weight of the SP and CP to increase at the same time that their control over significant portions of the working class may be loosened in day to day struggles and mobilizations. The combination of our policy of united front toward the mass organizations, our efforts to stimulate the self-organization of the class (elected strike committees, general assemblies of the strikers and general trade-union assemblies in the factories, neighborhood committees, women's committees, etc.), and our fight to qualitatively broaden our political influence within the broad vanguard corresponds both to the precise stage of recomposition of the workers movement the class struggle has reached in the countries mentioned above and to the needs of the whole working class.

On the other hand, any policy such as that upheld by the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction (LTF) and the Bolshevik Tendency (BT),<sup>(1)</sup> which blurs over the contradictory features of this stage of the recomposition of the workers movement, denies the social phenomenon of the broad vanguard, reduces the workers movement to the traditional organizations, and deduces the weight of various currents solely from electoral results, may well find itself out of step with explosive struggles. In practice it leads to combining a policy of dogmatic and sterile denunciation of the traitorous leaderships with tailending these same leaderships in great struggles. It even threatens to become counterposed in practice to struggles that clearly express the interests of the entire class (such as the struggle against the various austerity policies or attempts to establish soviet-type organs during revolutionary crises), under the pretext that these struggles are most often begun by the action of "minority" sectors.

4. The minority faction of the Tenth World Congress has divided on several occasions in face of these principal features of the new rise of world revolution: during the 1976 IEC plenum some Latin American groups broke from this tendency; a crisis broke out in the Spanish LC over the situation in Spain. The minority's line during the Tenth World Congress had not prepared it politically for these events. Its balance-sheet is one of striking failure. In face of each successive revolutionary crisis since the Tenth World Congress the LTF has made wrong prognoses and analyses and has proposed a line of action which would have been a political disaster for our movement had it won a majority in the International.

Contrary to all evidence and any serious analysis of the social and political conditions in South Vietnam, the LTF obstinately persisted, right up through the collapse of the Thieu regime,

IMT statement. . . . .8

in interpreting the NLF's signing of the Paris accords as implying the consolidation of capitalism in South Vietnam. In this the LTF based itself on a purely literal interpretation of the "program" of the Vietnamese CP, obstinately denying the reality of the line of action of this party, which, although through opportunist and bureaucratic methods which we must criticize and denounce, systematically oriented itself toward the liquidation of the regime of the landlords and the bourgeoisie, toward rejection of any policy of coalition based on maintaining the system of private property, toward the creation of a workers state, albeit bureaucratically deformed from the outset.

Contrary to all evidence and to the analysis of the social and political forces involved, and once again right through the catastrophe represented for its orientation by the open intervention of the South African army on the side of UNITA-FNLA and the deployment of the military forces of the Cuban revolution on the side of the MPLA, the LTF continued to place the three organizations engaged in the Angolan civil war on the same footing, going so far as to deny the character of this civil war as a clash between formations representing differing social forces and instead presenting it as an "inter-tribal conflict" or a conflict between "nationalities in formation." This led the LTF to the brink of an attitude of neutrality in a war between imperialism and a national liberation movement, which brought them to an ambiguous position on the brink of demanding the simultaneous withdrawal of all foreign troops, that is, not publicly clarifying the different attitude which revolutionary Marxists had to take toward imperialist mercenaries and South African troops on the one hand and the troops of the Cuban workers state on the other hand.

Contrary to all evidence and to a serious Marxist analysis of the social and political forces involved, the LTF presented the systematic and deliberate offensive of Mario Soares (unanimously supported by the Portuguese bourgeoisie, the high command of the Portuguese army, and imperialism) against the revolutionary gains of the proletariat, poor peasants, and soldiers in 1975, an offensive whose main purpose was the reconsolidation of the bourgeois state apparatus and repressive apparatus which had widely disintegrated under the impact of the revolutionary upsurge of 1975, as a "defense of democratic rights by the Social Democracy against a military dictatorship." It is sufficient to examine subsequent events to perceive the gross error of analysis made by the minority and the disastrous political conclusions drawn from it, which it attempts to camouflage today under the embarrassed formula, "the army changed its position and wound up preferring Soares to Cunhal."



IMI statement. . . . .9

To this day the LTF has drawn no lessons from its refusal to apply the traditional Trotskyist line of centering action during a situation that is becoming revolutionary on the extension, generalization, coordination, and centralization of the various organs of a soviet or pre-soviet type which emerged on a broad scale during the Portuguese revolution, even if in varying forms and with varying degrees of representativeness.

Finally, in the revolutionary crisis ripening in Spain, for opportunist reasons the LTF covered up the apparently "doctrinaire" but actually ultra-opportunist maneuvers of the leadership of the LC, especially on the trade-union question, a decisive one in Spain today. In effect, the LC, motivated by blind Stalinophobia (going so far as to consider the Workers Commissions as "anti-trade-union" and as "the major force responsible for trade-union division"), openly opted for trade-union division and supported the demagogy of the Social Democratic bureaucracy, to the point of stating that it favored the breakup of the Coordinación Sindical of the Workers Commissions, UGT, and USO, and asserting that trade-union unity boiled down to "UGT-CNT unity." There is no reason to be surprised that the leader of the LC who was the major theoretician of such an adventurist position has already openly abandoned the positions of Trotskyism and Leninism.

If such positions had been identified with the Fourth International, the Trotskyists would have appeared as dividers of the working class. This was able to be avoided only thanks to the audience of the LCR and the healthy reaction of the working class rank and file of the LC (of which the portion organized in the "Workers Tendency" has been expelled from the LC and has joined the LCR).

We find a common method in all these false positions: underestimation of revolutionary possibilities in countries on the brink of revolutionary crisis or already immersed in such a crisis; overestimation of reformist control over mass movements under such conditions; inability to shift rapidly from tactics and slogans appropriate to "normal" situations to the tactics and slogans required by situations of prerevolutionary or revolutionary crisis; sterile propagandism instead of a line of intervention in real struggles, which can only seriously inhibit the possibilities of building the party at an accelerated pace when struggles of great scope occur; rigid formalism in the approach to key problems of political and social struggle (the political forces in play are judged essentially on the basis of their writings and not their objective role in the class struggle); a beginning of revisionism of Marxism on the problems of the state (particularly the institutions of

IMI statement. . . . . 10

the bourgeois democratic state and the role of the proletarian state power in the overthrow of capitalism) and of bourgeois and petty-bourgeois nationalism among the oppressed nationalities (to which an unequivocal progressive role is attributed without taking account of the influence this ideology exerts in retarding the constitution of the proletariat as a class organized separately from the bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie, including on the political level).

It is natural that this faction blew apart under the combined effects of the experience of the Angolan and Portuguese revolutions on the one hand and the political failure of the LTF in the four cases cited above on the other hand. It has divided into two organized groups: the BT, which includes the majority of its forces in Latin America, and the LTF, which, in addition to the important sector of North America and Australia, includes a few nuclei in Latin America, Europe, and Asia. It is significant that an important part of the Central Committee of the Spanish LC, the only significant organization supporting the LTF in Europe, has also broken with the LTF.

Such is the verdict which events have rapidly pronounced on a faction that claimed to be "straightening out" the International and defending "orthodox Trotskyism."

As for the BT, it split off from the LTF only belatedly. It has offered no credible account of the reasons for which it remained so long associated with a faction that evolved toward the disastrous positions on Vietnam, Angola, Portugal, and Spain outlined above. While the BT has since declared itself generally in agreement with the positions of the IMT on Angola, and while it has adopted positions midway between those of the IMT and those of the LTF on the key importance of the struggle for the emergence, generalization, and centralization of soviet-type organs of self-organization of the toiling masses in a situation moving from prerevolutionary to revolutionary, its basic methodology remains opportunist and tailendist.

It is founded on systematic confusion between the mass movement and the bureaucratic apparatus of the organizations that hold the majority within the working class, constantly underestimating the possibility of the apparatus being outflanked by the movement, often making concessions to the orientations of the apparatus under the pretext of gaining the ear of the masses. The line of the Argentine PST during the year preceding the military coup, the line of the Uruguayan PRT during the period of the Frente Amplio and at the beginning of the Bordaberry coup, the line of the Portuguese PRT toward the Soares apparatus, and the line upheld by the BT for Spain and



IMI statement. . . . .11

Italy can all be reduced to this common denominator. The BT, like the LTF, also identifies defense of democratic rights of the masses with defense of the institutions of the bourgeois-parliamentary state.

In addition, the BT is characterized by ultrafactional behavior, virtually openly theorizing the priority of building the faction over building the party and the International and overstepping the organizational norms that must regulate any Leninist organization as soon as political differences are aggravated somewhat.

5. Between the Tenth and Eleventh World Congresses the International has gone through a period of growth, often modest, sometimes spectacular (above all in Spain, Mexico, and Colombia, and through the appearance and stabilization of its first daily, in France) and extension of the scope of its geographic base. In essence, this growth results from the favorable modification of the relationship of forces, both between the classes and within the working class and the organized workers movement. The capacity of the International and its major sections to seize these opportunities, however, is a function of the correct political orientation of the general political resolution passed by the Tenth World Congress. In this sense, it may be said that the political line adopted at the Tenth World Congress has not been an obstacle but on the contrary a stimulant to building the International.

In addition, the majority of the leadership that came out of the Tenth World Congress has demonstrated its maturity by adhering against hell and high water -- and in face of genuine provocations such as the expulsion of the IT comrades from the SWP and the formation by the BT of a quasi-public faction in the Mexican PRT -- to a resolutely unitary conception, defending the principle of maintaining the unity of the International. This conception is not based on "opportunist concessions" on anyone's part, but on a correct analysis of the character of the differences, one which has been confirmed by events.

The differences that have arisen in the Fourth International turn around the analysis of some of the major focuses of the world class struggle. The discussion has touched on a number of theoretical questions of great importance, on which the minorities have exhibited dangerous revisionist tendencies on several occasions.

But despite the scope of this discussion, the gravity of the errors of analysis and political

positions adopted by the minorities, and the beginning of theoretical revision which has been exhibited on some questions, the IMT reaffirms that all the components of our International have their place in it, that none of them has degenerated, nor do any base their orientation on a revision of the Trotskyist program. The IMT consequently defines its objectives in terms of a discussion within the Fourth International. The aim of the IMT is to assure, through this discussion, a new political coherence of the whole of our movement, and not simply to win a majority, thus contributing to calling a halt to the political course now being followed by the minorities.

The capacity of the IMT to make its self-criticism on the Latin American document of the Ninth World Congress, a document which incontestably played an important role in precipitating the tendency struggle within the movement but which cannot principally account for this struggle, especially in light of the events in Portugal, Angola, and Spain, represents additional proof of the maturity of the International leadership.

Nevertheless, the balance-sheet of the International since the Tenth World Congress is not solely one of progress and success, though these are real. There have also been deficiencies and failures which must be stressed:

a) While the International center has been strengthened in accordance with the decisions voted at the Tenth World Congress, and while the appearance of INPRECCR in four languages for the first time gives the International leadership an instrument for making its current political elaboration known to a significant portion of the members and sympathizers of the Fourth International, the center remains much too weak in cadres and material resources to be able to respond to all the requirements of an organization that has appreciably increased in numerical strength, implantation in the class, and geographical breadth. Important functions such as the coordination of workers work in Europe, the coordination of women's work, support to Arab work, and support to the comrades in Asia have not been carried out or have been carried out very inadequately.

b) There has been a serious delay in political elaboration, particularly on the balance-sheet of the revolution and counterrevolution in Latin America and on the new oppositions in the USSR and Eastern Europe.

c) There was insufficient reaction from the leadership of the International to incorrect, "vanguardist" interpretations of the European document, the consequence of which has been that



IMT statement. . . . .13

the necessary readjustments in orientation in countries like France or Spain have had to be made primarily on the initiative of the leaderships of sections, and inevitably belatedly. More generally, the overabundance of tasks facing the still too limited center has prevented adequate and regular discussion of the tactical problems of the European sections by the leadership of the International.

d) There was insufficient demonstrations of solidarity with the Palestinian resistance and the Lebanese left during the civil war in this country.

e) There has been a politically unjustified interruption in the regular publication of a theoretical review of the Fourth International in several languages as well as in the regular publication of the internal bulletins in the French language.

f) There is insufficient coordination in the realm of publications, an area in which there has been considerable expansion.

g) There have been hesitations, a lack of clarity, belated definition of definite criteria, and an excessively long delay in initiatives on the question of regroupments.

Correcting these errors and radically overcoming these weaknesses will be an important task for the new leadership of the International that comes out of the Eleventh World Congress. These are the essential preconditions for maintaining and accelerating the growth of the International after the Eleventh World Congress.

6. The tendency struggle within the International has created, especially since the Tenth World Congress, an abnormal organizational situation in which the elementary norms of democratic centralism have been violated. Thus, infractions of discipline have been committed in the application of the positions taken by the World Congress and the plenums of the IEC on the fate of the Indochinese revolution after the Paris accords, the Portuguese revolution, and the national liberation struggle in Angola. This abnormal situation has triggered an extremely dangerous dynamic, inasmuch as this violation is beginning to be theorized and systematized at the level of principles.

The idea of an International based on democratic centralism has been defended since 1914 by internationalist Marxists, since 1919 by all communists, and between 1933 and 1940, with determination, by Trotsky and the Trotskyists. This is not at all a question of a "separate organizational chapter" of revolutionary Marxist theory, something which has nothing to do with the program and would somehow express the "particular national experiences" of the workers

IMI statement. . . . 14

movement depending on whether it is accepted warmly, reluctantly, or only with lip service.

The idea of an International based on democratic centralism is an integral part of our political program. It is the logical and inevitable complement of the theory of imperialism and the theory of the permanent revolution. Any systematic rejection of this idea (whether in theory or solely in practice) inevitably reveals deviations and leads to the practice, if not the theory, of "national" communism and socialism in one country. "Parallel with Trotsky's irreconcilability in defending the internationalist principles of the movement was his adamant insistence upon the necessity and primacy of the international organization. 'Only an international organization can be the bearer of an international ideology.' The organizational form flows from and must correspond to the party's platform." (John G. Wright, "Trotsky's Struggle for the Fourth International," in Fourth International, August 1946.)

Granted, the international application of democratic centralism differs from its national application. The International does not impose national leaderships or national tactics on sections against the will of the majority of the members, not because the International leadership "lacks authority" or "has not proven itself," but because to act in such a way is ineffective, that is, contrary to the interests of party building and the proletarian revolution (a leadership commanding the authority of a Lenin or a Trotsky should be even more resolute in not applying such mechanical discipline, for it would have much more serious consequences since it might be more easily accepted at the outset).

The objective basis for this difference in the application of democratic centralism in the national and international spheres lies in the fact that the conquest of state power by the proletariat is still essentially carried out on the national level, that the national party is an instrument that aims primarily at this. But this very definition of the problem demonstrates its full complexity. On the one hand the internationalization of the class struggle means that the proletariat is increasingly confronted by the intervention of the international bourgeoisie before, during, and immediately after the seizure of power (as the example of Portugal once again confirms). On the other hand, the international extension of the revolution is an indispensable condition not only for building socialism but also for an effective struggle against the bureaucratic deformations of workers power.

The existence of an international organization with an international structure and discipline



IMT statement. . . . 15

thus corresponds both to the needs of the proletarian revolution and to the interests of the world proletariat in our epoch; it is not just a stylistic turn of phrase which we owe to our "tradition." The uneven and combined character of the process of world revolution is reflected in the combination of national revolutionary organizations and an International which must be a genuine world party and not a simple addition of sections, a simple body of "collaboration" and mutual consultation among national parties.

That is why on all programmatic and international questions the votes of the Congresses are binding on the national sections. Otherwise, the precise article of the statutes that asserts that those decisions which the Congress can make must be carried out by all sections no longer has any meaning. It would have to be modified along these lines: "The decisions of the World Congresses must be applied only by those sections that agree with them." We await with interest to see whether either of the existing minorities will propose such a modification of the statutes. As for us, we stick to the present text, and we will wage a vigorous campaign to see that it is actually applied. Indispensable discipline in action obviously does not mean that discussion (public or otherwise) of positions that have been adopted is suppressed.

Equally unprincipled is the assertion of the minorities that discipline is necessarily relaxed and factions become public in practice when serious political differences exist. This is the argument Stalinists, Maoists, centrists, and indeed all opponents of Bolshevism use in order to claim that the right of tendencies and toleration of factions inevitably lead to splits. We reject this argument as contrary to positive experiences, such as that of the Bolsheviks during Lenin's time, the Communist International between 1919 and 1923, and the Fourth International during the past ten years. Our ability to combine a very hard tendency struggle with the maintenance of the unity of the movement as a world organization indicates that democratic centralism can be effective and productive. Nevertheless, two series of experiences on this matter must be seriously criticized and rejected as contrary to Leninist principles.

On the one hand, the transformation of minority factions into de facto public factions in practice publishing their own international faction organs outside the control of the International leadership, creating their own international faction apparatus functioning outside the normal leadership bodies of the International, and organizing their own international expenditures, which

IMT statement . . . . 16

widely exceed the resources placed at the disposal of the movement as a whole and are not distributed according to priorities determined by the leadership bodies.

On the other hand, the brutal expulsion of minority tendencies under inadmissible pretexts and through clearly bureaucratic methods, such as the expulsion of the IT by the SWP, the expulsion first of the BT and then of the Workers Tendency by the Spanish LC, or threats of purge of the Mexican LS by the majority leadership of that organization at the last congress held before it split.

In contrast to these repeated violations of democratic centralism by the minorities, the balance-sheet of the IMT is much more positive. Neither in the International nor in any section led by the IMT has there been any expulsion of any minority. We do not deny that errors in the application of democratic centralism have also been committed by the IMT, in cases such as the splits in Australia and Canada, for example, or that these errors have not always been swiftly enough corrected by a collective effort of the tendency. We simply want to stress that the major responsibility for all the errors in the realm of organizational principles lies in the atmosphere of defiance of international democratic centralism created by the behavior of the minorities.

The IMT makes the struggle for an International based on democratic centralism, on a single organization in each country, on the normal execution of their statutory duties by all sections, on the normal functioning of the leadership bodies, and on the radical and definitive halt to the practices of public factions an essential point in its fight before and during the Eleventh World Congress. The Tenth World Congress made the mistake of not recognizing the strongest organization adhering to the FI in each country as the official section (such as the PST in Argentina and the LCR in Spain, etc.). We will fight at the Eleventh World Congress for the implementation of universal criteria, as outlined in this paragraph, for the recognition of a single section in each country. The struggle against any attempt to transform the Fourth International into a federation of factions and/or national organizations is a struggle to safeguard the programmatic integrity of the Fourth International. It is a struggle for its survival. History has been implacable against all attempts to create national "Trotskyist" sects. They are condemned to degenerate, organizationally as well as politically. Moreover, any unprincipled practice in the sphere of international organization sooner or later has repercussions in the sphere of national organizations as well. The fight to defend the Fourth International as a democratic-centralist organization is an integral part



IMT statement. . . . .17

of the struggle for the transitional program and for the victory of the international socialist revolution.

7. Tendencies and a faction, with permanent contours, have existed in the International for eight years now. This is an abnormal situation in a democratic organization like ours. It is time to return to a mode of functioning more in conformity with the traditions of Bolshevism.

The IMT will henceforth act as an "ideological" tendency based on:

- a) the present statement;
- b) the general line of the European document presented to the Eleventh World Congress, to which the IMT is preparing a series of amendments;
- c) the general line of the document of self-criticism on Latin America;
- d) defense of the conception of international democratic centralism such as it is developed in the entirety of the statutes of the International and made explicit in point 6 of the present statement, along with a proposal that a document on this question be discussed and voted on at the Eleventh World Congress. If necessary, if no agreement can be reached in the United Secretariat in this regard, the IMT will submit a tendency document on this subject to the pre-World Congress discussion.

As indicated in the preamble to this statement, other documents may possibly be added to this platform, depending on the development of the political discussion in the leadership bodies.

The fact that the IMT will act only as an "ideological" tendency implies that it will not prejudge the positions taken by the entire International on questions other than those contained in its platform by raising them first within the tendency. The discussion within the tendency will thus be limited to the questions on which the disagreements within the Fourth International have already been clearly revealed. At the present stage, the IMT defines these questions as those contained in its platform. At the present stage, discussion within the tendency will hence be limited to these questions, as well as problems directly linked to the struggle to have them adopted in the sections and at the World Congress. The discussion will be extended to other questions only if proposals are made to possibly include them in the tendency platform.

It follows that the only condition for adherence to the IMT is agreement with the documents of its platform. On other questions the members of the tendency are free to adopt the positions of

IMT statement. . . . .18

their choice, to write documents on these questions if they consider it necessary, within the statutory framework that regulates the discussion organized in their section and in the International. These documents will not be discussed in the tendency unless they are submitted for inclusion in the tendency platform.

Thus, the members of the IMT are not bound by any discipline in the pre-World Congress discussion, apart from the duty to fight for adoption of the line of the documents selected as the tendency platform. As for the questions related to the struggle for this line, including those of tactical votes, discussions in this regard will take place within the tendency. But since these questions involve elements of judgment other than the political positions of the tendency, the results of these discussions will have only moral weight on the members of the tendency.

The IMT -- as it has already committed itself on several occasions in the past -- has brought all its weight to bear for representatives of the two minorities to command full and complete representation in the leadership bodies of the International, representation that even exceeds their proportional numerical weight in the ranks of the International. They must be still more associated with all the political and organizational decisions, both at the stage of their initial elaboration and at the stage of their execution, not in parallel ad hoc consultations, but within the regularly constituted and elected leadership bodies. All the responsibilities that devolve on them, both in the political and practical contribution they can make to the building of the International as a function of their capacities and of the weight of the real sector of the movement which they represent, must be attributed to them. The political and principled basis of this orientation lies in a correct application of democratic centralism, as well as in the conviction that the dynamic of the political differences is not on the rise, that the minorities are capable of correcting some of the serious errors they have committed, and that any obstinacy on their part in maintaining a factional attitude would be an unprincipled policy for which they would pay that much more dearly since the majority of the International shall have applied a correct policy toward them.

But at the same time the IMT confirms, before the entire International, that it will consider that the LTF and the BT are continuing to function as factions engaging in practices contrary to the statutes and to Leninist principles of organization, regardless of any intention or written or oral assertion, so long as their behavior in practice remains that which has been criticized in



**The final pages of this document were not available for scanning.**

A Reply to the International Majority  
Tendency Declaration

By Barry Sheppard

[The general line of the following report was adopted by the National Committee of the Socialist Workers Party on April 17, 1977.]

At our January plenum we outlined our response to the "Self-Criticism on Latin America" by the International Majority Tendency Steering Committee [see "The Meaning of the IMT Steering Committee's Self-Criticism on Latin America," by Jack Barnes, International Internal Discussion Bulletin (IIDB), Volume XIV, No. 5, May 1977]. This included our proposal that the factional structures of both the IMT and LTF should be dissolved. At the February meeting of the United Secretariat we outlined our views for all the comrades present. The IMT Steering Committee met at the end of February, and adopted a "Declaration of the International Majority Tendency," which can be considered a first response to our proposal.

The IMT declaration is a contradictory document. I will first take up a certain number of positive steps forward contained in it.

We note that the IMT has accepted our proposal to place Latin America on the agenda of the next world congress and to explore, through discussions on the leading bodies of the international, the possibility of writing a common document on Latin America. The goal of writing such a common document is made more realizable by the decision of the IMT not to include as part of their platform the three documents on Argentina, Bolivia, and armed struggle adopted by the last world congress (1974). The new IMT platform includes only the "Self-Criticism" on this point. This strengthens the "Self-Criticism" and opens the way to a majority agreement to rescind the documents on Latin America passed by both the 1969 and 1974 world congresses.

The IMT declaration states that the 1974 world congress made a mistake in not recognizing the PST in Argentina as the section. This is an important step forward, since the treatment accorded the PST by the IMT was one of the examples of the factionalism of the majority leadership that developed after the 1969 world congress, and had been a source of considerable organizational tension.

The declaration also says that the IMT made errors in the splits that occurred in Australia and Canada. This clarification should help the process of fusion of Fourth Internationalist forces in those countries.

The declaration criticizes the threats of a purge made by the majority of the Mexican Liga Socialista (LS--Socialist League) at the LS convention of December 1975, which should



help the rapid fusion of the Mexican Trotskyist forces. This represents a welcome reversal on the part of the IMT [see "The February 1976 Plenum of the International Executive Committee of the Fourth International," by Barry Sheppard, SWP Internal Information Bulletin (IIB), No. 6 in 1976, April 1976].

The declaration affirms that minorities in the international should be integrated in "all the political and organizational decisions, both at the stage of their initial elaboration and at the stage of their execution...." This contrasts with the way the IMT acted in regard to Portugal, for example in 1975 when it excluded participation by LTF members in the work of helping the Portuguese comrades. If the intention expressed in the declaration is carried out, it would mean a reversal of the factional methods utilized in the center by the IMT following the 1974 world congress. Some progress in practice along these lines has occurred since the agreements reached at the October 1976 United Secretariat meeting. [See "Report on October 16-17, 1976, Meeting of the United Secretariat," by Jack Barnes and Joseph Hansen, SWP IIB No. 15 in 1976, December 1976.]

The declaration also admits that there has been a politically unjustified interruption in the regular publication of the internal bulletins in French. Overcoming this by the IMT leaders of the French section is a prerequisite for holding a democratic discussion in preparation for the next world congress.

#### The 'New Mass Vanguard'

The most important step forward in the IMT declaration, however, is political, and concerns the conception of the "new mass vanguard." First of all, the declaration indicates that there had been "vanguardist" interpretations of the European resolution submitted by the IMT and adopted at the last world congress. Further, it indicates that such interpretations were made by the French LCR and the Spanish LCR, whose leaderships have made recent corrections in spite of the failure of the international leadership to yet do so.

The declaration "clarifies" a number of points concerning the "new mass vanguard," lack of understanding of which led to "errors in the practice of sections." This clarification includes the definition of the "mass vanguard" as a "social phenomenon and not an assemblage of the so-called far left organizations." This vanguard includes more advanced workers and youth in the Social Democratic and Stalinist parties and youth organizations. The "reality and importance of this phenomenon" has been evident when large numbers of workers have refused to follow the line of their traditional leaderships in certain important situations, even though they have not fully broken with those leaderships, and

even though this vanguard does not have programmatic and political coherence. Further, it is necessary for the Fourth International to politically fight the ultraleft and centrist organizations for influence over these vanguard workers. The declaration says: "This requires constant political and ideological battle against the confusionism and political deviations of the ultraleftist and centrist formations, combined with a policy of united front..." toward the Social Democrats and Stalinists.

This rectification by the IMT goes a long way toward reducing the differences we had with them on this question since we gave the United Secretariat report on the Youth Radicalization to the 1969 world congress. We have pointed to the importance of the existence of a social layer of radicalizing youth and young workers which the IMT was attempting to grapple with under the heading of "new mass vanguard." Our differences developed over what to do about it. We said the IMT did not differentiate between this social layer and the ultraleft and centrist groups of the "far left." It projected a strategy of attempting to coalesce the "far left" groups by organizing national political campaigns around the "concerns" of the "vanguard" and thereby create an "adequate instrument" that could outflank the traditional organizations. This concept would lead to adaptation to the ultralefts and centrists, we said, and to underestimation of the continuing obstacle that the Social Democracy and the Stalinists represent and their continuing attraction to newly radicalized young workers.

On the basis of the corrections made by the IMT in this declaration, we believe that we should propose that there be a common discussion in the leadership bodies of the international to see if it is possible to write a common resolution on Europe, or on the imperialist countries. That is, we think we should stop the process of both the IMT and the LTF discussing these questions of strategy within each faction in order to prepare counterposed documents, and begin a common discussion, the goal of which is to write a common resolution, if possible.

### Steps Backward

Along with these steps forward, there are key aspects of the IMT declaration which constitute surprising steps backward.

Among the documents listed as the basis of the re-defined IMT is one that is yet to be written on democratic centralism. Apparently, it will be along the lines of the highly factional and one-sided conception of democratic centralism contained in the declaration. While it states that a discussion on democratic centralism will take place first in the United Secretariat, to adopt an unwritten



document as part of the IMT platform cuts across previous agreements that an open discussion would be held on the question of democratic centralism in the leading bodies without previous factional lineups on the question. The declaration is designed to do exactly the opposite. By raising a series of accusations against the LTF and the SWP to the effect that they have and continue to violate "elementary norms of democratic centralism," and by committing the IMT to a series of positions on the question before the discussion in the United Secretariat, the declaration precludes the kind of discussion on this question that had been previously agreed to. Once one of the factions adopts as a plank of its platform a resolution on democratic centralism, discussion on it will tend to occur along factional lines.

Similarly, there had been agreement to discuss the world political situation on a nonfactional basis in the leadership bodies, with the goal of writing a common document on this question. The declaration itself refers to this in its first paragraph. But then the declaration, which is part of the new platform of the IMT, proceeds to take political positions on a whole series of questions. These range from the assertion that the center of gravity of the Arab revolution has shifted from the Palestinian resistance to the Egyptian proletariat, to the assertion that the Vietnamese Communist Party "systematically oriented itself toward the liquidation of the regime of the landlords and the bourgeoisie." A general analysis of the world situation is included. Again, the declaration lines up the IMT on a whole series of political positions before there has been a discussion in the United Secretariat. This is just what we must get away from--discussing and adopting positions on the new questions and documents in the factions and not in the elected leadership bodies first.

The IMT says that the purpose of its declaration is to "redefine" its political platform. It no longer stands on a single one of the documents which defined it in the past. In place of the documents which formerly defined the IMT, it now stands on four new ones. One is the new declaration we are discussing. The second is the European resolution previously submitted by the IMT for the next world congress--a resolution that is to be substantially amended. The third is the "Self-Criticism on Latin America." And the fourth is a document on democratic centralism which has not yet been written.

This method is not correct. A faction should not be based on a group of people who were in agreement on superseded positions of the past, or who are "like-minded," or have the same "method." New questions should not be approached as if the old factional alignments will automatically apply. When changes in the platform of a faction are of such a substantial nature as the "Self-Criticism on Latin America,"

it is better to dissolve that faction, probe the areas of agreement the new position could open up, and only if necessary should a new faction or tendency be constituted, and then only after a thorough exploration of the current political positions of all concerned and without a preconception that new lineups, if any, will occur along the old faction lines.

#### Political Charges Against the LTF

The declaration contains a series of political charges against the LTF. I will list some of them. One is that the LTF pictured the counterrevolutionary policy of the leadership of the Portuguese Socialist Party "as a 'defense of democratic rights by the Social Democracy against a military dictatorship.'"

In relation to Angola, the LTF went "to the brink of an attitude of neutrality in a war between imperialism and a national liberation movement, which brought them to an ambiguous position on the brink of demanding the simultaneous withdrawal of all foreign troops, that is, not publicly clarifying the different attitude which revolutionary Marxists had to take toward imperialist mercenaries and South African troops on the one hand and the troops of the Cuban workers state on the other hand."

The declaration charges the LTF with having "covered up the apparently 'doctrinaire' but actually ultra-opportunist maneuvers of the leadership of the LC [Liga Comunista--Communist League of Spain]...."

The IMT discerns a "common method" of the LTF: "underestimation of revolutionary possibilities in countries on the brink of revolutionary crisis or already immersed in such a crisis; overestimation of reformist control over mass movements under such conditions; inability to shift rapidly from tactics and slogans appropriate to 'normal' situations to the tactics and slogans required by situations of prerevolutionary or revolutionary crisis; sterile propaganda instead of a line of intervention in real struggles, which can only seriously inhibit the possibilities of building the party at an accelerated pace when struggles of great scope occur; rigid formalism in the approach to key problems of political and social struggle (the political forces in play are judged essentially on the basis of their writings and not their objective role in the class struggle); a beginning of revisionism of Marxism on the problems of the state (particularly the institutions of the bourgeois democratic state and the role of the proletarian state power in the overthrow of capitalism) and of bourgeois and petty-bourgeois nationalism among the oppressed nationalities (to which an unequivocal progressive role is attributed without taking account of the influence this ideology exerts in re-



tarding the constitution of the proletariat as a class organized separately from the bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie, including on the political level)."

After all that, it is hardly shocking to learn that the LTF "identifies defense of democratic rights of the masses with defense of the institutions of the bourgeois-parliamentary state."

The picture the IMT paints of the LTF is of a sectarian tendency which is utterly worthless in any revolutionary crisis, and which has adopted outright reformist positions on key questions to boot. Small wonder that the IMT says that it would have been a "political disaster for our movement had it [the LTF] won a majority in the International."

#### The IMT Is a Faction

Moreover, the LTF has violated the "elementary norms of democratic centralism" and is continuing to engage in "practices contrary to the statutes and to Leninist principles of organization." It broke discipline concerning "the fate of the Indochinese revolution after the Paris accords, the Portuguese revolution, and the national liberation struggle in Angola." It has transformed itself into a de facto public faction, which publishes its own faction organ. The SWP leadership carried out a "brutal" expulsion through "bureaucratic methods" under "inadmissible pretexts" of the Internationalist Tendency [IT], an expulsion which was a "genuine provocation." Although the IMT also made some errors in applying democratic centralism, "the major responsibility for all [yes, all] the errors in the realm of organizational principles lies in the atmosphere of defiance of international democratic centralism created by the behavior of the minorities."

The declaration states that the IMT will fight against these organizational practices of the LTF.

In order to understand the IMT position, let us assume that the charges leveled by the IMT at the LTF are true. Then the LTF is a faction that has degenerated politically and which carries out repeated and continuous violations of democratic centralism. Such a faction cannot be fought by an ideological tendency. You need a counterfaction to do that. The IMT declaration is a justification for maintaining the IMT as a faction, organized to fight the political degeneration and organizational practices of the LTF.

This is underscored by the declaration, which states the IMT will fight against the LTF as long as the LTF continues to act as was criticized in "paragraphs 8 and 9 of point 6 of the present resolution," that is, as long

as the LTF violates democratic centralism as judged by the IMT.

Thus the IMT declaration on the face of it contradicts the assertion included in the statement that the IMT is becoming an "ideological tendency." That the IMT intends to continue functioning in a factional manner is also indicated by the fact that it says that it will hold discussions on "tactics" concerning the struggle for the positions of the IMT, which include the positions and charges contained in the declaration, although "the results of these discussions will have only moral weight on the members of the tendency." Thus the IMT will continue to hold its own separate discussions apart from discussions in the leadership bodies, and will exercise "moral weight" on its members to line up even on what are admittedly tactical items.

We have to say that the IMT declaration amounts to a rejection of our proposal that the factional structures be dismantled in preparation for the next world congress.

#### The IMT Proposal

A word should be said about the final point in the IMT declaration, which is apparently the IMT's counter-proposal to us: "At the Eleventh World Congress, the IMT will also urge all tendencies and factions to dissolve after this Congress and allow the leadership democratically elected by the Congress to test the application of the line adopted by the Congress. Ideological tendencies may be reconstituted, if it is politically justified, during the period preparatory to the Twelfth World Congress (or when events whose objective importance for the fate of the revolution and the International is undeniable provoke serious differences within the movement, and in accordance with the discussion organized in the International by its leadership bodies)."

Taken with the declaration as a whole, this apparently means that the IMT intends to hold together as a faction at least up to the next world congress, and after that, too, if "all tendencies" do not dissolve at that time. This runs directly counter to the objective needs of the international. Responsible leaders on all sides should seriously probe the extent to which it is possible to overcome the divisions of the past, especially in light of the organizational agreements reached at the October 1976 United Secretariat meeting and the narrowing of political differences indicated in the IMT "Self-Criticism on Latin America." To facilitate this process, we have to break up the factional structures, stop holding preliminary discussions on new events and documents in the factions, and allow these initial discussions to first be held in the



leadership bodies of the international, and seriously work to achieve common positions. Whatever differences emerged would presumably not follow the old factional lineups. It is our opinion that if we follow this course, we could achieve common positions on a number of documents at least that would command the support of a large majority of the international.

Second, although the IMT declaration states it will "urge" tendencies and factions to dissolve after the next world congress, we have to put this point in the context of the practice of sections that are led by IMT supporters, such as the French section, which has in the past formally required tendencies to dissolve after congresses. It is true that after a congress or a convention the movement normally shifts gears, to implement the decisions, and the internal discussion is closed for the time being except insofar as is decided by the leadership bodies. But this in no way implies a ban on the continued existence of tendencies or factions, which have the right to exist under the norms of democratic centralism.

#### The Charges Are False

I am not here going to make a point-by-point rebuttal of the political and organizational charges the IMT declaration levels against the LTF and the SWP, but just take up a few of them as well as discuss the method used.

First, comrades will note that the declaration purports to quote from LTF positions. I'm sure comrades also noted that no sources were given for these quotations. That is because the positions attributed to the LTF by utilizing quotation marks are falsifications, as any objective searching for the "quotes" of the LTF documents will demonstrate.

For example, the IMT declaration charges that the LTF portrayed the counterrevolutionary role of the Portuguese Socialist Party leadership in the summer of 1975 as a "defense of democratic rights by the Social Democracy against a military dictatorship." This is a falsification and does not represent the positions of the LTF.

The attempt by the IMT declaration to present the debate over Portugal in this fashion obscures the very real differences we had. These include differences over the República case and defense of the democratic rights of the SP when these were under attack from the Gonçalves government; differences over the importance of the fight for democratic rights, in Leninist revolutionary strategy in general and in the Portuguese revolution in particular; differences over the nature of the Armed Forces Movement; whether we should call for a CP-SP government; whether we should have defended the Constituent Assembly against at-

tempts by the capitalist government to disband it in the summer of 1975; how to promote the development of real soviets, united front organs of struggle of the working class; what attitude to take toward the fake "soviets" set up by the "far left"; what attitude to take toward the "far left" front called the FUR; etc.

Some charges made by the IMT, such as that we identify "defense of democratic rights of the masses with defense of the institutions of the bourgeois-parliamentary state" are plainly absurd. If this charge were true, the LTF should be expelled from the international as reformist.

Concerning Angola: The IMT charges that the LTF was on "the brink of an attitude of neutrality" between imperialism and a national liberation movement and between imperialism and the workers states. It's hard to defend yourself from that kind of charge, of course. The accuser need not, and in fact does not, present any proof. I could charge Ernest Mandel with having been "on the brink" of holding up a Belgian pastry shop at 6:30 p.m. last Friday night. He didn't actually do it, but no matter, that's not my charge. I know his predilection for Belgian pastries, and well, I just think he was "on the brink" of doing it. Let him try to prove he wasn't.

The position of the LTF in this regard was clearly stated in the LTF document on Angola, in its very first point: "1. With the invasion mounted by South Africa and the utilization of mercenaries financed primarily by the CIA, imperialist intervention in the Angolan civil war reached a high point at the end of 1975 and beginning of 1976. For revolutionary Marxists and supporters of democratic rights, it was an elementary duty to offer material support to the military struggle against this intervention, and to organize an international campaign under the general slogans of 'Hands Off Angola!' 'South Africa Out of Angola!' and, in view of the threat from American imperialism because of Havana's aid to the MPLA, 'Defend Cuba!'" [See "Resolution on Angola, Draft Resolution of the LTF," IIDB, Volume XIII, No. 8, December 1976.]

Again, this false charge obscures real differences we had over the nature of the MPLA and of the Angolan civil war. Insofar as these differences remain, we should debate them, not throw wild accusations that have no foundation and only divert attention from the real issues.

In what document does the LTF say that bourgeois nationalism among the oppressed nationalities is unequivocally progressive? How has this alleged position been expressed in practice? Has the LTF supported the ideologies



of bourgeois nationalist formations or parties, or said they were progressive in the neocolonial countries? In India, Pakistan, Latin America, Iran, China, Egypt?

Where have we supported petty-bourgeois nationalist ideologies or assigned them an unequivocally progressive role? Did we perhaps say this of the ideology of the MPLA in Angola? Or about the program of the Vietnamese Communist Party?

The IMT declaration charges that the LTF is guilty of "a beginning of revisionism of Marxism on the problems of the state (particularly the institutions of the bourgeois democratic state and the role of the proletarian state power in the overthrow of capitalism)...." What the phrase "the role of the proletarian state power in the overthrow of capitalism" apparently refers to is our position concerning the establishment of workers states in China, Cuba, and Vietnam. We will only note here that our position on the theory of these transformations is the same as the one held in common in our movement at the time of the 1963 reunification of the Fourth International. [See the appendices to "The Meaning of the IMT Steering Committee's Self-Criticism on Latin America," by Jack Barnes, IIDB, Volume XIV, No. 5, May 1977.]

As to the charge that the LTF "covered up the apparently doctrinaire but actually ultra-opportunist maneuvers of the leadership of the [Spanish] LC, especially on the trade union question,..." the LTF has never taken a position on the trade-union question in Spain. The IMT declaration itself is a hodgepodge of self-contradictions on this point--it refers to the Workers Tendency's differences with the LC leadership on this point, but the leaders of the Workers Tendency are in the LTF! It also says that the "leader of the LC who was the major theoretician of such an adventurist position has already openly abandoned the positions of Trotskyism and Leninism."

But the authors of the IMT declaration forgot to add that this same comrade, Comrade Roberto, broke with the LTF and is an opponent of it, a fact which these authors knew since I had reported it to a meeting of the United Secretariat.

### The Principled Nature of the LTF

The authors of the IMT declaration seem to regard it as a great victory for the IMT that Comrade Roberto and "an important part of the Central Committee of the Spanish LC" have broken with the LTF. At the same time, it tries to impute that the erroneous political positions of these comrades are a result of--the LTF. The same attitude is expressed in regard to the break from the LTF carried out

by Comrade Moreno and the other comrades who later formed the Bolshevik Tendency [BT]. The declaration indulges in a kind of gloating over these instances.

The IMT comrades should take a more sober look at the situation. Would it have been correct for the LTF to think it was a great victory when Comrade Santucho and the Argentine PRT broke with the IMT--and left the Fourth International?

It is time the IMT comrades began to realize that Comrade Moreno's break with the LTF began with a secret attempt to destroy comrades in Mexico who supported the LTF and with splitting one of the Mexican sympathizing groups. This procedure was repeated in Portugal. These incidents signaled a factional marauding campaign against the international as a whole on the part of the Bolshevik Tendency.

In reality, the breaks from the LTF initiated by Comrade Roberto on the one hand and by Comrade Moreno on the other underscore the principled nature of the LTF. The LTF is not a gang of "like-minded" people but a principled faction based on documents presented to the international as a whole. On the basis of political disagreement with those documents some former members of the LTF in Spain broke away, as did the comrades who have formed the Bolshevik Tendency. In addition, those comrades who were directly involved in violations of the elementary norms of our organization in the split of the Mexican Socialist League were expelled from the LTF for their conduct. Adherence to the organizational norms of Leninism is part of the LTF platform.

#### The Organizational Charges Are False

The declaration lumps together what it calls "the brutal expulsion of minority tendencies under inadmissible pretexts and through clearly bureaucratic methods, such as the expulsion of the IT by the SWP, the expulsion first of the BT and then of the Workers Tendency by the Spanish LC, or threats of purge of the Mexican LS by the majority leadership of that organization at the last congress held before it split."

The charge concerning the Internationalist Tendency in the SWP is preposterous. We published the full and complete record of the IT affair, and all comrades can read in this record, in the secret documents of the IT itself, that the IT had rejected the SWP as degenerate, had organized itself as a disloyal faction, systematically broke with SWP discipline, and finally set itself up as a separate organization with its own separate discipline and intervention in the class struggle, carrying out a temporary entry tactic in the SWP until it could convince



the rest of the IMT of the correctness of its split course. The IMT charges are designed merely to cover up the IMT's own complicity with this split operation.

The declaration doesn't even point out that subsequent to the split of the IT, every one of those former IT members who rejected the split course and reapplied for membership in the SWP have been accepted into membership.

It is my personal opinion that the leadership of the Spanish LC made mistakes regarding both the supporters of the Bolshevik Tendency in the IC, and with the Workers Tendency. But the IMT declaration does not point out that the split of the BT from the LC was in large measure due to a splitting operation launched by the Bolshevik Tendency itself against the LC.

The case of the split in the Mexican IS is entirely different. [See "World Movement Report," by Mary-Alice Waters, IIDB, Volume XIV, No. 2, April 1977.] Throwing together these very different cases blurs over the real splitting operation that the Bolshevik Tendency has launched within the international as a whole, and disarms the international in face of this operation. It is an attempt to justify the wrong position the IMT took on the splits in Mexico and in Portugal at the February 1976 International Executive Committee meeting.

#### 'Democratic Centralism'

The declaration raises another important question in its treatment of democratic centralism. It states that "on all programmatic and international questions the votes of the Congresses are binding on the national sections." The problem comes in the interpretation the IMT apparently gives to this, since the declaration charges that the LTF violated discipline in regard to the "fate of the Indochinese revolution after the Paris accords, the Portuguese revolution, and the national liberation struggle in Angola."

This could only mean that at least in these cases it was a breach of democratic centralism for the newspapers and magazines of sections and sympathizing groups to publicly present the positions of those sections and sympathizing groups, as decided by democratic discussion and vote of their conventions and elected leaderships. If this is a violation of democratic centralism, then the IMT is introducing an extremely dangerous and unacceptable innovation.

Such a conception would mean that on all the major questions of world politics, the sections would not be free to decide what their positions are, but would have to wait for word from the international center. This would not only paralyze the sections' work in their own countries, it would mean that the sections could formulate policy for

themselves on only a very narrow range of questions. It would prevent the formation of leaderships in the sections capable of developing their own positions on key questions, and take away the responsibility of the leadership and membership for deciding their positions and defending those positions in their own countries. Such leaderships and memberships would become completely dependent on the international leadership for their views. Parties based on that concept could never lead revolutions in their own countries. Therefore such a concept cuts across the central task of the international: to help forge genuine and self-confident leaderships in the national arenas where revolutions occur. The concept, if it were to be adopted, would destroy the Fourth International as a revolutionary organization and turn it into a literary circle with a few bright people in the center handing down a line to be parroted in the press of ineffectual sections.

This conception is a step backward from what many IMT comrades have said. Comrade Jones, for example, speaking at our last convention, stated that only the international, of course, through its leading bodies, and by majority vote, establishes the line of the international, and that the sections have a duty to make that line known. But the press of each section must reflect the democratic decisions of that section. This was the way the Third International under Lenin and Trotsky functioned and the way the Fourth International functioned from the beginning.

The charge that the LTF has a public faction organ apparently refers to Intercontinental Press. IP, as comrades know, is not an organ of the SWP or of the Fourth International. But as the listing of editor and contributing editors indicates (they were selected before the factional struggle began), IP presents the views of the international as a whole. Therefore in no sense can IP be considered to reflect the views of one faction only. But on this question we are faced with a Catch-22 situation. The comrades who are leaders of the IMT have refused to write for IP. Yet they charge that it doesn't represent their views sufficiently and therefore is a public faction organ. When the editor pleads with them to write directly for IP so that their views are better expressed in IP, they refuse. So their views are expressed elsewhere, including in obscure or bourgeois publications. Often the IP staff finds them accidentally and translates them. Again the IP is charged with being a faction organ....

To top it off, the IMT declaration states that as long as this public faction organ exists, they must be organized to fight it.

#### When Did the Factionalism Begin?

The declaration says, "The capacity of the IMT to



make its self-criticism on the Latin American document of the Ninth World Congress, a document which incontestably played an important role in precipitating the tendency struggle within the movement but which cannot principally account for this struggle, especially in light of the events in Portugal, Angola, and Spain, represents additional proof of the maturity of the International leadership."

We can agree that the self-criticism on Latin America is a demonstration of positive qualities in the IMT leadership, even if it was more than half a decade late. (The IMT leadership does not equal the leadership of the international, however.) But the attempt by the IMT to say that the faction struggle did not primarily stem from the wrong line on Latin America adopted at the 1969 world congress departs from the historic facts. The faction struggle originated and became quite sharp long before the Portuguese and Angolan events (let alone Spain, where we have yet to even probe if there are differences and whether they are deep!). The factionalism began right after the 1969 world congress, or more accurately, at the congress itself, and it was begun by the majority in order to carry out its line in Latin America. [See "The Meaning of the IMT Steering Committee's Self-Criticism on Latin America," by Jack Barnes, IIDB, Volume XIV, No. 5, May 1977.]

#### The IMT Declaration Is an Obstacle

The IMT declaration is out of harmony with the objective needs of the international, and with recent developments. It is out of harmony with the antifactional statements of several members of the IMT Steering Committee repeatedly made in the last year and a half.

The IMT comrades have agreed, for example, to probe the possibility of writing at least some common documents. But why even try to do that if you believe that we are sectarian sterile propagandists in any prerevolutionary or revolutionary situations?

IMT comrades in Canada, Australia, Spain, and Mexico favor fusion to help heal splits in those countries. With people who support bourgeois parliamentarism? Who go to the brink of neutrality in a fight between imperialism and a national liberation movement?

Do the IMT comrades in Canada believe that the LTF leaders of the Canadian section support bourgeois nationalism in Québec? Apparently not, since there do not appear to be substantial differences on that score.

Despite the factional nature of the IMT declaration, the SWP leadership believes we must continue to press for the dissolution of the factional structures, and continue

to press for open discussions in the leadership bodies of the international to reduce and clarify the remaining political differences in preparation for the next world congress. In light of the political and organizational developments of recent months, we consider that to be the only responsible course to pursue. In this regard, we ask the comrades of the IMT to reconsider their declaration.

\*

\*

\*



**“Report on the Meeting of the LTF Steering Committee, April 30-May 2, by Barry Sheppard” is unavailable at this time.**

TRANSLATION

New York, April 26, 1977

Dear Mercedes,

Thank you for your letter with your document on the elections and the positions of the LCR. I think your document handled several important points quite well.

Raul has sent me all the documents of the Third Congress of the LC. At last I am reading them along with the major document of the Congress of the LCR-ETA VI. This last document I received from the British (IMG) comrades. In this letter I only want to take up the question of the slogan of the republic. To help think through this question, I am enclosing two articles you may find of interest.

They are: An article by Pierre Frank written in 1946 (see the last three pages), and an article by Trotsky entitled "Problems of the Italian Revolution" written May 14, 1930.

Neither of these articles is an indepth exposition on the question of the slogan for a republic although both refer to it. In Trotsky's writings in 1931 on Spain there are three passages which I think has been misinterpreted by some comrades. I enclose those three pages which include the following quotes, "The republic is now the official slogan of the struggle." "The slogan of the republic, of course, is also the workers' slogan." "The more quickly their best elements (proletariat - PC) join us, the sooner the democratic republic will be identified in the mind of the masses with the workers' republic."

I do not believe that from these three phrases one can conclude that Trotsky's position was in favor of our using the slogan republic. In my opinion, he says three simple things; republic was the official slogan of a mass struggle, the workers also raised this slogan and that we should seek to change the masses to support a "workers' republic." There is obviously a substantial difference between saying that the workers raised the slogan and saying that the slogan is part of our program which we should raise. I agree that the exact phrases in both Spanish and English are imprecise to determine Trotsky's meaning.

There may be other articles by Trotsky that take up the slogan of a republic, but the 1930 article and the 1931 passages are the only two I know of.

Only the last three pages of the article by Pierre Frank refer to the question of a republic. But I believe you will find the entire article very interesting on questions dealing with the adjustments made in the forms of bourgeois rule, after fascist governments were ousted in various countries in Europe at the end of the Second World War. Of course, Pierre Frank might express himself somewhat differently today,



but I think his point on the importance of bonapartist regimes for the bourgeoisie is quite relevant. Likewise Trotsky's letter to the Italians raises some general considerations about the meaning of bourgeois democratic interludes that can come about after the collapse of fascism. He sees such a period as possible only if the socialist revolution is not carried through. The proletarian character of the struggle in Spain today confirms the point Trotsky is making. So I think you will find those two articles of interest.

In this letter I would like to outline to you how I see the question of the slogan republic. Our starting point should be that the slogan republic can have two rather different implications.

The call for a republic can express an elementary democratic sentiment--against a monarchy, for example. It can be interpreted to mean nothing more than the idea that the people should choose the government; this is the strict dictionary definition of the word. On the other hand, the call for a republic can express a basic political objective: the idea that a bourgeois democratic regime is the objective to strive for.

We support any mass struggle for democratic rights regardless of how confused its expression may be; but we oppose the idea that the objective should be a bourgeois government. Thus the entire point hinges around how the slogan is interpreted in the concrete circumstances.

The reformist parties, of course, identify the struggle for bourgeois democratic rights with support to bourgeois democratic governments, and seek at all times to confuse and confine the struggle for democratic rights to adjustments within the framework of a bourgeois regime. Sometimes they raise the slogan of a republic precisely in order to express this objective. Our goal and task is exactly the opposite--to try and make clear the difference between democratic rights and a bourgeois regime.

One of the central axis of anti-Communist propaganda on a world scale is that of trying to equate democratic rights with capitalism. Although this varies from country to country the idea that capitalism means liberty, while socialism means totalitarianism is the underlying theme in most anti-communist propaganda. They are much aided in this propaganda by the experience of the Stalinist regimes. This propaganda has an impact on the masses; many people believe that the struggle for more freedom, more democratic rights, is interlocked with support for certain forms of bourgeois parliamentary rule.

In seeking to make our position clear we must avoid sectarianism. The key to this is to recognize the content and dynamic of any mass struggle for democratic rights, whatever the slogans that are popularized and foremost at the moment. We are not neutral in the struggle to improve the rights (and therefore the fighting position) of the proletariat under capitalism. For example, we favor governmental posts to be elected not appointed, or that parliament be elected with proportional representation, or that a parliament should have only one

house not two. All three of these examples are strictly within the context of a bourgeois regime. But this in no way implies any concession in our political opposition to all forms of a bourgeois regime. As a matter of principle we never call for a bourgeois government or support bourgeois candidates.

We raise our slogans with the goal of seeking to help the workers gain a clear understanding of their own class interests. Thus in dealing with the situation in Spain today, we have to try and separate out the sentiment to struggle for democratic rights, which we support, from the objective of a bourgeois government, which we oppose. We try to link the struggle for democratic rights with our objective of a workers government. To do this we raise a coordinated series of slogans to express our position, even if at one moment or another we concentrate agitationally on a specific democratic slogan.

In order to achieve clarity it is often important to complement one slogan with another in our propaganda, for instance, the call for a constituent assembly with the call for a workers government or a workers and peasants government (the latter is probably best in Spain today). These two demands are complementary. A constituent assembly offers the opportunity for the highest expression of democratic rights within the context of bourgeois society. The "free" election of delegates to an assembly to decide what kind of government should be established. Such a call for a constituent assembly by itself does not specify what government should exist, and does not in any way imply support for a bourgeois government. But our call for a constituent assembly should be combined in our propaganda, with our answer to the question of who should govern, the working class, expressed as a workers and peasants government, and further concretized, depending on the specific situation in the class struggle, in the call for a CP-SP government or some other concrete formula.

What does the slogan of the republic express in Spain today? If it is understood by the masses as simply a generic demand that the people should decide on all questions of government rather than accepting the decisions of a monarchy, then the slogan is not in itself in conflict with our class principles. It is then a tactical question of whether and how we might utilize this slogan. I believe this has been the position in essence that the T.O. has held.

But if the slogan is understood to mean that the objective is to return to the second Spanish republic or to set up some other sort of bourgeois democratic regime, then the slogan cuts across our class principles, as Pierre Frank explains in his article of 1946.

It seems to me that the basic limitation in using the slogan of a republic is that it is very difficult to separate these two aspects-- democratic rights (down with the monarchy) and a bourgeois republic (Spain 1931-1939). And at least the slogan leads itself to promoting this confusion. That is why it seems best to explain our position by centering our propaganda around the following axis: down with the monarchy and all institutions of Francoism, for full democratic rights, for a constituent assembly, for a workers and peasants government.



The republic slogan can also help lend itself to promoting confusion in the direction of the concept of revolution by stages: that first we must fight for a democratic stage under bourgeois rule, and only later for socialism. This is the case today in Spain where there is enormous pressure transmitted and promoted by the reformist workers parties that we are now fighting for a democratic stage. With this totally false differentiation between the struggle for democratic rights and the socialist revolution, the reformists are able in the name of "democracy" to oppose the class demands of the workers which are rising objectively out of the living class struggle. This ties in logically with their support for a social pact and their opposition to proletarian methods of struggle in favor of class collaboration, agreements, negotiations, etc.

This brings me to another problem I see. It is possible to bend towards the "democratic" stage posture if the slogan republic becomes, in effect, our governmental slogan. I think this danger is expressed in the LSR document, "After the Referendum," in which these comrades propose an electoral bloc under the slogan for the Third Republic as the most important point and no mention whatever is made of our own governmental slogan. The T.O. (Workers Tendency) is correct in insisting that we should raise our class governmental slogan in the elections. I see that in the proposed program for an electoral bloc, the LCR, like the LSR, leaves out any governmental slogan. This is done at the very time when everyone in Spain is discussing who should rule, what kind of government should exist. We must take a clear position on this. It is the question of questions to clarify in this election. We are for a workers and peasant government, for a workers republic.

To say this in no way contradicts the correct effort by the LCR to seek out and concentrate on specific democratic demands, and seek as wide a bloc in action on those specific slogans. This is what the LCR did recently regarding the call "to legalize all working class political parties." But as the T.O. explains, an election poses the question of who should govern. Our tactics in an electoral campaign cannot be treated in the same way as our united front tactics for action over specific issues in the class struggle. In an election campaign, we must aim to present our overall political position particularly as concerns the question of who should govern. This question separates us from the popular frontist positions of the centrists and Maoists as well as the CP and SP. But if we fail to present our class governmental slogan in the elections, we cannot effectively differentiate ourselves from these currents.

For the bourgeoisie the maintenance of the monarchy is quite important to insure a slow and stable transition from Francoism to a government with a more popular base of support. Thus today the SP and CP are backing the efforts of the bourgeoisie to maintain a bonapartist regime based on the monarchy, and oppose raising the slogan for a republic. But with the stormy rise of the class struggle and the potential for a rapid disenchantment with the monarchy, the slogan of a republic could come to the fore. This cannot be ruled out and would require tactical shifts in how we present our propaganda as well as direct intervention into any mass movement.

I do not see any problem in our propaganda explaining, "we are opposed to the monarchy, let the people decide what government they want through a constituent assembly. We favor a workers and peasants government. We say: down with the monarchy, for a republic, a workers republic that will end capitalism and establish socialism."

In thinking through this question, we must keep in mind how the slogan republic is understood, at what stage the mass movement is at and how best to explain our program and to help mobilize the masses in struggle. It must be crystal clear whenever we say republic we mean a workers republic (i.e., a workers and peasants government), and can in no way be interpreted as a bourgeois republic. For us, that is a question of principle.

Peter

P.S. I am also sending you under a separate cover an Education for Socialist Bulletin entitled: "The Workers and Farmers Government" by Joseph Hansen. This bulletin includes a series of articles on the meaning and correct usage of the slogan workers and farmers government including the original discussion at the Fourth World Congress of the Third International. I especially recommend that you read the article on page 49 by Michel Pablo published in 1947, which I think you will find very useful.

CC: LC, LCR



lenced report on the Industrial Con-  
ference which declared that "it  
be comparatively easy for a number of  
employers . . . to deliberately provoke  
industrial disputes with the object of  
embarrassing the Labour Government.  
This situation calls for discrimination  
in our relationship to strikers and we  
should be careful that we are not used  
as tools of the employers in any such  
attempts." This is only one step away  
from the war-time position of the Stal-  
inists which branded all strikes as pro-  
vocations of the employers and called  
upon the workers not to yield to such  
provocations, not to strike.

The main capital of the ILP during  
the past years has consisted of its  
Parliamentary Group and its tradition  
in the Labour movement. Without  
the M.P.s it will be nothing.  
The development, more precisely the  
degeneration, of the ILP has verified  
the prediction of the last RCP Con-  
gress. We said:

"As a current separate and apart  
from the reformists and the revolu-  
tionaries, the ILP will not be able  
to maintain itself. Like its brother  
parties on the continent of Europe it  
will disappear ignominiously from  
the scene."  
The Conference revealed that there  
are very few elements remaining in  
the ILP who are not so steeped in its  
centrist atmosphere as to be capable  
of absorbing the revolutionary ideas of  
Trotskyism. Those who have such  
capacities will be propelled in our in-  
tegration. The coming struggles will de-  
monstrate the viability of Trotskyism.  
of the programme and method of re-  
volutionary Communism.

NP" and all that the General Secre-  
tary can say is "must you go."  
Some of the rank and file ILP com-  
rades at the Conference had illusions  
that the passing of the anti-affiliation  
is a resolution would have a sobering  
effect on the right wing and would put  
them back on the rails. Subsequent  
events will have dispelled their illu-  
sions. They are to be left in the rem-  
nants of the independent alternative  
to the Labour Party without a pro-  
gramme, without a perspective, with-  
out hope for the future.

The plight of the rump of Common-  
wealth, which has suffered an identifi-  
cate to that of the ILP in Millington,  
its lone MP, has already gone into the  
Labour Party, may provide the basis  
for fusion. C. A. Smith, Common-  
wealth Chairman, has had such an idea  
in mind for some time and has been  
making approaches to the ILP behind  
the scenes. It will solve nothing if it  
does take place. It will not halt the  
decay of either organisation. These  
two lame dogs will prove incapable of  
helping each other over the stile.

The Conference showed that the  
possibilities of the ILP playing any  
great role in the future are growing  
ever more dim. Its literature circu-  
lation, its general activity, its active  
membership do not compare with those  
of the RCP. Such industrial influence  
as it exerts is at the official level. Its  
trade union leaders, Bob Edwards,  
Tom Stephenson and Will Ballantine,  
lacking a firm policy, do not assist the  
Party's industrial development but  
transmit the pressure of the Labour  
and trade union bureaucracy into the  
ILP. This was shown by the unchal-  
lenged report on the Industrial Con-  
ference which declared that "it  
be comparatively easy for a number of  
employers . . . to deliberately provoke  
industrial disputes with the object of  
embarrassing the Labour Government.  
This situation calls for discrimination  
in our relationship to strikers and we  
should be careful that we are not used  
as tools of the employers in any such  
attempts." This is only one step away  
from the war-time position of the Stal-  
inists which branded all strikes as pro-  
vocations of the employers and called  
upon the workers not to yield to such  
provocations, not to strike.

But our comrades have not yet  
gone. From the depths of my soc-  
ialist conscience I make this appeal  
to them: "Must you go? Can't you  
stay? There has been no botching  
nor harrang of doors. There was a  
perfectly reasonable difference of  
opinion on a tactical problem. The  
Party has decided. The doors of the  
Party are wide open to all who are  
prepared loyally and sincerely to  
implement Conference decisions. Re-  
member what the Party has meant  
to you. Will you find such joy in  
Socialist service elsewhere? Is there  
not an imperious need for an inde-  
pendent Socialist Party? I am sure  
there is and I am certain that the  
ILP is such a Party. Therefore,  
comrades, we want you to stay with  
us. We don't want you to go."

But this sentimental claptrap has  
fallen on deaf ears. Those Party Off-  
icers whom McNair promises will im-  
plement the Conference decision "not  
only in the letter but in the spirit"  
are already on their way out! Fenner  
Brookway is resigning from the polit-  
ical secretaryship and editorship of  
the NEW LEADER. Two of the Par-  
liamentary Group, McGovern and  
Campbell Stephen, together with most  
of the Glasgow Councillors, are prepar-  
ing to go over to the Labour Party.  
This is all the respect they have for  
Conference decisions "arrived at in  
accordance with the genuine demo-  
cratic procedure which governs the

reached. We have been divided on  
this issue for many months. The  
full intensity of our flow of work for  
International Socialism has been re-  
tarded by this difference of tactical  
approach. The NAC as well as the  
membership was divided (1). We  
have never sought and never accep-  
ted the dull acquiescence of totali-  
tarian subservience. Such divisions  
as this are of the essence of demo-  
cracy and we are prepared to pay  
the price even though it be high. In  
this case the price is high as some of  
our comrades may be leaving us. It  
is hard, terribly hard, to lose com-  
rades with whom one has worked for  
many happy years in loyal and fruit-  
ful collaboration.

But this sentimental claptrap has  
fallen on deaf ears. Those Party Off-  
icers whom McNair promises will im-  
plement the Conference decision "not  
only in the letter but in the spirit"  
are already on their way out! Fenner  
Brookway is resigning from the polit-  
ical secretaryship and editorship of  
the NEW LEADER. Two of the Par-  
liamentary Group, McGovern and  
Campbell Stephen, together with most  
of the Glasgow Councillors, are prepar-  
ing to go over to the Labour Party.  
This is all the respect they have for  
Conference decisions "arrived at in  
accordance with the genuine demo-  
cratic procedure which governs the

To leave it behind when they enter the  
Labour Party.  
The alternative resolution demanded  
the maintenance of the ILP as an in-  
dependent organisation and as an alter-  
native to the Labour Party.  
The debate around these two resolu-  
tions produced impassioned appeals  
from Patrick Brookway and the sup-  
porters of the first resolution. Brock-  
way spoke of the personal crisis  
through which he was passing and  
threatened to resign from the editor-  
ship of the NEW LEADER. McGovern  
and Campbell predicted the doom of  
the ILP should it continue to function  
independently.

The vocal support given to the anti-  
totalist and sectarian confession. Many  
of the ideas expressed were from the  
recipe book of a third period Stalin-  
ism against which the right wing  
subtly warned.

Despite the efforts of the pro-affili-  
ationist right wing, the second resolu-  
tion was carried by 75 votes to 60.  
The decision of the ILP to remain  
outside the mass Labour Party is  
virtually its death warrant. Lacking  
a revolutionary programme, discipline  
and leadership, it can never become an  
alternative to the Labour Party. The  
workers cannot distinguish its policy  
from that of the mass Labour Party  
and consequently are unable to under-  
stand the reason for its separate  
existence.

The ILP is now completely split. The  
pitiful, sentimental character of the  
Party is underlined in my article by  
John McNair in the NEW LEADER  
of May 4th. The General Secretary  
endeavours to prevent a split by a  
tentful appeal to the right wing who  
are deserting to the Labour Party in  
denance of the majority decision of the  
Conference. He writes:

"This decision is to stay outside the  
LP) was arrived at in accordance  
with the genuine democratic pro-  
cedure which governs the ILP and it  
will be implemented, not only in the  
letter but in the spirit, by our Nat-  
ional Council and by our Party  
Officers.

I think many of us heaved a sigh  
of relief when the final decision was

To leave it behind when they enter the  
Labour Party.  
The alternative resolution demanded  
the maintenance of the ILP as an in-  
dependent organisation and as an alter-  
native to the Labour Party.  
The debate around these two resolu-  
tions produced impassioned appeals  
from Patrick Brookway and the sup-  
porters of the first resolution. Brock-  
way spoke of the personal crisis  
through which he was passing and  
threatened to resign from the editor-  
ship of the NEW LEADER. McGovern  
and Campbell predicted the doom of  
the ILP should it continue to function  
independently.

The vocal support given to the anti-  
totalist and sectarian confession. Many  
of the ideas expressed were from the  
recipe book of a third period Stalin-  
ism against which the right wing  
subtly warned.

Despite the efforts of the pro-affili-  
ationist right wing, the second resolu-  
tion was carried by 75 votes to 60.  
The decision of the ILP to remain  
outside the mass Labour Party is  
virtually its death warrant. Lacking  
a revolutionary programme, discipline  
and leadership, it can never become an  
alternative to the Labour Party. The  
workers cannot distinguish its policy  
from that of the mass Labour Party  
and consequently are unable to under-  
stand the reason for its separate  
existence.

The ILP is now completely split. The  
pitiful, sentimental character of the  
Party is underlined in my article by  
John McNair in the NEW LEADER  
of May 4th. The General Secretary  
endeavours to prevent a split by a  
tentful appeal to the right wing who  
are deserting to the Labour Party in  
denance of the majority decision of the  
Conference. He writes:

"This decision is to stay outside the  
LP) was arrived at in accordance  
with the genuine democratic pro-  
cedure which governs the ILP and it  
will be implemented, not only in the  
letter but in the spirit, by our Nat-  
ional Council and by our Party  
Officers.

I think many of us heaved a sigh  
of relief when the final decision was

lenced report on the Industrial Con-  
ference which declared that "it  
be comparatively easy for a number of  
employers . . . to deliberately provoke  
industrial disputes with the object of  
embarrassing the Labour Government.  
This situation calls for discrimination  
in our relationship to strikers and we  
should be careful that we are not used  
as tools of the employers in any such  
attempts." This is only one step away  
from the war-time position of the Stal-  
inists which branded all strikes as pro-  
vocations of the employers and called  
upon the workers not to yield to such  
provocations, not to strike.

The main capital of the ILP during  
the past years has consisted of its  
Parliamentary Group and its tradition  
in the Labour movement. Without  
the M.P.s it will be nothing.  
The development, more precisely the  
degeneration, of the ILP has verified  
the prediction of the last RCP Con-  
gress. We said:

"As a current separate and apart  
from the reformists and the revolu-  
tionaries, the ILP will not be able  
to maintain itself. Like its brother  
parties on the continent of Europe it  
will disappear ignominiously from  
the scene."  
The Conference revealed that there  
are very few elements remaining in  
the ILP who are not so steeped in its  
centrist atmosphere as to be capable  
of absorbing the revolutionary ideas of  
Trotskyism. Those who have such  
capacities will be propelled in our in-  
tegration. The coming struggles will de-  
monstrate the viability of Trotskyism.  
of the programme and method of re-  
volutionary Communism.

NP" and all that the General Secre-  
tary can say is "must you go."  
Some of the rank and file ILP com-  
rades at the Conference had illusions  
that the passing of the anti-affiliation  
is a resolution would have a sobering  
effect on the right wing and would put  
them back on the rails. Subsequent  
events will have dispelled their illu-  
sions. They are to be left in the rem-  
nants of the independent alternative  
to the Labour Party without a pro-  
gramme, without a perspective, with-  
out hope for the future.

The plight of the rump of Common-  
wealth, which has suffered an identifi-  
cate to that of the ILP in Millington,  
its lone MP, has already gone into the  
Labour Party, may provide the basis  
for fusion. C. A. Smith, Common-  
wealth Chairman, has had such an idea  
in mind for some time and has been  
making approaches to the ILP behind  
the scenes. It will solve nothing if it  
does take place. It will not halt the  
decay of either organisation. These  
two lame dogs will prove incapable of  
helping each other over the stile.

The Conference showed that the  
possibilities of the ILP playing any  
great role in the future are growing  
ever more dim. Its literature circu-  
lation, its general activity, its active  
membership do not compare with those  
of the RCP. Such industrial influence  
as it exerts is at the official level. Its  
trade union leaders, Bob Edwards,  
Tom Stephenson and Will Ballantine,  
lacking a firm policy, do not assist the  
Party's industrial development but  
transmit the pressure of the Labour  
and trade union bureaucracy into the  
ILP. This was shown by the unchal-  
lenged report on the Industrial Con-  
ference which declared that "it  
be comparatively easy for a number of  
employers . . . to deliberately provoke  
industrial disputes with the object of  
embarrassing the Labour Government.  
This situation calls for discrimination  
in our relationship to strikers and we  
should be careful that we are not used  
as tools of the employers in any such  
attempts." This is only one step away  
from the war-time position of the Stal-  
inists which branded all strikes as pro-  
vocations of the employers and called  
upon the workers not to yield to such  
provocations, not to strike.

But our comrades have not yet  
gone. From the depths of my soc-  
ialist conscience I make this appeal  
to them: "Must you go? Can't you  
stay? There has been no botching  
nor harrang of doors. There was a  
perfectly reasonable difference of  
opinion on a tactical problem. The  
Party has decided. The doors of the  
Party are wide open to all who are  
prepared loyally and sincerely to  
implement Conference decisions. Re-  
member what the Party has meant  
to you. Will you find such joy in  
Socialist service elsewhere? Is there  
not an imperious need for an inde-  
pendent Socialist Party? I am sure  
there is and I am certain that the  
ILP is such a Party. Therefore,  
comrades, we want you to stay with  
us. We don't want you to go."

But this sentimental claptrap has  
fallen on deaf ears. Those Party Off-  
icers whom McNair promises will im-  
plement the Conference decision "not  
only in the letter but in the spirit"  
are already on their way out! Fenner  
Brookway is resigning from the polit-  
ical secretaryship and editorship of  
the NEW LEADER. Two of the Par-  
liamentary Group, McGovern and  
Campbell Stephen, together with most  
of the Glasgow Councillors, are prepar-  
ing to go over to the Labour Party.  
This is all the respect they have for  
Conference decisions "arrived at in  
accordance with the genuine demo-  
cratic procedure which governs the

reached. We have been divided on  
this issue for many months. The  
full intensity of our flow of work for  
International Socialism has been re-  
tarded by this difference of tactical  
approach. The NAC as well as the  
membership was divided (1). We  
have never sought and never accep-  
ted the dull acquiescence of totali-  
tarian subservience. Such divisions  
as this are of the essence of demo-  
cracy and we are prepared to pay  
the price even though it be high. In  
this case the price is high as some of  
our comrades may be leaving us. It  
is hard, terribly hard, to lose com-  
rades with whom one has worked for  
many happy years in loyal and fruit-  
ful collaboration.

But our comrades have not yet  
gone. From the depths of my soc-  
ialist conscience I make this appeal  
to them: "Must you go? Can't you  
stay? There has been no botching  
nor harrang of doors. There was a  
perfectly reasonable difference of  
opinion on a tactical problem. The  
Party has decided. The doors of the  
Party are wide open to all who are  
prepared loyally and sincerely to  
implement Conference decisions. Re-  
member what the Party has meant  
to you. Will you find such joy in  
Socialist service elsewhere? Is there  
not an imperious need for an inde-  
pendent Socialist Party? I am sure  
there is and I am certain that the  
ILP is such a Party. Therefore,  
comrades, we want you to stay with  
us. We don't want you to go."

But this sentimental claptrap has  
fallen on deaf ears. Those Party Off-  
icers whom McNair promises will im-  
plement the Conference decision "not  
only in the letter but in the spirit"  
are already on their way out! Fenner  
Brookway is resigning from the polit-  
ical secretaryship and editorship of  
the NEW LEADER. Two of the Par-  
liamentary Group, McGovern and  
Campbell Stephen, together with most  
of the Glasgow Councillors, are prepar-  
ing to go over to the Labour Party.  
This is all the respect they have for  
Conference decisions "arrived at in  
accordance with the genuine demo-  
cratic procedure which governs the

reached. We have been divided on  
this issue for many months. The  
full intensity of our flow of work for  
International Socialism has been re-  
tarded by this difference of tactical  
approach. The NAC as well as the  
membership was divided (1). We  
have never sought and never accep-  
ted the dull acquiescence of totali-  
tarian subservience. Such divisions  
as this are of the essence of demo-  
cracy and we are prepared to pay  
the price even though it be high. In  
this case the price is high as some of  
our comrades may be leaving us. It  
is hard, terribly hard, to lose com-  
rades with whom one has worked for  
many happy years in loyal and fruit-  
ful collaboration.

reached. We have been divided on  
this issue for many months. The  
full intensity of our flow of work for  
International Socialism has been re-  
tarded by this difference of tactical  
approach. The NAC as well as the  
membership was divided (1). We  
have never sought and never accep-  
ted the dull acquiescence of totali-  
tarian subservience. Such divisions  
as this are of the essence of demo-  
cracy and we are prepared to pay  
the price even though it be high. In  
this case the price is high as some of  
our comrades may be leaving us. It  
is hard, terribly hard, to lose com-  
rades with whom one has worked for  
many happy years in loyal and fruit-  
ful collaboration.

reached. We have been divided on  
this issue for many months. The  
full intensity of our flow of work for  
International Socialism has been re-  
tarded by this difference of tactical  
approach. The NAC as well as the  
membership was divided (1). We  
have never sought and never accep-  
ted the dull acquiescence of totali-  
tarian subservience. Such divisions  
as this are of the essence of demo-  
cracy and we are prepared to pay  
the price even though it be high. In  
this case the price is high as some of  
our comrades may be leaving us. It  
is hard, terribly hard, to lose com-  
rades with whom one has worked for  
many happy years in loyal and fruit-  
ful collaboration.

reached. We have been divided on  
this issue for many months. The  
full intensity of our flow of work for  
International Socialism has been re-  
tarded by this difference of tactical  
approach. The NAC as well as the  
membership was divided (1). We  
have never sought and never accep-  
ted the dull acquiescence of totali-  
tarian subservience. Such divisions  
as this are of the essence of demo-  
cracy and we are prepared to pay  
the price even though it be high. In  
this case the price is high as some of  
our comrades may be leaving us. It  
is hard, terribly hard, to lose com-  
rades with whom one has worked for  
many happy years in loyal and fruit-  
ful collaboration.

reached. We have been divided on  
this issue for many months. The  
full intensity of our flow of work for  
International Socialism has been re-  
tarded by this difference of tactical  
approach. The NAC as well as the  
membership was divided (1). We  
have never sought and never accep-  
ted the dull acquiescence of totali-  
tarian subservience. Such divisions  
as this are of the essence of demo-  
cracy and we are prepared to pay  
the price even though it be high. In  
this case the price is high as some of  
our comrades may be leaving us. It  
is hard, terribly hard, to lose com-  
rades with whom one has worked for  
many happy years in loyal and fruit-  
ful collaboration.

# DEMOCRACY OR BONAPARTISM IN EUROPE? By PIERRE FRANK

The following article is presented for  
International discussion by a leading  
member of the Parti Communiste In-  
ternationale, French Section of the  
issue.

The problems of the proletarian re-  
volution are posed today in Europe  
under the most varied aspects. It is  
not surprising therefore that differ-

Article printed in the June-July, 1946 issue  
of Workers International News.]



posed several questions concerning democratic demands and the possibilities of democratic regimes in Europe. In for some it was only a question of putting the emphasis on democratic demands while for others one of putting it on the slogans of soviets and the Socialist United States of Europe, this difference would very likely be resolved in the daily activities of the parties, provided both tendencies knew how to connect dialectically the democratic slogans and the specific slogans of the proletarian revolution. On the other hand a question which must be treated with the greatest precision and which cannot be settled by daily activity is that of the nature of the present regimes in Europe. It is a theoretical problem of the first importance to know whether or not we have democratic regimes in Europe for differences on this point must finally result which is not necessarily the case with democratic slogans—in different polities, as happened on the question of the nature of the Soviet State which has so often been brought forward during the years of Stalinist degeneration and reaction.

**Do Democratic Regimes Exist in "Liberated" Europe?**

Our reply to this question obviously does not depend on the criteria required by the Foreign Office and the State Department for the diplomatic recognition of a government, any more than on those defined by Stalinist propaganda. Bourgeois democracy is a political form the analysis of which has been made by the most eminent Marxists and it is their analysis which serves completely to guide us on this matter.

The principal problem of Europe is Germany. Unfortunately, under present conditions, the political forms and formations there are still only in an embryonic state; the military occupation governments stifle all political life capable of disturbing their own aims. Consequently, Germany scarcely affords us criteria concerning the political forms of the state in Europe. Throughout that part of Europe occupied by the Red Army great overtures are taking place; but the Stalin-

ist manoeuvres completely distort the simplest bits of information. In any event we are not confronted with democratic governments far or near. These are governments based on capitalist property, under the control of the Moscow bureaucracy, and with a greater or lesser base in the worker and poor peasant masses. Only the presence of the Red Army assures their continuance.

But after all, the discussion among the American comrades has dealt, and moreover rightly so, with the countries of Western Europe, those which are in the "zone of influence" of American and British democratic imperialism.

Unquestionably, the most characteristic example in this zone is that of France, which once again constitutes the most appropriate subject for a Marxist study of specifically political questions. Let us say in the beginning that everything that is true for France is not necessarily true at present for Italy, the Scandinavian countries, Belgium, etc., but it is certainly in France that the political tendencies manifest themselves with the greatest clarity and distinctness.

Do we have a democratic regime in France? Comrade Morrow, in an article aimed at summarizing the positions of his tendency in the discussion, replies in the affirmative in the following terms:

"The struggle of the masses is limited by the fact that it still accepts the leadership of the reformist parties. The objective resultant is bourgeois democracy.

Another factor working for bourgeois democracy is the resistance of a section of the French capitalist class, led by de Gaulle, to U.S. domination. There was much indignation at the plenum, notably from Comrade Cannon, when I defined the Gaulthiers as a bourgeois-democratic tendency. The majority could not understand this quite simple phenomena, that a section of the French capitalist class, first to resist German imperialism and then to resist U.S. domination, was for a period basing itself on the masses through the mediation of the reformist

parties." (Fourth International, May 1945).

We shall endeavour to show by an analysis of the class relations that this reasoning is faulty on a number of points. As one knows, it is always profitable not to examine a question solely by its appearance at a given moment, but to see it in its historical development over a longer period. This is very easy for us to do since the Fourth International has taken very clear positions on France over a period of many years.

In February 1934 a violent reactionary attack dealt a mortal blow to the democratic Third Republic. The new regime was defined by Trotsky as follows: "a preventive Bonapartist regime cloaking itself with the worn-out formulae of the parliamentary state and manoeuvring between the insufficiently strong camp of the fascist regime and the insufficiently class-conscious camp of the proletarian state." (August 1934).

The violent reactionary attack awakened the labouring masses. A strong surge to the left took place, which forced a leftward shift of the Bonapartist governments, at the same time that the Popular Front was created to check and mislead the revolutionary movement of the masses. The year 1936 saw the triumph of the Popular Front thanks to the exploitation of strong democratic illusions; but it also saw a strong surge of the workers (June 1936). The division of France into mortally hostile camps deepened. The regime of the Popular Front was not a democratic regime it contained within itself numerous elements of Bonapartism as we shall see further on.

With Munich and the liquidation of the Popular Front, the governments of Deladier and Reynaud, resembling those of Doumergue and Flandin, prepared the Bordeaux transaction of June 1940 which served to install the Petain regime. Despite the support it received from German imperialism (it held power only with German support and went under as soon as the German Army had to quit French territory), this regime was not considered by us as fascist but rather as

Bonapartist. In the notes he dictated for an article shortly before his assassination, which he did not have the time to write, Trotsky expressed himself as follows:

"In France there is no fascism in the real sense of the term. The regime of the senile Marshal Petain represents a senile form of Bonapartism of the epoch of imperialist decline... Precisely because Petain's regime is senile Bonapartism it contains no element of stability and can be overthrown by a revolutionary mass uprising much sooner than a fascist regime." (Fourth International, October 1940).

Several months later a manifesto of the International Secretariat entitled "France Under Hitler and Petain" declares:

"The swift invasion of the German troops has shattered the administrative system. The only group representing a certain relative solidity were the top ranks of the Army. Around them rallied some Anglo-phobe politicians. This combination was crowned by the octogenarian Petain. The new Bonaparte did not even use cannon against parliament, which decided on its own hook to disappear.

The struggle for democracy under the flag of England and the United States will not lead to a notriably different situation. General de Gaulle struggles against slavery at the head of colonial governors, that is to say, of slave masters. In his appeals this leader uses, just like Petain, the vocal 'we'. The defence of democracy is in good hands! If England should install de Gaulle in France tomorrow, his regime would not in the least be distinguished from that of the Bonapartist government of Petain." (November 1940).

Thus our most responsible international body had predicted that a simple substitution of gangs following a victory of the Allies would not signify a change in the nature of the political regime. Have events verified this prediction or not? We find ourselves in the presence of an evaluation on the historical scale based on positions which were defended for many years by



the Fourth International) against all other theories and cheap labels spread by the other tendencies and formations of the labour movement. If an error was committed it would truly be a considerable one and we would be urgently obliged to seek the reasons for it and correct it. As for ourselves, we don't believe that our organization was in error on this point. We sought to define the regime of de Gaulle in 1944 at the moment when he had ceased being the leader of a military legion at London and had become the head of the government installed in Algeria as the step before becoming the head of the government at Paris. We gave only a personal evaluation which does not have the authority of the citations given above but one may well excuse us for reprinting it here, for it applies in large measure to the present regime in France.

"The significance of the sentence pronounced by the Algiers tribunal goes far beyond the personality of Pucheu and of his judges. The sentence reveals the common nature of the Petain regime in France and the de Gaulle regime now established in North Africa which lays claim to the future government of France. At the same time, the sentence may serve to lay open some of the differences between the two regimes.

The Petain regime is the dictatorship of the army and the police in the service of big capital. This is Bonapartism, not fascism. It is Bonapartism propped up by the Gastaco and the German occupation troops.

The de Gaulle regime—especially since its establishment at Algiers—contains an ever increasing number of men from the army and the police who have deserted Vichy. This too is Bonapartism. It is Bonapartism propped up by the Allied troops and the crumbs of Lese-Lend.

The differences between these two Bonapartist regimes are in so way exhausted by the fact that some of these French patriots have a marked preference for the Basic English as opposed to the jargon of the 'Voelkisher Beobachter'.

In France, independent working

class organizations are driven to illegality by Petain; in Algeria, where reaction still reigned supreme at the time of the proletarian offensive of 1936, the de Gaulle regime cannot help tolerating the open expression of trade unions and working class parties and must even seek their collaboration.

In France, Petain is constantly being spurred on by the agitation of the fascist organizations, in particular by Doriot's PPF. In Algeria, these same fascist organizations have been reduced to illegality and there actually appears to be no fascist movement in existence at Algiers. (Obviously, one of these Bonapartist regimes leans essentially on fascist reaction, whereas the other leans more towards the exploited masses. This is no wise to the credit of one or other of the leading cliques, it is simply the resultant of the class forces in operation; but it is a fact of great importance for the future development of the class struggle." (Fourth International, June 1944).

We don't see that the "liberation" of France has brought fundamental changes in the above-mentioned characteristics of the de Gaulle regime. Unquestionably the weight of the worker masses is markedly heavier in France than in Algeria and the stronger democratic traditions are factors which contribute to weakening the regime and force it to drape itself in enough shapeless camouflage to hide its Bonapartist traits, but it doesn't change its nature.

#### Bonapartism

After having shown the continuity of our political analysis for more than ten years of French history and before proceeding to a more penetrating study of the de Gaulle regime, we believe it worthwhile to review some generalizations on Bonapartism at the cost of a new series of citations.

In "Origins of the Family, Private Property and the State" Engels explains how a Bonapartist form of state appears under certain circumstances:

"At certain periods it occurs that the struggling classes balance each other so nearly that the public power

gains a certain degree of independence by posing as the mediator between them. The absolute monarchy of the 17th and 18th century was in such a position balancing the nobles and the burghers against one another. So was the Bonapartism of the first, and still more of the Second Empire, playing the proletariat against the bourgeoisie and vice versa. The latest performance of this kind, in which rulers and ruled appear equally ridiculous is the German Empire of Bismarckian make, in which capitalists and labourers are balanced against one another and equally cheated for the benefit of the degenerate Prussian cabbage junkers.

Limiting ourselves in this article to the Bonapartism of the capitalist regime we merely call to mind the definition of Bonapartism applied and explained on many occasions by Trotsky in reference to the Stalinist dictatorship. But Trotsky was very insistent in attributing this conception of Bonapartism to the von Papen and von Schleicher governments in the months preceding Hitler's coming to power; he did this in two pamphlets one of which "The Only Road" devotes itself mainly to this very question. He showed the same insistence concerning the Doumergue and Mandin ministries in France which had resulted from the violently reactionary attack of February 6, 1934. He showed the differences in the class relations between a democratic regime and a Bonapartist regime.

"The passing over of the bourgeoisie from the parliamentary to the Bonapartist regime does not finally exclude Social-Democracy from that legal combination of forces upon which capitalist government bases itself. Schleicher, as is well known, sought in his time the aid of the trade unions. Through his friend Marquet, Doumergue has without doubt relations with Joubaux and Co. The essence of the democratic state consists, as is well known in the fact that everyone has the right to say and write what he pleases but that the big capitalists retain the power of deciding all im-

portant questions. This result is obtained by means of a complicated system of partial concessions (reforms) becomes exhausted. Social-Democracy ceases to be the main political support of the bourgeoisie. This signifies: capital can no longer rely upon a tamed public opinion; it needs a state apparatus which is independent of the masses—i.e. Bonapartist.

In the one case, society turns almost in a circle about the big bourgeoisie as a pivot; the latter find in the petty bourgeoisie and in a section of the working class a stable foundation; consequently the government and the state apparatus rest on these strata by means of a parliamentary majority. In the other case the big bourgeoisie does not find sufficient support in the masses which are polarized towards the camp of the revolution and the camp of the counter-revolution; under these conditions in order to save the social order the state apparatus, with the forces of repression in the front, tends to raise itself above society. The base machine no longer rests on a mass base but maintains itself in unstable equilibrium between two camps; these feats of social gymnastics come to a lamentable end the moment one of the camps takes the initiative in a decisive struggle.

The examples mentioned above for Germany of 1932 and France of 1934 are those of a weak Bonapartism in the period of capitalist decline; the qualification of Bonapartism in their case was not contested in our ranks probably because, as Trotsky wrote, it is still easy to recognize in an old man the characteristics which he possessed in his youth.

But the Bonapartism of declining capitalism can cloak itself in other costumes. In certain cases it is fairly difficult to recognize it for example in the case of governments of the left, even very much to the left, notably of the Popular Front type. There Bonapartism is so outrageously varnished with a democratic sheen that many allow themselves to be taken in by it. The existence of Bonapartist elements in the Kerensky regime was the subject of a chapter of "The History of



the Russian Revolution" by Trotsky who characterized Kerensky as "the mathematical centre of Russian bonapartism." This theoretical evaluation was in agreement with that of Lenin who, on September 23, 1917, wrote to the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party: "We must give . . . a correct and clear slogan: to drive out the non-partyist gang of Kerensky with its pre-parliament." There was no question there of an agitational formula. In "State and Revolution," the greatest Marxist classic on the question of the state, Lenin, after having recalled the terms of Engels cited above with the same examples, adds the following phrase: "Such, we add, is the present Kerensky government in Republican Russia since it began to persecute the revolutionary proletariat, at a moment when, thanks to the leadership of the petty bourgeois democrats, the soviets had already become potent while the bourgeoisie was not yet strong enough openly to disperse them."

Certain individuals may be surprised to see an idea applied to regimes so widely separated from one another and will doubt its usefulness. Many other ideas familiar to Marxists are applied to extremely wide fields and yet are no less correct and useful. For example Leninism. Also, for example, the dictatorship of the proletariat, which is applied to the Paris Commune under its leadership of Proudhonists and Blanquists, as well as to Soviet Russia under the leadership of Lenin and Trotsky. The term "bonapartism" does not completely exhaust the characterization of a regime, but it is indispensable to employ it in present day Europe, if one wishes to go forward with the least chance of error. Let us add finally that Marxism is not alone in the possession of such important general ideas; all the sciences do likewise. Thus chemists call bodies carbon which differ more widely from one another than the bonapartism of Schöcher and that of Kerensky. And chemistry doesn't get along so badly either on that account. The contrary is true.

Let us note that the greatest theoreticians of Marxism did not at all

define the political nature of a bourgeois regime by the positions which the latter held in the field of foreign policy but solely and simply by the position it occupied in relation to the classes composing the nation. Let us likewise observe that the limitation of the struggle of the masses because of the treacherous leaderships (according to the expression of Comrade Morroy) or, what amounts to the same, the paralysis or impotence of the mass organizations (to employ the terms of Lenin or Trotsky) does not give as subjective resultant a bourgeois democracy in the conditions of present day France, but rather a bonapartism which possesses an apparent strength.

#### The de Gaulle Government

The conditions which dictate a bonapartist regime to the bourgeoisie equally dictate a foreign policy which is in no way a policy of "resistance." The social crisis of France requires a particular acute character precisely because of the change of its world position. But to see French capitalism or part of it "resisting" American or German imperialism and becoming democratic by virtue of this is to fall into error.

France's crisis owes its extreme acuteness to the fact that a great power of the 19th century must accommodate itself to a second-rate position in the capitalist world of the twentieth century, because of the weakness of its economic base which has remained stagnant in the face of the development of new and younger powers. A retrogression of this type (like that occurring in Great Britain after its "victory" in the Second World War) does not only signify securing a camp stool in place of an armchair in the international conferences, but above all a considerable lowering of the national revenue, and therefore a considerable reduction in the standard of life, particularly for the working masses. The first luxury article that capitalism tries to eliminate under such circumstances is democracy. Well before 1939 big capital in France understood that it could no longer claim a seat of great power as in the past. It had to find a protector for a future

full of threats. Inertia had more or less kept it trailing behind British imperialism but it was easy to see that the latter was also in serious straits although it had more reserve to hold out longer. To resist the revolutionary movements it was necessary to look elsewhere than London and its ailing democracy. Beside, French heavy industry had some special business reasons for orienting French capital towards German imperialism which, with the coming to power of the Nazis moved forward with seven-league boots.

But if French capitalism turned its eyes towards German imperialism and was guilty of counter-revolutionary defeatism in 1943 in the interests of its domestic politics, it none the less sought to prevent these few cards which remained in its hand from being completely taken away, knowing that German imperialism was still far from having consolidated its position and that it had not been able to secure any better ally than Italy. On the other hand an important section of French capitalism (finished goods, industries, luxury articles, tourist trade) could not because of its special interests neglect the American continent where it had its principal customers. As a result, French imperialism, pulled from opposite sides, endeavoured to play an intermediary role between Germany and the United States immediately after the debacle of June 1940, hoping to be able to earn a small commission for this work. It hasn't been forgotten that certain elements of American capitalism lent themselves for a time to this (Leaky mission). But when it became clear that the United States was intransigent toward German imperialism and the latter had no further chance of victory, this role of go-between was abandoned and the Bank of France and the Comités des Forges themselves became "resistant" in their own fashion, of course. Billions were transferred to Algeria in the months preceding the occupation of North Africa by the Americans; the top French administration made contact with de Gaulle.

For a little more than a year, de Gaulle, as head of the government,

while endeavouring from time to time to rattle his wooden sabre a bit, tried to re-establish this courier's policy, adapting it to the new principal powers that is to say, the U.S. and the USSR, and ignoring England. De Gaulle quickly signed a treaty of alliance with the U.S.S.R. but this document soon proved to be worthless, for Stalin, having nothing to get from de Gaulle, let him down in all the international conferences which have been held since then. In his recent visit to Washington de Gaulle obtained some loans for French economy (in which sufficiently important American business interests are involved) but he returned empty-handed from the political point of view. It took him less than a year to learn that it is one thing to play the role of arbiter between two weaker states and another thing for a small state to wish to manoeuvre between two great powers. General de Gaulle would have been able to learn something about this without having to experience it if he had addressed himself to certain ancient Polish colonels. Finally, de Gaulle who was openly attacked by a section of the French bourgeoisie for his policy of isolation has taken a small step towards England and the countries of Western Europe by proposing to create an association resembling one for the blind and the paralyzed.

Any way one may examine it this foreign policy of French capitalism is in no way "resistant" and, besides, there is nothing in it which predisposes the "Gaulists" to democracy.

If one studies the class relations in France, the bonapartist character of the de Gaulle government appears in the greatest clarity, since the day of "liberation" up to the elections of October 21, 1945 and to the conditions created by them.

The liberation of Paris was accomplished under the leadership of the Comité National de la Résistance (CNR), whose mass base was constituted by the workers' organizations (General Confederation of Labour, Communist Party, Socialist Party) and the militias composed in great part of worker members of these organizations. The CNR and more particularly the



workers' organizations, would have been able at this time to establish themselves in power, supporting themselves on the militias and the local committees of resistance. (These last represented in a bureaucratic fashion, and not democratically, the proletariat and the exploited masses in general.) In this period de Gaulle personally had very few real forces and would not have been able to oppose the CNR. As for the reaction and the old capitalist forces they were completely demoralized and disorganized and were hiding themselves. To save the capitalist regime thus left stripped bare, it was necessary from the very beginning to find something to cover it again and to camouflage it for the eyes of the masses. For this desired effect the uniform of a resisting general was used and they raised him as the representative of the nation, above classes, parties and groupings. In many respects this operation resembled that which occurred in February 1917 when the conciliators of the Petrograd soviet yielded the power, surrendering without firing a shot, to a provisional government without any real base.

It goes without saying that the bonapartism thus created has not at all the intention of leading too precarious an existence. It seeks to create a base for itself while securing the complicity of the leadership of the political formations and others who, in the given period, canalize the class forces between which it tries to maintain itself.

#### Traitorous Working Class Leaders

From the very first de Gaulle had to obtain the collaboration of the leaders of the parties which included the working class in order to accomplish the dissolution of the militias, the submission of the local committees of resistance to the organizations of the old bourgeois states as well as a unification of all the armed forces under the control of the government artificially created by these leaders themselves. Despite the support of the traitorous leaders, this operation took several months to achieve.

Every bonapartist government in France has tried to create a base for itself in the peasantry; the army hav-

ing been, for a very long time a sort of protector of the middle peasantry (see "The Eighteenth Brumaire" in particular where Marx wrote "The uniform was the holiday costume of the peasant." In the new circumstances de Gaulle has remained faithful to the bonapartist tradition. Shortly after the Second World War when the countryside suffered from the mass-power shortage and it was necessary to resort to the employment of prisoners of war for the tasks of trained workers, especially in the mines, de Gaulle attempted to maintain an army of one million men, that is, a standing army superior to those which France had preceding the years of re-armament and direct preparation for the war. Promises have been made to the peasantry, higher prices have been allowed for their products, etc., without much being accomplished, however, in the way of results, since the peasants need manpower, materials, livestock, seeds, manufactured products; since there is a shortage of all these things; and since the profits they can make on the black market cannot be used to obtain these things.

The elections which have just taken place provide one of the most striking proofs of the bonapartist character of the regime. Elections, a constituent, a parliament, a government responsible to an elected assembly, are so many disagreeable things for the general. He couldn't throw all this into the garbage can. What he was interested in above all was to wield stable power which would not be at the mercy of an assembly. Look he said, at the history of the Third Republic with its cascades of falling ministers. Thus he decided that simultaneously with democratic elections to elect an assembly on the bases of programme and parties, there should be held a referendum in the nature of a plebiscite designed to deprive the elected assembly of the greater part of its rights and to preserve, on the other hand, the greater part of the power in his own hands. Upon the announcement of this referendum a number of the democratic politicians of France shouted "bonapartism." Surely it was not a knowledge of Marxist literature on this

question but very simply an elementary knowledge of the history of their country which led them to such declarations.

For a long time the French bourgeoisie has sought to resolve a problem that the years have made as insalubrious as squaring the circle. It wanted "a strong state," in part to insure the defence of its frontiers, but mainly to hold in check the domestic enemy, the working class; but all the same, it did not wish this state to become too strong, for each time that it has permitted the state to entrench itself too strongly, it quickly found its own posterior in contact with the military books. To assure themselves that the state would not be further disturbed by political conflicts, the generals evinced an intention to transform the whole country into a barracks and to deprive everyone, including the bourgeoisie themselves, of political rights. This is the essential reason why even the most reactionary and personally arbitrary Republic, notably Clemenceau and Poincaré, opposed and fought vigorously against the interference of the generals in politics. But that is already ancient history.

In the October 21 elections the end of the democratic regime was incontrovertibly demonstrated by the inglorious foundering of the principal formation of the Third Republic, the Radical party, which had dominated and been maintained in every possible and imaginable way by that Republic. In "Whether France" Trotsky showed among other things that the policy of the Popular Front, the alliance of workers' organizations with the Radical party, was going in a direction directly contrary to the development of the situation, that is to say, to the decomposition of bourgeois democracy and of its principal party, that of the Radicals.

But the voting has created a situation in which bonapartism is literally under one's nose. The double vote of October 21—the democratic elections and the plebiscite—has resulted in the most desirable situation for a general of the coup d'état.

#### Votes Almost Equally Divided

In the elections for the Constituent Assembly, the votes were pretty nearly equally divided between three parties: the Stalinist Party followed by an important layer of the petty bourgeoisie of the towns and countryside; the Socialist Party, with a minority of the proletariat (without however losing its working class base in northern France) and a very great number of petty bourgeois votes. Finally the Mouvement Republicain Populaire (MRP), organized by Catholic politicians, who before the war flirted with the Popular Front and during the war participated in the resistance, but who were always solid pillars of the capitalist regime. In return, they received on October 21 all the votes of the reactionaries who have realized that they had no chance at all under their old colours.

The plebiscite is such a model stratagem that you can say without fear of deception it could only have been conceived beneath the kept of a general. A direct question for or against de Gaulle would never have given the desired result, for the present day bonapartism is too weak to intimidate the voters. Therefore the question was necessary. It was decided to pose two questions instead of one. (They even dreamt for a moment of posing three to do the job better.) To the first question there was no doubt that, save for a tiny minority of greatbeards, everyone was going to reply Yes: the Third Republic is dead. To say Yes to the first question was to influence many voters to say Yes to the second question; besides it is easier to say Yes than No even in a referendum. It sufficed to wrap the second question in fine-spun language to finish the sowing of confusion. The result was a majority of about 60 percent of the votes for de Gaulle who on the strength of this will receive from the post of head of the government from the new assembly.

What is going to happen? De Gaulle, feeling strong with 13,000,000 votes behind him, does not have to share counsel with anyone. Before him is an assembly with three parties of



Let us merely recall in passing that the partisans of the "Three Theses" seriously propose to make a struggle for the freedom of religion—a democratic slogan, unquestionably—one of the most essential points in the struggle against fascism. For anyone who has not completely lost the use of his faculties in the course of these terrible years of reaction through which we have passed, it is clear that such a democratic slogan has nothing in common with us. It is on the contrary more and more evident that this slogan is today the property of a whole section of reaction which does not dare to show its true face.

But a great error, even a very dangerous error, has been committed in qualifying as democratic and in proposing to our organization the slogan of "the Republic" (cf. the article of Comrade Logan on Italy). We are completely in favour of the slogan "Down with the monarchy" in Italy, in Greece, and for all the countries where this institution, inherited from feudalism exists. We are no less in favour of the slogan of the Assembly of a single chamber which is against the Senate the House of Lords, etc. But between these slogans and the "Republic" there is a deep moat which we cannot cross. In one case we endeavour to direct the masses against institutions of a profoundly reactionary character, which limit, even under the capitalist regime, the possibility of democratic expression of the masses, and which, in moments of crisis become quasi-automatically the rallying point for the forces of the counter-revolution.

Since we here speak of the resolution of our English comrades let us note that it defines the new Labour government as "Kerenkyism". The Bonapartism, that they ignored, has found the means to incarnate itself into their document under a very special name. But we do not think that the present Attlee government is bonapartist à la Kerenky. Without questioning the coming to power of this government, that is to say, of a formation which rests on the working class but wishes to leave intact The City and British capitalism, at the moment when the latter has only gained a victory at the price of its very substance, will accelerate the downfall of British imperialism. The oldest of "democracies", as a result of the last elections, possesses a dead end. But the term "Kerenkyism" is not appropriate, for it already presupposes the accomplishment of the passage from democracy to this form of bonapartism. On the contrary, it is in the future, probably from among this passage will occur and the English workers and their organizers will then have to face an important crisis. In England, etc., the only features of bonapartism. For example the Labour government under the pressure of capital and encouraged by the administrative apparatus, which has not yet been formed, is inclined to play a role of centre above the parties, while a section of the Labour parliamentary group endeavours to continue representing in a reformist and parliamentary fashion the worker masses who have elected them.

Bonapartism, as will probably be the case in all Europe, expressed itself through a series of epileptic convulsions, of great shifts to the right and to the left. The same phenomenon likewise occurred in France after 1934: 1934, violent reactionary attack; 1936, general strike and occupation of the factories; 1940, coup d'état of Bordeaux; 1944, uprising against the Petain regime. These great leaps follow one another, accompanied by deepening divisions of the nation along with a political clarification on both sides in regard to the decisive struggle.

The use of democratic slogans—combined with transitional slogans—is justified more precisely because the possibilities of a democratic regime are non-existent, because present-day bonapartism is completely unstable and the struggle for the most extreme democratic demands can only end in its existence. But again it is necessary for us to understand one another on the democratic slogans which we adopt and not to define slogans as democratic when they are not.

been in no wise out of theoretical pedantry. Names are used to distinguish between concepts; concepts, in politics, in turn serve to distinguish among real forces. The smothering of Fascism would leave no room for Bonapartism, and, it is to be hoped, would mean the direct introduction to the social revolution.

Only—the proletariat is not armed for the revolution. The reciprocal relations between Social Democracy and the Bonapartist government on the one hand, and between Bonapartism and Fascism on the other—while they do not decide the fundamental questions—distinguish by what roads and in what tempo the struggle between the proletariat and the Fascist counter-revolution will be prepared.

One must no more confuse the bonapartism "of the right" with fascism than the bonapartism "of the left" with democracy. We have seen that bonapartism takes very different forms according to the conditions in which the two mortally opposed camps find themselves; we maintain also that the existence of democratic liberties, even of very great democratic liberties, does not suffice to make a regime democratic. The bonapartists à la Kerenky, Popular Front . . . are even notorious for their flood of democratic liberty up to the point where capitalist society thereby even risks its balance and is in danger of capazing. Democratic liberties do not proceed, as in a regime which one can correctly define as democratic, from the existence of a margin for reforms within capitalism, but on the contrary, from a situation of acute crisis, the result of the absence of all margin for reforms.

Precisely because we do not generally have in Europe at the present time democratic regimes, because there is literally no place for them and because the extension of democratic liberties can only undermine the bonapartist regimes, we put forward the most extreme democratic demands, in connection of course with the transitional demands which prepare the duality of power.

The resolution of the recent national conference of the English section of the Fourth International ignores, alas, in

practically equal numbers, and a perspective of new elections in nine months. They will all manoeuvre with each other. The Assembly and also the ministry in which the representatives will find each other again, will have to submit to the arbitration and will of General de Gaulle. All that resembles parliamentarism and democracy is going to be discredited in quarrels and in impotence; but there will always be a general to restore order!

At least for the most immediate future, the French government will be composed of representatives of the three parties. The Socialist party which cannot play the role of bonapartist is in the most difficult position. It evidently does not wish to form a government with the Stalinists alone (the latter strongly indicated this possibility the day after the elections, because they were sure that the socialists would not take it into consideration and Stalinists kept insisting strongly and will do nothing to realize it). The Socialist party can no more, under the present conditions form a ministry with the MRP, leaving the Stalinists in the opposition.

As for de Gaulle, it is evidently all to his advantage to make the ministry a nest of intrigues and disputes by introducing into it members of the three parties, which will contribute to discredit them and to reinforce his personal position. It is quite possible, as the Stalinists do not wish to conduct too "revolutionary" a policy and the MRP not being able to adopt too soon an openly reactionary attitude, that the crisis will not open in the very first days, but it is not the desire of the politicians—in or out of uniform—which regulates the development of events. The class conflicts will not fall at an early date to place the political problems on a razor's edge.

The importance of a correct definition of the European governments goes beyond the domain of theory. What Trotsky wrote in 1932 on the subject of bonapartism in Germany preserves all its value mutatis mutandis for the bonapartism of 1945:

"It we have insistently demanded that a disjunction be made between Fascism and Bonapartism, it has



tion. In the other case, we would advance the slogan which, if we made the mistake of adopting it, would make us the promoters of a completely empty state form. "The Republic"? This slogan does not concern a partial capture but puts to the fore the very question of the state. What republic can we reconquer in the current epoch? The Republic of Workers and Peasants Soviets alone, and not a bourgeois republic. The slogan of "the Republic" is absolutely silent on this point and can only, by its confusion, favour the class enemy.

It is evident that, despite our rejection of this slogan, we will not be neutral in the plebiscites which may be held in Europe on the question of the monarchy. We shall call the workers and peasants to vote against the monarchy, but clearly specifying that we do not have the choice as to the other term of the alternative, that we are voting against the monarchy but not in favour of the bourgeois republic.

It is almost twenty years ago that the Italian Social Democrats in one of their fits of theoretical audacity inscribed in their programme of the struggle against fascism the slogan of "the democratic republic of the toilers and, for a certain period, the Italian Communist Party, in one of its zig-zags to the right, had an equivocal position towards this slogan. When in 1930, a section of the leadership of the Italian CP broke with Stalinism, turned toward the Left opposition, this slogan was the object of a clarification on the exchange of views which took place at that time. The old opposition, that of the Bordighists, had an absolutely negative attitude on democratic slogans; it was especially necessary that the new Italian comrades should not take for their part a position which could be exploited by the Bordighists and which would have been fatal in the struggle against fascism. In a letter to the comrades in the NOI Trotsky expressed himself as follows on the slogan of the Italian Social Democrats:

"While advancing one or another set of democratic slogans we must irremediably fight against all forms

of democratic charlatanism. Such low-grade charlatanism is represented by the slogan of the Italian Social Democracy: "The Democratic Republic of the Toilers". The "Toilers republic" can be only the class state of the proletariat. The "Democratic Republic" is only a masked rule of the bourgeoisie. The combination of the two is a naive petty bourgeois illustration of the Social Democratic rank and file (workers, peasants) and deliberate treachery on the part of the Social Democratic leaders (all these Turatis, Modiglianis and their ilk). Let me once again remark in passing that I was and remain opposed to the formula of a "National Assembly on the basis of workers-peasants committees", precisely because this formula approaches the Social Democratic slogan of the "Democratic Toilers Republic" and, consequently, can render extremely difficult for us the struggle against the Social Democrats." May 14, 1930.

The slogan of "the Republic" as such is also as erroneous and pernicious as that of "The Democratic Republic of the Toilers", although, we are persuaded, few comrades in our international organization would have at present an inclination to mix in the above fashion the forms of bourgeois power with the forms of proletarian power. But it is not the thoughts and intentions of this or that comrade which are under discussion but the slogan of "the Republic" itself. This is not a democratic slogan but, to employ the strong expression of Trotsky, democratic charlatanism.

The theoretical principles and positions which are a part of the accumulated capital of the Bolshevik-Leninists gained in the course of their years of struggle against Stalinism, reformism and all the varieties of centrism in this workers' movement, and which we have called to mind in this article, obviously far from exhaust the questions which arise on the European situation. But it is indispensable to take them as a point of departure to permit our militants and our sections to orient themselves correctly despite the enormous confusion which rages and which, unhappily, will not fail to rage for the

duration of a complete period, up to the point when the events and ourselves, in assisting events by a correct

policy, consciously array an important fraction of the working class under the flag of the Fourth International.

## THE JEWISH QUESTION

By LEON TROTSKY

*I publish herewith four statements by Trotsky during the last years of his life expressing his views on the Jewish question. The first is in the form of an interview given to correspondents of the Jewish press upon his arrival in Mexico. The second is an excerpt from an article in "Thermidor and Anti-Semitism" written in 1937. The third is a letter which Trotsky addressed to the Jews in 1938. The fourth is an excerpt from a letter which Trotsky addressed to the Jews in 1938, in which he attacked the anti-Semitism and fascism in the United States, calling upon them to support the revolutionary struggle of the Fourth International as the only road to their salvation. The fourth statement is from the archives of Leon Trotsky.*

### I.

Before trying to answer your questions I ought to warn you that unfortunately I have not had the opportunity to learn the Jewish language, which moreover has been developed only since I became an adult. I have not had, and I do not have the possibility of following the Jewish press, which prevents me from giving a precise opinion on the different aspects of so important and tragic a problem. I cannot therefore claim any special authority in replying to your questions. Nevertheless I am going to try and say what I think about it.

During my youth I rather leaned toward the prognosis that the Jews of different countries would be assimilated and that the Jewish question would thus disappear in a quasi-automatic fashion. The historical development of the last quarter of a century has not confirmed this perspective. Decaying capitalism has everywhere swung over to an exacerbated nationalism, one part of which is anti-semitism. The Jewish question has loomed largest in the most highly developed capitalist country of Europe, in Germany.

On the other hand the Jews in differ-

ent countries have created their press and developed the Yiddish language as an instrument adapted to modern culture. One must therefore reckon with the fact that the Jewish nation will maintain itself for an entire epoch to come. Now the nation cannot normally exist without a common territory. Zionism springs from this very idea. But the facts of every passing day demonstrate to us that Zionism is incapable of resolving the Jewish question. The conflict between the Jews and Arabs in Palestine acquires a more and more tragic and more and more menacing character. I do not at all believe that the Jewish question can be resolved within the framework of existing capitalism and under the control of British imperialism.

And how, you ask me, can socialism solve this question? On this point I can but offer hypotheses. Once socialism has become master of our planet or at least of its most important sections, it will have unimaginable resources in all domains. Human history has witnessed the epoch of great migrations on the basis of barbarism. Socialism will open the possibility of great migrations on the basis of the most developed technique and culture. It goes without saying that what is here involved is not compulsory displacements, that is, the creation of new ghettos for certain nationalities, but displacements freely consented to, or rather demanded by certain nationalities. The dispersed Jews who would want to be reassembled in the same community will find a sufficiently extensive and rich spot under the sun. The same possibility will be opened for the Arabs, as for all other scattered nations. National topography will become a part of the planned economy. This is the grand historical perspective that I envisage. To work for international socialism means also to work



1. You remind me that I once criticized the slogan "Republican Assembly on the Basis of Workers' and Peasants' Committees," a slogan formerly put forward by the Italian Communist Party. You tell me that this slogan had an entirely episodic value and that at present it has been abandoned. I would like nevertheless to tell you why I consider it to be erroneous or at least ambiguous as a political slogan. "Republican Assembly" constitutes quite obviously an institution of the bourgeois state. What, however, are the "Workers' and Peasants' Committees"? It is obvious that they are some sort of equivalent of the workers' and peasants' soviets. Then that's what should be said. For, class organs of the workers and poor peasants, whether you give them the name of soviets or committees, always constitute organizations of struggle against the bourgeois state, then become organs of insurrection, to be transformed finally, after the victory, into organs of the proletarian dictatorship. How, under these conditions, can a Republican Assembly—supreme organ of the bourgeois state—have as its "basis" organs of the proletarian state?

I should like to recall to you that in 1917, before October, Zinoviev and Kamenev, when they came out against an insurrection, advocated waiting for the Constituent Assembly to meet in order to create a "combined state" by means of a fusion between the Constituent Assembly and the workers' and peasants' soviets. In 1919 we saw Hilferding propose to inscribe the soviets in the Weimar constitution.<sup>196</sup> Like Zinoviev and Kamenev, Hilferding called this the "combined state." As a new type of petty bourgeois, he wanted, at the very point of the most abrupt historical turn, to "combine" a third type of state by wedding the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie to the proletarian dictatorship under the sign of the constitution.

The Italian slogan expounded above seems to me to be a variant of this petty-bourgeois tendency. Unless I have understood it in a wrong sense. But in that case it already has the incontestable defect of lending itself to dangerous misunderstandings. I profit by it to correct here a truly unpardonable error committed by the epigones in 1924: they had found in Lenin a passage saying that we might be led to wed the Constituent Assembly with the Soviets. A passage saying the same thing may likewise be discovered in my writings. But what exactly was involved? We were posing the question of an insurrection that would transmit the power to the proletariat in the form of soviets. To the question of what, in that case, we would do with the Constituent Assembly, we replied:

## PROBLEMS OF THE ITALIAN REVOLUTION<sup>196</sup>

May 14, 1930

Dear Comrades:

I have received your letter of May 5. Thanks very much for this study of Italian communism in general and of the various tendencies within it in particular. It filled a great need for me and was most welcome. It would be regrettable if your work were to be left in the form of an ordinary letter. With a few changes or abridgments, the letter could very well find a place in the pages of *La Lutte de classes*.

If you do not mind, I will begin with a general political conclusion: I regard our mutual collaboration in the future as perfectly possible and even extremely desirable. None of us possesses or can possess preestablished political formulas that can serve for all the eventualities of life. But I believe that the *method* with which you seek to determine the necessary political formulas is the right one.

You ask for my opinion concerning a whole series of grave problems. But before attempting a reply on some of them, I should formulate a very important reservation. I have never been closely acquainted with Italian political life, for I have spent only a very short time in Italy, I read Italian very poorly, and during my time in the Communist International I did not have the opportunity to dig deeper into an examination of Italian affairs.

You should know this fairly well yourselves, for how explain otherwise the fact that you undertook so detailed a work to bring me up to date on the pending questions?

It follows from the foregoing that my answers, in most cases, ought to have only an entirely *hypothetical* value. In no case can I consider the reflections that follow as definitive. It is quite possible and even probable that in examining this or that other problem I lose sight of certain highly important concrete circumstances of time and place. I will therefore await your objections and supplementary and corrective information. Inasmuch as our method, as I hope, is common, it is in this way that we shall best arrive at the right solution.



"We shall see; perhaps we shall combine it with the Soviets." We understood by that the case where the Constituent Assembly, convoked under the Soviet regime, would have a Soviet majority. As this was not the case, the Soviets dispersed the Constituent Assembly. In other words: the question was posed of whether it was possible to transform the Constituent Assembly and the Soviets into organs of one and the same class, and not at all of "combining" a bourgeois Constituent Assembly with the proletarian Soviets. In one case (with Lenin), it was a question of the formation of a proletarian state, of its structure, of its technique. In the other (with Zinoviev, Kamenev, Hilferding), it was a question of a constitutional combination of two states of enemy classes with a view to averting a proletarian insurrection that would have taken power.

2. The question we have just examined (the Republican Assembly) is intimately connected with another which you analyze in your letter, namely, what social character will the antifascist revolution acquire? You deny the possibility of a bourgeois revolution in Italy. You are perfectly right. History cannot turn back a considerable number of pages, each of which is equivalent to half a decade. The Central Committee of the Italian Communist Party already tried once to duck the question by proclaiming that the revolution would be neither bourgeois nor proletarian, but "popular." It is a simple repetition of what the Russian Populists said at the beginning of this century when they were asked what character the revolution against czarism would acquire. And it is still this same answer that the Communist International gives today with respect to China and India. It is quite simply a pseudorevolutionary variant of the social democratic theory of Otto Bauer and others, according to which the state can raise itself above the classes, that is, be neither bourgeois nor proletarian. This theory is as pernicious for the proletariat as for the revolution. In China it transformed the proletariat into cannon fodder of the bourgeois counterrevolution.

Every great revolution proves to be *popular* in the sense that it draws into its wake the entire people. Both the Great French Revolution and the October Revolution were wholly popular. Nevertheless, the first was bourgeois because it instituted individual property, whereas the second was proletarian because it abolished individual property. Only a few hopelessly belated petty-bourgeois revolutionists can still dream of a revolution that would be neither bourgeois nor proletarian, but "popular" (that is, petty-bourgeois).

Now, in the imperialist period, the petty bourgeoisie is incapable not only of leading a revolution, but even of playing an independent role in it. In this way the formula of a "democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry" henceforth constitutes a simple screen for a petty-bourgeois conception of a *transitional* revolution and a *transitional* state, that is, of a revolution and a state that cannot take place in Italy or even in backward India. A revolutionist who has not taken a clear, point-blank position on the question of a democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry is doomed to fall into error after error. As to the problem of the antifascist revolution, the Italian question, more than any other, is intimately linked to the fundamental problems of world communism, that is, of the so-called theory of permanent revolution.<sup>198</sup>

3. Following from what has been said comes the question of the "transitional" period in Italy. At the very outset it is necessary to establish very clearly: transition from what to what? A period of transition from the bourgeois (or "popular") revolution to the proletarian revolution—that is one thing. A period of transition from the fascist dictatorship to the proletarian dictatorship—that is something else. If the first conception is envisaged, the question of the bourgeois revolution is posed in the first place, and it is then a question of establishing the role of the proletariat in it. Only after that will the question of the transitional period toward a proletarian revolution be posed. If the second conception is envisaged, the question is then posed of a series of battles, disturbances, changing situations, abrupt turns, constituting in their entirety the different stages of the proletarian revolution. These stages may be many. But in no case can they contain within them a bourgeois revolution or its mysterious hybrid, the "popular" revolution.

Does this mean that Italy cannot, for a certain time, again become a parliamentary state or become a "democratic republic"? I consider—in perfect agreement with you, I think—that this eventuality is not excluded. But then it will not be the fruit of a bourgeois revolution, but the abortion of an insufficiently matured and premature proletarian revolution. In the event of a profound revolutionary crisis and mass battles in the course of which the proletarian vanguard will not have been in a position to take power, it may be that the bourgeoisie will restore its rule on "democratic" bases. Can it be said, for example, that the present German republic is a conquest of the



bourgeois revolution? Such an assertion would be absurd. What took place in Germany in 1918-19 was a proletarian revolution, which for lack of leadership was deceived, betrayed, and crushed. But the bourgeois counterrevolution nevertheless was forced to adapt itself to the circumstances resulting from this crushing of the proletarian revolution and to assume the form of a parliamentary "democratic" republic. Is the same—or about the same—eventuality excluded for Italy? No, it is not excluded. The enthronement of fascism resulted from the fact that the 1920 proletarian revolution was not carried through to its completion. Only a new proletarian revolution can overturn fascism. If it should not be fated to triumph this time either (owing to the weakness of the Communist Party, maneuvers and betrayals of the social democrats, the Freemasons, the Catholics), the "transitional" state that the bourgeois counterrevolution would then be compelled to set up on the ruins of the fascist form of its rule could be nothing else than a parliamentary and democratic state.

What in the long run is the aim of the Antifascist Concentration? Foreseeing the fall of the fascist state by an uprising of the proletariat and in general of all the oppressed masses, the Concentration is preparing to arrest this movement, to paralyze it, and to thwart it in order to pass off the victory of the *renovated bourgeois revolution as a supposed victory of a democratic bourgeois revolution*. If this dialectic of the living social forces is lost sight of for a single moment, the risk is run of getting inextricably entangled and of swerving off the right road. I believe there cannot be the slightest misunderstanding between us on this score.

4. But does this mean that we communists reject in advance all democratic slogans, all transitional or preparatory slogans, limiting ourselves strictly to the *proletarian dictatorship*? That would be a display of sterile, doctrinaire sectarianism. We do not believe for one moment that a single revolutionary leap suffices to cross what separates the fascist regime from the proletarian dictatorship. In no way do we deny a transitional period with its transitional demands, including democratic demands. But it is precisely with the aid of these transitional slogans, which are always the starting point on the road to the proletarian dictatorship, that the communist vanguard will have to win the whole working class and that the latter will have to unite around itself all the oppressed masses of the nation. And I do not even exclude the possibility of a constituent assembly which, in certain circumstances, could be im-

posed by the course of events or, more precisely, by the process of the revolutionary awakening of the oppressed masses. To be sure, on the broad historical scale, that is, from the perspective of a whole number of years, the fate of Italy is undoubtedly reduced to the following alternative: *fascism or communism*. But to claim that this alternative has already penetrated the consciousness of the oppressed classes of the nation is to engage in wishful thinking and to consider as solved the colossal task that still fully confronts the weak Communist Party. If the revolutionary crisis were to break out, for example, in the course of the next months (under the influence of the economic crisis, on the one hand, and under the revolutionary influence coming from Spain, 199 on the other), the masses of toilers, workers as well as peasants, would certainly follow up their economic demands with democratic slogans (such as freedom of assembly, of press, of trade-union organization, democratic representation in parliament and in the municipalities). Does this mean that the Communist Party should reject these demands? On the contrary. It will have to invest them with the most audacious and resolute character possible. For the proletarian dictatorship cannot be imposed upon the popular masses. It can be realized only by carrying on a battle—a battle in full—for all the transitional demands, requirements, and needs of the masses, and at the head of the masses.

It should be recalled here that Bolshevism by no means came to power under the abstract slogan of the dictatorship of the proletariat. We fought for the Constituent Assembly much more boldly than all the other parties. We said to the peasants: "You demand equal distribution of the land? Our agrarian program goes much further. But no one except us will assist you in achieving equal use of the land. For this you must support the workers." In regard to the war we said to the popular masses: "Our communist task is to war against all oppressors. But you are not ready to go so far. You are striving to escape from the imperialist war. No one but the Bolsheviks will help you achieve this." I am not dealing with the question of what exactly the central slogans of the transitional period in Italy should be right now, in the year 1930. To outline them, and to effect correct and timely changes, it is necessary to be far better acquainted with Italy's internal life and in much closer contact with its toiling masses than it is possible for me to be. For, in addition to a correct method, it is also necessary to *listen* to the masses. I want simply to indicate the general



place of transitional demands in the struggle of communism against fascism and, in general, against bourgeois society.

5. However, while advancing this or that democratic slogan, we must fight irreconcilably against all forms of democratic charlatanism. The "Democratic Republic of the Workers," slogan of the Italian social democracy, is an example of this petty charlatanism. A republic of the workers can only be a proletarian class state. The democratic republic is only a masked form of the bourgeois state. The combination of the two is only a petty-bourgeois illusion of the social democratic rank and file (workers, peasants) and an impudent falsehood of the social democratic leaders (all the Turatis, Modiglianis,<sup>200</sup> and their ilk). Let me once again remark in passing that I was and remain opposed to the slogan of a "Republican Assembly on the Basis of Workers' and Peasants' Committees" precisely because this formula approaches the social democratic slogan of the "Democratic Republic of the Workers" and, consequently, can make the struggle against the social democracy extremely difficult.

6. The assertion made by the official leadership of the Communist Party that the social democracy allegedly no longer exists politically in Italy is nothing but a consoling theory of bureaucratic optimists who wish to see ready-made solutions where there are still great tasks ahead. *Fascism has not liquidated the social democracy but has, on the contrary, preserved it.* In the eyes of the masses, the social democrats do not bear the responsibility for the regime, whose victims they are in part. This wins them new sympathy and strengthens the old. And a moment will come when the social democracy will coin political currency from the blood of Matteotti<sup>201</sup> just as ancient Rome did from the blood of Christ. It is therefore not excluded that in the initial period of the revolutionary crisis, the leadership may be concentrated chiefly in the hands of the social democracy. If large numbers of the masses are immediately drawn into the movement and if the Communist Party conducts a correct policy, it may well be that in a short period of time the social democracy will be reduced to zero. But that would be a task to accomplish, not yet an accomplishment. It is impossible to leap over this problem; it must be solved.

Let me recall at this point that Zinoviev, and later the Manuilskys and Kausinens, announced on two or three occasions that the German social democracy also essentially no longer existed. In 1925 the Comintern, in its declaration to the French party written by the light hand of Lozovsky,

likewise decreed that the French Socialist Party had definitely left the scene. The Left Opposition always spoke up energetically against this flimsy judgment. Only outright fools or traitors would want to instill the idea in the proletarian vanguard of Italy that the Italian social democracy can no longer play the role that the German social democracy did in the revolution of 1918.

It may be objected that the social democracy cannot succeed again in betraying the Italian proletariat as it did back in 1920. This is an illusion and a self-deception! The proletariat has been deceived too many times in the course of its history, first by liberalism and then by the social democracy.

What is more, we cannot forget that since 1920 ten full years have elapsed, and since the advent of fascism eight years. The children who were ten and twelve years old in 1920-22, and who have witnessed the activities of the fascists, today comprise the new generation of workers and peasants who will fight heroically against fascism, but who lack political experience. The communists will come into contact with the full mass movement only during the revolution itself and, under the most favorable circumstances, will require months before they can expose and demolish the social democracy which, I repeat, fascism has not liquidated but on the contrary has preserved.

To conclude, a few words on an important question of fact, about which there cannot be two different opinions in our circle. Should or can Left Oppositionists deliberately resign from the party? There cannot be any question about this. Except for rare exceptions, and they were mistakes, none of us ever did that. But I do not have a clear idea of what is required of an Italian comrade to hold on to this or that post inside the party in the present circumstances. I cannot say anything concrete on this point, except that not one of us can allow a comrade to accommodate to a false or equivocal political position before the party or the masses in order to avoid expulsion.

I shake your hand.

Yours,

Leon Trotsky

(The Spanish Revolution (1931-39), L. Trotsky Pathfinder Press, New York, 1973.)

*Part I: From Monarchy to Republic*

67

sure the convocation of a democratic constituent Cortes; and so that this Cortes can give the land to the peasants, and do many other things, workers', soldiers', and peasants' soviets must be created to fortify the positions of the toiling masses.

## 6

### THE REVOLUTION IN SPAIN

January 24, 1931

#### 1. *Old Spain*

The capitalist chain is again threatening to break at its weakest link; Spain is next in order. The revolutionary movement is developing in that country with such vigor that world reaction is deprived in advance of the hope for a speedy restoration of order on the Iberian Peninsula.

Spain is unmistakably among the most backward countries of Europe. But its backwardness has a singular character, invested by the great historic past of the country. While the Russia of the czars always lagged far behind its western neighbors and advanced slowly under their pressure, Spain knew periods of great bloom, of superiority over the rest of Europe and of domination over South America. The mighty development of domestic and world commerce increasingly overcame the effect of the feudal dismemberment of the provinces and the particularism of the national regions of the country. The growth of the power and importance of the Spanish monarchy in those centuries was inextricably bound up with the centralizing role of mercantile capital and with the gradual formation of the "Spanish nation."

The discovery of America, which at first enriched and strengthened Spain, subsequently worked against it. The great routes of commerce were diverted from the Iberian Peninsula. Holland, which had grown rich, broke away from Spain. Following Holland, England rose to great heights over Europe for a long time. By the beginning of the second half

---

Published in pamphlet form by the Communist League of America in March 1931, in a translation from the Russian by Morris Lewitt.



primitive urban centers, whereas the Spanish monarchy took shape under the conditions of the *decline* of the country and the *decay* of the ruling classes. If European absolutism generally could rise only thanks to a struggle by the strengthened cities against the old privileged estates, then the Spanish monarchy, like Russian czarism, drew its relative strength from the impotence of the old estates and the cities. This accounts for its obvious resemblance to Asiatic despotism.

The predominance of the centrifugal tendencies over the centripetal ones in the economy as well as in politics undermined the foundation of Spanish parliamentarism. The government's pressure on the electorate was decisive: throughout the last century, elections unflinchingly gave the government a majority. Because the Cortes found itself dependent upon the successive ministries, the ministries themselves naturally sank into dependence upon the monarchy. Madrid held the elections but the king held the power.

The monarchy was doubly necessary to the disunited and decentralized ruling classes, which were incapable of governing the country in their own name. And this monarchy, reflecting the weakness of the whole state, was — between two upheavals — strong enough to impose its will on the country. In short, the state system in Spain can be called "degenerated absolutism, limited by periodic military coups." The figure of Alfonso XIII expresses the system very well, from the points of view of its degeneracy and absolutist tendencies and of its fear of coups. The king's maneuvering, his betrayals, his treason, and his victory over the temporary combinations hostile to him are not at all rooted in the character of Alfonso XIII himself but in the character of the whole governmental system; under new circumstances, Alfonso XIII only repeats the inglorious history of his great-grandfather, Ferdinand VII.

Alongside the monarchy, and in alliance with it, the clergy represents another centralized force. Catholicism, to this day, remains a state religion; the clergy plays a big role in the life of the country, being the firmest axis of reaction. The state spends many tens of millions of pesetas annually to support the church.<sup>14</sup>

The religious orders are extremely numerous; they possess great wealth and still greater influence. The number of monks and nuns is close to 70,000, equaling the number of high

of the sixteenth century, Spain had already begun to decline. This decline assumed an official character, so to speak, with the destruction of the Great Armada (1588). The condition that Marx called "inglorious and slow decay" settled down upon feudal-bourgeois Spain.

The old and new ruling classes — the landed nobility and the Catholic clergy with their monarchy, the bourgeois classes with their intelligentsia — stubbornly attempted to preserve the old pretensions but, alas, without the old resources. In 1820, the South American colonies finally broke away. With the loss of Cuba in 1898, Spain was almost completely deprived of colonial possessions. The adventures in Morocco only ruined the country, adding fuel to the already deep dissatisfaction of the people.<sup>13</sup>

Spain's retarded economic development inevitably weakened the centralist tendencies inherent in capitalism. The decline of the commercial and industrial life in the cities and of the economic ties between them inevitably led to the lessening of the dependence of individual provinces upon each other. This is the chief reason why bourgeois Spain has not succeeded to this day in eliminating the centrifugal tendencies of its historic provinces. The meagerness of the national resources and the feeling of restlessness all over the country could not help but foster separatist tendencies. Particularism appears in Spain with unusual force, especially compared with neighboring France, where the Great Revolution finally established the bourgeois nation, united and indivisible, over the old feudal provinces.

While not permitting the formation of a new bourgeois society, the economic stagnation also corroded the old ruling classes. The proud noblemen often cloaked their haughtiness in rags. The church plundered the peasantry, but from time to time it was plundered by the monarchy, who, as Marx said, had more in common with Asiatic despotism than with European absolutism.

How could this be? The comparison between czarism and Asiatic despotism, which has been made more than once, seems much more natural geographically and historically. But with regard to Spain, this comparison retains all its force as well. The difference is only that czarism was formed on the basis of the *extremely slow development* of the nobility and of the



school students and more than twice the number of college students. It is no wonder that under these conditions 45 percent of the population can neither read nor write. Most of the illiterates, of course, are concentrated in the countryside.

If the peasantry in the epoch of Charles V (Carlos I) gained little from the might of the Spanish empire, it subsequently suffered the heaviest burden of the empire's decline.<sup>15</sup> For centuries it led a miserable, and in many provinces a famished, existence. Even today more than 70 percent of the population, the peasantry bears on its back the main burden of the state structure. Limited access to land and water, high rents and taxes, antiquated implements, primitive soil-tilling techniques, the requisitions of the church, high prices of industrial products, a surplus rural population, a great number of tramps, paupers, friars—that is the picture of the Spanish village. The condition of the peasantry has for a long time made this group a participant in the numerous uprisings. But these bloody outbursts were not national but local phenomena, dyed in the most varied and often the most reactionary colors. Just as the Spanish revolutions as a whole were small revolutions, so the peasant uprisings assumed the form of small wars. Spain is the classic country of guerrilla warfare.

## 2. *The Spanish army in politics*

Following the war with Napoleon,<sup>16</sup> a new political force was born in Spain—army officers, the younger generation of the ruling classes, inheritors of the ruins of the once-great empire, and in large measure declassed.

In this country of particularism and separatism, the army necessarily assumed great significance as a centralizing force. It became not only a prop of the monarchy, but also a vehicle for the discontent of all sections of the ruling classes. Like the bureaucracy, the officers are recruited from those elements, extremely numerous in Spain, that demand of the state, first of all, their means of livelihood. And as the appetites of the different groups of "cultured" society greatly exceed the state, parliamentary, and other positions available, the dissatisfaction of those left over nurtures the republican camp, which is just as unstable as all the other groupings in Spain. But insofar as a genuine and sharp social indignation is often concealed

under this instability, the republican movement from time to time produces resolute and courageous revolutionary groups to whom the republic appears as a magic slogan of salvation.

The total size of the Spanish army is nearly 170,000 men, of whom over 13,000 are officers. Fifteen thousand marines should be added to this. The weapon of the ruling classes of the country, the commanding staff also drags the ranks of the army into its plots. This creates the conditions for an independent movement of the soldiers. In the past, noncommissioned officers have burst into politics without their officers and against them. In an uprising in 1836, the noncommissioned officers of the Madrid garrison compelled the queen to grant a constitution. In 1866, the artillery sergeants, dissatisfied with the aristocratic orders in the army, rose in insurrection. Nevertheless, the leadership in the past has remained with the officers. The soldiers, who were politically helpless, followed their dissatisfied commanders even though their own dissatisfaction was fostered by other, deeper social forces.

The contradictions in the army usually correspond to the branch of service. The more advanced the type of arms, that is, the more intelligence required on the part of the soldiers and officers, the more susceptible they are, generally speaking, to revolutionary ideas. While the cavalry is usually inclined to the monarchy, the artillery furnishes a big percentage of the republicans. No wonder the air force, the newest branch, appeared on the side of the revolution and brought with it elements of the individualist adventurism of their profession. The final say remains with the infantry.

The history of Spain is the history of continual revolutionary convulsions. Military coups and palace revolutions follow on each other's heels. During the nineteenth century and the first third of the twentieth, political regimes kept changing, and within each one of them ministries changed kaleidoscopically. Not finding sufficiently stable support in any of the propertied classes—even though they all needed it—the Spanish monarchy more than once fell into dependence upon its own army. But the atomization of the provinces put its stamp on the character of the military plots. The petty rivalry of the juntas was only the outward expression of the Spanish revolutions' lack of a leading class. Precisely because of this, the monarchy triumphed over each new revolution. A short time



after the triumph of order, however, the chronic crisis once more broke through. Not one of the many regimes that supplanted each other sank deep enough roots into the soil. All of them quickly wore themselves out struggling with the difficulties growing out of the meagerness of the national income, which was inadequate to sustain the appetites and pretensions of the ruling classes. We saw in particular how shamefully the last military dictatorship ended its days. The stern Primo de Rivera fell even without a new military coup; he was simply deflated, like a tire that runs over a nail.

All the Spanish revolutions were the movements of a minority against another minority: the ruling and semiruling classes impatiently snatching the state pie out of each other's hands.

If by the term "permanent revolution" we are to understand a succession of social revolutions, transferring power into the hands of the most resolute class, which afterwards applies this power for the abolition of all classes, and subsequently the very possibility of new revolutions, we would then have to state that, in spite of the "uninterruptedness" of the Spanish revolutions, there is nothing in them that resembles the *permanent* revolution. They are rather the chronic convulsions expressing the intractable disease of a nation thrown backward.

It is true that the left wing of the bourgeoisie, particularly personified by the young intellectuals, long ago set itself the task of converting Spain into a republic. The Spanish students who, for the same general reasons as the officers, were recruited primarily from the dissatisfied youth, became accustomed to wielding an influence altogether out of proportion to their numbers. The domination of the Catholic reaction fed the flames of the opposition in the universities, investing it with an anticlerical character. Students, however, do not create a regime. In their highest echelons, the Spanish republicans are distinguished by an extremely conservative social program. They see their ideal in present-day reactionary France, calculating that along with the republic they will also acquire wealth. They are not at all disposed, or even able, to take the road of the French Jacobins;<sup>17</sup> their fear of the masses is greater than their hostility to the monarchy.

If the cracks and gaps of bourgeois society are filled in Spain with declassed elements of the ruling classes, the numerous seekers of positions and income, then at the bottom, in the

cracks of the foundation, are the numerous slum proletarians, declassed elements of the toiling classes. Idlers in finery as well as idlers in rags form the quicksands of society. They are all the more dangerous for the revolution the less it finds its genuine base of support and its political leadership.

Six years of Primo de Rivera's dictatorship leveled and compressed all the dissatisfaction and rebelliousness. But the dictatorship bore within it the incurable vice of the Spanish monarchy: strong towards each of the separate classes, it remained impotent in relation to the historic needs of the country. This impotence brought about the wreck of the dictatorship on the submarine reefs of financial and other difficulties before the first revolutionary wave had a chance to reach it. The fall of Primo de Rivera aroused every kind of dissatisfaction and hope. Thus General Berenguer has become the doorman for the revolution.

### 3. *The Spanish proletariat and the new revolution*

In this new revolution, we meet, at first glance, the same elements we found in a series of previous revolutions: the perfidious monarchy; the splinter factions of the conservatives and liberals who despise the king and crawl on their bellies before him; the right-wing republicans, always ready to betray, and the left-wing republicans, always ready for adventure; the conspiratorial officers, of whom some want a republic and others a promotion; the restless students, whose fathers view them with alarm; finally, the striking workers, scattered among the different organizations; and the peasants, reaching out for pitchforks and even for guns.

It would, however, be a grave error to assume that the present crisis is unfolding according to and in the image of all those that preceded it. The last decades, particularly the years of the world war, produced important changes in the economy and social structure of the country. Of course, Spain still remains at the tail end of Europe. But the country has experienced its own industrial development, in both extractive and light industry. During the war, coal mining, textiles, the construction of hydroelectric stations, etc., were greatly advanced. Industrial centers and regions sprang up all over the country. This created a new relationship of forces and opened up new perspectives.



The successes of industrialization did not at all mitigate the internal contradictions. On the contrary, the circumstance under which the industry of Spain, a neutral country, flourished under the golden rain of the war was transformed into a source of new difficulties at the end of the war when the increased foreign demand disappeared. Not only did the foreign markets disappear — Spain's share in world commerce is now even smaller than it was prior to the war (1.1 percent as against 1.2 percent) — but the dictatorship was compelled, with the aid of the highest tariff walls in Europe, to defend its domestic market from the influx of foreign commodities. The high tariff led to high prices, which diminished the already low purchasing power of the people. That is why industry after the war did not rise out of its lethargy, which is expressed by chronic unemployment on the one hand, and the sharp outbursts of the class struggle on the other.

Now even less than in the nineteenth century can the Spanish bourgeoisie lay claim to that historic role which the British and French bourgeoisies once played. Appearing too late, dependent on foreign capital, the big industrial bourgeoisie of Spain, which has dug like a leech into the body of the people, is incapable of coming forward as the leader of the "nation" against the old estates, even for a brief period. The magnates of Spanish industry face the people hostilely, forming a most reactionary bloc of bankers, industrialists, large landowners, the monarchy, and its generals and officials, all devouring each other in internal antagonisms. It is sufficient to state that the most important supporters of the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera were the Catalan manufacturers.

But industrial development raised the proletariat to its feet and strengthened it. Out of a population of twenty-three million — which would be considerably greater if not for emigration — there are nearly one and a half million industrial, commercial, and transportation workers. To them should be added about an equal number of agricultural workers. Social life in Spain was condemned to revolve in a vicious circle so long as there was no class capable of taking the solution of the revolutionary problem into its own hands. The appearance of the Spanish proletariat on the historic arena radically changes the situation and opens up new prospects. In order to grasp this properly, it must first be understood that the establishment

of the economic dominance of the big bourgeoisie and the growth of the proletariat's political significance definitely prevented the petty bourgeoisie from occupying a leading position in the political life of the country. The question of whether the present revolutionary convulsions can produce a genuine revolution, capable of reconstructing the very basis of national life, is consequently reduced to whether the Spanish proletariat is capable of taking the leadership of the national life into its hands. There is no other claimant to this role in the Spanish nation. Moreover, the historic experience of Russia succeeded in showing with sufficient clarity the specific gravity of the proletariat, united by big industry in a country with a backward agriculture and enmeshed in a net of semifeudal relations.

The Spanish workers, it is true, already took a militant part in the revolutions of the nineteenth century, but always on the leash of the bourgeoisie, always in the second line, as a subsidiary force. The independent revolutionary role of the workers was reinforced in the first quarter of the twentieth century. The 1909 uprising in Barcelona showed what power was pent up in the young proletariat of Catalonia.<sup>18</sup> Numerous strikes that developed into direct uprisings broke out in other parts of the country too. In 1912, a strike of the railroad workers took place. The industrial regions became fields of valiant proletarian struggles. The Spanish workers revealed a complete freedom from routine, an ability to respond quickly to events and to mobilize their ranks boldly on the offensive.

The first postwar years, or more correctly, the first years after the Russian Revolution (1917-1920), were years of great battles for the Spanish proletariat. The year 1917 witnessed a revolutionary general strike. Its defeat, and the defeat of a number of subsequent movements, prepared the way for the Primo de Rivera dictatorship. When the collapse of the latter once more posed in all its magnitude the question of the further destiny of the Spanish people, when the cowardly search for old cliques and the impotent lamentations of the petty-bourgeois radicals showed clearly that salvation cannot be expected from this source, the workers, by a series of courageous strikes, cried out to the people: *We are here!*

The "left" European bourgeois journalists and, trailing after them, the Social Democrats, with their scientific pretensions,



love to philosophize on the theme that Spain is simply going to reproduce the Great French Revolution, after a delay of almost one hundred and fifty years. To expound revolution to these people is equivalent to arguing with a blind man about colors. With all its backwardness, Spain has passed far beyond France of the eighteenth century. Big industrial enterprises, 10,000 miles of railway, 30,000 miles of telegraph, represent a more important factor for the revolution than historical reminiscences.

Endeavoring to take a step forward, the well-known English weekly *The Economist* says with regard to the Spanish events: "We have the influence of Paris of 1848 and 1871 rather than the influence of Moscow of 1917." But Paris of 1871 is a step from 1848 toward 1917. The counterposition is an empty one.

The conclusion L. Tarquin reached last year in *La Lutte de classes* was infinitely more serious and profound: "The proletariat (of Spain), supported by the peasant masses, is the only force capable of seizing power." This perspective is laid out as follows: "The revolution must bring about the dictatorship of the proletariat which would carry out the bourgeois revolution and would courageously open the road to socialist reconstruction." This is the way—the only way—the question can now be posed.

#### 4. The program of the revolution

The republic is now the official slogan of the struggle. The development of the revolution, however, will drive not only the conservatives and liberals but also the republican sections of the ruling classes to the banner of the monarchy.

During the revolutionary events of 1854, Cánovas del Castillo wrote: "We are striving for the preservation of the throne, but without a camarilla which will disgrace it." Now this great idea is developed by Señor Romanones and others.<sup>20</sup> As though a monarchy is even possible without camarillas, especially in Spain!

A combination of circumstances is possible, to be sure, in which the possessing classes are compelled to sacrifice the monarchy in order to save themselves (for example: Germany!). It is quite likely, however, that the Madrid monarchy, even with two black eyes, will survive until the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The slogan of the republic, of course, is also the workers' slogan. But for them establishing a republic is not merely a matter of replacing the king with a president, but also of thoroughly purging the feudal refuse from the whole of society. Here the first consideration is the agrarian question.

The relationships in the Spanish countryside present a picture of semifeudal exploitation. The poverty of the peasants, particularly in Andalusia and Casille, the oppression by the landowners, authorities, and village chiefs have already more than once driven the agricultural workers and the peasant poor to the road of open mutiny. Does this mean, however, that even during a revolution bourgeois relations can be purged of feudalism? No. It only means that under the current conditions in Spain, capitalism must use feudal means to exploit the peasantry. To aim the weapon of the revolution against the remnants of the Spanish Middle Ages means to aim it against the very roots of bourgeois rule.

In order to break the peasantry away from localism and reactionary influences, the proletariat needs a clear revolutionary democratic program. The yearning for land and water, the bondage caused by the high rents, acutely pose the question of confiscation of privately owned land for the benefit of the poor peasants. The burden of state finances, the unbearable government debt, bureaucratic pillage, and the African adventures pose the need for a cheap government, which can be achieved not by the owners of large estates, not by bankers and industrialists, not by the liberal nobility, but only by the toilers themselves.

The domination of the clergy and the wealth of the church put forward the democratic problem: to separate church and state and to disarm the church, transferring its wealth to the people. Even the most superstitious sections of the peasantry will support these decisive measures when they are convinced that the budgetary sums that have up to now gone to the church, as well as the wealth of the church itself, will, as a result of secularization, go not to the pockets of the freethinking liberals but to the cultivation of the exhausted peasant holdings.

The separatist tendencies present the revolution with the democratic task of national self-determination. These tendencies were accentuated, to all appearances, during the period of the dic-

tatorship. But while the "separatism" of the Catalan bourgeoisie is only a pawn in its play with the Madrid government against the Catalan and Spanish people, the separatism of the workers and peasants is only the shell of their social rebellion. One must distinguish very rigidly between these two forms of separatism. Precisely, however, in order to draw the line between the nationally oppressed workers and peasants and their bourgeoisie, the proletarian vanguard must take the boldest and most sincere position on the question of national self-determination. The workers will fully and completely defend the *right* of the Catalans and Basques to organize their state life independently in the event that the majority of these nationalities express themselves for complete separation. But this does not, of course, mean that the advanced workers will push the Catalans and Basques on the road of secession. On the contrary, the economic unity of the country with *extensive autonomy of national districts*, would represent great advantages for the workers and peasants from the viewpoint of economy and culture.

The monarchy's attempt to ward off the further development of the revolution with the aid of a new military dictatorship is not at all out of the question. But what is out of the question is the serious and long-term success of such an attempt. The lesson of Primo de Rivera is still too fresh. The chains of the new dictatorship would have to be wound over the sores that have not yet healed from the chains of the old one. According to the newspaper dispatches, the king would like to try; he looks about anxiously for a suitable candidate but finds no volunteers. One thing is clear: the breakdown of a new military dictatorship would be very costly to the monarchy and its distinguished representative, and the revolution would acquire a mighty impulsion. "Place your bets, gentlemen!" the workers can say to the ruling classes.

Can the Spanish revolution be expected to skip the parliamentary stage? Theoretically, this is not excluded. It is conceivable that the revolutionary movement will, in a comparatively short time, attain such strength that it will leave the ruling classes neither the time nor the place for parliamentarism. Nevertheless, such a perspective is rather improbable. The Spanish proletariat, in spite of its combativeness, still recognizes no revolutionary party as its own, and has no ex-

perience with soviet organization. And besides this, there is no unity among the sparse communist ranks. There is no clear program of action that everyone accepts. Nevertheless, the question of the Cortes is already on the order of the day. Under these conditions, it must be assumed that the revolution will have to pass through a parliamentary stage.

This does not at all exclude the tactic of a boycott of Berenguer's fictitious Cortes, just as the Russian workers successfully boycotted Bulygin's Duma in 1905 and brought about its collapse.<sup>21</sup> The specific tactical question of the boycott has to be decided on the basis of the relation of forces at a given stage of the revolution.

But even while boycotting Berenguer's Cortes, the advanced workers would have to counterpose to it the slogan of a *revolutionary constituent Cortes*. We must relentlessly disclose the fraudulence of the slogan of the *constituent Cortes* in the mouth of the "left" bourgeoisie, which, in reality, wants a *constituent Cortes* by the good graces of the king and Berenguer, for the purpose of haggling with the old ruling and privileged cliques. A genuine constituent assembly can be convened only by a revolutionary government, as a result of a victorious insurrection of the workers, soldiers, and peasants.

We can and must counterpose the revolutionary Cortes to the conciliatorist Cortes; but, to our mind, it would be incorrect *at the present stage* to give up the slogan of the revolutionary Cortes. To counterpose the slogan of the dictatorship of the proletariat to the problems and slogans of revolutionary democracy (for a republic, for an agrarian revolution, for the separation of church and state, the confiscation of church properties, national self-determination, a revolutionary constituent assembly) would be the most sterile and miserable doctrinairism. Before the masses can seize power, they must unite around the leading proletarian party. The struggle for democratic representation in the Cortes, at one or another stage of the revolution, can immeasurably facilitate the solution of this problem.

The slogan of *arming the workers and peasants* (the creation of a workers' and peasants' militia) must inevitably acquire an ever greater importance in the struggle. But at the *present stage*, this slogan too must be closely tied to the questions of defending the workers' and peasants' organizations,



the agrarian revolution, the assuring of free elections, and the protection of the people from reactionary military coups.

A radical program of *social legislation*, particularly unemployment insurance; shifting the burden of taxation to the wealthy classes; free popular education — all these and similar measures, which in themselves do not exceed the framework of bourgeois society, must be inscribed on the banner of the proletarian party.

Alongside these, however, demands of a transitional character must be advanced even now: nationalization of the railroads, which are all privately owned in Spain; nationalization of mineral resources; nationalization of the banks; workers' control of industry; and, finally, state regulation of the economy. All these demands are bound up with the transition from a bourgeois to a proletarian regime; they prepare this transition so that, after the nationalization of the banks and industry, they can become part of a system of measures for a planned economy, preparing the way for the socialist society.

Only pedants can see contradictions in the combination of democratic slogans with transitional and purely socialist slogans. Such a combined program, reflecting the contradictory construction of historic society, flows inevitably from the diversity of problems inherited from the past. To reduce all the contradictions and all the tasks to one lowest common denominator — *the dictatorship of the proletariat* — is a necessary, but altogether insufficient, operation. Even if one should run ahead and assume that the proletarian vanguard has grasped the idea that only the dictatorship of the proletariat can save Spain from further decay, the preparatory problem would nevertheless remain in full force: to weld around the vanguard the heterogeneous sections of the working class and the still more heterogeneous masses of village toilers. To contrast the bare slogan of the dictatorship of the proletariat to the historically determined tasks that are now impelling the masses towards the road of insurrection would be to replace the Marxist conception of social revolution with Bakunin's.<sup>22</sup> This would be the surest way to ruin the revolution.

Needless to say, democratic slogans under no circumstances have as their object drawing the proletariat closer to the republican bourgeoisie. On the contrary, they create the basis for a victorious struggle against the leftist bourgeoisie, making

it possible to disclose its antidemocratic character at every step. The more courageously, resolutely, and implacably the proletarian vanguard fights for democratic slogans, the sooner it will win over the masses and undermine the support for the bourgeois republicans and Socialist reformists. The more quickly their best elements join us, the sooner the democratic republic will be identified in the mind of the masses with the workers' republic.

For the correctly understood theoretical formula to be transformed into a living historic fact, it must penetrate the consciousness of the masses on the basis of their experience and their needs. To do this, it is important to avoid getting bogged down in details, so as not to distract the attention of the masses; the program of the revolution must be expressed in several clear and simple slogans, which will vary in accordance with the dynamics of the struggle. This is precisely what revolutionary politics consists of.

##### 5. Communism, anarcho-syndicalism, Social Democracy

As usual, the leadership of the Comintern started out by overlooking the Spanish events.<sup>23</sup> Manuilsky, the "leader" of the Latin countries, only recently declared that the Spanish events do not deserve attention. There you are! In 1928, these people declared France to be on the eve of the revolution. After having so long accompanied funerals with wedding music, they could not but greet a wedding with a funeral march. For them to act otherwise would mean to betray themselves. When it appeared, nevertheless, that the events in Spain, not foreseen in the calendar of the "third period,"<sup>24</sup> continued to develop, the leaders of the Comintern were simply silent. This, at any rate, shows far greater prudence. But the December events made further silence impossible.<sup>25</sup> Once more in rigid conformity with tradition, the leader of the Latin countries made a 180-degree turn: we have in mind his December 17 article in *Pravda*.

This article calls the dictatorship of Berenguer, like the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera, a "fascist regime." Mussolini, Matteotti, Primo de Rivera, MacDonald, Chiang Kai-shek, Berenguer, Dan — all these are variations of fascism.<sup>26</sup> Once there is a ready epithet, why bother to think? To be thorough, only the "fascist" regime of the Abyssinian Negus remains to be in-



cluded in this catalog. *Pravda* informs us that the Spanish proletariat not only is more and more "adopting the program and slogans of the Spanish Communist Party," but also has already "become conscious of its role of hegemony in the revolution." Simultaneously, the official dispatches from Paris speak of peasant soviets in Spain. It is known that under Stalinist leadership the soviet system is adopted and realized first of all by the peasants (China!). If the proletariat has already "become conscious of its role of hegemony," and the peasants have started to build soviets, all this under the leadership of the official Communist Party, then the victory of the Spanish revolution must be considered guaranteed—at any rate, till the time when the Madrid agents are accused by Stalin and Manulsky of incorrectly applying the general line which, on the pages of *Pravda*, once more appears before us as general ignorance and light-mindedness. Corrupted to the very marrow by their own policy, these "Leaders" are no longer capable of learning anything!

In reality, in spite of the mighty sweep of the struggle, the subjective factors of the revolution—the party, the mass organizations, the slogans—are extraordinarily behind the tasks of the movement, and it is this backwardness that constitutes the main danger today.

The semispontaneous spread of strikes, which have brought victims and defeats or have ended with no gains, is an absolutely unavoidable stage of the revolution, the stage of the awakening of the masses, their mobilization, and their entry into struggle. For it is not the cream of the workers who take part in the movement, but the masses as a whole. Not only do factory workers strike, but also artisans, chauffeurs, and bakers, construction, irrigation, and, finally, agricultural workers. The veterans stretch their limbs, the new recruits learn. Through the medium of these strikes, the class begins to feel itself a class.

However, the spontaneity—which at the present stage constitutes the strength of the movement—may in the future become the source of its weakness. To assume that the movement can continue to be left to itself without a clear program, without its own leadership, would mean to assume a perspective of hopelessness. For the question involved is nothing less than the seizure of power. Even the stormiest strikes do not solve

this problem—not to speak of the ones that are broken. If the proletariat were not to feel in the process of the struggle during the coming months that its tasks and methods are becoming clearer to itself, that its ranks are becoming consolidated and strengthened, then a decomposition would set in within its own ranks. The broad layers aroused by the present movement for the first time would once more fall into passivity. In the vanguard, to the extent to which the ground slipped from under its feet, moods favoring partisan acts and adventurism in general would begin to revive. In such an eventuality, neither the peasantry nor the city poor would find authoritative leadership. The awakened hopes would very quickly be converted into disappointment and exasperation. A condition would be created in Spain reproducing, in a certain measure, the situation in Italy after the autumn of 1920.<sup>27</sup> The dictatorship of Primo de Rivera was not fascist but a typical Spanish dictatorship of a military clique supporting itself on certain parts of the wealthy classes; but with the conditions pointed out above—the passivity and the hesitancy of the revolutionary party, and the spontaneity of the mass movement—genuine fascism would find a base in Spain. The big bourgeoisie would conquer the unbalanced, disappointed, and despairing petty-bourgeois masses and would direct their restlessness against the proletariat. Of course, we are far from that point yet. But no time should be lost.

Even if we should assume for a moment that the revolutionary movement led by the left wing of the bourgeoisie—officers, students, republicans—leads to victory, then the fruitlessness of this victory would in the final analysis prove it equal to defeat. The base of support of the Spanish republicans, as we have already said, is completely on the present property relations. We can expect them neither to expropriate the big landowners, nor to liquidate the privileges of the Catholic church, nor to cleanse the Augean stables of the civil and military bureaucracy. The monarchist camarilla would simply be replaced by a republican camarilla, and we would have a new edition of the short-lived and fruitless republic of 1873-1874.<sup>28</sup>

The fact that the Socialist leaders trail behind the republican leaders is quite in the nature of things. Yesterday, the Social Democracy clung with its right arm to the dictatorship of Primo



de Rivera. Today it clings with its left arm to the republicans. The principal aim of the Socialists, who do not and cannot have an independent policy, is participation in a solid bourgeois government. To this end, they would not refuse to make peace even with the monarchists, if it came to that.

But the right wing of the anarcho-syndicalists is in no way insured against the same fate; in this connection, the December events are a great lesson and a stern warning.

The National Confederation of Labor (CNT—Confederación Nacional del Trabajo) indisputably embraces the most militant elements of the proletariat. Here the selection has gone on for a number of years. To strengthen this confederation, to transform it into a genuine organization of the masses, is the obligation of every advanced worker and, above all, of the communists. This can also be assisted by work inside the reformist trade unions, tirelessly exposing the betrayals of their leaders and calling upon the workers to unite in a single trade union confederation. The conditions of revolution will be of extraordinary assistance to this work.

But at the same time we have no illusions about the fate of anarcho-syndicalism as a doctrine and a revolutionary method. Anarcho-syndicalism disarms the proletariat by its lack of a revolutionary program and its failure to understand the role of the party. The anarchists "deny" politics until it seizes them by the throat; then they prepare the ground for the politics of the enemy class. This is what happened in December!

If the Socialist Party were to acquire a leading position over the proletariat during the revolution, it would be capable of only one thing: spilling the power conquered by the revolution into the republican sieve, from which the power would then automatically pass to its present possessors. The great conception would result in a miscarriage.

As far as the anarcho-syndicalists are concerned, they could head the revolution only by abandoning their anarchist prejudices. It is our duty to help them do this. In reality, it may be assumed that a part of the syndicalist leaders will go over to the Socialists or will be cast aside by the revolution; the real revolutionists will be with us. The masses will join the communists, and so will the majority of the Socialist workers.

The advantage of a revolutionary situation lies in the fact that the masses learn fast. The evolution of the masses will

inevitably produce differentiations and splits not only among the Socialists but also among the syndicalists. Practical agreements with *revolutionary* syndicalists are inevitable in the course of the revolution. These agreements we will loyally fulfill. But it would be truly fatal to introduce into these agreements elements of duplicity, concealment, and deceit. Even in those days and hours when the communist workers have to fight side by side with the syndicalist workers, there must be no destruction of the principled disagreements, no concealment of differences, nor any weakening of the criticism of the wrong principled position of the ally. Only under this condition will the progressive development of the revolution be secured.

#### 6. *The revolutionary junta and the party*

The events of December 15, when the workers rose up simultaneously not only in the big cities, but also in the remote villages, demonstrate how much the workers themselves are striving for unity of action. They utilized the signal of the republicans because they didn't have a loud enough signalman of their own. The defeat of the movement apparently did not call forth a shadow of dismay. The masses viewed their own actions as experience, as a school, as preparation. This is an extremely characteristic feature of "revolutionary ascent."

In order to enter the broad road, the proletariat needs even now an organization rising over all the present political, national, provincial, and trade union divisions in their ranks and corresponding to the sweep of the present revolutionary struggle. Such an organization, democratically elected by the workers of the factories, mills, mines, commercial enterprises, railway and marine transport, by the proletarians of the city and village, can only be the soviet. The epigones<sup>29</sup> have done immeasurable damage to the revolutionary movement of the whole world, fixing in many minds the prejudice that soviets can only be created by the needs of an armed insurrection and only on the brink of this insurrection. In reality, the soviets are created when the revolutionary movement of the working masses, even though still far from an armed insurrection, creates the need for a broad, authoritative organization, capable of leading the economic and political struggles embracing simultaneously the different enterprises and the different trades. Only if the soviets are rooted in the working class during the

preparatory period of the revolution will they be able to play a leading role at the time of a direct struggle for power. It is true that the word "soviet" after thirteen years of existence of the Soviet regime has now acquired a somewhat different meaning than it had in 1905 or in the beginning of 1917, when the soviets appeared not as organs of power but only as the militant organizations of the working class. The word "junta," directly tied to all of Spain's revolutionary history, expresses this thought better than anything else. On the order of the day in Spain stands the creation of workers' juntas.

With the present state of the proletariat, the building of juntas presupposes the participation in them of the communists, anarcho-syndicalists, Social Democrats, and the nonparty leaders of the strike struggles. To what extent can we count on the participation of the anarcho-syndicalists and the Social Democrats in the soviets? This cannot be foretold from a distance. The sweep of the movement will undoubtedly compel many syndicalists, and perhaps some of the Socialists, to go further than they wish, provided that the communists are able to present the idea of the workers' juntas with the necessary energy. Under the pressure of the masses, the practical questions of the building of soviets, the ratio of representation, the time and method of elections and so forth, can and should become the object of *agreement* not only of all the communist factions among themselves but also with those syndicalists and Socialists who consent to the creation of juntas. The communists, of course, appear at all stages of the struggle with their banner unfurled.

In spite of the newest Stalinist theory, it is hardly likely that the peasant juntas, as elected organs, will appear in any considerable number, prior to the seizure of power by the proletariat. In the preparatory period in the village, different forms of organization will develop sooner, based not upon elections but upon individual selection: peasant unions, committees of the village poor, communist nuclei, a labor union of agricultural workers, and so forth. The propagation of the slogan of *peasant juntas*, based on a revolutionary agrarian program, can even now, however, be put on the agenda.

The correct posing of the question of "soldiers' juntas" is very important. Because of the very character of military organization, soldiers' soviets can appear only in the final period of

the revolutionary crisis, when the state power loses control over the army. In the preparatory period, it will be a matter of organizations of an intimate character, groups of revolutionary soldiers, party nuclei, and, in many cases, personal connections of workers with individual soldiers.

The republican uprising in December 1930 will undoubtedly go down into history as the transition between two epochs of revolutionary struggle. It is true that the left wing of the republicans established connections with the leaders of workers' organizations in order to bring about unity of action. The unarmed workers had to play the role of cheerleaders for the republicans, who were the chief performers. This act was performed fully enough to reveal once and for all the incompatibility of an officers' plot with a revolutionary strike. Against the military plot, which opposed one branch of the service to another, the government found sufficient forces within the army itself. And the strike, deprived of an independent aim and of its own leadership, was necessarily reduced to nothing as soon as the military uprising was crushed.

The revolutionary role of the army, not as an instrument of officers' experiments but as an armed part of the people, will be determined, in the last analysis, by the role of the worker and peasant masses in the course of the struggle. For the revolutionary strike to be victorious, it will have to bring about the confrontation of the workers with the army. No matter how important the purely military features of such a clash may be, politics outweighs them. The masses of soldiers can be won over only by clearly explaining the social tasks of the revolution. But it is precisely the social tasks that frighten the officers. It is natural that the proletarian revolutionists should direct their attention even now to the soldiers, creating nuclei of conscious and daring revolutionists in the regiments. The communist work in the army, politically subordinated to the work among the proletariat and the peasantry, can be developed only on the basis of a clear program. But when the decisive moment arrives, the workers, by the sheer weight of numbers and the force of their assault, must sweep a large part of the army to the side of the people or, at any rate, neutralize it. This broad revolutionary posing of the question does not exclude a military "plot" of the advanced soldiers and officers sympathizing with the proletarian revolution, in the period



directly preceding the general strike and insurrection. But such a "plot" has nothing in common with military coups: its task is of an auxiliary character and consists of insuring the victory of the proletarian uprising.

For a successful solution of all these tasks, three conditions are required: a party; once more a party; again a party!

How will the relations between the various existing communist organizations and groups be arranged, and what will be their fate in the future? It is difficult to judge from a distance. Experience will show. Great events unmistakably put to the test ideas, organizations, and people. Should the leadership of the Comintern appear incapable of offering anything to the Spanish workers except a wrong policy, apparatus commands, and splits, then the genuine Communist Party of Spain will be constituted and tempered outside the official framework of the Communist International. One way or another — a party has to be created. It must be united and centralized.

The working class can under no circumstances build its political organization on the basis of federations. A Communist Party is needed — not in the image of the future state order of Spain but as a steel lever for the demolition of the existing order. It can be organized only on the principle of democratic centralism.

The proletarian junta will become the broad arena in which every party and every group will be put to the test and scrutinized before the eyes of the broad masses. The communists will counterpose the slogan of the united front of the workers to the practice of coalitions of Socialists and a part of the syndicalists with the bourgeoisie. Only the united revolutionary front will enable the proletariat to inspire the necessary confidence among the oppressed masses of the village and city. The realization of the united front is conceivable only under the banner of communism. The junta requires a leading party. Without a firm leadership, it would remain an empty organizational form and would inevitably fall into dependence upon the bourgeoisie.

The Spanish communists have ahead of them glorious historic tasks. The advanced workers of the world will follow with rapt attention the course of the great revolutionary drama, which will sooner or later require not only their sympathy but also their cooperation. We will be ready!

END

### Statements by Trotsky on the demand for a republic

"The slogan of the republic, of course, is also the workers' slogan. But for them establishing a republic is not merely a matter of replacing the king with a president, but also of thoroughly purging the feudal refuse from the whole of society. Here the first consideration is the agrarian question." ("The Revolution in Spain," January 24, 1931, in The Spanish Revolution (1931-39), p. 77.)

"We can and must counterpose the revolutionary Cortes to the conciliationist Cortes; but, to our mind, it would be incorrect at the present stage to give up the slogan of the revolutionary Cortes. To counterpose the slogan of the dictatorship of the proletariat to the problems and slogans of revolutionary democracy (for a republic, for an agrarian revolution, for the separation of church and state, the confiscation of church properties, national self-determination, a revolutionary constituent assembly) would be the most sterile and miserable doctrinaireism." (Ibid., p. 79, emphasis in original.)

"Finally, I should like to refer to point 5, concerning Russia, as an incredible curiosity. It is asserted there that the Bolsheviks supported the slogan of a national assembly 'for a fairly short period, from the fall of czarism to the attempt at restoration of capitalist rule....' In reply, the social democracy put forward the slogan of a national assembly from the start of its existence, i.e., from 1883. This slogan played a gigantic role in the education of the proletariat and the party from the first years of this century. The 1905 revolution grew under this slogan. The whole work of the Bolsheviks between the two revolutions went under the slogans of: 1. a democratic republic; 2. the land to the peasants (democratic-agrarian reform); 3. the eight-hour day (demand for workers' democracy).

"The Bordigists will certainly explain that all this was a complete error, that it belongs to the dark period in which the truth of the proletarian dictatorship had not yet been discovered."

("Critical Remarks About Prometeo's Resolution on Democratic Demands," January 15, 1931, in Writings of Leon Trotsky 1930-31, pp. 135-36.)

"By ambiguous formulas, we can only serve Molinier, who himself serves Pivert, who in turn covers for Léon Blum. And the latter puts all his forces behind de la Rocque...and the King of Prussia.

"Under czarism, liberals and democrats treated us like fools because of our propaganda in support of the slogan for a republic. Why frighten the people? they would object. There is enough in



our propaganda to develop the content of a republic (various freedoms, universal suffrage, etc.) without actually saying that terrible word. We would reply: In order for the revolution to become possible, we must instill and maintain in the people an implacable hatred against the nobility, the bureaucracy, etc.... And every worker, every peasant, who learns to hate the czar will accept the slogan for a republic without difficulty.

"The people of the SAP only repeat in connection with the Fourth International the reasoning of our old 'democrats' in connection with the republic slogan. Such reasoning is characteristic of the mentality of a petty bourgeois--very 'daring' in abstract critique, but always halting before the efforts of revolutionary will." ("Against False Passports in Politics," December 16, 1935, in Crisis of the French Section, p. 120, emphasis in original.) [Pathfinder Press publication to be released August 1977.]

Also see, "Three Conceptions of the Russian Revolution," Writings of Leon Trotsky (1939-40), pp. 55-73.

TRANSLATION

Buenos Aires  
March 19, 1977

To the United Secretariat  
of the Fourth International

Dear Comrades:

The signers of this letter reaffirm that we are Trotskyist militants and members of the Fourth International. As you know all too well, there are differences among us that have dragged on for years. Many of them have their origin in differences on the international level. But these in no way keep us from being in complete agreement on one point, a request we have to make of you.

It deals with the exclusion of a discussion on the situation in Latin America and a balance sheet on Argentina from the agenda of the coming world congress.

In making this request, we don't fail to take into account the opportunities confronting the Fourth International in other arenas of the world revolution. Neither do we want to show a lack of appreciation for the time problems that arise in preparing an agenda for the congress. And we shouldn't be seen as imposing a nationalist criterion--trying to subordinate the progress of the international to our particular situation.

Quite to the contrary--there are other reasons that motivate us to formally request a balance sheet on the situation in Latin America and, particularly, in Argentina. In the first place, the Fourth International, through its various organizations, undoubtedly played a key role in the day-to-day revolutionary effort in this country during the last eight years. Counterposed lines were put to the test, and we passed through the most varied experiences. What is more, the involvement of the international in the debate around the lines of action in Argentina reached such a point that this became one of the principal themes of the internal discussion and a dividing line for the formation of tendencies.

At the same time, this involvement was not merely intellectual or divorced from the class struggle--Perón himself spoke explicitly of the Fourth International as the great enemy. A cabinet minister explained in a televised speech the scope of the political plans of the Fourth International in Argentina. In order to support his position, he held up to the cameras a copy of the magazine Cuarta Internacional that contained the decisions of the Tenth World Congress from which he read several paragraphs. For months, on all the TV and radio stations throughout the country, every fifteen minutes "the Trotskyists of the Fourth International" were attacked. Not a week

(over)



passed without the bureaucracy of some union publishing an "appeal" attacking the "Trotskyists." To this very day, official propaganda is oriented along the same lines--through radio, television, and wall posters the dictatorship repeats: "Citizens, don't turn your back on the country--don't play the game of the Trotskyists!" The daily La Opinión, which supports official policies, was shut down for publishing an article by a priest in defense of human rights. The main point of this article was to demonstrate that the government's repressive policy was throwing the masses into the arms of Marxism. But not just any old Marxism: "From the ideological point of view Trotskyist thought has become unusually widespread among youth in the first years of college and the later years of secondary school. While it seemed to have been buried in its own ruins in the 1920s, it has cunningly reappeared in recent years."

The enemy does not do such things by accident. Besides other considerations, this obviously results from the general way in which Trotskyism and the Fourth International as such are regarded, and not from a party that is clearly defined before the broad masses and is a permanent political factor.

We believe that this presents an enormous future responsibility for the Fourth International as a whole. Nevertheless, we can leave that responsibility aside for a moment, in order to make it clear that we aren't dealing with a "national" preoccupation.

For example, we think it is completely natural that the international and the United Secretariat center their attention and forces on Spain. But at the same time we are convinced that is indispensable for the international and its sympathizing organizations to assimilate the experience of Argentina so that our actions in Spain might be the most fruitful. It is not possible to advance without assimilating living experiences dialectically. And this can't be done without a thorough Marxist critique of every step. If conclusions are not clearly drawn from everything that has happened here (where, we emphasize, the international played a key role), not only will the sacrifice of thousands of comrades have been in vain--comrades who offered their lives, their liberty, their devotion to the ideas (of one or another line) of the Fourth International--but also and above all, such sterile sacrifices will be repeated over and over again.

In the second place, our preoccupation with the exclusion of this point from the agenda of the world congress should be seen in light of the intention of the United Secretariat to further unifications in those countries where there are two or more sympathizing organizations. At first sight, this can appear to be a narrow interest that in effect subordinates the world congress to the problems of the groups signing this letter. But that is not the case. The differences over Argentina have profound roots. Although we all want to overcome the present dispersion (and are firmly committed to work toward this), it is clear that any unification that does not result from a thorough balance sheet of experiences can be no more than a prologue to

disaster. And here again we are not speaking of a national disaster. What must comrades throughout the world think of the leadership of the international, if Comrades Hansen and Mandel, who have written and debated repeatedly on Argentina and the necessary course of action, after years in which the differences and calamities have multiplied, now allow their documents to be laid aside in order to push through a unification? Perhaps it isn't necessary for that old debate to arrive at a clear conclusion? Since its scope was the entire international and its protagonists the most distinguished leaders of our movement, how can we now minimize it and forget it, without such a lack of response dealing blow after blow to the international as a whole?

To what role will the international leadership be relegated in the eyes of rank-and-file militants all over the world, if after having outlined their positions and courses of action and having carried their debate to the point of splitting organizations the leadership now keeps silent precisely at the moment when the bourgeois hordes are destroying their organizations and militants; if that leadership that in the past carried out discussions down to the most minimal details today fails to offer an explanation of what happened, a balance sheet, and a general orientation for the future?

No attempt is being made to pass over our own responsibilities. Quite to the contrary, we want to assume them and expose them to the criticism of comrades all over the world. This letter is only one of the tasks that we confront in that respect.

This is a problem that concerns the political authority of the international leadership, not only before the Argentine Trotskyists but before comrades all over the world and before organizations that observe the course of the Fourth International from outside. We who aspire to an international that goes forward daily toward construction of the World Party can't permit the United Secretariat to lose its political authority.

Consequently from any point of view and particularly from the point of view of the Fourth International as a whole, we think that extending the agenda will not be a big obstacle to the Eleventh World Congress discussing and drawing clear conclusions from the experiences in Latin America and Argentina in recent years.

Revolutionary greetings,

MANIFIESTO OBRERO  
LIGA COMUNISTA  
LIGA SOCIALISTA REVOLUCIONARIA  
ORGANIZACION COMUNISTA



A Statement on the Slanders Circulated by the Healy Group  
Against Hansen, Novack, and the Socialist Workers Party

For almost a year the Workers Revolutionary party, the British group headed by Gerry Healy, has conducted a vicious slander campaign against the Socialist Workers party of the United States and two of its veteran leaders, Joseph Hansen and George Novack. Healy and his followers in various countries have published articles and pamphlets, held public meetings, and distributed leaflets and posters accusing both men of "criminal negligence" in Trotsky's assassination and of being "accomplices of the GPU," alleging that they have covered up crimes of the Soviet secret police and shielded its agents.

They also insinuate that Hansen colluded with the FBI. By implication their charges likewise dishonor James P. Cannon, founder of the American Trotskyist movement, as well as Trotsky himself and his son Sedov.

Healy and his associates have not brought forward the slightest probative evidence, documents, or testimony to substantiate their libelous accusations against Hansen and Novack, the nominal targets of the attacks. The script of their polemics is fabricated out of baseless innuendoes, gratuitous suppositions and outright lies that do not have any political content or foundation in fact. They constitute a shameless frame-up.

The specific allegations have been exposed and refuted point by point in articles by various organizations and individuals printed in Intercontinental Press which can be consulted for extensive information.

The records of Hansen and Novack as political figures, writers, and editors are well known to us and many others the world over. Both have been continuously active for more than forty years as prominent members of the American Trotskyist movement and supporters of the Fourth International. It is especially odious that they have been singled out and falsely accused of aiding Stalin's assassins, since they devoted themselves to protecting Trotsky's life during his last exile in Mexico.

The signers of this statement feel obliged to speak out in defense of Hansen and Novack and the Socialist Workers party against the smear campaign impugning their integrity.

But there is more to the matter than that. We are concerned about the practice of such disruptive methods in the workers movement. They are not new. The Mensheviks maintained that Lenin was a paid agent of the Kaiser. Later Stalin accused Trotsky of being an agent of the Gestapo. Marxists and civil libertarians have from the first repudiated these frame-up techniques employed by the Stalinists against their political opponents and critics. Anyone else who resorts to them must be opposed. Otherwise the struggle for socialism, which includes the honest presentation of conflicting views, becomes discredited.

We call upon the leaders of the Workers Revolutionary party and their followers to cease their scurrilous attacks. They discredit the authors, not the accused. We further ask others who share our position that frame-ups have no place in the socialist movement to add their voice of protest and public condemnation to ours.





## Workers Revolutionary Party

British Section of the International Committee of the Fourth International

General Secretary: M. Banda

21b Old Town,  
Clapham, London SW40JT  
Telephone: 01-622 7028

April 2, 1977

Mr Ken Coates,  
Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation,  
Bertrand Russell House,  
Gamble Street,  
Nottingham NG7 4ET.

Dear Mr Coates,

On March 15, 1977, I wrote an open letter to you about the latest evidence that Sylvia Franklin, nee Callen, party name Caldwell, personal secretary to the late James P. Cannon, was a GPU agent all along. In the years 1938 to 1947 she played a key role in the GPU murder network which carried out the assassination of Leon Trotsky in Mexico on August 20, 1940.

I asked you to reconsider your previous position in signing a petition in support of Joseph Hansen and George Novack of the Socialist Workers Party (USA) who both say to this day that Franklin was "an exemplary comrade".

Although proof of her GPU role has been published and Jean Van Heijenoort and Michel Pablo have acknowledged that she was in fact working for Stalin's secret police, I have not received a reply from you.

Hansen and Novack have lived with this lie about Franklin for the past 30 years since the SWP's rigged control commission "cleared" her. But can you live the same lie?

When you signed Hansen and Novack's petition you falsely accused the International Committee of the Fourth International of "a shameless frame-up" (Intercontinental Press, September 6, 1976). Because the facts demand it, this is a slander which you must withdraw.

All of you have reputations to protect. You have a responsibility to declare for historical truth and separate yourselves from Hansen and Novack who are desperately shielding a known GPU agent connected with the ring that organised Trotsky's murder.

Mrs Deutscher, your name has been associated with scrupulous historical scholarship. Is that to be irreparably tainted?

Mr Coates, you claim to be a champion of political morality. What possible moral justification is there in joining a conspiracy of silence with Hansen and Novack to cover up the crimes of a GPU agent?

Mr Anderson, you claim to be a serious thinker and historian. How can this be reconciled with your present position in declaring for Hansen, Novack and Franklin?

Your silence is damaging to you and all that you profess to stand for. There is one principled course to follow - - publicly withdraw your name from Hansen and Novack's petition.

If you genuinely want to know the truth about Trotsky's assassination and the GPU network which carried it out, then you will also join the call for an international Commission of Inquiry. Such a commission will sift through all the evidence compiled by the International Committee and call witnesses.

The purpose is to purge the Trotskyist movement of the crimes of Stalin's police and to bring to an end the decades-long conspiracy of silence about them. You have a duty to remove your names from the list of those who want to suppress these crimes and shield proven GPU agents.

We await your reply.

*M Banda*

Michael Banda  
Workers Revolutionary Party  
General Secretary



1966 President of the Earth Council (OM 116) (1972-1976) Vice-President Earth Council (1976-1980)  
1966-1969, 1971-1972, 1974-1975, 1977-1978

## The Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation Ltd.

BERTRAND RUSSELL HOUSE,  
GAMBIE STREET,  
NOTTINGHAM NG7 4LT,  
ENGLAND (Reg. Office)  
Reg. No. 891680 (England)  
Telephone 0602 74504  
Cables: Russfound Nottingham

8th April, 1977.

Mr. Joe Hansen,  
Intercontinental Press,  
PO Box 116,  
Village PO Station,  
New York,  
N. Y. 10014,  
U.S.A.

Dear Joe,

Have you any suggestions about how the three of us ought to respond to this letter, if at all? I am writing to Tamara and to Perry Anderson in order to ascertain their views.

With all good wishes,

Fraternally,



Ken Coates

May 8, 1977

Mr. Ken Coates  
The Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation Ltd.  
Gamble Street  
Nottingham NG7 4ET  
England

Dear Ken,

Your letter of April 8 was not delivered until yesterday. The post office stamped the envelope "insufficiently prepaid for transmission by air." So it came by sea-mail.

The Xeroxed copy of the April 2 letter to you, signed by Banda, is similar to the one dated February 7, 1977, sent by Slaughter to the United Secretariat, which replied March 26. We published both documents in the April 25 issue of Intercontinental Press. You have probably seen them by now.

The Healyites have approached various signers of the statement denouncing their frame-up. The objective in each case has been to persuade them to withdraw their names. This effort is quite revealing. It testifies to Healy's failure to put across the frame-up. Outside of his own followers, only a figure like Verseken has supported the false charges; and even he felt compelled to issue a mild reproof of the methods used. In face of this failure to win any significant support, the Healyites turned to the tactic of trying to shake signers of the statement.

I don't know if they expect to make any real progress along this line. The letters are actually designed for publication in the News Line; and the real audience, of course, is the membership of the WRP and its followers in other countries, as is shown by the nature of the argumentation, and the rapidity with which it was published--the April 2 issue of the News Line, the same date that was placed on the letter.

Banda's letter cannot stand the least critical inspection. The main thread deals with the case of Sylvia Caldwell, which he now apparently believes to be the most vulnerable point of attack. Our position has been and still remains that she is presumed to be innocent until proved guilty. Without repeating what has already been said about Healy's advocacy of her guilt, a presumption based on the slanders set in motion by the FBI and the FBI's creature Budenz, the



following items in Banda's letter are worth noting:

1. "Latest evidence." Banda asserts that "proof of her GPU role has been published." No such thing. The News Line has only repeated the testimony of Budenz who collaborated with the FBI.

Banda also speaks of the "latest evidence." Is this an admission that the earlier "evidence" provided by Budenz was insufficient to convict her? But the "latest evidence," as featured in headlines in the News Line consists of opinions expressed by Van Heijenoort and Pablo.

2. Van Heijenoort and Pablo. "Jean Van Heijenoort and Michel Pablo have acknowledged that she was in fact working for Stalin's secret police..." Neither Van Heijenoort nor Pablo "acknowledged..." The implication of Banda's statement is that previously they were covering up for her.

However, they were quoted by the March 12 News Line as follows:

"Van Heijenoort, now a professor at Brandeis University, near Boston, said that "everything in my mind at the present time goes in the direction that Sylvia was an agent of the GPU."

"Asked if he also accepted that Franklin was a GPU agent, Pablo replied: "Oh, I think so. Definitely. I think she was, yes, an agent."

In the March 28 issue, the News Line quoted Pablo more extensively: "Oh, I think so. Definitely. I think she was, yes, an agent. I think so. And I think it is right that they must admit it. That's my position. The Socialist Workers Party must admit it."

Thus Van Heijenoort said he was inclined in his mind to believe that Sylvia was an agent; Pablo was inclined more definitely to think so. A belief of this kind, however, does not constitute evidence; and neither Van Heijenoort nor Pablo offered any evidence. Moreover, both of them have condemned Healy's frame-up methods.

3. "Rigged Control Commission." Banda includes another choice item:

"Hansen and Novack have lived with this lie about Franklin for the past 30 years since the SWP's rigged control commission 'cleared' her. But can you live the same lie?"

The slander, cooked up by Banda and his fellow frame-up artists, is directed against the entire top leadership

of the SWP, primarily James P. Cannon.

This new charge shows how the effort to bolster a frame-up inevitably leads to fresh lies that become more and more transparent. To give plausibility to their first false charges, the Healyites are now confronted with putting across the lie that all the leaders of the SWP, above all Cannon, were and are "accomplices of the GPU."

4. "Reputations to Protect." Banda's disinterested concern about protecting the reputations of Ken Coates, Tamara Deutscher, and Perry Anderson is laudable, if unexpected. It is to be hoped that you will respond in kind and help protect the reputation of the Healyite frame-up artists. As a sign of his sincerity, Banda will no doubt soon publicly rectify the bad mouthing given you in the columns of the News Line. I, for one, will be looking forward to an article by Banda criticizing an item in the February 25, 1977, issue of the Bulletin that denounced Isaac Deutscher. The Bulletin is the organ of the Central Committee of the Workers League, the American contingent of Healy's followers. The author is Frank Martin, one of their most authoritative writers:

"The weight of evidence proving Hansen and Novack's complicity with the GPU is so enormous that they have finally been forced into the pages of the Militant.

"But there they make the remarkable contention:

"'Healy's political reasons for conducting a campaign of slander against Hansen and Novack are quite obvious. He is seeking to prejudice his followers against reading Trotskyist publications, particularly those featuring articles by Hansen and Novack or by those who share their political views.'

"Need we point out that it was not the press of the International Committee but the Militant itself which blacked out totally any discussion of these issues, including Hansen and Novack's own articles on the subject, for the last 18 months?

"But the real core of this article is the statement that 'Healy claims to be acting out of concern for the "security of the Fourth International". But in fact his practices are directly contrary to those of Lenin and Trotsky.'

"Who does the Militant cite as their 'authority' to prove this? Lenin? Trotsky? Of course not. They turn, instead, to that middle class renegade Isaac Deutscher, who spent his entire political life opposing the construction of the Fourth International.

"'In the third volume of his biography of Trotsky,' writes



the Militant, 'Isaac Deutscher described Trotsky's reactions to unproved suspicions against a supporter in Paris (Mark Zborowski) who later proved to be a Stalinist agent provocateur.' (If it had been left to Hansen and Novack, those suspicions would still be unproved).

"According to Deutscher:

"'All too many accusations had already been bandied about in the small Trotskyist circle in Paris anyhow; and if all of these were to be taken seriously, there would be no end to the chasing of agents provocateurs.

"'He (Trotsky) knew all too well what a curse stool-pigeons were in any organization; but he also knew that constant suspicion, and witch-hunting could be even worse. He decided not to lend ear to any accusation unless it was unequivocally presented and substantiated.

"'He preferred to take the gravest risks and to expose himself to extreme danger rather than to infect and demoralize his followers with distrust and scares.'

"Is it true that Trotsky 'preferred to take the gravest risks and to expose himself to extreme danger'?"

"Hansen and Novack are banking on Deutscher's so-called reputation to pull the wool over SWP members' eyes. Behind this quotation is Hansen's completely reactionary position, already exposed by the International Committee, that Trotsky himself was responsible for his own assassination!"

I don't know whether you decided to reply to Banda's letter. Its swift publication showed that Banda did not expect a reply. It might be useful to write a public rejoinder as part of further clarification of the record; but it is distasteful to deal with such crap--and time-consuming. If you do reply, please send a copy to Intercontinental Press.

Meanwhile Gerry Foley has written an article taking up Banda's gross attack on political dissidents in the Soviet Union. It is in the current issue of Intercontinental Press. You should have received it by now. Just in case the Postal Service goofed, I am enclosing a copy.

Fraternally,

Enc.

Joe Hansen

REMOVED COPY

London  
April 6, 1977

Dear Joe and George,

I have just received the 4 April issue of ICP. I was somewhat amazed to see in it a statement by Jock Haston on Healy. I think printing this is a really cardinal blunder which gives big openings to Healy.

I am not sure if you are aware who Haston is now, although I thought I had mentioned it clearly to George when he was here, but you must be quite clear that this person is a most disgusting renegade in the real sense. He is one of the main organisers of anti-CP and anti-Trotskyist witch-hunts in the trade unions - in particular in the Electrical Trades union. He helped organise the banning of CP members from holding office in that union and, through his educational schools, he keeps up a continual witch hunt against all left wing members of the ETU - a campaign involving expulsions, dissolving of branch committees, replacing elective positions in the unions with appointees of the right wing bureaucracy etc. His position, within his more limited resources, is entirely analagous to that of say Jay Lovestone. He is one of the most hated men in the entire trade union movement for any militant in the ETU. To involve him in defending Trotskyists against slanders of Healy is rather like utilising Lovestone or Joseph McCarthy to defend Trotskyists against the Stalinists. It is completely out of the question that we should be associated with this individual in any shape or form. To utilise his name will give Healy a considerable opening. I think it very likely for example that a series of the signatories to the appeal against Healy would have had many second thoughts if they had known Haston would be involved in any way.

I am all the more surprised that this letter was printed as I briefly discussed Haston with George when he was here. He told me that Grant and Haston had asked to see him and what was the IMG's opinion? Brian and I both agreed that it was fine to see Grant but that on no account should George see Haston. I was therefore a bit stunned to see the piece in ICP.

I am not sure what to do about this now though. If Healy has got any sense at all we will see a big series in the Newsline on 'Who is Jock Haston' and he will use Haston's involvement with the campaign to try to obscure every issue. Given the emotive reaction which Haston's name has for not a few people in the trade union movement such a campaign would have a certain resonance.

I don't see that we can do anything at present, although you may have some ideas, except to wait for what Healy does. To write something now on Haston would have a somewhat confusing effect and in any case it would have to be done very carefully - Haston is an element for whom a resort to the bourgeois courts would be extremely likely and probably give him



Letter to Joe and George  
Jones - 2 -

great pleasure. Incidentally his talk about 'retirement' is bullshit - he is just as much connected up with the 'anti-communist/anti-Trotskyist' network as ever.

Please let me have your ideas on how to deal with this mess. In future please check with us before printing any statements of people who you're not sure who they represent now - as you couldn't have been with Haston.

As to what Haston is up to by sending the letter I don't know but whatever it is the Fourth International and the SWP shouldn't have anything to do with it. I would like to hear from you as soon as possible on how to deal with what is only too likely to come from Healy now. I think that when Barry comes for the next USec we must have a discussion on policy for this campaign now.

fraternally,  
s/Alan Jones

New York, N.Y.  
April 22, 1977

Alan Jones  
England

Dear Alan,

I did not receive your April 6 letter asking about Jock Haston's statement until after our plenum, hence the delay in replying.

First, on Haston's statement itself. I do not see anything wrong in its contents per se. The author makes clear that he is not a Trotskyist and has not been since "1950." His stand is the very elementary one of opposing frame-ups such as the one committed by the Healyites.

He includes a useful bit of information--that he was a former leader of the British Trotskyist movement and that the Trotskyism he knew then had nothing in common with what the Healyites are practicing today. In this respect, the statement offers testimony that adds to the growing mountain of evidence condemning the Healyites. This holds true no matter what Haston's current politics may be.

You are, of course, quite correct in noting that I was not aware of Haston's current activities and reputation, etc. In fact I don't think the Healyites have mentioned him since the period following the 1953-54 split. Perhaps other left publications have carried exposés, but no one has called my attention to them if they exist.

In your letter you liken him to a miniature Joseph McCarthy or to a Lovestone. But that is not very enlightening. McCarthy was a bourgeois politician, a right-wing Republican, who played the role of a protofascist. Lovestone was the foreign expert of the Stalinphobic AFL tops, who are part of the Democratic machine. From what you say Haston would appear to be a minor figure in the right wing of the British Social Democracy. However he was once in the Trotskyist movement. Can you completely exclude that he was moved by conscience? Or at least a twinge of conscience?

As to what the Healyites might try to do with Haston's statement, I see no cause for much concern. They will simply resort to argumentum ad hominem as they have with everyone else who has condemned their frame-up. So what will their Fleet Street poison-pen artist say? That Haston is a "real" renegade and Wohlforth, for instance, is only a fake renegade? And prove it with a series of ten articles that might well include libelous material?

The key problem centers on your view that it was a mistake to publish Haston's statement because of his politics. I would



readily agree that it would have been a mistake if we had followed a rule from the beginning of rejecting the support of all those with whom we disagree politically. But we never applied any such rule. If we had decided on such a rule we should have announced it from the start.

Our appeal, it is true, was directed mainly to socialists (of all kinds), members of the workers movement, and civil libertarians. But the basis of the appeal was not agreement with the political views of the victims; it was opposition to the frame-up techniques employed against them, which were in the tradition of the Stalinists.

Since the appeal did not exclude anyone holding political positions going beyond opposition to the use of frame-up techniques, it did not exclude Stalinophobes. Should we have made at least this political distinction? I do not think so. The issue still remained that of a frame-up against which all political tendencies upholding democratic rights were duty bound to take a stand.

If it were not a frame-up and Healy had proved that George and I were really "accomplices of the GPU," then the Stalinophobes would in all likelihood have felt inclined to move to the head of the pack demanding we be tarred and feathered. However, since we proved that Healy had cooked up a frame-up, all that remained was to note the fact and denounce such techniques. There was not much in this for the Stalinophobes and so they tended to stand aloof from what appeared to be a squabble among the Trotskyists, useful only in smearing Trotskyism as being identical to Stalinism.

As I see it, it would be a mistake to change the basic criteria we have been following in defending ourselves against the Healyite campaign. As the truth spreads, there will no doubt be quite a few who will voice an opinion. Some will have considerable impact because of their moral standing, others less, and some might be negative. All of them, however, should be made a matter of public record, in my opinion, so that those most interested can follow the developments.

By the way, we did not "involve" Haston in the case. His statement was not solicited and came as a surprise. He decided on his own to send it. As he says, it was Glotzer who called his attention to the Healyite campaign. Glotzer's connection is important in explaining Haston's motives. Glotzer, as you may have noted, was one of the signers of the statement that appeared in the September 6, 1975, IP. Evidently on a trip to Britain, he called the attention of people he knew to Healy's foul campaign. That one of these was Haston is quite natural. Glotzer is one of the leaders of the right-wing Social Democrats in the United States, and thus has much in common with Haston politically. And like Haston, he was a former Trotskyist leader (a follower of Shachtman).

\* \* \*

I do not understand why you thought George should not see Haston. Was it only a tactical question? Our complete opposition to Haston's politics should not prevent us from talking with him on such questions as the history of the Trotskyist movement, for instance. He may have material that would be useful in that connection, or he might agree to a tape interview on a series of questions concerning the years he was in the movement.

This aspect occurred to me because of the fact that along with his statement he sent me a Xerox of an interesting document that I had not seen before. It may be familiar to you, but in case it isn't, I am enclosing a Xerox of it.

Fraternally yours,

*Joe*

Joe Hansen

Enc.



[TRANSLATION]

Paris  
January 10, 1977

FROM: International Revolutionary Marxist Tendency  
TO: The Leadership of the Socialist Workers Party

Dear Comrades,

We have already sent you a copy of the resolution adopted by the International Secretariat of our organization dated March 5, 1976, regarding the accusations made by G. Healy against Hansen and Novack. We have also sent you a copy of the letter we addressed at the time to our Belgian section.

We are astonished that, despite our taking such clear positions, you in your public press and internal bulletins have renewed your attacks on "Pabloism," on the basis of arguments that grossly distort our actual past and present positions, and even in the sphere of the present polemics between your organization and G. Healy. We find this attitude profoundly regrettable.

With this letter we would like more specifically to make the following suggestions. In view of the scope that the G. Healy's campaign has taken on and its harmful effects for the movement founded by Leon Trotsky, it would be extremely useful to form a commission made up of "neutral" elements, enjoying the respect of the different sides, that would examine the case and pass judgment. Such a verdict, accepted by the different sides, would make it possible to bring the controversy to a close.

A man like Van, for example, could take on the responsibility for forming such a commission, if he accepted.

We raise this suggestion as an example of what could be done in this realm.

With our revolutionary greetings,

s/ The Bureau of the International Secretariat of the  
International Revolutionary Marxist Tendency



14 CHARLES LANE,  
NEW YORK, N.Y. 10014  
(212) 242-5530

March 15, 1977

Bureau du Secretariat International  
Tendance Marxiste Revolutionnaire Internationale  
Paris

Dear Comrades,

Please excuse our delay in answering your letter of January 10, which we received January 24th.

As we have written previously, we were grateful to receive copies of your March 5, 1976, resolution and the letter concerning the stand of your Belgian section. As you probably noticed, these were published in the September 6, 1976, issue of Intercontinental Press.

Likewise, we were glad to learn that your views were presented at the January 14 meeting in London in repudiation of Healy's slander campaign. The message sent by Comrade Pablo was read at the meeting and was also subsequently printed in Intercontinental Press in its February 7 issue.

As to your proposal to initiate a commission of respected "'neutral' elements" to examine and pass judgment on Healy's charges, we do not see such a project as feasible at the present time. We do not think that such a commission would help to "bring the controversy to a close," as you envisage it could. This conclusion is indicated by Healy's response to the detailed refutations of his charges that have already been made publicly by Joseph Hansen, George Novack, and numerous others. Healy has absolutely disregarded these answers, and everything would point to his doing exactly the same thing in regard to the findings of an impartial commission.

We share your judgment of the capabilities and objectivity of Van. He has already stated his position on the slanders in two statements that have been published in Intercontinental Press (the September 6, 1976, and February 28, 1977, issues).

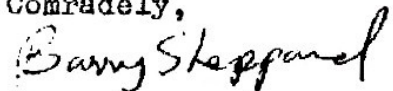
Finally, you refer in your letter to "attacks on 'Pabloism'" by SWP leaders in our public press and internal bulletin. We are not sure what you are referring to here. We have made no attacks on "Pabloism" in reference to your current positions. The fact is that your current positions remain obscure to us. We receive only Sous le Drapeau du Socialisme, and the last issue we have seen of that was dated June 1976. We would be



glad to receive any other material that would bring us up to date.

Perhaps your objection to "attacks on 'Pabloism'" relates to the publication by the SWP Education Department of documents on the history of the Fourth International, some of which contain polemics against Comrade Pablo's past positions. But we are publishing this material, along with many other items of that period, strictly as historical documentation and for no other purpose.

Comradely,



Barry Sheppard  
SWP Organization Secretary

**“Letter from John Benson concerning the next meeting of the LTF Steering Committee” is unavailable at this time.**