

SEP 30 1977

MINUTES OF THE UNITED SECRETARIAT MEETING
July 21-22, 1977

PRESENT: Adair, Aubin, Claudio, Duret, Frej, Galois, Johnson, Kurt,
Manuel, Roman, Romero, Walter

IEC PRESENT: Petersen

GUESTS: Enrique

AGENDA: 1. Argentina
2. South Africa
3. Africa
4. Organization of the Discussion on Latin America
5. Greek Convention
6. Bureau Report
7. OCRFI
8. Spain
9. Costa Rica

Chair: Galois

1. Argentina

Romero reported on the kidnapping of members of the PST.

Discussion.

AGREED to send the information to the sections and sympathizing organizations. (See July 25, 1977, mailing.)

2. South Africa

Petersen reported on the initiation of an international trade union solidarity campaign with South African unionists by the British Anti-Apartheid Movement. (See July 25, 1977, mailing.)

Discussion.

3. Africa

Roman reported on news received about a split in the Groupe Ouvrière Révolutionnaire and the formation of the Ligue Communiste de Travailleurs. Both organizations are putting out material and consider themselves supporters of the Fourth International. Recent developments indicate that there is a possibility of unifying the two organizations.

Discussion.

MOTION: To send the following letter to both organizations from the United Secretariat. (See Attachment A.)

CARRIED

4. Organization of the Discussion on Latin America

Galois reported on initial thinking in the Bureau concerning the preparation of the discussion.

AGREED to discuss further at the September meeting after consultation with several members of the International Executive Committee in Latin America.

5. Greek Convention

Report by the United Secretariat delegation to the fusion convention of the OCIG and RCF. The name of the fused organization is

Organization of Communist Internationalists of Greece (OCIG) and the name of the paper is Othofragma (Barricade), formerly the name of the paper of the RCF. The convention also decided to proceed with discussions seeking fusion with the Communist Internationalist League -- the organization formed by comrades who broke with Healy.

Discussion.

6. Bureau Report

A. Galois reported on correspondence with Israel and Portugal. (See Attachment B.)

Discussion.

B. Duret reported that while Domingo is not on the Bureau Sylvain will be responsible for Bureau correspondence with Latin America and coordination with Latin American exile groups.

Discussion.

C. Duret initiated a discussion on the functioning of the center and publications.

Discussion.

AGREED to continue the discussion at the September meeting.

D. Congress delegations

MOTION: 1) that the United Secretariat delegation to the SWP convention be comrades Aubin and Duret;

2) that the United Secretariat delegation to the RMG, GMR and LSA/LSO conventions be comrades Aubin, Duret, Johnson, and Sylvain.

CARRIED

7. OCRFI

Aubin reported on the progress of the preparation of the articles for the discussion with the OCRFI. Articles by both the United Secretariat and the OCRFI should be ready by October.

Discussion.

AGREED that the Bureau will prepare proposals on questions such as the size of publication, prices, and title.

8. Spain

Manuel initiated a discussion on the results of the elections and a balance-sheet of the FUT campaign and the LCR election policy. The LCR experienced significant expansion as a result of its election campaign.

Discussion.

Statement by Romero. (See Attachment C.)

Statement by Manuel. (See Attachment C.)

Statement by Galois and Johnson. (See Attachment C.)

9. Costa Rica

Duret initiated a discussion concerning the interview with

Fausto Amador appearing in the June 20, 1977, issue of Perspectiva Mundial and reprinted in Intercontinental Press Vol. 15, No. 24, June 27, 1977. (See Attachment D.)

Discussion.

MOTION by Duret: The United Secretariat votes to make known to the editor of Intercontinental Press:

1. that the publication in the June 27, 1977, issue of IP and the June 20, 1977, issue of Perspectiva Mundial of the interview with F. Amador without prior consultation with the United Secretariat, the Bureau, or even one of the associate editors (E. Mandel, L. Maitan, or P. Frank) represents an initiative that clearly goes against the type of functioning that should prevail for the production of such a document;

2. that in explicitly asserting that Amador is a member of the Fourth International, the interview not only contains a falsification, but goes against the motions adopted by the United Secretariat;

3. a copy of the letter that was sent to Rodrigo will be sent to the editor of IP, adding that the United Secretariat is still waiting for an answer on this subject.

MOTION by Galois: To designate several comrades of the United Secretariat to discuss this question with Joe Hansen, editor of IP, and to refer this motion to the next meeting.

For Galois motion:	3 (Adair, Galois, Johnson)
Against:	7 (Aubin, Duret, Claudio, Frej, Kurt, Roman, Walter)
Abstentions:	2 (Manuel, Romero)
For Duret motion:	7 (Aubin, Duret, Claudio, Frej, Kurt, Roman, Walter)
Against:	3 (Adair, Galois, Johnson)
Abstentions:	2 (Manuel, Romero)

MOTION by Duret: Following the publication by Intercontinental Press and Perspectiva Mundial of an interview with F. Amador, the United Secretariat confirms the content of the letter that was sent by the Bureau to Rodrigo, dated June 29, 1977. This motion and the letter to IP will be sent to F. Amador.

MOTION by Galois: To table the motion, and to await a reply to the letter sent from the Bureau.

For Galois motion:	3 (Adair, Galois, Johnson)
Against:	7 (Aubin, Duret, Claudio, Frej, Kurt, Roman, Walter)
Abstentions:	2 (Manuel, Romero)
For Duret motion:	6 (Aubin, Duret, Frej, Kurt, Roman, Walter)
Against:	0
Abstentions:	5 (Adair, Claudio, Galois, Johnson, Romero)
Not voting:	1 (Manuel)

MOTION by Claudio: The United Secretariat requests IP to publish the letter that was sent by Livio Maitan concerning the interview with F. Amador.

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MOTION by Galois: To table a vote on the motion by Claudio until the September meeting.

MOTION by Roman: To instruct the delegation to the SWP convention to discuss with the editor of Intercontinental Press how to make the positions of the United Secretariat concerning F. Amador known to the readership of IP.

For Roman motion: 2 (Kurt, Roman)

For Galois motion: 8 (Adair, Aubin, Duret, Frej, Galois,
Johnson, Manuel, Walter)

For Claudio motion: 2 (Claudio, Romero)

(See Attachment D for the correspondence and interview.)

meeting adjourned.

ATTACHMENT A
United Secretariat Letter to GOR and LCT, Senegal

Paris, le 22 juillet 1977

Chers camarades,

Nous avons appris violà plusieurs mois, avec inquiétude, le départ du GOR d'une partie de ses militants. Nous craignons alors l'affaiblissement des forces trotskistes au Sénégal. Nous n'avions pas reçu de nouvelles des camarades qui avaient quitté l'organisation jusqu'à tout récemment. C'est en effet, lors du rapport fait au bureau du SU par le camarade D., de retour d'un voyage au Sénégal, que nous avons appris l'existence de la LCT et de contacts entre elle et le GOR devant conduire à un regroupement des forces se réclamant de la Quatrième Internationale au pays.

Nous n'avons pas encore reçu les documents d'orientation de la LCT dont D. nous a signalé l'existence (concernant l'orientation générale et l'intervention en milieu étudiant). De même, nous n'avons pas à notre disposition de rapport circonstancié du GOR donnant son estimation de la situation. Mais, selon les documents fournis par D. et son rapport au bureau du SU, il semble bien que les bases de principe pour un regroupement des forces se réclamant de la QI existent. Le Secrétariat unifié a eu une première discussion sur la base des informations en notre possession. Il tient à insister sur l'importance qu'il y a à assurer avec succès le regroupement de toutes les forces trotskistes au Sénégal, malgré les difficultés qui semblent s'être fait jour peu avant le départ de D. du pays.

Les forces qui se réclament de la QI au Sénégal sont encore extrêmement faibles, en nombre comme en termes d'implantation. Pourtant, nous sommes tous conscients du rôle que peut jouer dans l'extension de l'influence marxiste-révolutionnaire en Afrique notre développement sénégalais, au pays comme dans l'émigration. Dans ces conditions, la division organisationnelle durable de forces trotskistes serait extrêmement préjudiciable, aussi bien au Sénégal que dans le reste du continent ou dans l'émigration. En ce qui concerne ce dernier point, vous savez qu'une "fraction" comprenant l'ensemble des militants sénégalais de la QI en Europe a récemment été formée et que notre travail dans l'émigration sort juste d'une crise qui a longtemps affaibli notre capacité d'intervention. Il importe au premier chef, pour la consolidation de notre travail dans l'émigration et dans le continent, que nos forces au Sénégal connaissent les meilleurs développements.

Ce n'est pas la première fois que le SU est confronté à ce type de problème dans un pays où nos effectifs sont encore faibles. L'expérience prouve que la capacité à regrouper dans une même formation, l'ensemble des militants attachés à la construction de la QI, malgré les éventuels désaccords politiques et les possibles tensions personnelles, est essentielle et constitue l'une des meilleures garanties quant aux succès futurs de l'organisation. Le problème se pose d'ailleurs dans un cadre plus vaste. Sur la base d'une position de principe, nous avons décidé de tout faire pour unifier, au plus tard à la date du prochain congrès mondial (prévu pour 1978), les forces se réclamant de la QI dans les divers pays. En effet, vous n'êtes pas sans savoir que dans plusieurs cas, elles sont divisées en deux ou trois organisations nationales. Nous considérons que le dépassement de cette situation anormale est l'un des objectifs majeurs que notre mouvement doit s'assigner. Ainsi, dans la période actuelle, se sont opérées ou s'opèrent des fusions au Canada, au Mexique et en Grèce. Et nous voudrions souligner, dans ce contexte international aussi, l'importance que nous accordons au regroupement des forces au Sénégal dans la période qui s'ouvre.

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ATTACHMENT A....cont'd./2

Comme dans les autres cas où sont possibles des processus de fusion et de regroupement, le SU est prêt à intervenir, par l'intermédiaire d'un mandat donné à son bureau, pour aider au mieux leur succès. C'est pourquoi, par la présente lettre, le SU de la QI veut nouer des liens directs avec vos organisations. Nous sommes prêts à recevoir toutes vos propositions concernant le regroupement des forces trotskistes au Sénégal; et nous vous ferons part de nos suggestions. Nous vous demandons de nous envoyer l'ensemble des documents qui peuvent nous éclairer sur vos débats d'orientations politiques et votre intervention de masse, comme votre appréciation des possibilités de regroupements et de leurs modalités.

Recevez, chers camarades, nos fraternelles salutations révolutionnaires,

s/ Roman, pour le Secrétariat Unifié

ATTACHMENT B

Letters from the United Secretariat Bureau
to the Portuguese PRT and the RCL of Israel

1. United Secretariat Bureau letter to the Portuguese PRT

June 29, 1977

Dear Comrades,

We have received a recent Discussion Bulletin of the PRT, containing material entitled, "Boletim de Discussão Sobre as Relações com a LCI." As we understand it, the article in this bulletin expresses the official position of the PRT.

We are very disappointed in the decision you have taken "to cease any kind of activity aimed at fusion between the LCI and PRT." (p.8) As you know, it has been a long-standing position of the United Secretariat -- an opinion expressed unanimously -- to encourage fusion between the PRT and the LCI, which would be a big boost for Trotskyism in Portugal.

Among the reasons you give for taking this decision is the following: "We never thought that the fusion of the two organizations had to be carried out on the basis of the principles of the Bolshevik Tendency, just as we in no way require identification with the Tendency as a basis for membership in our party. But we think, and we have always said, that the section to build had to be a Trotskyist section of the Fourth International, and not a disguised section of the IMT. The latter hypothesis would mean the dissolution of Portuguese Trotskyism as a politically and organizationally independent current; at the same time, this would cause great harm to the International. The fact that the LCI has not been willing to fight consciously against the disastrous orientation of the IMT demonstrates that it is inclined to bring about its own self-dissolution into the so-called 'far-left' and into the POUMist and centrist conceptions of Mandelism. The LCI's dependence on the Majority is a decisive obstacle to the fusion of the two organizations." (p.5)

In the first place, you have known the LCI political positions for a long time, and you have also known that many LCI leaders have expressed themselves in favor of IMT positions. Yet this was never before presented by you as an obstacle to exploring the possibilities for fusion. So, we fail to see the relevance of this argument today.

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ATTACHMENT B....cont'd./2

Secondly, and more importantly, it is inadmissible to demand, as a precondition for fusion, that the majority of the fused organization break from the IMT.

Simply consider the logical consequences of your position, if applied elsewhere. If it is impossible to carry out a fusion that results in a party with a majority of IMT supporters, then does it not also follow that comrades who are presently members of sections with IMT majorities should pursue a split course? If the formation of a united Portuguese party with an IMT majority would mean "the dissolution of Portuguese Trotskyism," then what is the logical consequence on an international level, where many sections and sympathizing groups are led by IMT majorities? Has Trotskyism been dissolved in all these countries? And, for that matter, what about the Fourth International itself? At the last world congress, and at recent IEC meetings, a majority has voted for IMT positions. Has this meant the dissolution of Trotskyism in the Fourth International itself?

Your position is tantamount to rejecting the legitimacy of the IMT as a Trotskyist current within the Fourth International. We reject this. The IMT, like the BT and the LTF, stands politically within the framework of Trotskyism. As a consequence, supporters of the IMT have a place in the Fourth International, and there is no justification, either to reject unification, or to advocate split on the grounds that the majority of a section or sympathizing organization supports the views of one of these international tendencies or factions.

Accordingly, we urge you to reconsider your decision, and once again explore the possibilities of fusion with the LCI.

There is an additional matter we wish to raise about section 3 of the PRT bulletin. The section is entitled, "No to Mandelist revisionism! No to Zimmerwaldian, POUMist and Centrist Corruption of the International!" It includes the following statement: "How can anyone find fault with us for struggling ruthlessly against the centrist corruption of our International, and against petty bourgeois and revisionist fifth columns that exist inside it?" (p.5)

The characterizations above are quite sharp. Recall, for example, that the Trotskyist movement split with the centrist POUM. If today, there ever developed a centrist or revisionist fifth column in the Fourth International, it would be our duty to break with it -- politically and organizationally -- at least, that would be the only serious conclusion to draw from such characterizations. You have charged that such a problem exists in the Fourth International today. We await a response from you to clarify what you mean.

Comradely,
The United Secretariat Bureau

cc: LCI

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ATTACHMENT B...cont'd./32. United Secretariat Bureau Letter to the Revolutionary Communist League of Israel

July 8, 1977

Dear Comrades,

We are writing to you about some developments concerning the Palestinian Communist Group. Comrade Ygal Schwartz, one of the leaders of the PCG, was just in Europe and asked to talk with us. Comrades Aubin, Duret, and Galois of the United Secretariat Bureau participated in discussions with him.

Comrade Schwartz told us that the main purpose of his trip to Europe was to clarify the status of the PCG with regard to the OCRFI, out of which the PCG had originated, but with which the PCG had been developing differences.

You are, of course, familiar with the PCG's positions on the Arab revolution. We recall your January 8, 1977, letter to the United Secretariat in which you pointed out that these comrades, who at that time were still a minority in the Workers League, were moving closer to your own positions. Comrade Schwartz told us that the PCG's positions on the Arab revolution, as they have been developing since, clearly diverge on some important points from those held by the OCI, the most important group in the OCRFI. (We are not certain about the official positions of the OCRFI, as such.) Comrade Schwartz told us that the PCG agrees with the general line of the 1971 SWP resolution, "Israel and the Arab Revolution."

On international questions, Comrade Schwartz told us that the PCG has been following the big political questions that have been under discussion for the past several years in the USFI. In general, the PCG comrades, on the basis of the information they have, agree with the positions of the LTF on Latin America, Portugal and past questions concerning electoral policy in Europe. On a more recent question he said that he disagreed with the OCRFI position on Spain, and saw the LCR campaign in the recent Spanish elections as positive; he seemed to agree with the LCR's general orientation in the present situation.

As you know, the PCG comrades welcomed the statement made by the OCRFI after the October 1976 meeting between delegations of the OCRFI and the USFI. In the opinion of the PCG, this statement not only opened the way to a discussion, but to a unification -- that is, that the mutual characterizations made on this occasion lay the basis for a principled unification. Comrade Schwartz said that he was disappointed when the OCRFI representative told him, in their discussions here, that the OCRFI did not share this point of view. In fact, the PCG holds the view that the 1963 reunification itself was principled, that it was the correct thing to do at the time, and that it brought together the majority of Trotskyists into one organization. The PCG sees no obstacle, from their side, to being in a common organization with the forces of the USFI.

Comrade Schwartz told us that the PCG disagreed with the OCRFI organizational norms, as expressed in the OCRFI decision to expel the Workers League. Although the PCG comrades felt that they themselves had been mistreated by the Workers League majority during the time that they were a minority in the Workers League, and although they disagreed strongly with the political positions of the Workers League and felt themselves closer to the positions of the OCRFI,

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ATTACHMENT B....cont'd./4

they thought that the reasons utilized to expel the Workers League from the OCRFI were insufficient. The PCG felt that there was room in an international Trotskyist organization for a broad range of views.

It was with the totality of these positions above that Comrade Schwartz came to discuss with the OCRFI. He said that he was informed by the OCRFI that the positions held by the PCG were incompatible with membership in the OCRFI.

In his discussions with us, Comrade Schwartz indicated some further evolutions on his part. He indicated that he either held differences with or was reevaluating OCRFI positions on various points such as the nature of Cuba; the nature of the East European workers states; the approach towards the new developments in the West European Communist Parties; the nature of united front policy; the supposed decline of the productive forces.

We discussed all this in the Bureau afterwards and, in general, it seemed to us that the political positions expressed by Comrade Schwartz were compatible with membership in the Fourth International. One of the things about us that comrade Schwartz was attracted to was our tradition of welcoming a broad range of political views within the Fourth International, within the framework of common agreement on basic principles, and our efforts to build a democratically centralized International with a collective, collaborative leadership that includes comrades of differing views.

We also took note of the fact that Comrade Schwartz seemed genuinely interested in learning more about all aspects of the Fourth International. While he was here in Europe he made arrangements to obtain a complete file of Inprecor (the PCG already receives Intercontinental Press) as well as the addresses of the publications of a broad range of our sections. He asked to speak with comrades of the French LCR to learn more about our activities in France. And he stated that the PCG was firmly committed to fusion with the RCL of Israel.

We would like to know your views on the prospects for fusion between the PCG and the RCL. If a fusion were possible, it would certainly mean a big step forward in the construction of a section of the Fourth International in Israel. But we are well aware that fusion processes are often difficult to achieve in practice. Comrade Schwartz told us that there were some difficulties that had arisen in working it out in Israel. What are your views on this? If there is anything we can do to help facilitate matters, we are, of course, more than willing to do so.

Revolutionary greetings,

s/ Aubin and Galois, for the United Secretariat Bureau

ATTACHMENT C
Three Statements Concerning *Revista de America*

1. Statement by Romero

The United Secretariat has been notified by a leader of the Spanish LCR concerning the decision by his organization's Central Committee to prohibit public sales of Revista de America by the membership. This leader indicated that he considered that Issue No. 3 of Revista de America, in his judgment, should not be sold in the local headquarters of the organization either. These decisions are disturbing, inasmuch as they constitute a sharp new attack on the editorial staff of Revista de America, the Argentine PST, and the International Bolshevik Tendency. Even more serious is the acceptance of this virtual ban, adopted without discussion and with no opportunity whatsoever for the "reprimanded" comrades to defend themselves, by the members of the USec present. In view of this, I feel obliged to enter a formal protest into the record against this serious decision, which increases tensions within the International and jeopardizes its unity, independently of any future steps the leadership of the IBT and PST may feel compelled to take with regard to the USec and the international as a whole.

2. Statement by Manuel

The United Secretariat has been notified by Comrade Manuel of the Liga Comunista Revolucionaria concerning the following resolution from the Central Committee:

Nonofficial publications of the international can only be distributed in the local units of the party with the permission of the leadership. All other forms of distribution will have to be specially authorized by the leadership (unanimously adopted).

During the meeting, Comrade Manuel expressed his personal opinion that Issue No. 3 of Revista de America seriously distorts the political activity of the LCR, and that, for this reason, it should not be distributed in the LCR's local units.

He felt that Comrade Romero's statement amounts to a factional distortion of the issue.

3. Statement by Galois and Johnson

We were surprised and disturbed by Comrade Romero's insistence that his statement be included in the minutes after the factual inaccuracies contained in it were clarified during the discussion.

Comrade Manuel repeated what he says in his statement: that the circulation of Revista de America has not been prevented by the LCR and that no decision to restrict the circulation of issue No. 3 had been made. It was Comrade Manuel's personal opinion, not a decision of the LCR, that issue No. 3 should not be distributed in the LCR local units.

While not all members of the United Secretariat expressed themselves on this point, some did state that they would consider it unwise to restrict the circulation of issue No. 3. Thus it is false to say that the "United Secretariat members present" favored a ban on Revista. During the discussion several comrades also stated that, in their opinion, it is the right of the LCR to control the political activity of the party and its members, including what publications to sell and in what manner they will be sold -- a principle with which Comrade Romero himself agreed during the discussion.

ATTACHMENT C....cont'd./2

Since neither the LCR nor the United Secretariat adopted a position on this question, we question the meaning of Comrade Romero's statement that the supposed "decision" of the LCR "increases tensions within the International and jeopardizes its unity."

ATTACHMENT D
Fausto Amador Materials

1. June 6, 1977, letter from Rodrigo to the United Secretariat

San José, 6 de Junio de 1977

Ernest Mandel
Bruselas

Estimado camarada Ernesto:

Recibimos hace ya algunas semanas la resolución del SU concerniente a mi persona y de una forma inmediata pasamos a estudiar la forma mas conveniente y políticamente adecuada de cumplir con las disposiciones de la resolución del SU tanto en su espíritu como en su letra.

Desdichadamente una publicación semejante firmada por mi y aparecida en el QUE HACER? nos colocaría en precarias condiciones de seguridad, puesto que yo soy extranjero en este país y el partido se está enfrentando precisamente en estos días a la delicada tarea de cumplir con todos los requisitos legales que le permitan presentarse en las elecciones nacionales. Pensamos que si el SU hubiese inquirido sobre el particular y considerando los problemas de seguridad implícitos en su decisión de que fuera publicada en el QUE HACER? mi relación de los hechos con toda seguridad la resolución habría sido diferente al menos en el aspecto que concierne a la publicación en el QUE HACER?

Pensamos, camarada que estarás de acuerdo con nosotros sobre este problema. De todas formas te pedimos que nos informes sobre la posición del SU frente a este problema. No se trata solo de mi seguridad personal, que logicamente tiene su importancia, sino de las complicaciones legales en que podría verse envuelto todo nuestro partido.

Ante esta situación decidimos que no apareciera texto alguno firmado por mi en el QUE HACER? o en ninguna publicación costarricense. Pensamos que lo mas importante era que apareciera un texto expresando claramente mi posición ante los hechos en cuestión y que este texto tuviera difusión amplia en Centro America y en particular en Costa Rica. Con ese propósito realizamos una entrevista para ser publicada en organos ampliamente difundidos en nuestro medio y llenando las particularidades exigidas por el SU para volver a considerar si se me acepta en la internacional o no.

La tardanza en la aparición de dicha entrevista, por razones ajenas a nuestra voluntad, nos mueve a escribirte para que disipes cualquier duda que pudiera surgir en camaradas impacientes e inmaduros, sobre mi disposición a hacer los mayores esfuerzos por eliminar este penoso problema que tan grotescos y sectarios aspectos ha tomado hasta ahora.

La publicación de nuestra entrevista no implica de ninguna manera acuerdo alguno de nuestra parte con las inmensas ambigüe-

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dades de la resolución asimismo que con la velada pero no menos evidente exigencia de realizar una especie de auto-crítica, disposición de tradición totalmente ajena a nuestro movimiento. Pero comprendemos que esto como muchas otras cosas forman parte del bagaje de tradiciones trotskistas abandonadas y por las cuales lucharemos dentro de la Cuarta Internacional.

Aprovecho esta carta asimismo para pedirte una mediación serena y madura con los camaradas de la LCR francesa, de forma que nos envíen su periódico que en repetidas ocasiones les hemos pedido en intercambio con el nuestro. Esta ausencia de correspondencia fraternal contrasta fuertemente tanto con el trato que ellos mismos brindan al PRT (ex-LCI) la otra organización hermana en este país, como con la actitud mucho menos sectaria de parte de los camaradas italianos que nos envían su prensa desde hace algunas semanas ya. Esta situación es de particular difícil comprensión para toda una serie de camaradas simpatizantes de la TMI que decidieron abandonar el PRT y sumarse a nuestras fuerzas.

Por todas estas razones te pedimos igualmente que hagas algún esfuerzo por lograr que nuestro partido reciba un trato normal en su correspondencia con el Centro internacional en lo que se refiere a los documentos de las tendencias y a las minutas del SU. Esto quiere decir que nos ayudaría mucho que el material internacional que recibimos fuera también en español para no estar sometidos a las limitaciones arbitrarias de lo publicado en Colombia por el Bloque Socialista. Los derechos de los camaradas que no leen inglés, como nuestros camaradas simpatizantes de la TMI, están en cuestión en este punto.

No dudes, camarada, en hacernos llegar tus críticas y sugerencias ante cualquier error a que nuestra juventud política nos induzca. Estamos seguros que aprenderemos mucho más y nos desarrollaremos mucho mejor si contamos con los consejos y las críticas fraternales y revolucionarias de quienes, como vos, por historia personal y por cargos internacionales, tienen la responsabilidad de tener ese trato hacia los que aspiramos a ser trotskistas consecuentes y serios.

En espera de tu respuesta, recibe de todo nuestro partido y míos en particular, los saludos más efusivos y revolucionarios.

s/ Rodrigo

2. June 29, 1977, United Secretariat letter to Rodrigo

June 29, 1977

San José

Dear Comrade Rodrigo,

We have received your letter of June 6, 1977.

We remind you that the resolution adopted by the United Secretariat asks for a declaration signed by F. Amador, and published in a Central American press organ.

While taking security problems into account, it is up to F. Amador to choose the Central American publication that is the most adequate for publishing such a declaration on a broad scale. In the opinion of some comrades, the monthly magazine Dialogo Social, published in Panama, could be used for this purpose.

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We hope for a speedy application of the United Secretariat's recommendation.

Comradely,

s/ Charles Michalous, for the United Secretariat Bureau

3. Letter from Livio Maitan to Intercontinental Press

Rome, July 1, 1977

To the Editorial Committee
Intercontinental Press, New York

Dear Comrades,

I saw the interview with Fausto Amador in your June 27 issue.

You knew that the US had taken a position on this matter that was absolutely clear -- Amador's actions were "incompatible with the defense of the interests of the working class and therefore incompatible with membership in the F.I." and admitting him to membership could not be discussed before "a clear public rejection made by Amador himself." Despite this, you have published a document in which, contrary to the truth, Amador claims that he is a member of the F.I. and in which he gives all sorts of shameless and grotesque explanations for his behavior. He wants us to believe, moreover, that he did not join the International before because of the Ninth World Congress resolution, seeking by this means to gain some reflected luster a posteriori from a factional struggle in which -- for good reasons -- he did not participate.

You knew, moreover, that we were very sensitive about this entire affair. The least that you should have done was consult us, at least as "contributing editors." You preferred to follow an outrageous policy of presenting us with a fait accompli.

None of us wanted a public polemic over this whole distressing story. This could only discredit us and be exploited by our opponents. But you have taken the initiative. So, I am sending you a document, which I ask you to publish immediately.

Best regards,

s/Livio Maitan

Rome, July 1, 1977

Intercontinental Press
New York

I have read the interview with Fausto Amador that you published in your June 27 issue.

I think that just reading this document must have raised questions in the minds of more than a few comrades about the kind of character to whom you gave so much space. I also think that not very many people would take an indulgent attitude toward a man who left a movement fighting against a bloody dictatorship, taking advantage of his family's ties with the dictator to comfortably return home, and then deliver political sermons before the reporters of a press that is one of the most corrupt in the world. I would hope, nonetheless, that no one thought that the murdered and tortured militants of the Sandinista Front had any lessons to learn from someone who shortly

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after returning to the bosom of his family became an embassy functionary so that, as he informs us, he would not have to pay taxes and could "live more easily in Brussels."

If I wanted to stir up the mud, I would ask you to publish the reports in the Managua press at the time when Amador says they reproduced his statements in part and did not totally falsify them. In his interview, he says, among other things, that although he was repelled by the bureaucratization in Cuba -- oh, such an impeccable revolutionist! -- he considered Cuba and the countries like it a thousand times preferable to the capitalist ones. Unfortunately, he launched foul and slanderous accusations in the press, claiming, for example, that in the USSR they pull workers' teeth without an anesthetic.

The least that might be considered is that such moves were unworthy and contrary to the interests of the people of Nicaragua.

It is true that at a certain time, Amador had contacts with Trotskyists in France and Belgium. But as soon as it became clear how he had behaved, our comrades took their distance. Amador's claim that he is working in the Fourth International is absolutely false. He is not a member of any section or sympathizing organization. No body of the International has ever agreed to admit him. This must be absolutely clear.

s/Livio Maitan

4. July 25, 1977, United Secretariat letter to Joseph Hansen

July 25, 1977

Joe Hansen, Editor
Intercontinental Press

Dear Joe,

We enclose for your information:

- (1) two resolutions passed by the United Secretariat on July 22nd, 1977, concerning the publication in Intercontinental Press of the interview with Amador; and
- (2) a copy of a letter, dated June 29th, 1977, from the United Secretariat Bureau to comrade Rodrigo.

Comradely,

s/Dave Windsor, for United Secretariat Bureau

5. July 25, 1977, United Secretariat letter to Rodrigo

July 25, 1977

San José

Dear comrade Rodrigo,

We enclose for your information:

- (1) two resolutions passed by the United Secretariat on July 22nd, 1977, concerning the publication in Intercontinental Press of the interview with Amador; and
- (2) a copy of our letter, dated July 25th, 1977, to the editor of Intercontinental Press, Joe Hansen.

Comradely,

s/Dave Windsor, for United Secretariat Bureau

6. Intercontinental Press interview with Fausto Amador

(Appearing in IP, Vol.15, No.24, June 27, 1977.)

(The following interview was granted by Fausto Amador, a former participant in the guerrilla struggle in Nicaragua. We have taken the text from the June 20 issue of Perspectiva Mundial, a revolutionary-socialist news magazine published fortnightly in New York. The translation is by Intercontinental Press.)

Question. I understand that you have gone through several different political phases on your road toward Trotskyism and the Fourth International, including a period in which you were involved in the guerrilla movement in the 1960s and were a strong supporter of Guevarism and the Cuban line of the period. What was your first political experience before that? Did you have any political background before you became involved in guerrilla war?

Answer. I first became involved in politics at the age of eighteen as a student leader in the Instituto Nacional Ramirez Goyena in Managua. The fact that my brother, Carlos Fonseca Amador, was a national leader played a big role in my becoming interested in politics and had a great influence on my political development. Nonetheless, my first involvement was entirely independent of him since throughout the year 1965-66 he was either out of the country or in prison.

In my early work as a student leader, I did not yet have any clear Marxist orientation. But very quickly my contact with students of very modest means and with very poor sections of the population convinced me that socialism was the only way to change the economic conditions.

Q. In what year did you become active in the student movement?

A. It was in 1964. At that time I not only started to be active in the student movement but began to work in a left party called the Partido de Movilización Republicana (PMR -- Republican Mobilization Party). This group was built as a popular front for the elections that were to be held some time in the future.

The main left groups that participated in the PMR were the Partido Socialista Nicaraguense (Nicaraguan Socialist Party, the CP) and the Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional (Sandinista National Liberation Front, a guerrilla organization named for the leader of the resistance to the renewed U.S. Marine occupation in the late 1920s and early 1930s, which set the stage for the Somoza dictatorship).

When I was in the PMR, I worked in organizing neighborhood committees, along with Roberto Amaya, a very valuable comrade who was murdered by the Somoza regime in 1967 when we were both in the FSLN. In this work, we managed to organize about 300 persons in the thirteen local committees we succeeded in forming. We held a great number of meetings in poor neighborhoods. We did canvassing to find out about the conditions in these areas. We started up various struggles. This was my first active participation in the mass movement.

Q. Was it usual for students to work in neighborhood committees?

A. Yes. Nonetheless, this activity had nothing to do with the student movement. It was a form of political work that oriented me more toward the movement of the poor masses than toward the student movement. In the student field, we organized several nationwide strikes and began an attempt to form a national student federation.

Let's say that the battles we engaged in in the student movement were quite different from our political work in the struggles of the poor masses. We fought a long time to keep the student center at the Instituto Nacional Ramírez Ceyena from being given a definite political character, from becoming controlled by a left group. We thought that it would be much better to keep the student movement independent and not have it linked to any political party.

Q. What made you believe it was necessary to join in the armed struggle, in the guerrilla movement, after this experience?

A. During that period, I came into contact with my brother, who was living in the underground. I should make clear that from the beginning I strongly opposed the guerrilla strategy as a revolutionary political method. However, my brother convinced me that I should fight for this position inside the FSLN and not outside it. This seemed reasonable because I had already had plenty of clashes with the union bureaucracy of the Partido Socialista Nicaragüense. They had prevented me many times from speaking at the union hall. And so, I felt the need for an alternative to reformism. And the only group that was really opposing reformism, capitulation, and class collaboration in my country was the Frente Sandinista.

Q. What was the program of the Frente Sandinista?

A. That was very difficult to say at the time because there was no written program, there was no such thing as congresses or democratic meetings. What is more, the national leadership was handpicked by the leaders themselves, who had assumed the leading role as the organization developed.

In this period, the FSLN proclaimed the need for a deepgoing agrarian reform and for freeing our country from the claws of American imperialism. It identified with the traditions of all the anti-imperialist struggles that have been waged in Nicaragua since the time of Benjamin Celedón in 1909, to Augusto César Sandino in the 1930s, up to the present day. It considered itself to be fighting for a socialist revolution against the Somoza dictatorship.

I joined the Frente Sandinista after it had been virtually wiped out in 1963-64. My first contacts with the Frente Sandinista were in 1965. But it was not until 1966 that it began to organize a new guerrilla movement that was to go into action in the following period.

Q. Did the Frente Sandinista believe at the time that it was possible to participate in any of the reformist-led movements or that there was any way to participate in the politics except through armed struggle?

A. The answer to that question is rather complicated. The youth who had come to make up the Frente Sandinista represented a whole radicalized layer that had come to the conclusion that the only way to destroy the Somoza dictatorship was through armed struggle. But it was more complicated than that. They were strongly influenced by the Second Declaration of Havana.

The fundamental thing that this group of leaders who formed the Frente Sandinista had come to understand was that the task of ousting the Somoza regime was bound up inextricably with responding to the social and economic demands of the poorest sections of the population. So, they saw that socialist revolution and the struggle against the Somoza regime were intimately linked.

However, from the outset the Frente Sandinista saw guerrilla warfare as the only method for pursuing its program. There was an attempt in 1964 to form a legal party that would fight for the Sandinista program in the framework of legality. But this project was short-lived, since those who wanted to organize such a party were jailed. In these circumstances, my brother Carlos made up his mind that in view of the repression and the dictatorship, the only possible way for overthrowing the Somoza regime was through an insurrectionary struggle.

Q. Were you involved in the operations of the guerrilla units?

A. The answer to that is also rather complicated. My involvement in the Frente was bound up with my relationship with my brother.

However, the whole program of mass action that I proposed to Carlos ran into total opposition from all the students in the Frente Sandinista and from all the leaders, with the exception of Carlos himself, who did sympathize to a certain extent with this plan of political action. However, in view of the general opposition, it could not be carried out.

In these circumstances, Carlos assigned me to organize the shoe repairers union that was influenced by some Frente activists. But my lack of trade-union experience and confusion about the connection between union activity, a nonexistent party, and an organization planning guerrilla actions made this work quite ineffective.

Q. Did you participate in guerrilla actions to any extent?

A. A time came when it seemed necessary to form guerrilla units, since the Somoza regime was carrying out a campaign of violent repression. In these conditions, discussion inside the Frente Sandinista stopped. The Somoza regime threw all its power against us, and we had to defend ourselves. All the political work I had been doing before had to be abandoned. Everyone I had contacts with or relations with or who had confidence in me in the mass movement was forced into silence. Our supporters were called on to limit themselves to aiding our activity, to providing houses, helping with transport, taking care of comrades, and all the rest.

From mid-1966 to mid-1967, all our activity was concentrated on defense against the repression, underground activity, and work with guerrilla operational units.

Q. From what you say, it seems that one of the major bases of the Frente Sandinista was the student movement. Was that the case?

A. Yes, the Frente's main source of recruits was the student movement. And when these students came into the organization, they brought to bear an additional pressure for continuing the guerrilla line.

Q. I understand from what you told me earlier that you also spent some time in Cuba after your experience in the Frente Sandinista. Why did you go to Cuba?

A. In 1967, a guerrilla group was formed in the mountains while I was working with the guerrilla units in the cities. The guerrilla front in the mountains was brutally crushed by the repressive forces of the regime, and we had to pull the central command back to the city. I took part personally in the operation to rescue the central command of the Frente Sandinista and transfer it to a more secure location in the city.

Q. Is it easier to hide out in the cities than in the mountains?

A. At this time, our security was much better than it was later. The regime gradually got over its surprise and began to come down hard on us. The group in the mountains of Pancasán had made a series of tactical errors, so that its existence no sooner became known than one of the main units was completely wiped out. With this unit gone, the other was left without any practical possibility for continuing military operations.

Q. And then, as you told me before, you went to Cuba. Was that related to your moving to the city?

A. The comrades who came back into the city from the mountains immediately took over the command, which had been in the hands of those of us who were working there. They came back with a series of proposals for wreaking revenge on the regime. Our position at the time was that we should wait, reorganize, and resume the kind of political work we had been doing.

In these circumstances, my presence in the city and in the country itself became inconvenient for many elements, and I was given foreign assignments, such as purchasing equipment. I went abroad,

and I advised the group of comrades who had been closest to me, Roberto Amaya in particular, to come with me, because the situation was going to get very difficult. The others were going to start carrying out desperate actions and were going to be hit very hard by the regime.

A few months after I left, a torturer by the name of Sergeant Gonzalo Lacayo was shot, and the regime responded immediately with a sweeping repression. Almost all the leaders of the urban guerrilla forces were captured. Many cadres were brutally murdered. During this time, I was out of the country, assigned to military training in Cuba.

Q. How long did you stay in Cuba?

A. I was there for almost two years — from January 1968 to about July 1969.

Q. And did your experience in Cuba strengthen or weaken your attitude toward the guerrilla concept of overthrowing the regime in Nicaragua?

A. My experience in Cuba was a traumatic one in my political development. I was not prepared politically for the Cuban experience. My conceptions about socialism were purely theoretical, and the growing bureaucratization of Cuba in the period I was there threw me off balance. I swung back and forth between a revulsion at the bureaucratic methods I witnessed and accepting them as necessary. During the entire time I was in Cuba I was unable to get a clear understanding of this phenomenon.

I could sum up the political conclusion I drew from my experience in Cuba very simply. It was a rather pragmatic one because of my lack of political education. I said: "Cuba and the countries like it are a thousand times preferable to the capitalist states in which we live, but this is not the kind of socialism I started out to fight for."

Since I had no political alternative there, I was in a difficult situation. As for guerrilla warfare, the situation in Cuba made me see that this method was a fatal and pernicious one and that it had to be fought against. Some differences that had arisen in the Frente led to my beginning to fight inside the organization in Cuba against this line, although not in a very systematic way.

Because of the fairly secret type of training I was undergoing, I was virtually cut off from the rest of the Sandinistas in Cuba. But it was obvious, and I made it known when I got back to Nicaragua, that I had ceased to be active in the Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional.

Q. What did you do when you returned to Nicaragua?

A. When I started to get ready to return to Nicaragua, I realized that I had to be able to come back to some kind of legal existence in order to find new political alternatives and to think over and decide more fundamentally what I was going to do, what political course I was going to follow in the future. In that period, I was rather strongly inclined to Maoism, but China's foreign policy gave me serious problems.

In this situation, I managed to get in touch with my father, and discussed the question with him. He is a personal friend of the dictator and has managed his property for twenty-five years. He told me that he could easily get permission for me to return to a legal existence and secure a guarantee of my complete physical safety. It was under these conditions that I returned to Nicaragua.

Q. On your return to Nicaragua, were you required to make any public statements to gain your legal status, or was it just a tacit understanding?

A. This matter should be totally clear. When I returned, there was no condition on the part of the regime that I make any kind of statement. There was just an agreement between my father and the Somoza regime to let me return to the country legally and live there legally for some time. There was an implication that I could not remain there for very long.

However, when I got back, and the newspapers learned of my arrival, dozens of journalists invaded my home. My father's opinion, of course, was that I should not make any statement to the

press, or that at least I should make the briefest one possible. And in a certain sense, I believe I should have followed his advice.

Moreover, this was just after a week-long period of interrogation, without torture, to which I had been subjected. Obviously I could tell the interrogators nothing because I had been out of the country for two years. I did not have the slightest knowledge of the situation of the Frente Sandinista, and all the comrades that I could recognize were either in prison or dead.

In these circumstances, I wondered if I should not make an open, public break with the Frente Sandinista, explaining my reasons to everyone, and not just quietly stop being active in it. The grounds for this were clear. Many of those I had brought into the Frente Sandinista were dead, had been tortured, seen their families destroyed, or were in prison, and I believed that I bore a heavy responsibility toward those that I had recruited to explain publicly why I was leaving the Frente. So, I agreed to give an interview to the press.

As regards the action of the Frente Sandinista, I said clearly that this was an absurd, pointless battle behind the back of the masses, that no one had any idea what it was doing. I presented a number of positions I continue to hold.

About Cuba, I said that there were a lot of things going on there that I did not know how to characterize politically — I did not get into anything as exotic as the class nature of the Cuban state — but that they did not jibe with the kind of socialism I was fighting for. On the other hand, I said that the situation in Cuba was a thousand times better than the kind of oppression in my country, and I remained dedicated to my revolutionary principles.

As for what I thought about the guerrillas, I said frankly that my opinion was that they should return to mass action. I said that I thought this was perfectly possible inasmuch as a national campaign for the release of the political prisoners and legalization of the Frente Sandinista had a certain potential for success. In these circumstances, I called on the comrades to study the problems of revolution more deeply and to reconsider what political course they should follow. I think this was the right position. And I think today that I can repeat this appeal to them to change their political course, because this is the correct thing to do.

At one point, a journalist asked me a very specific question, which was the key one in the interview, whether I thought that if my brother turned himself in he would be treated in the same way I was. My answer was yes. In view of the rather deep friendship between Somoza and my father, I thought that this was possible at the time. Later the situation sharpened to such an extent that it was no longer so. In fact, he was murdered by government troops November 8, 1976, in the northern mountains of Nicaragua.

Q. This would not have affected other members of the Frente Sandinista, would it?

A. I don't think so. I think that other members of the Frente Sandinista would have been treated differently. I don't remember exactly how I answered this question about other members. But I do recall clearly that I said that it was perfectly possible that the guerrillas could return to legal life by turning themselves in to the police if after a long process of political struggle and under the supervision of international bodies they got assurances that their lives would not be in danger.

What grounds did I have for saying that? I based myself on similar processes that had already occurred in other countries, specifically Venezuela. But the answer that I gave to this question has caused me the worst problems right up to the present day.

Q. Why did this reply cause you so many problems?

A. There are two reasons. I was perfectly aware that the bourgeois media were going to present my statements in their own way. This is why I said that I would only make a statement if they assured me that the press conference would be broadcast over the radio. What I said did come across over the radio. But in the press, naturally, it was quite another matter. Every paper played up my news conference in a way that best suited its own purpose.

The opposition press raised a big hue and cry, saying "Fausto Amador, a man in search of the

truth." It said that I was against capitalism and that I was a man who was still seeking the truth, and significantly, that I was still anti-Somoza.

On the other hand, the Somoza press said: "Poor boy, he wrecked his home. He left his wife. His little girl hardly recognizes him. And now he is appealing to the guerrillas not to let the same thing happen to them."

At the same time, the regime and the official radio station started picking out parts of what I said, which sounded terrible out of context. They made it seem as if what I had said was "I appeal to my comrades to please come back and apply themselves to their studies."

Of course, what I said about studying was in the context of studying the problem of how to make the revolution. They tried to play up what I said as if I was calling on the guerrillas to study in the universities.

Q. So, do you think that the interview had a positive or a negative effect on what you wanted to propose?

A. In fact, I think giving this interview was a very grave political error, since I had no control over the way they were going to use what I said, taking some things totally out of context. The regime exploited this opportunity to the hilt, carrying out a massive propaganda operation. Once this started happening, I had already given the interview, and there was no way I could control the way they used what I said.

Obviously, this whole business seriously discredited me in the eyes of those closest to the Frente. They did not understand most of what I said, which was correct. Today many people say the same sort of things. But at that time, in 1969, very few were talking in such terms.

Q. You say that the interview had the opposite result from what you intended. Did it also turn your former comrades against you? Make them consider you a traitor or something like that?

A. That, in fact, is what happened. Prior to this, I was already in a tiny minority that opposed the guerrilla course, while engaging in the work of the organization. When I made my statements, all my comrades began to consider me a traitor to the Frente Sandinista.

Carlos, who was jailed around that time in Costa Rica, said that he no longer considered me his brother. But at the same time, he called on me to return to the organization, which shows, obviously, that he did not consider me a traitor, since you could hardly call on a traitor to come back into the Frente. Nonetheless, in the general context, the results of the interview were disastrous.

The consequences of this political error continued to affect me throughout that period, and they still do. Many layers that have radicalized or come into left activity in the last two to four years don't know exactly how this incident came about. The only thing they know about is the old tale of betrayal. They don't really know what it was all about. And so this story continues to cause me a certain amount of trouble.

Q. You left Nicaragua after a few weeks, didn't you? And then you went to Europe.

A. That's right. I left very shortly after giving that interview and settling some personal problems with my wife, who had remarried while I was out of the country. I went to London, and while I was there, I studied English and came around the left.

My idea of studying obviously involved studying questions that have to do with making the revolution, because I still don't have any academic degree to show for all the time I was in Europe.

In London I had a rather ticklish problem. I attended a little Christmas party given by the Nicaraguan embassy. The Nicaraguan students in London asked me to say a few words. And so I gave a little speech denouncing the regime, denouncing imperialism, denouncing the corruption.

The ambassador tried to shut me up. But I wouldn't let anybody do that. Then they tried to throw me out of the embassy. A huge ruckus started up in the place. They made such a fuss that a few minutes later the ambassador died of a heart attack.

In these rather delicate circumstances, I left London and went to France to study French, and later I went to Belgium.

Q. It was in Belgium, then, that you first came into contact with the Trotskyists and the Fourth International?

A. My first contact with Trotskyism was reading Leon Trotsky, especially his *Revolution Betrayed*. Reading this book was the most important experience in my political development because it enabled me to sort out all the ideas that had been buzzing around in a chaotic way in my mind.

In Belgium, I got into direct contact with members of the Fourth International, but at the same time another thing happened that caused me quite a few problems. My family offered to buy me a car. In order to avoid paying taxes on it, and without my knowing for certain what they were doing, they had me named cultural attaché at the Nicaraguan embassy in Belgium. This appointment was a pure formality. My name was mud in the embassy and it still is to this day. The whole purpose of it was to be able to live more easily in Belgium — more peacefully and with guarantees of a certain type. And so I accepted this diplomatic post, when I was appointed to it.

I thought that this was not a very important matter. I was not a member of any political party. I was a totally isolated individual. And so I thought taking this purely honorary post would not have any repercussions. This was a second big error, but it was one that could be rectified more easily.

Q. Do you mean that your appointment to the post of cultural attaché did not require you to make any speeches, any formal statements or promises, or attend any meetings in the name of the embassy in Belgium?

A. There was no such obligation whatever at any time. What is more, my relations with the Nicaraguan embassy remained exactly the same as before. I was *persona non grata* in the embassy. Moreover, when the Belgian government asked me for a curriculum vitae, I said that I had been the editor of a revolutionary paper. In the entire time I was in Belgium, the embassy never asked me to do anything.

Q. How was it finally that you lost your post as cultural attaché?

A. While I held this post, I came into contact with members of the Fourth International. I took part in conferences, in study groups, and in seminars given by the Communist League in France.

Everyone knew I was a cultural attaché but they all also knew what the circumstances were and regarded it as kind of a joke. When I would come into meetings, many comrades used to say: "How is our cultural attaché, today?" This was a way of kidding around.

Naturally we all understood the need for getting out from under this title as soon as possible. But this had to be done in a politically useful way.

An armed clash occurred in Nicaragua in which it appeared that my brother had been killed. I had a close contact with a leading Trotskyist comrade. He advised me to talk to a trade unionist who had ties with the *Ligue Révolutionnaire des Travailleurs* (LRT — Revolutionary Workers League, Belgian section of the Fourth International). This person arranged for me to speak at a press conference given by the Russell Tribunal Against War Crimes in Vietnam, which had widened its scope to take up the question of war crimes in Latin America.

This conference was attended by a great number of journalists from several parts of the world. I formally resigned my post, and in a speech that lasted more than half an hour, I denounced the government's robberies and the role of the imperialists. I pointed to the regime's problems. I declared my revolutionary convictions.

Q. When did this press conference take place?

A. It was toward the end of 1973.

Q. What was the result of this giving up your post and attacking the Somoza regime? Did it mean that you would be unable to return to Nicaragua under the conditions that you had first tried to arrange when you came back from Cuba?

A. My resignation created rather serious problems. In giving up this post, I immediately lost my legal status in Belgium and had to apply for admittance to the country as a political refugee. Immediately after the press conference, I went to the Office of the High Commission for War Refugees, where they gave me all the necessary documents. And for the rest of the time I was in Belgium my status was that of a political refugee. I thought this was likely to create certain problems about my returning to Nicaragua.

Later on, my father told me that I had been an idiot — which he repeats every time I see him — because he had managed to arrange it so that I could come back to Nicaragua again. I had great difficulty in getting the papers for going back. It was only through my father's close friendship with Somoza that I was able to get a passport. So, normally I can enter Nicaragua without a lot of problems.

But one thing should be clear. Every time I enter the country, they interrogate me for five or six hours, asking me questions such as "What's your name?" "What are your parents' names?" "What are your brothers' and sisters' names?" They do this to show me that the interrogation is intended as harassment. And while I am in Nicaragua, I am watched.

Q. So, you would say that it is now impossible for you to live and do political work in Nicaragua?

A. That is absolutely out of the question, unless I tried to work underground. If I tried to start to do open political work in Nicaragua, my life would soon be in danger.

Q. During your stay in Europe, or in Belgium, did you continue to move toward Trotskyist positions and the Fourth International?

A. Yes, of course. During the entire period I was in Europe I moved closer and closer to the Fourth International. The process was somewhat slow because of doubts I had over the line being followed by the international at that time. You see, I had left the guerrillas convinced that this was a wrong method. I reached revolutionary Marxist conclusions from reading Trotsky, and came around the Fourth International. Those I got in contact with seemed to have some of the same illusions I had already rejected. I thought that I had come too far to go backward now. These problems were a consequence of the resolution adopted at the Ninth World Congress of the Fourth International projecting a general strategy of guerrilla warfare for Latin America.

At the time, I was aware that not everyone in the Fourth International agreed with this position on guerrilla warfare in Latin America. But I was afraid that those who opposed it were "reformists" whose attitude was pacifist for all practical purposes. This seemed to be the general feeling about them. And I continued to maintain that it would be necessary for the workers to defend themselves arms in hand against any armed attacks by reactionary bourgeois forces. I maintained this even in my press conference in Nicaragua. And so I did not try to make any contact with those in the Fourth International who opposed the strategy of guerrilla warfare in Latin America. It seemed to me that it would be very difficult to work in the Fourth International in view of the Ninth Congress line.

Q. Did that mean that you decided to leave the Fourth International, and sort of strike out on your own, or did you keep up your connections with the Fourth International?

A. At no time since I came to Trotskyism did I consider abandoning the line of building a revolutionary world party of the working class. Nor did I ever consider trying to do this outside the framework of the Fourth International. It was just that because of the differences I had I needed more time to think out how I could fight inside the Fourth International for my own political positions.

Q. I assume that you still retain your connection with the Fourth International, and still have your criticisms of the line taken at the Ninth World Congress of the Fourth International.

A. My situation is no longer the same as what I described above. Some years ago, I was able to study the positions of those in the Fourth International who opposed the guerrilla warfare strategy in Latin America and found that they coincided very largely with those that I had arrived at in isolation. From that moment on, I realized clearly that I should be in the Fourth International and I immediately asked to join. Since that time, I have been working in the Fourth International and helping to build it any way I can. But that doesn't mean that I dropped any of the criticisms I had.

Q. This is a résumé of your political history and how you finally came to Trotskyism and the Fourth International. What do you think the prospects are for the growth of Trotskyism in Central America and the rest of Latin America?

A. The main conclusion I have drawn from my political experience is that the problems that capitalism and imperialism are creating in Latin America are pushing many sections of the population toward Marxist positions. Every one of these layers has its own contradictions, of course. Every one has its own way of conceiving of the evolution that is leading it toward Marxism.

Thus in the coming period, the resounding failure of reformism, the increasing discreditment of Stalinist Communist parties, and the worsening social conditions in Latin America are going to push many sections of the population toward revolutionary Marxist positions. Of course, every sector that comes to us will bring its own prejudices and create pressures that will have to be combated.

Q. In Latin America in particular, it would seem that the guerrilla phase of the radical movement is coming to a close. What is your opinion about the possibility of political activity in Central America and Latin America now, and the possibility of building parties that are not based on guerrilla movements?

A. It is clear that guerrilla warfare has become extremely discredited among the radicalizing forces. There still are guerrilla groups with some strength. Paradoxically, the Frente Sandinista is stronger now than it has ever been, at a time when the guerrilla movement is ebbing all over Latin America. However, the possibilities for building revolutionary parties have never been better, since there is an obvious need, in the context of rejecting the guerrilla line, for an alternative to reformism.

However, another serious problem has arisen. For a long time ultraleftism and guerrillism were mixed up together. They became synonymous, since for a considerable period in Latin America the fundamental form taken by ultraleftism was guerrillism.

Now we have to be extremely alert to new, more classic forms of ultraleftism, the kind of ultraleftism that Lenin fought. If we are not on guard against such new ultraleft tendencies, of the sectarian type, we are going to have great difficulties in offering answers to the most urgent problems of the masses, the key problems of the masses in our countries. And if we cannot present such answers effectively, it will be very difficult to build revolutionary Marxist parties.

Q. To wind up, could you tell us something about the current situation in Nicaragua?

A. The situation in my country is rather explosive. The Somoza regime continues to rule with a mailed fist, relying on the National Guard, which has become extremely corrupt. And in the recent period, there have been a great many mass mobilizations.

The decisive role in the political struggles has been played by the urban masses, in rather sharp contrast to the immediate past, in which it was the rural masses that played the main role.

As a result of this new turn in the situation, the aspirations and hopes of the masses for solving their most fundamental social problems are more and more bound up with opposition to the Somoza regime. In these circumstances, the fight for democratic rights is emerging as a central axis of the

mass struggles, and this fight for democratic rights means very concrete things for the masses.

In their eyes, the struggle means fighting for improving their living standards and achieving a better life, a more human existence. Thus, the way the masses see the fight against Somoza, the fight for democratic rights has clearly socialist implications. In this way, the revolution to overthrow the Somoza regime is linked to the revolution to establish a socialist society.

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ATTACHMENT E

Statement by Claudio on Socialist Democracy Document

At the April 30, May 1-2, 1977, meeting of the United Secretariat, Comrade Claudio requested that a statement be included in the minutes following the adoption of the general line of the document "Socialist Democracy and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat." The following is his statement. (See page 24 of these minutes.)

ATTACHMENT E. STATEMENT BY CLAUDIO ON 'SOCIALIST DEMOCRACY DOCUMENT'Declaration Claudio (SU 1-2 mai 1977)

Je veux tout d'abord protester contre une violation des normes élémentaires d'organisation des discussions au SU. En effet, mon contreprojet, qui fut rédigé alors que le projet était considérablement différent de celui qui a été finalement adopté, n'a pas été traduit en anglais ni porté à connaissance de tous les membres du SU dans la version française, bien que la discussion ait duré six mois.

J'ai voté contre le projet--et je me réserve d'intervenir dans le débat public--pour les raisons suivantes:

a) Notre mouvement a opéré des révisions politiques et programmatiques au cours de son histoire. Il l'a fait dans la clarté, en expliquant que des rectifications s'imposaient et pourquoi. Or, le texte en question révisé notre position sur la démocratie prolétarienne sur un point important--la pluralité des partis soviétiques. Il le fait non seulement en glissant complètement sur le fait du changement, mais même en cherchant de donner l'impression qu'il confirme une tradition déjà établie. Une telle méthode est en soi incorrecte et n'aide pas la formation des militants;

b) le texte--qui pourtant contient toute une série d'idées incontestables--acquiert un caractère abstrait abstraitement idéologique--dans le mesure ou il semble ignorer le contexte concret--hautement dramatique--dans lequel se déroule et se déroulera la lutte pour le pouvoir dans l'écrasante majorité des pays (il suffit de rappeler que les pays ou une démocratie bourgeoise existe et qui sont donc plus directement concernés par la problématique "nouvelle" du texte ne représentent qu'une minorité infime des pays capitalistes). Une telle démarche risque, donc, d'apparaître beaucoup plus comme la proposition d'un modèle idéal que comme la réaffirmation critique nécessaire des conceptions de base du marxisme et du léninisme;

c) l'interdiction des partis bourgeois sous la dictature du prolétariat n'est absolument pas une question de principe. Mais leur reconnaissance ne l'est pas non plus. D'autre part, le problème réel et extrêmement ardu de la lutte contre les tentatives de restauration ne saurait être réduit à la dimension des mesures élémentaires contre des actions terroristes éventuelles;

d)) le texte pourrait avoir des implications politiques et tactiques sérieuses dans des cas spécifiques. Par exemple, faut-il en tirer la conclusion que nous sommes pour la reconnaissance de partis bourgeois à Cuba et au Vietnam?

Mes remarques se basent sur le projet tel qu'il a été soumis à la réunion du SU du 1 et 2 mai. J'ignore dans quelle mesure des changements seront apportés dans la version finale.

Statement by Claudio (US 1-2 May 1977)

First of all, I want to protest against a violation of the elementary norms of organization of discussions in the US. In fact, my counterdraft, which was written at a time when the draft differed considerably from the text that was finally adopted, was not translated into English, nor was the French version brought to the attention of all the members of the US, eventthugh the discussion lasted six months.

I voted against the draft, and I reserve the ight to intervene in the public discussion, for the following reasons:

a) Our movement has made political and programmatic revisions in the course of its history. It has done so clearly, explaining that these rectifications were necessary and explaining why. Now, the document in question revises our position on proletarian democracy on an important point: the plurality of soviet parties. It does so not only while completely glossing over this change, but even seeks to give the impression that it confirms an already established tradition. Such a method is incorrect in itself and does not help to educate militants;

b) Although it contains a whole series of incontrovertible ideas, the document takes on an abstract character--abstractly ideological--in that it seems to ignore the concrete context, a highly dramatic one, in which the struggle for power is developing and will develop in the overwhelming majority of countries. (It is sufficient to recall that the countries in which bourgeois democracy exists and which are therefore more directly concerned by the "new" problematic of the document represent only a tiny minority of the capitalist countries.) Such an approach thus threatens to appear as the proposal of an ideal "model" much more than as the necessary critical reaffirmation of the basic conceptions of Marxism and Leninism;

c) The prohibition of bourgeois parties under the dictatorship of the proletariat is absolutely not a question of principle. But neither is the recognition of such parties. In addition, the real and extremely arduous problem of the struggle against attempts at restoration cannot be reduced to the dimension of elementary measures against possible terrorist actions;

d) The document could have serious political and tactical implications in specific areas. For example, is it necessary to draw from it the conclusion that we are for the recognition of bourgeois parties in Cuba and Vietnam?

My remarks are based on the draft as it was submitted to the US meeting of May 1-2. I do not know to what extent changes will be made in the final version.