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New York, N.Y. 10014
February 21, 1979

TO NATIONAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS AND ORGANIZERS

Dear Comrades,

Enclosed are the following reports:

1. A report on Peru, by Peter Camejo. This report, covering the period through November 1978, contains the material that, for time considerations, could not be presented to the December 1978 meeting of the National Committee.

2. Reports on Africa by Maceo Dixon and Ernest Harsch. This material was presented to the Political Committee on January 25, 1979.

Comradely,



Gus Horowitz
SWP National Office

Report on Peru

By Peter Camejo

[Covering the period up through November 1978.]

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Peru has been going through a period of a sharp rise in the class struggle. Most important for us is that the Trotskyist movement has been playing an important role in Peru and faces a very favorable situation.

The excellent articles by Fred Murphy and Miguel Fuentes in Intercontinental Press/Inprecor are providing comrades with a week-by-week accounting of the prerevolutionary situation in Peru and the activities of our comrades. This report deals with the internal situation in the Trotskyist movement. It will concentrate on the efforts to unify the Trotskyist forces and related political questions.

Constituent Assembly

One of the most important political questions which has been debated within our movement in Peru has been over what attitude to take towards the Constituent Assembly, as it stands vis-à-vis the military dictatorship. On July 28, 1978, when the Constituent Assembly opened, a motion was presented by several delegates from workers parties calling for the Constituent Assembly to declare the military government dissolved. This motion became known as the "Red Motion." Much of the internal debate in the Trotskyist movement has revolved around this motion.

The basic problem is the following. The Constituent Assembly is made up of a majority from bourgeois parties. To call for a government of the Constituent Assembly is to call for a bourgeois government, something we obviously do not favor. But the Constituent Assembly is a popularly elected body (regardless of all the abuses and manipulation involved in its election), while the military dictatorship has no popular mandate of any kind. It would be sectarian not to use this contradiction between the Constituent Assembly and the military dictatorship to try to mobilize the masses against the dictatorship. The question thus becomes: how can the Constituent Assembly be used to fight for more democratic rights--against the military dictatorship--while avoiding a call for a Constituent Assembly government?

This question becomes extremely important when you take

(over)

into account that the masses have few illusions in the military government but still do have very many illusions in the bourgeois parties, APRA and the PPC [American People's Revolutionary Alliance; Christian People's Party], which are working hand in glove with the military. Thus counterposing the sovereignty of the Constituent Assembly to the military dictatorship, as was done by the Red Motion, can expose the bourgeois parties, which spoke against the military dictatorship throughout the election campaign, but voted down the Red Motion in the Constituent Assembly.

The Trotskyists in Peru have taken various positions. On the extreme left was the position of the FIR. (The FIR no longer exists. It unified with others to form the PRT [Revolutionary Workers Party]. This will all be covered later in the report.) The FIR held that it was wrong to present the Red Motion: to do so was to create illusions in the bourgeois Constituent Assembly and to play the game of the military dictatorship which, because its own popular base has collapsed, wants the Constituent Assembly in reserve as a bourgeois alternative.

At the other end of the spectrum is the position taken by the Bolshevik Faction members of the PST. They held it was not only correct to present the Red Motion calling for sovereignty of the Constituent Assembly, but that it is also correct to call for a Constituent Assembly government. In an internal document they went so far as to say that such a future Constituent Assembly government--even though it would clearly be bourgeois--would basically be a step forward. In public, however, the Bolshevik Faction-led PST has avoided calling for a bourgeois government. Instead they call on the Constituent Assembly to elect a government made up of the worker-representatives (a minority) and to elect Hugo Blanco president.

In my opinion both of these positions are in error because they do not differentiate between calling for a constituent assembly to take the sovereignty from the unelected military government and calling for a bourgeois government. The two are not the same.

This problem is similar to the one we confronted around the slogan for a republic in Spain at the time of the Spanish parliamentary elections. There we faced the problem that calling for a republic can mean two different things to the masses. It can mean simply: down with the monarchy; let there be a government based on popular will. We favor that idea. The other possible meaning of the slogan for a republic, is a government like the Spanish republic in the 1930s, that is a bourgeois government. We oppose a bourgeois republic.

Most people confuse the two in their thinking. How can

we make the differentiation? From our point of view, the slogan of a constituent assembly is preferable, because it more exactly conveys the idea of popular sovereignty, without implying a bourgeois republic. But can we then just rule out the use of the term republic under all circumstances? That would be sectarian, because the republic demand can sometimes arise in a context of mobilizing mass sentiment against the monarchy without necessarily implying support for a bourgeois regime. What we must do then, is make clear that our governmental slogan is a workers and peasants government, that is, to put the slogan "republic" in the context of a system of demands which makes clear our governmental slogan, that is, a workers and peasants republic, and leaves no room for an incorrect interpretation of the republic demand.

At the time of the Spanish elections the ex-LTF comrades tended in a sectarian direction, completely opposing any use of the call for a republic. They were partially reacting to the opposite error of the LCR which used the slogan for a republic in its electoral program without having any governmental slogan. The worst position in Spain was that of the group led by the Bolshevik Faction; it proposed an electoral program limited to democratic demands, with the call for a republic explicitly presented as their governmental slogan.

In Peru we face the same question, in essence. It is correct to call for a sovereign constituent assembly. That simply says that the military dictatorship cannot limit the constituent assembly in any way. This is the same as saying down with the dictatorship. It is a democratic slogan and absolutely necessary.

Calling for a sovereign constituent assembly does not imply calling for a government to be organized by a bourgeois-dominated constituent assembly. We call for a workers and peasants government.

It is not so difficult to understand this if we look at the question more concretely. We propose that the constituent assembly be sovereign. The bourgeois parties oppose us. We thereby expose them and denounce them. We can easily explain that the reason why these bourgeois parties oppose a sovereign constituent assembly is that they are really for the military dictatorship. That is readily understood.

Let us suppose the bourgeois parties were willing to support our call for a sovereign constituent assembly, that is, fight against the military dictatorship. (This is not out of the realm of possibility. In Nicaragua, for example, most of the major bourgeois parties are calling for the removal of the Somoza dictatorship.) Then we would propose concrete actions, for instance a call from the constituent assembly for a general strike to bring down the government. If the situation was one in which massive actions, as in Iran, were possible (partially

true today in Peru, but without the support of the bourgeois parties) then the concretization of our governmental slogan would be based on the organizational forms arising out of the struggle. One example might be to call for a government of a general-strike committee of workers and peasants; or we might base the call on the worker- and peasant-mass organizations leading the struggle.

In either case, whether or not the bourgeois forces in the constituent assembly will act to end the dictatorship, we need not call for a government of the constituent assembly when it has a majority of bourgeois representatives.

Most of the Trotskyist forces in Peru--with differing degrees of clarity--have tried to make this differentiation between calling for sovereignty of the Constituent Assembly and a government of the Constituent Assembly.

Problems Towards Unification

At the time of the now-famous Peruvian elections, the Trotskyist movement in Peru was quite divided. This report will only consider the currents affiliated to the United Secretariat and the OCRFI. (There are small sectarian groups in Peru associated with the Healy and Posadas cults, as well as other sectarian and ultraleft groups calling themselves Trotskyist, but these groups are irrelevant organizationally and politically.)

The OCRFI group, the POMR [Revolutionary Marxist Workers Party], is probably the largest Trotskyist organization. It was the product of a split of the large centrist group called Revolutionary Vanguard in the early 1970s. A group of leaders around Ricardo Napurí moved towards Trotskyism under the influence of the OCRFI comrades. (They succeeded in bringing about three hundred members out of a centrist group they had helped to found years earlier.) They were not able to hold most of these comrades and had only about ninety members at the time the present wave of radicalization began. Since then, they have grown considerably. They have a headquarters and a regular twice-monthly paper which claims a circulation of over 10,000. In addition to their central party unit in Lima, they have branches in some other areas of the country.

The POMR has played an important role in organizing some of the people's assemblies. They have some forces in the trade unions, but are basically weak in this area. There is no major political difference between the line of the POMR and the line comrades have been following as expressed in the speeches and interviews of Hugo Blanco.

The POMR has publically offered to begin serious discussions to attempt to unify the Trotskyist forces of the OCRFI

and the United Secretariat in Peru. This is a welcome development that could mean a great step forward for Peruvian Trotskyism.

The forces affiliated to the United Secretariat were fragmented at the time of the elections. This was a product of various causes. The ultraleft error of the Ninth World Congress was responsible, in great part, for the chaos our movement was in. To help explain what has happened in the last six months and to keep the report reasonable short, I will only summarize the most essential information.

The groups affiliated to the United Secretariat were:

1. FIR--Front of the Revolutionary Left.
2. FIR-IV--Front of the Revolutionary Left-Fourth International.
3. FIR-POC--Front of the Revolutionary Left-Workers and Peasants Party.
4. PST--Socialist Workers Party.
5. Grupo Combate Socialista--Socialist Struggle Group.
6. Círculos Natalia Sedova--Natalia Sedova Circles.

The PST, FIR-POC, Grupo Combate Socialista, and the Círculos Natalia Sedova, were all active in the FOCEP. The FIR and FIR-IV were active in the UDP (Democratic People's Unity), an electoral bloc in which centrist and Maoist tendencies held the decisive weight.

There were three tendencies inside the PST: the Bolshevik Faction (which held the majority), the Hugo Blanco-led pro-unity tendency, and the OLT (Leninist-Trotskyist Opposition).

On October 8, two conferences were held in which all these organizations regrouped as follows:

The PST (Bolshevik Faction) unified with the majority of the FIR-POC to form the new PST.

The FIR, FIR-IV, Blanco's tendency in the PST, Grupo Combate Socialista, Círculos Natalia Sedova, and a few FIR-POC members unified to form the new PRT. The OLT refused to join either.

The process of fusion, which reduced the number of groups affiliated to the United Secretariat from six to two, is a direct product of the impact of events and efforts by the United Secretariat and many Peruvian comrades to overcome the state of fragmentation of the Trotskyist movement. The Bolshevik Faction has been opposing the process of unification of all Trotskyists in Peru.

Before describing the events which led to the formation of the PRT and the failure to include the PST forces within

one party, it is of value to review the situation confronted by our movement in Peru.

We are weak in the trade-union movement. The major trade-union federation is controlled by the pro-Moscow Communist Party. The Maoists and centrists control most of the opposition forces within the trade unions, although the Trotskyists have a foothold in a few important unions.

This negative relationship of forces in no way implies that the door is closed to building our strength in the working class and deepening our involvement in the unions. Doing so remains the number one strategic problem before us in Peru. The only problem more immediate is that of establishing a Trotskyist party. All the Trotskyist organizations existing at the time of the elections are more accurately described as groups rather than parties. Their structure was based on function rather than on political criteria, that is, they had nothing equivalent to branches, but functioned only through fractions because of their small size. This makes it very hard to expand and to develop new members.

Without a regular press, a headquarters, and a correct organizational structure, all our victories in elections, our popularity, the circulation of our materials, the public meetings, and work in the trade unions, will mean little.

As a whole, our forces in Peru are more proletarian than most parties in the Fourth International, although they also have a large number of recruits gained from a student background, as is characteristic of many sections. At this moment, the possibilities for recruitment are greatest in the slum areas.

It is important to understand what this means. About one-third of the population of the entire country lives in Lima, and the slums of Lima encompass one-half of the city's population. The people living in these areas suffer a degree of poverty deeper than that in most Latin American countries. In Peru there are still enormous sections without running water or electricity.

The people who live in these slums are workers and street peddlers (ambulantes)--a disguised form of unemployment. Most unemployed find some sort of marginal occupation to survive, often becoming peddlers. Thus, although the official figure is seven percent, Peru really has about forty percent unemployment.

Much of the vote for FOCEP came from the slums. The alienation against the better-known political formations, whether bourgeois or of the reformist working-class currents, was reflected in a vote for the one person these oppressed masses felt was incorruptible and not attempting to manipulate them--Hugo Blanco. A few other candidates on the FOCEP slate, such

as Genero Ledesma, Ricardo Napurí, and Hernán Cuentas, showed strong popularity in certain regions.

Blanco's overwhelming prestige among the slum poor is due to his long history of struggle from the peasant movement up to today. His total opposition to the military regimes, as exemplified by his deportations, has given him a credibility with the masses that the bourgeoisie is desperately seeking to destroy.

What this means concretely is that the Trotskyists can enter any slum area in association with the name of the FOCEP or Blanco, and receive a warm welcome. It is easy to establish rank-and-file committees for the FOCEP in the slums. Many already exist. Many young workers in these committees--and some who are not so young--are potential party recruits. Thousands are open to Trotskyism. In fact, even though we are smaller than the Stalinists, Maoists, and centrists, as well as the bourgeois-populist formations, we have the edge on all these forces for recruitment in the slums today.

The potential has hardly been touched. The same can be said of the peasant movement where Blanco's prestige is also very high. While I was in Peru, for instance, Blanco received a letter from peasant leaders of a region, explaining their struggle against reformist currents in the union and their desire to affiliate to Blanco's party.

Various rumors have been circulating about efforts by the government to judge the popularity of Blanco and the FOCEP. FOCEP, which received twelve percent of the vote in the June 1978 elections, is said to be much more popular today. It is impossible to judge the validity of such rumors. But their very existence indicates the continued popularity of FOCEP and Blanco.

I personally picked out a slum area in Lima and asked everyone I ran into whom they had supported in the elections. I found the FOCEP to be by far the largest current; an absolute majority indicated they would vote for, or seriously consider voting for, Blanco for president.

The popularity of the FOCEP and the lack of bourgeois control of this political formation through its reformist agents is a major problem for the bourgeoisie. But before discussing the internal situation in the FOCEP it is first necessary to return to the unity efforts of the Trotskyists.

United Secretariat

Two years ago the United Secretariat tried to get the various groups in Peru to consider unification. A unity commission was established, but it failed to unify the various groups. Under the impact of recent events the United Secretariat tried again. In July a commission went down to Lima and was able to

make important headway. Facilitating this was Hugo Blanco's continued support for unity and the dissolution of the LTF and IMT.

After the IMT's criticism of the Ninth and Tenth World Congress resolutions and reports on Latin America and armed struggle, there remained no major political differences over policy in Latin America among the forces affiliated to the Fourth International.

One stumbling block in the way of unity was that the Trotskyist forces had participated in two different electoral fronts: the FOCEP and the UDP. Since this involved a very important area of their activity, it could have presented a problem in achieving unity. Fortunately this question was resolved rapidly in a very positive political manner.

To start with all six groups had the same analysis of the UDP. They saw it as a front dominated by the Maoist currents. They agreed it was not a popular front, but that its leadership would like to turn it into one. Secondly the comrades who had been working in the UDP agreed it was best to work in the FOCEP, and that the main gains for Trotskyism could be made through work around FOCEP. They likewise agreed that some of their previous judgements on the UDP and FOCEP had been wrong. They did not expect, of course, that their balance sheet and that of other comrades who had been in the FOCEP would be exactly the same.

This step on the part of the comrades who had been in the UDP reflected a serious political attitude and political maturity on their part to correct a course, after the objective situation indicated they had made a misjudgement. By so doing, they showed potential as political leaders and removed the only important problem for a unification of our forces in Peru.

Given the agreement over what to do next--work in FOCEP--and over political analysis of the UDP, that problem was objectively settled. In July, representatives of the leaderships of all groups met together and it was agreed by all to explore unity on that basis. A written statement to this effect was drawn up and signed by all, including the PST. It was agreed that the timing of the break from the UDP by the FIR and the FIR-IV comrades was a tactical question. In fact, shortly afterward the comrades who had been working in the UDP called a public press conference, announcing that they were leaving the UDP and joining FOCEP. However, by August, this question was to be resurrected by the Bolshevik Faction as a pretext to block the unification of the Trotskyist forces in Peru.

The United Secretariat delegation succeeded in getting all the groups to agree to work together in a unity commission headed by Blanco, and to hold a plenary meeting of all groups

to see if there remained any political problems in bringing about a general unification. August 20 was set as the date for the plenary.

Unfortunately, simultaneous with the United Secretariat's efforts to unify the Trotskyist movement, the Bolshevik Faction--led by Nahuel Moreno--set out on a different course and threw its full strength behind a totally opposite perspective.

The Bolshevik Faction held an international faction meeting in July. Aware of the enormous potential for Trotskyism in Peru, they decided that it would be one of the countries they would concentrate on. But, proceeding from factional considerations, they decided to try to make a breakthrough for their faction alone. They thought that in Peru they would be able to show the Fourth International that the Bolshevik Faction's party-building methods were correct. They would do it all by themselves; unification, they thought, would only get in the way. At that time they controlled the PST, of which Blanco was a member.

The Bolshevik recognized that a unified Trotskyist party would leave them in a minority. So they moved rapidly to try and build up the PST and to block unification. They devoted a lot of resources to Peru, including a large number of experienced cadres. Although this leadership infusion greatly strengthened the PST apparatus, it also resulted in the faction de facto replacing the elected leadership of the PST. Decisions no longer went through normal channels. The central PST party leadership, which included Blanco, was presented with a fait accompli, with regard to decisions on assignments, expenditures of money, political line in the newspaper, etc.

Upon Blanco's return from exile, he submitted a short article for the international internal discussion bulletin criticizing the party-building methods of Nahuel Moreno, the leader of the Bolshevik Faction. This put Blanco definitively on the faction's "enemies list." The Bolshevik Faction began one of its now infamous character assassination campaigns against Blanco, like the previous campaigns they have launched against Cristina of Mexico, Fausto Amador of Costa Rica, Socorro Ramírez of Colombia, and more recently, Miguel Antonio Bernal of Panama. With Blanco they have been somewhat more cautious in their charges.

Nevertheless, Nahuel Moreno himself made a trip to Peru, during which he launched into a long tirade against Blanco to the members of the Bolshevik Faction, seeking to whip them up against unification prior to the August 20 meeting.

The theme of this new campaign against Blanco--and against unity--was that a new danger had appeared in Peru: popular frontism. The comrades who had been in the UDP were portrayed as terribly tainted; they could not be allowed to participate

in any unification until they made a strong self-criticism, joined the FOCEP, and cleaned up their act--with a trial period of six months. Blanco, they charged, favored unification because he was capitulating to popular-frontist pressures.

The Bolshevik Faction entered the August 20 plenary prepared for an hysterical campaign against the supposed dangers of popular frontism in the Peruvian Trotskyist movement. This campaign was aided by the messages of solidarity brought by Bolshevik Faction members of other countries. The speeches were backed up by cheering and sloganeering from the floor which was carefully organized by Bolshevik Faction leaders. The FIR-POC comrades who were influenced by the Bolshevik Faction backed up the majority of the PST in this campaign.

This role by the Bolshevik Faction succeeded in part. It established a factional atmosphere, ending the possibility of an objective political discussion. From lack of experience the comrades of the FIR-IV and FIR who were under attack responded to the shouts and taunts of the Bolshevik Faction by shouting themselves, accusing the PST of electoralism for their position of calling for a Constituent Assembly government. Attempts by Blanco, who was chairing the meeting, to stop the sloganeering and discuss politics calmly were unsuccessful.

At that meeting I spoke from the point of view of the United Secretariat delegation. I spoke out for the need to build a unified section in Peru, run by Peruvians, and I indicated our opposition to the concept of setting a line for Peru from the outside. I was strongly criticized by the Bolshevik Faction for not setting a line for Peru myself. Later this attack was escalated, and I was charged by the Bolshevik Faction for allegedly saying that they were mercenaries who went around using money to buy comrades.

The Bolshevik Faction claims that the Fourth International is suffering from a "moral crisis," and they are continually "discovering" examples of individual degeneracy to back up this allegation. Their charge against me was spread around Latin America and beyond, to Europe, as a new example of this "moral crisis." Later the charges against me were expanded to include the allegation that I bore responsibility for the imprisonment and kidnappings of comrades.

This alleged "moral degeneracy" on my part was used as a pretext by the Bolshevik Faction to refuse to attend the next meeting of the unification commission of the Trotskyist movement. At that meeting, held a few days after the August 20 plenary, a motion was presented in the name of all the groups, except for the PST (Bolshevik Faction) and the FIR-POC, declaring that their conclusion from the August 20 meeting was that the differences that existed were not sufficient to justify maintaining separate groups, and therefore they wished to

set a date for a fusion conference.

The result was that on October 8, the Combate Socialista group, the Natalia Sedova circles, FIR, FIR-IV, and the Pro-Unification Tendency of the PST unified into a new party--the PRT.

Meanwhile, the PST had planned a plenary for September 3 to permit all its members to participate in a discussion on the unity question as well as other questions. But at that meeting the Bolshevik Faction insisted that everyone had first to vote that they were loyal to the PST and would abide by whatever decision was made at that plenary, before discussion on any question could be held.

Blanco and other comrades protested that since the question under discussion was whether to dissolve the PST and unify with the other Fourth International groups, it would be wrong to first vote on the very question under discussion. He explained that the PST was simply one public faction along with various others of the Peruvian section of the Fourth International, and the question was whether to abandon the public faction in support of the formation of a unified party, or continue as in the past. He declared that his primary loyalty was to the Fourth International and to all the Fourth Internationalists in Peru, rather than to any of the public factions; in his opinion no political basis existed to justify maintaining separate groups.

The Bolshevik Faction mounted a strong and vociferous call for PST loyalty and discipline. They accused Blanco of being undisciplined because he was a mass leader and thought he was more important than the rank and file. The Bolshevik Faction insisted on voting on their "loyalty oath" before the political question of unity could be discussed. Blanco and twenty other comrades refused to vote and abstained. About seventy-five comrades voted for the Bolshevik Faction motion. The PST majority then announced that Blanco and all others refusing to vote for their motion were no longer in the party. Thus Blanco was expelled September 3 from the PST for trying to present his views for the need for unity.

It was this September 3 meeting that was attacked by the group that called itself the Peruvian Anti-Communist Alliance (really an arm of the dictatorship). Three comrades were kidnapped; two were released shortly afterwards, but one was held for a week and tortured. (He was a supporter of the Bolshevik Faction, while the other two were opponents of the Bolshevik Faction.)

After this event, the Bolshevik Faction charged that, because of my remarks at the August 20 meeting, I was responsible for the kidnappings. Later they added that I was also responsible for the arrest of Moreno in Brazil. The members of

the Bolshevik Faction in Peru and in other countries claim to believe these accusations.

After the September 3 meeting, the Bolshevik Faction mounted a public campaign against Blanco, trying to explain his separation from the PST. They gave interviews to the bourgeois press stating that Blanco was undisciplined and was unifying with forces outside the FOCEP having nothing to do with Trotskyism. This resulted in some sensational news items in the bourgeois media. Many believed that Blanco had quit the FOCEP. A whole delegation of independents in the FOCEP went to meet with Blanco to ask him to remain in the FOCEP. They were shocked to discover the information being circulated by the PST was totally false.

The Bolshevik Faction also published an internal document for its members explaining that Blanco was adapting to popular frontism. Publicly they ran a special two-page centerspread in their paper attacking Blanco. This public attack spread beyond Blanco to the United Secretariat, which was accused of building centrist parties.

Right-wing newspapers ran front-page headlines using the PST leaders' attacks on Blanco as a way to try and weaken Blanco's prestige.

The PST unified with the FIR-POC, whose leadership was in general agreement with the policy of opposition to unity. The new party was called the PST, and the new newspaper carried the name of the FIR-POC paper, Bandera Socialista, as Intercontinental Press/Inprecor reported in the November 6, 1978 issue. The PST/FIR-POC unification took place on October 8, the same day as the founding meeting of the PRT. No representative of the PRT was allowed to attend the PST gathering, and the PST refused to send any representative to the PRT founding conference.

Thus, after October 8, three Trotskyist groups of importance exist in Peru: the PRT, the PST, and the POMR. The POMR has publicly suggested the establishment of a commission to try and unify the Trotskyist movement in Peru. The PRT answered the POMR, through an article signed by Blanco, also calling for the unification of the three Trotskyist groups in Peru.

Important steps towards possible unity between the PRT and the POMR have already been taken. A joint commission has been established and a political statement to probe the areas of agreement and differences has been prepared by the POMR. So far the PST has refused to participate in these discussions.

A discussion on the whole Peruvian situation took place at the United Secretariat meeting in early November. There the representatives of the Bolshevik Faction were asked to explain the BF's view of the deep political differences which were

blocking unification in Peru. The PST newspaper had referred to basic programmatic differences. The BF leaders were unable to state a single political difference. Instead, they raised a new demand that had to be fulfilled before unity could be considered. They demanded that the PRT and the United Secretariat declare their support for a campaign for a ticket of Blanco for president and Ledesma for vice-president (a current public campaign by the PST). If this new condition was not met, they held there could be no unification.

This proposal had one positive aspect to it. The previous proposal from the Bolshevik Faction had been that the groups in the UDP--the FIR and FIR-IV--leave the UDP at once, strongly self-criticize their past, and successfully pass a six-month trial period working in the FOCEP. Apparently these conditions have now been dropped. Since the new PRT is in the FOCEP, and no members of the Fourth International remain in the UDP, the Bolshevik Faction's old pretexts against unity have no credibility. So they have switched their pretext for opposing unity.

The proposal for a Blanco-Ledesma ticket brings us to an important political problem confronting us in Peru: the situation in the FOCEP.

Whither the FOCEP?

The following groups are in the FOCEP:

The PST; PRT; POMR; a crazy Maoist group (which everyone else in the FOCEP leadership is agreed must be expelled from the FOCEP because they have carried out physical attacks on other FOCEP members, and have continually broken the few unity principles of FOCEP); a centrist group, called the MIR for Socialism; and a group of "independents" around Ledesma. The "independent" sector has recently added, at Ledesma's request, a small bourgeois-populist party called the ARS [Acción Revolucionaria Socialista--Revolutionary Socialist Action].

Ledesma is very anxious to run for president. He sees himself as the Allende of Peru, and his goal is to turn the FOCEP into a popular front. Both the government and the Stalinists are very concerned over the popularity of the FOCEP and would like to prevent it from becoming a pole for a class-struggle orientation and for independent political action by the working class.

There is a growing campaign to build up Ledesma as the leader of the FOCEP against Blanco. Equis, a slick weekly published by the ex-Trotskyist and collaborator of the Velasco regime, Ismael Frías, is campaigning continually for the opening up of the FOCEP to the rest of the "left" under Ledesma's leadership.

The FOCEP has no clear program. In the elections for the

Constituent Assembly, the Trotskyist candidates--such as Blanco, Napurí, Cuentas, Benavides, Fernández, and others--presented a class-struggle line and called for a workers and peasants government. Other candidates in the FOCEP called for a coalition or national government.

In preparation for the coming elections, the tasks for the Trotskyists today in the FOCEP is to fight to make the FOCEP a pole for a class-struggle orientation as opposed to a class-collaborationist one. In order to achieve this they need to work out a program for the FOCEP which will include a governmental slogan for a workers and peasants government, and against popular frontism. It is imperative that a socialist bloc be formed within the FOCEP between the PRT, POMR, PST and, if possible, the MIR, and as many independents as possible. This is imperative because Ledesma is the legal "owner" of the FOCEP and will, of course, have the support of the government in the inevitable internal battle for jurisdiction.

In the elaboration of a program, its adoption, and the choosing of a candidate, the thousands of workers and supporters of the FOCEP who are organized in rank-and-file committees must be involved. Meetings of the rank-and-file groups should be called to discuss a proposed program and vote on their choice of candidates. A congress of the FOCEP rank and file must be considered to make the final decision.

Ledesma is counting on the divisions between the Trotskyists to paralyze their effectiveness. He hopes to add new groups favoring a popular-front perspective to the FOCEP to diminish the relative strength of the Trotskyists inside the FOCEP.

It is in the context of this situation that the PST has suddenly announced its campaign for a Blanco-Ledesma ticket. The motivation for this campaign was, once again, essentially factional. Unconcerned with the enormous stakes involved, they are proceeding in a manner that cuts across the present struggle in the FOCEP. By arbitrarily announcing a Blanco for president campaign, they have led many people to think that Blanco has decided to break with any democratic process in the FOCEP, in order to promote his own campaign. A Blanco-Ledesma split could now be made to appear to be a fight between two caudillos for the presidential nomination, instead of a clear difference over program.

The Bolshevik Faction, of course, realized that to counteract such a danger Blanco would have to deny he is running for president, and that this would play into the hands of Ledesma, who is informing one and all privately that he wishes to be the presidential candidate of the FOCEP.

The PST is also concerned about undoing the public damage

that they inflicted upon themselves after the expulsion and public attacks on Blanco. With this campaign they seek to prove that they are not anti-Blanco. Internally this campaign is also used to "prove" their charge of Blanco's capitulation to popular frontism, by his refusal to accept the nomination. Thus, the campaign supposedly takes on the nature of a pressure campaign to keep Blanco out of the popular-front camp. The PST has also begun a financial drive for its publicity campaign. Money is collected as if it were being collected for Hugo Blanco. (In fact, right after expelling Blanco, but before the news became widely known to the public, the PST approached the peasants union in Chaupimayo and received a substantial sum of money from them, because the peasants still thought that the PST was Blanco's party.) The Bolshevik Faction's method of collecting money from the masses on false pretense in this way can only damage the prestige of Trotskyism in Peru.

It is clear that if Blanco declared himself a presidential candidate without a discussion or vote in the FOCEP, he would, in effect, be provoking a split. Furthermore it is clear that the big majority of FOCEP supporters would be unaware of any programmatic differences in such a split. It would seem like the Trotskyists had led a split over a personality quarrel. Efforts to stop the PST campaign, in order to prevent weakening the Trotskyist position in the FOCEP, were to no avail.

At the United Secretariat meeting it was pointed out to the Bolshevik Faction members that their proposal was rather odd. They wanted a single slate composed of Ledesma and Blanco. But Ledesma is the leader of the pro-popular-front wing of FOCEP, while Blanco is the leading spokesperson for Trotskyism. This contradiction shows the purely factional basis for the BF's decision to make this tactical question over a presidential ticket the condition for the unification of the Trotskyist forces in Peru.

Recently, Blanco held a press conference to clarify that he was not a candidate for president, and that funds being collected for his campaign are being collected under false pretences.

The central task of the Fourth International in Peru today is to promote the formation of a strong unified Trotskyist party that can take the initiative in the FOCEP and lead the thousands of workers and peasants who are turning towards us, on a class-struggle perspective. If we can build a strong, unified party in the next year, and take full advantage of the present legal and semilegal openings, the Peruvian comrades would break new ground in the growth of Trotskyism throughout Latin America, and lay the groundwork for a mass Trotskyist party in Peru in the not-too-distant future.

--January 1, 1979

REPORT ON AFRICA

By Maceo Dixon

I want to focus mainly on Senegal in this report, even though I'm going to deal with some of the other places I visited.

First of all, the way the work is organized in France has a bearing on the situation in Senegal. The Senegalese comrades who are in France are in two cells. They are in a cell of the LCR, and at the same time in the Senegalese cell, an African cell. These Senegalese comrades discuss all their work in the Africa Commission or in the African cell, but not in the LCR cell.

The Africa Commission, in its work, stresses the "building of nuclei of the Fourth International," that is, having discussions with Africans about Trotskyism and so forth. It does not emphasize the building of a solidarity movement to get imperialism out of Africa, which in my opinion misses opportunities to build nuclei through working in the solidarity movement.

In London, I had a meeting with comrades of the Africa Commission there, which is part of the International Marxist Group, the British section of the Fourth International. I gave a report to them on the work that we were doing in the African solidarity movement in the United States, the Drake Koka tour, the turn into industry and how that relates to it, what we're doing in industry around it, why we were going to Africa, what we were going to do when we got back, and so forth. The comrades were impressed, but they felt that they couldn't do much of anything in London itself around African solidarity work, at least nowhere near what we were doing in the United States.

But some of them raised the idea of someone from the United States going to Britain to do a short speaking tour on the divestment movement, since they have a small divestment movement on some of the campuses there.

On Africa itself, I want to briefly go over Tanzania, Zambia, Kenya, and Nigeria, even though I want to concentrate on Senegal.

In all of these countries, there are big opportunities for our movement internationally. One of the things that Ernie [Harsch] alluded to was that much of our time was spent clarifying what Trotskyism is. We had to do this because of the effects of slanders by the Stalinists and other tendencies against Trotskyism, or misrepresentation by people who consider themselves Trotskyists, but who are off on a lot of important questions. So much of our time was spent just trying to clarify fundamental questions.

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And that was a very big help to people.

In Tanzania, I talked to people around the PAC. I showed them IP/I and the Militant. They were very open and friendly. I had discussions with the rank and file. My experience with these groups is that the rank and file has a different outlook than the leadership, in many respects, including in political perspective. For example, the question of whether Tanzania is moving toward "socialism." The PAC leadership would toe the Tanzanian government's line, "Yes, it is becoming socialist." I looked around. I didn't see too much socialism, just a lot of poverty. But you talk to the rank and file, people who live off of thirty dollars a month, they said, "Do I look like I'm living under socialism?" I had very long discussions with these people, and they would differ with the leadership on many different types of questions.

There's a big problem when refugees come out to exile from South Africa. Most of these people feel pressured into one particular faction, or one particular group, such as PAC, ANC, or Black Consciousness movement. That is, if they're not already in one of these organizations politically when they're leaving South Africa. A good example of that is when they're coming out of South Africa and going into Botswana. A number of times people have explained to me how the Botswana police meet these people at the border. To get into Botswana you have to say you are with a particular group. And then right behind the Botswana police is maybe the PAC or ANC with scholarships, money, other assistance.

Even to get into colleges and universities here in the United States, in Europe, or wherever, through scholarship groups like the Stoke-Phelps Fund, the African-American Institute, you have to be in a particular group. To get a scholarship from the Stoke-Phelps Fund, you have to be in the ANC. Otherwise you won't get into the United States through them. So the scholarship question becomes a political football in the exile movement.

In my opinion, exile politics are totally factional, to say the least. But still there's a lot of openness toward some of our ideas.

Most of the discussions we had with people in Zambia, Tanzania, and Nigeria were with South Africans. We were not able to contact the comrades in Zambia, because of the big problem with communications there.

In Kenya, Zambia, and Nigeria, we had opportunities to collect material on the poverty and the conditions in general for use in our press. However, the atmosphere in Zambia was pretty tense because of Rhodesian bombing raids.

I was able to visit a SWAPO school in Zambia, where there were about 200 young students, some of whom had from time to time gone into battle in Namibia against the South Africans. I got into a lot of discussions with these people. Some had been to the youth festival in Cuba, so we talked about their impressions and what they thought about Cuba. They totally identify with Moscow. When I raised some questions about the Chinese and Soviet bureaucracies, one guy said that anyone who criticizes the Soviet Union should be put in jail.

We had discussions with a lot of people around questions like Iran, Cuba, the Soviet Union, China, armed struggle, the illusions that people have about the United States, and so forth. Even among some political people, there were illusions about the United States. They're fed a lot of propaganda in the press about the position of Blacks in the United States. They need information about the real situation here, so they can explain to others how imperialism is not helping Blacks, either in Africa or the United States. So we should try to get the Militant to these people.

I want to jump now to Senegal, which is quite important. If I'm correct, it's the only place in Africa where we actually have sympathizing groups of the Fourth International.

There are two groups in Senegal: the LCT, the Workers Communist League; and the GOR, the Revolutionary Workers Group. They are in the process of fusion, which they've been engaged in for eight or nine months, at least.

The origins of the two groups go back to differences that began among African comrades and the Africa Commission in France over the question of how African comrades there should be organized. Should there be one formation where Africans from all countries are included, or should there be separate groups in France, that is, for Senegalese, for people from Ivory Coast, and so on. A raging debate began over this question. The tense situation in France had its effects in Senegal, exacerbating tensions in the GOR, which until then had been the only group in Senegal. Finally, the GOR split down the middle, and the LCT was formed.

The comrades told me that during the previous factional struggle in the Fourth International, the LCT had looked toward the former LTF, and the GOR toward the IMT, which was also a factor in the split. However, neither group was very familiar with the documentation. In any case, everyone now pretty much agrees that today there are no basic, fundamental differences between the two groups in Senegal.

At any rate, they pretty much agree on Senegalese politics, such as the recent process that the Senghor government is carrying

out to "democratize" Senegal. Both groups say that what Senghor is doing is a farce. Earlier last year, Senghor held elections and said that other parties could run in the elections. But there could only be three parties, one for each particular tendency, as defined by him: a Marxist tendency, a nationalist tendency, and a socialist tendency. Senghor proclaimed his party the socialist tendency. Although both the LCT and GOR considered this a farce, they had different positions on the elections. One called for abstention and one called for a boycott.

Also there's the question of freedom of the press. Though there are illegal parties, some of them have been able to sell their papers openly. The comrades are grappling with how they should relate to this. Both groups say that they should not publish a paper, for different reasons. But there are a couple of people in both groups who feel that they should put out a paper, if they had the money and the human resources. They think it's possible without facing a lot of harassment.

Both groups say that everyone who was in prison for political reasons has been released. There are also now some unions independent from the state. One unionist formed a teachers union that both groups say is independent.

The comrades are also grappling with a number of international questions, like the Shaba crisis in Zaire, which is important since there are French troops and bases in Senegal, and Senghor allowed them to shuttle troops to Zaire to put down the uprising, as well as sending Senegalese troops to Zaire. They are trying to grapple with that, but they never did come up with a position.

However the fusion process works out, the comrades want to do it on their own. They feel very strongly about this. But they appreciate people from the Fourth International coming to visit them.

I talked to many comrades from both groups, and they both want to have a fusion. They feel there is a fundamental basis for a fusion. They set up a joint committee in June or July of last year, with two representatives from each group, who meet often. The committee is to establish a joint bulletin for the two groups, where they can publish various documents. But only the two comrades from each group will be involved in producing these documents and discussing them together. This appears to be a substitute for members of the two groups as a whole having joint discussions about the fusion process, about different political questions.

Now, they agreed that the first document would be gotten out in August. But they had some problems. The GOR, I believe, wanted to have a discussion about the general political situation

in Senegal; the LCT wanted a discussion about the workers movement in Senegal. Months later the LCT decided to concede, to let the GOR write a document on the general situation. But then the GOR took several more months to write the document, and they just finished it as I was leaving.

I think progress will be made in the fusion process. It's going to move ahead, but I think they need some help.

There were some other interesting things about the discussions I had with them. I think I was the first person to convince them to have a joint discussion with more than just the two people from each side. I didn't want to have joint discussions about internal matters, but about things like Cuba, Iran, and so forth. They found it very useful, and we had some lively discussions.

I think we had about two days of discussions on Cuba, about the situation in Cuba and Cuba's role in Africa. They were the only Africans I ran into who were opposed to the Cuban troops being in Africa. Both groups felt that the Castro regime should be overthrown. Anyway, there were some people who were interested to hear how the Cuban revolution developed, information that they had never heard.

I had a big discussion with some people in the LCT about the SWP's call for a Black party in the United States. Some of them thought that was racist. After I explained it, they pretty much agreed. We also discussed the question of when to raise the call for a labor party in the United States. One comrade in the joint discussion thought the turn of the international toward industry was workerist. So we discussed that and I think I convinced the comrades of why we were doing it.

We also discussed the dissolution of the factions. The GOR felt very good about the dissolutions. But the LCT didn't. Some of the LCTers support the positions put forward by Nemo and others who were in the minority of the LTF and who had opposed the dissolution of the factions. They think it's wrong because they say the former leaders of the IMT have not dealt with all the questions that led to the formation of the factions in the first place, like the conception of the new mass vanguard.

But I think I made some headway on this through our joint discussions, showing them how fruitful it was to have joint discussions, how some people from one group could support the other group on various questions.

The LCT also raised a few points about the draft world political resolution. The GOR pretty much agreed with it. The LCT said it disagreed with the conception of the different sectors of the world, the imperialist sector, the workers states, and the semicolonial and colonial world. So I explained how we

not only have to build parties in every country, but that the dynamics and tempos are different in the different sectors, that different orientations are involved. I think I convinced some of the comrades.

On the women's movement. There are no women in either group, and they don't have much of an orientation on the question of women in Senegal. Women are very oppressed in Africa, but they don't have an orientation at all. The only time we discussed it was when they attacked the feminist movement in the United States.

At least the comrades in Senegal felt very favorable about the situation in Iran. They thought it was very promising. The same with other Africans we talked to. Everyone is looking to Iran.

One final point. There are a number of people in the countries we visited who it would be good for us to get our literature to: the Militant, IP/I, and some Pathfinder literature too.

--January 25, 1979

REPORT ON AFRICA

By Ernest Harsch

Although I also went to Zambia and Kenya, this report will concentrate on the situations in South Africa and among the South African exiles in Botswana.

First on a few general points about the South African visit. I spent more than three weeks there and was able to travel and function quite freely, visiting African townships like Soweto, KwaMashu, Clermont, and Ntuzuma, the Crossroads squatters camp, and nearly ten of the "Coloured" townships around Cape Town. These visits, plus other information collected during the trip, provided material for articles in our press on the general situation in South Africa, especially on the conditions of life of the Black population. This was one of the most important aspects of our trip: to strengthen our propaganda around South Africa within the United States, in conjunction with our efforts to help build the movement to get U.S. imperialism out of southern Africa.

While in South Africa, I was also able to meet and talk with important Black leaders and activists in a number of cities. Much of the time was spent in discussions with people around the Black Consciousness movement, which is still the most active and influential current involved in the liberation struggle.

The Black Consciousness movement has suffered some heavy blows over the past few years. Almost all of the publicly functioning organizations associated with it were outlawed in October 1977, and almost every top leader of those groups has been detained at one time or another. Some are still in detention, but many have now been released, although quite a number were "banned" after their release from detention, making it more difficult for them to engage in open political activities.

As a consequence of the repression, people around the Black Consciousness movement are a bit more cautious now about what they say and do in public, but very few appear to have been demoralized. To an extent, those who are able to try to keep up a public presence, through such organizations as the Soweto Action Committee and the Soweto Students League, both of which were formed after the bannings of October 1977. Another group, the Azanian People's Organisation, was also formed. It identified more openly with the Black Consciousness movement and quickly suffered the detention of its key leaders. Nevertheless, the willingness of certain layers to openly defy the regime so soon after the 1977 crackdown is indicative of the continued spirit of combativity and optimism that seems to pervade the movement today.

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Even among those who face restrictions, like banning orders, there is little sense of resignation. I was able to talk to a number of banned leaders. They did not dwell on their experiences in detention, but immediately began discussing what should be done next and how they could best organize under the circumstances. There is a lot of evasion of the banning orders, which they realize are calculated risks that must be taken if the movement is not to stagnate.

Among the South African exiles that Maceo and I were able to talk to, especially in Botswana, the general mood is a little different. Because they do not face direct South African repression, they are able to talk and organize more freely, but they still must be cautious given the hostile attitude of the Botswana government (which is under much South African pressure). On an individual level, they are generally cut off from direct involvement in the day-to-day struggle inside South Africa. This is disorienting to many, especially among the youth who fled into exile during and after the 1976 uprisings. They are unsure of where they fit in. This problem is compounded by the relative poverty they face. They must survive on small stipends and are usually unable to get jobs. This leads some of them to gravitate toward other political forces that can offer a few material benefits, such as the ANC and PAC, or the Nigerian government (which is trying to curry some political influence within the South Africa exile movement). The pressures of exile life lead to an exaggeration of minor differences and personal frictions, fostering numerous and complex factional struggles. These are usually of a petty character, with few real political differences involved. This factionalism is the strongest among the younger exiles who were members or supporters of the Soweto Students Representative Council while they were in South Africa. We were careful not to seem like we were friendlier to any of these factions than the others, and sought to have discussions with as many different people as possible.

In both South Africa and Botswana, there was a general receptivity to what we had to say. We encountered almost no hostility, even though we openly identified ourselves as Trotskyists.

People were especially interested to hear what we had to say about the United States, about our analysis of the American government's policy toward southern Africa. They realize the danger that American imperialism can pose to their struggle. They all thought that the development of a massive movement within the United States against American imperialism could aid their struggle immeasurably. They felt that more should be done, both in the United States and Europe, to get foreign companies out of South Africa and to cut off all foreign aid to the apartheid system.

At the same time, there were widespread illusions about the situation within the United States itself. People have an image, built up in the press, of the United States as a land of affluence and democracy. They were surprised to hear about the extent of racism, poverty, unemployment, and repression faced by American workers.

In both South Africa and Botswana, there was also a general receptivity to our socialist ideas. A number had already gone a long way toward socialist conclusions themselves, especially among the younger layers around the Black Consciousness movement. Some consider themselves Marxists, and have read some of the classics. Even within South Africa, activists have been able to read Marx, Engels, and Lenin (though all of the latter's works are banned). While I was there, Mandel's From Class Society to Communism was still available in some bookstores. Quite a bit of Pathfinder literature circulates. A few of those around the Black Consciousness movement also knew a little about Trotskyism, though this was more common among the exiles than within South Africa itself.

There appear to be different currents within the Black Consciousness movement. Since a lot of the positions of the movement are not precisely defined, activists interpret what Black Consciousness aims for in different ways. Some have a reformist-type approach, or stress Black theology and various community self-help schemes. Others are more radical, and emphasize the role of the working class in the liberation struggle. Many of the latter say they are for socialism, though what they mean by that varies.

In both countries, many political discussions are going on among the followers of the Black Consciousness movement over a wide variety of important questions: what are the lessons of the 1976 uprisings, why didn't the upsurge have more of a focused character, why didn't the government fall, what should they do next? Many think that it is necessary to develop a more coherent political strategy and to be better organized. Among the younger leaders who came out of the South African Students Organisation, the Black People's Convention, the Black Allied Workers Union, and other groups, a few are now thinking of the need to build a revolutionary party.

It is important to stress that most of the thinking of those who are moving toward revolutionary socialism is still very fluid. There are few who believe they have everything thought out or are firm in all their positions. This makes it very easy--and extremely worthwhile--to have discussions with them.

There are some, who have disagreements with us on various questions, but who nevertheless respect us and are willing to work with us. This includes some of the student and trade-union leaders the SWP has been able to work with over the past two years.

Even though some of them now have political differences with us, they could conceivably be won over at some stage. Regardless of whether that happens, it is nevertheless important to continue working with them in as nonsectarian a fashion as possible.

I met no Stalinists in South Africa, nor did I meet anyone who thought very highly of the South African Communist Party. It tends to be viewed as a predominantly white liberal group, which now exists mainly in London. A few people were quite knowledgeable about the SACP's history, despite the difficulties in getting literature about it. Among certain young Black high-school activists, however, there are some illusions that the CP can be reformed. They recognize the need for a party, but see the CP as the only organized force at this point. Although they don't have any direct experience with it, they think it might be pressured in a more revolutionary direction. This attitude could give the Stalinists some new openings. Another factor is a certain identification these activists make between Moscow and Havana. They are a little suspicious of Soviet intentions, but they strongly support the Cuban involvement in Africa, and that tends to reflect back on Moscow in a favorable light.

Almost all the South Africans we talked to, whether they considered themselves socialists or not, thought very highly of the Cuban role in Africa. For them it is an immediate issue. They cheered what the Cubans did in Angola to halt the South African drive, and they hope to see similar Cuban actions in the future. The more radical people we talked to thought the Cubans were motivated by proletarian internationalism.

Among some of them, however, there was another reason for liking the Cubans, a certain fascination with the question of armed struggle. This was especially strong among the younger exiles, many of whom think that guerrilla warfare may be the way to defeat the white minority regime. This attitude has led some of the exiles to join the ANC and PAC, both of which have a guerrilla-warfare strategy. Even among those who take their distance from the ANC and PAC, such as most of the factions around the SSRC, there is a strong idealization of guerrilla actions: if they criticize the military campaigns of the ANC and PAC, it tends to be limited to questions of planning and technique.

Within South Africa, some of the militants think that the ANC and PAC could still play a role in assisting the struggle based inside the country. They tend to think that the present guerrilla-warfare orientation of both groups is suicidal, that it leads to the needless death and imprisonment of too many young activists. There are a few people who think the ANC and PAC could be revitalized by an influx of new recruits, and that, in fact, it is necessary to work within them. Again, this attitude could provide both the ANC and PAC with new opportunities

to reassert their influence within South Africa. They already have some, but it is quite minimal in relation to the influence of the Black Consciousness movement.

There is one grouping in particular within the milieu of the Black Consciousness movement that is evolving rapidly toward revolutionary Marxism. It is composed primarily of exiles based in Botswana, who have been reading some of our literature for more than a year. An interview with this grouping was published in Intercontinental Press/Inprecor, February 5, 1979. They are against the theory of a two-stage revolution, though they don't identify themselves as Trotskyists. They are not too clear on the nature of Stalinism. They say they are committed to building a revolutionary combat party. They recognize the centrality of the national question in South Africa, and the importance in general of raising democratic demands.

We also met some people, both in South Africa and Botswana, who consider themselves Trotskyists.

There is a Trotskyist-oriented grouping in South Africa, predominantly Black in composition, whose main leaders came out of the Unity Movement. They say they are opposed to all nationalism, even that of the oppressed, and are consequently somewhat sectarian toward the Black Consciousness movement and other nationalist forces. This attitude is the strongest among the older members of the grouping. The younger ones seem more open to the idea of working with nationalist fighters, however.

Although some of them came out of the Unity Movement, they are reviewing that whole experience in a critical light. They are very critical of I.B. Tabata. They do not have the perspective of reviving the Unity Movement. They spend a lot of time trying to analyze the current situation in South Africa and in the rest of the world as well. We had discussions on a wide variety of questions, ranging from the class struggle in the United States to the revolution in Iran, from the Leninist position on the national question (which they are uncomfortable with) to the Cuban role in Africa. They say that a revolutionary party must be built in South Africa, but the main leader of the grouping says the conditions aren't yet right (others think they are). The grouping was familiar with the general historical positions of Trotskyism, but only had a vague knowledge about the situation in the Fourth International, so they were eager to hear about the most recent developments, especially the dissolution of the factions.

In Botswana, we met a handful of people who identify themselves as Trotskyists. A couple came out of the Unity Movement, specifically a group within the Unity Movement called the Society of Young Africa. They have been receiving some of our literature.

They have apparently considered themselves Trotskyists for quite some time, though they have been very isolated from the world movement. They are interested in the Fourth International, but don't view themselves as adherents. They say they are still studying the Fourth International. Nevertheless, they seemed quite impressed with our reports on the dissolution of the factions, the upcoming world congress, and the turn to the industrial working class. Like the grouping in South Africa, they are anti-nationalist, but much more so. They oppose working in united fronts with any nationalist forces, whether the ANC, PAC, or Black Consciousness movement (or even Stalinists for that matter), which is sectarian, in our opinion. They tend to dismiss the recent young exiles as politically inexperienced. Because of some of the political positions they defended, they have tended to misrepresent Trotskyism, a problem that we had to overcome in our discussions with other exiles in Botswana.

--January 25, 1979