

Re: Situation in the Fourth International

We are sending you, enclosed herewith, a set of documents on recent developments in the International and our relations with the Bolshevick Faction, Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency and the OCRFI.

Extremely serious events have occurred. They amount to a declaration of split by the leadership of the BF and LTT, in coordination with the OCI, French affiliate of the OCRFI.

On the evening of Sunday, 28 October, the OCI and the Bolshevick Faction formally adopted a "Draft Declaration" which the LTT (whose international steering committee was meeting over the weekend) had decided to endorse. This draft was to be presented on Monday, 29 October, to the meeting of the OCRFI International Bureau in Paris. The draft amounts to a violent declaration of split.

The draft states that the "USec" (i.e. the Fourth International) is going through an "unprecedented crisis", the extension of the crisis that are said to have shaken our movement ever since "revisionism" was "installed" in the "leadership of the Fourth International" in 1951-53. It denounces the "liquidationist" course followed by the USec on the question of Nicaragua. The resolutions adopted by the USec at its last meeting are said to imply the "liquidation of any organisation claiming to represent the Fourth International and its programme. It calls for repression against such organisations and against all worker militants who try to encourage independent struggles by the working class...." "All is perfectly clear" the statement adds. "The USec majority is calling for repression...."

After the OCI and the LTT adopt in their draft the provisions of the statement on Nicaragua submitted by Moreno to the last USec meeting, after denouncing the "Castroism" of the SWP leadership and the "over-up" that "Mandel" agrees to give it, after defining revisionism in the FI as "capitulation in the final analysis to the Stalinist bureaucracy as the central axis of the worldwide apparatus of counterrevolution...." the "draft" calls for the holding of an international "conference" "to discuss and respond to these problems with the goal of unifying or reconstructing on a principled basis the entire world Trotskyist movement as it has been defined above" (emphasis added).

The "draft" earlier calls on "all organisations claiming to represent the FI and its program, method, and the bases on which it was founded in 1938 to create the conditions for a real, profound discussion. It is only in this way that we can define which tendencies and positions are revisionist and thus incompatible with membership in the Fourth International, and which ones defend the principles and should be the basis for reorganising the Fourth International". Finally, it should be pointed out that this draft explicitly states that "the OCRFI, the Bolshevick Faction and the Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency jointly call" (emphasis added) for this international conference and for all three to form a "parity commission". Moreover, this "draft" has already been formally adopted by the leadership of the BF and LTT.

The three representatives of the LTT in Britain dissociated themselves from this decision, denouncing its splittist character (see their statements in the enclosed documents).

It is unlikely that the ranks of the LTT were informed of what was happening (the local congresses of the French LCR took place without incident this weekend). All the same, the decision had been in the works for some time. The congress of the Colombian PST was publicly postponed some time ago until December because, as the PST explained, there would be no congress of the FI in November, but there would be a genuine congress of the world Trotskyist movement later on.

In Portugal, the BF refused to recognise the decisions of the congress of the section that was held this weekend.

The United Secretariat Bureau had made its position on relations between the USec and the OCRFI leadership very clear. In particular, the Bureau explained that it would not agree to the OCRFI or OCI dealing directly with the BF and LTT over the heads of the regular structures of the FI, nor would it agree to these two groupings being given a direct invitation to attend the conference that the OCRFI

2.

is holding at this moment in Paris. Such an attitude on the part of the OCRFI, we emphasised, would completely change the kind of relations we could have with them (see the October 11 letter from the Bureau to the OCRFI).

We learned on Sunday evening that the BF and LTT had, in fact, been invited as such. Under these conditions, we sent only a silent observer to their meeting.

This Monday morning, it turned out that the OCRFI International Bureau had in fact met in the last few days. Moreno for the BF and Nemo for the LTT took the floor in the meeting on Monday morning to support the formations of a "parity commission" to "expel revisionism from the Trotskyist movement" (Moreno) and to denounce a "situation of inevitable split" (Nemo) as well as to call for an "international conference of the world Trotskyist movement".

A statement to that effect was jointly adopted by the OCRFI, BF, and LTT. Dorgueil, the USec observer at the OCRFI Bureau meeting, refused to participate in these "discussions". He informed the OCRFI that the Bureau of the United Secretariat would propose that the OCRFI no longer be invited to attend the Eleventh World Congress since its policy was a direct attack on the organisational integrity of our movement (the USec Bureau had previously decided to take this position in the event of such a situation should occur).

Shortly afterward, Lambert declared the ninth session of the OCRFI International Bureau closed.

This circular is to inform you as fast as possible of these latest developments, which are very grave. We will discuss afterward all of the decisions that will have to be taken in connection with the new situation in our movement, which we will then inform you of.

Fraternally,

Roman, for the United Secretariat Bureau, 29/10/79.

Resolution to LTT International Steering Committee by Strawson and supported by Levi and Sinclair

1. The declaration proposed by Comrade Moreno, to be adopted by the OCRFI, the OCI, the BF, and the LTT, constitutes a splitting act, an act aimed at destroying the FI. This declaration, and the course proposed, must be denounced by all militants and leaders of the FI.
2. The positions of the LTT, its platform and method of struggle, stand in contradiction to this declaration. All comrades of the LTT must place loyalty to the FI, our World Party, above any tendency consideration, and must rally to the defence of the FI.
3. Even at this late stage the LTT appeals to the comrades of the Bolshevik Faction to pull back from this course- to take their rightful place in the ranks of the FI- to defend their legitimate political positions- to attend the World Congress- to collaborate at the leadership level with other leaders of the FI-; and to fight with us and all militants to build the FI.

28/10/79.

(The statement by the British delegation to the LTT Steering Committee meeting is on the appended sheet)

Circular from the Bureau of the United Secretariat to All Sections and Sympathising Sections of the Fourth International, 30/10/39.

Yesterday, the Bureau sent you documentation of the decisions taken by the leaderships of the Bolshevik Faction, the Leninist Trotskyist Tendency, and the Organising Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International on 27-28 October. In face of these decisions, the United Secretariat Bureau notes the following:

1. We are faced with an obvious and prepared attempt by leaders of the Bolshevik Faction and the Leninist Trotskyist Tendency, acting in collaboration with the OCRFI, to destroy the Fourth International, its sections, and its accumulated cadres. Having abandoned the attempt to win the militants of the Fourth International to their views by means of democratic discussion, the leaders of the Bolshevik Faction and the Leninist Trotskyist Tendency complicit in this act are now attempting to destroy those Trotskyist organisations which disagree with their political line.

2. This act of leaders of the Bolshevik Faction and the LTT, together with the OCRFI, was prepared during the preceding weeks. The campaign began with the acts of slander and implicit threats of violence carried out by members of the PST of Colombia against militants of the Fourth International in the PSP. On 3 October, Moreno, Nemo, and other leaders of the Bolshevik Faction and the LTT openly violated the discipline and integrity of the French section and the Fourth International by taking part in a meeting with the leadership of the OCRFI.

This was followed by trips conducted by BF leaders to various countries in Europe attempting to weaken or destroy sections of the Fourth International. Thus, according to the IMG leadership, Comrade Moreno made trips to Britain in which he incited members of the IMG to commit disloyal acts, to prepare to break with the section, and urged an organisation outside of the Fourth International, the Workers Socialist League, to participate in an attempt to split the FI. All this was carried out behind the backs of the British section leadership.

Members of the Bolshevik Faction in the Portuguese section have announced their refusal to recognise the congress of the section. In Italy, members of the BF have issued leaflets publicly attacking the section and attempted to disrupt public meetings of the GCR.

This splitting operation of the BF leadership was carried out in collaboration with a section of the leaders of the LTT. This part of the LTT leadership established relations with an organisation outside of and hostile to the Fourth International, the "Liga Comunista" of Spain. These LTT leaders urged LTT members in various countries, including Britain and France, to violate the discipline of the national sections and of the Fourth International. This activity culminated at the international Steering Committee meeting of the LTT, held on 27-28 October which adopted the "Draft Declaration" that was sent to you yesterday. Members of the French, Belgian, Danish and Portuguese sections at this meeting voted to violate the discipline of their organisations and to split the Fourth International. The British LTT rejected the split and remains loyal to the FI.

3. To judge the character of these splitting operations more clearly they should be placed in the context of the pre-World Congress discussion that has been taking place in the Fourth International.

The date and conditions for preparing the World Congress in a democratic manner were agreed to by the entire United Secretariat, including representatives of the Bolshevik Faction and the LTT. The United Secretariat has adhered to these decisions. On the request of the BF, the time limit was extended for submission of documents by the Faction. All the documents submitted within this time limit were printed in the three languages, producing one of the largest pre-World Congress discussions in the history of the Fourth International. Representatives of the BF

2.

and the LTT were able to present their positions at national congresses of all the organisations where they have supporters and even those where they had no supporters.

The charge that the coming world congress has been prepared in an undemocratic way is thus patently false.

4. The victory of the Nicaraguan masses, led by the FSLN, in overturning the Somoza dictatorship has made it necessary to add a new point of discussion on the World Congress agenda. In face of a revolution in progress, it is obviously necessary for the Fourth International to react quickly in order to be able to participate in this process.

Because of the closeness of this revolution to the World Congress it was not possible to conduct a written discussion on Nicaragua on the same scale as the rest of the pre-World Congress discussion. However, a full discussion was held on Nicaragua at the 29 September- 4 October United Secretariat meeting, at which the LTT and the DF could have proposed counterresolutions to the draft proposed by the United Secretariat Bureau. Such counterresolutions could then have been proposed to the World Congress. The DF and the LTT did not do so. Moreover, they voluntarily absented themselves from the sessions of the United Secretariat in which Nicaragua was discussed.

The fraudulent character of the claim of the DF and LTT leaderships that a real discussion on Nicaragua would not take place is further revealed by the discussions and votes that have already taken place in the sections. The national congresses that took place after the United Secretariat meeting (for example in Sweden, Britain, France, Portugal, Denmark, and Austria) were able to discuss the United Secretariat resolution and to consider any other positions put forward for a vote by the delegates to those congresses.

5. The demagogic claim by the DF and LTT leaderships that holding the congress on the agreed-upon dates is designed to stifle discussion on Nicaragua and simply carry out administrative disciplinary measures is untenable on two accounts.

First, the United Secretariat has already decided to propose to the World Congress that the discussion on Nicaragua should continue after the Congress. This is necessary not only from the point of view of our internal needs, but above all because of the unfolding of the revolution itself.

Secondly, the United Secretariat has explicitly proposed to the World Congress the consideration of disciplinary action only against the behaviour of the Bolshevik Faction as an international public faction, independently from their particular political line on Nicaragua. The notion adopted by the United Secretariat explained that that the public intervention of the DF in Nicaragua was a "qualitative new stage" in the public faction operation of the DF, in which they "placed the discipline of their faction above that of the Fourth International, in the midst of an unfolding revolution". What made this escalation of their flaunting of democratic centralism particularly grave was the fact that it occurred in such a way as to discredit the International in face of a living revolution and hinder the International's ability to relate to that revolution and to its most militant participants and leaders.

The notions of the United Secretariat regarding political activity of supporters of the International in Central America and regarding Fausto Amador are of a different character. Since in these countries, as the resolution explains, "there is no section or sympathising organisation recognised by a World Congress of the Fourth International", there can, therefore, be no question of administrative or disciplinary measures by the World Congress; there exist no formally recognized organisations or members of the International in those countries against which such measures could be taken. The United Secretariat decided that all supporters of the FI in

3.

those countries should act in collaboration with the elected leadership bodies of this International and on its line. There is also no question of the International leadership attempting to impose "instructions" on recognized sections or sympathising organisations, since such organisations do not exist..

The functioning of the Bolshevik Faction as a public faction did not begin with the Nicaraguan revolution. Reports and documents of the BF itself have made clear that his faction has its own international apparatus, finances, internal bulletins, etc., and acts outside of any collaboration with the leading bodies of the International to send cadres to various countries, maintain relations with organisations outside of the FI, and carry out splitting operations in various sections.

The United Secretariat has condemned this functioning in the past, for example in the motion concerning Colombia adopted at the January 1978 United Secretariat meeting, which concluded: "Thus, the top leadership of this international faction bears responsibility for the acute crisis of the Colombian PST." The methods of the BF were further documented in the contribution by United Secretariat member Hugo Blanco, "To the Latin American Comrades: Notes on the Bolshevik Tendency".

The operation of the Simon Bolivar Brigade only constituted a new escalation of these kinds of methods, contrary to the spirit and letter of the statutes of the International, which have been condemned by the United Secretariat in the past. The last United Secretariat meeting simply decided that if these methods are continued, it will propose to the World Congress that the declared leadership of the BF be expelled from the FI. If they accept the application of the statutes and the World Congress decisions, they are invited - as they have been many times before - to participate fully in all the leading bodies of the International proportional to their strength and will of course have the right to maintain a tendency or faction and to fight inside the International to reverse the World Congress decisions with which they disagree, including on Nicaragua.

6. The BF, LTT and the OCRFI try to cover their splitting move by charging that the United Secretariat has taken a "liquidationist" course. This charge is not new from the OCRFI and other currents that have refused to join in the building of the Fourth International. However, this supposed "liquidation" has somehow resulted in a significant growth in the membership, cadres, and number of sections of the Fourth International over the past decade. It has resulted in the bringing together of the overwhelming majority of Trotskyists in the world, and no supposed "reconstruction" of the FI can take place outside it.

Contrary to the BF and LTT demagogy and lies, the differences that have arisen in the International over such questions as characterisation of the political situation in Nicaragua, the role of the Nicaraguan government, and the nature of the FSLN do not reflect any "liquidation of the program of the International". These are the type of differences that normally develop in a democratic centralist International in the course of a developing revolution. Moreover, it is a lie that the United Secretariat supported the expulsion of the Simon Bolivar Brigade from Nicaragua. In fact, at its September 1978 session, the United Secretariat criticised that expulsion.

7. The only fundamental programmatic difference revealed in the declarations of the BF, LTT and OCRFI concerns the necessity of building a revolutionary international based on democratic centralism; that is, the need to build simultaneously and jointly both national revolutionary parties and the World Party of Socialist Revolution, not at some future moment, but here and now. This is a centre-piece of the programme of the Fourth International which flows unavoidably from the very nature of the class struggle under imperialism and the theory of permanent revolution, and which can only be abandoned at the price of withdrawing into "national-Trotskyism", a grotesque version of "national-communism".

4.

The LTT, BF and OCRFI propose to substitute a "discussion conference" for participation in the World Congress. To deny the necessity for a decision-making World Congress - which combines the broadest freedom of discussion, including the right to form tendencies and factions, with the adoption of decisions binding on the membership and the election of a leadership to lead the International forward in action; means to dissolve the organisation. It means to proclaim before the workers' movement that the concept of building the Fourth International is bankrupt or must be put off to the indefinite future. This false view, and the splitted move by the BF and LTT, are the real expressions of the liquidationist and cadre-destroying dangers faced by the International today.

8. Despite all their political differences and different origins, the BF, LTT and OCRFI have united in opposition to the Fourth International because, for different reasons, they cannot stand the constraints of functioning in a real international organisation. The motivation for this common refusal is confused, but comes through clearly in their common Declaration. It is based on the desire of each component of the bloc to remain "master of its own house", imposing severe restrictions on internal democracy which would be impossible inside a world party that defended the elementary democratic rights of minorities. This conception substitutes the spirit and methods of a faction or sect for the task of building real revolutionary parties. No solid organisation can be built on such a basis. The BF/LTT/OCRFI "regroupment" cannot last because it lacks an organisational framework corresponding to our program and traditions. This lack of a political basis is reflected in the fact that neither the LTT nor the BF have put forward any alternative general political orientation for the Fourth International. This unprincipled behaviour is going to demoralise and destroy hundreds of militants and cadres.

9. The United Secretariat opened discussions with the OCRFI after that organisation affirmed that it considered the Fourth International as a whole to be a revolutionary organisation, that it considered the discussion could take place on the basis of the preparatory texts for the coming World Congress, and that the aim of the discussion would be the regroupment of all members of the two organisations in a single International based on democratic centralism. What occurred was a publicly expressed change of position by the OCRFI from its previous attitude of hostility towards the FI, which it saw as an "obstacle" on the road to "reconstruction" of the International, an "obstacle" that had to be destroyed. We did not make a judgement on the sincerity of this change of position or on whether it represented a manoeuvre. We simply reacted politically, within the framework of our general orientation in favour of the unification of all revolutionary Marxist inside the Fourth International. This is the context in which the invitation of the OCRFI to the World Congress must be seen.

The situation has again changed with the formation of the "Parity Commission" between the OCRFI, the BF and the LTT with the context of the "Draft Declaration" of the three groups, and the with the various manoeuvres carried out in preparation of this move over the past few weeks, which included making contact and carrying out activities on the part of the OCRFI with currents in the Fourth International outside the framework of the sections. Such activity is in contradiction with recognition of the Fourth International as a revolutionary organisation. These recent developments show that the OCRFI has again made a turn toward an attempt to destroy the Fourth International, not to unify with the Fourth International. Under these conditions an invitation to the OCRFI to attend the World Congress would serve no purpose.

The OCRFI, BF and LTT are aiming to split the Fourth International over conjunctural differences. For this reason alone, their splitting manoeuvre is unprincipled and criminal. The World Congress and the leadership that will be elected by it will take the necessary measures to continue our political offensive toward other organisations claiming to be Trotskyist with a view to defending our programme, pursuing our orientation of seeking the basis for fusions with other forces moving in a

5.

revolutionary direction, and testing the political and organisational conditions for achieving unification with all Trotskyist groups within the Fourth International based on democratic centralism.

10. Therefore, the date of the World Congress is maintained, as decided by the United Secretariat of September 29-October 4. The Bureau confirms that all sections and sympathising organisations should send their delegates as planned. The Bureau will propose to the United Secretariat and the World Congress that only those organisations that recognise the legitimacy of the congress and its decisions should be accepted as belonging to the Fourth International. The World Congress will be able to take any measures necessary to defend the integrity of the International and to assure its expansion. The sections and sympathising organisations will likewise be able to take whatever measures necessary to defend their own integrity.

United Secretariat Bureau,
October 30, 1979.

•c

STATEMENT FROM LEVI, SINCLAIR & STRAWSON

*29.OCT. 79

The majority of the members of the LTT Steering Cttee this weekend (Oct.26), decided to issue a joint appeal with the Bolshevik Faction and Organising Cttee for the Reconstruction of the FI calling for an open conference of all organisations claiming to adhere to the Trotskyist Program, with the aim of fighting revisionism and "recomposing" the trotskyist movement.

To issue such an appeal is to say that the FI as presently organised, its sections, its World Congress, its IEC, and its secretariat are dead from the point of view of the world revolution. There can be no other meaning for such an appeal. It is a splitting act.

The declaration of the LTT states and the Steering Committee earlier voted that all members of the LTT must be loyal members of the FI. We stand by this declaration. The International is not dead from the point of view of the world revolution. To split the FI, to issue such an appeal, as decided by the majority of members of the Steering Committee, is therefore an unprincipled and criminally irresponsible split.

We, British members of the LTT Steering Committee, condemn this course of action. It is a break with the principles of which the tendency was formed. We appeal to all members of the FI adhering to the LTT to stand by the declaration of the LTT, to remain loyal members of the FI, to repudiate the proposed Appeal. The fight continues within the FI. With the FI within the FI, our politics can win. Outside of it there is no future.

(we can be contacted at: PO Box 50, London N1; or tel. Mike- 359-8371)