

# INTERNAL INFORMATION BULLETIN

April 1976

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# THE FEBRUARY 1976 PLENUM OF THE INTERNATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

by Barry Sheppard

The February 12-15 meeting of the International Executive Committee (IEC) of the Fourth International was a restricted meeting of that body. At the November 1975 meeting of the United Secretariat, the International Majority Tendency (IMT) passed a factionally motivated motion calling "for a restricted IEC to be held February 1976" and rejected a motion supported by members of the Leninist Trotskyist Faction (LTF) to "hold a full meeting of all the regular, alternate and consultative members of the IEC who are able to attend; to begin a fund drive to raise the necessary funds; and to set an outside date of late August or early September" in order to give enough time to raise the funds to have a representative IEC. The IMT proposed that only a limited number of IEC members be invited in order to reduce costs, and that the LTF and the IMT cooperate in selecting those who would be allowed to participate and those who would be excluded.

The LTF Coordinating Committee refused, pointing out that neither it nor the IMT had any right to choose a select group from among the IEC members who would be allowed to attend. At the December United Secretariat meeting the IMT responded by dropping the appellation "restricted." However, they still refused to organize a fund drive to finance full participation in the IEC. As a result, IEC members from a number of important organizations in the international could not attend, and the representation of others was restricted. Under these circumstances, the European members of the IEC were disproportionately represented.

The following countries, which have members on the IEC, were not represented at all: Antilles, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, China, India, Iran, New Zealand, Peru, South Africa, Uruguay, Venezuela, and Ireland.

Unable to attend were the two members from the Antilles, four members from Argentina including all those from groups that had formerly supported the IMT, four of the five members from Australia, the two members from Bolivia, the two members from Brazil, the one member from Chile, the two members from China, one of the members from Colombia, the three members from India, the two from Iran, two of the three members from Japan, two of the five members from Mexico, the two members from New Zealand, the two members from Peru, the one member from South Africa, the one member from Uruguay, the two members from Venezuela, three from the United States, one from Canada, six members from Spain, the two members from Ireland, and eleven members from the rest of Europe. Two of the three European members of

the Control Commission were able to attend; the two non-Europeans were not.

The political and organizational decisions taken by the IMT at this IEC meeting registered a deepening of the political differences in the Fourth International, a process of further splits in sections and sympathizing groups, the further erosion of the authority of the leading body of the international, and a further breakdown in the organizational norms of the Fourth International.

## Portugal

There were two political points on the agenda of the meeting, Portugal and Angola. The IMT and the LTF each submitted resolutions on Portugal (see *Intercontinental Press*, Vol. 14, No. 11, March 22, 1976).

Under this point of the agenda, comrades of the leadership of the Argentine PST [Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores—Socialist Workers Party] announced that they and supporters from other countries had left the LTF because of differences over Portugal. They stated that they were considering their further course and that they might set up a third international faction or tendency. At the IEC they did not submit any written platform to politically justify their turn or to define their faction, nor have they done so up to now. The PST-led grouping at the IEC voted against both the IMT and LTF resolutions on Portugal; however, their political stand as presented orally at the IEC indicated they were moving toward the positions of the IMT. Their characterizations of the LTF and the SWP were bizarre, in my opinion, and included charges of "revisionism" and of having adopted "Parvus's theory for the advanced imperialist countries," that is, the theory of a "workers mobilization and revolution in order to win a democratic program." The roots of the SWP's revisionism, they said, are to be found in Comrade Novack's book, *Democracy and Revolution*.

The most important aspect of the debate on Portugal was the failure of the IMT to rectify its erroneous line in light of the test of events in Portugal. As all sides agree, the IMT's line in the Portuguese revolution has been an application of the IMT's European perspectives document adopted at the 1974 World Congress of the Fourth International (see *Intercontinental Press*, Vol. 12, No. 46, Dec. 23, 1974). Enough experience has been gained in the course of the Portuguese events to demonstrate conclusively the failure of the IMT's strategy. The resolution submitted by the LTF drew a balance sheet on the IMT's

positions in light of the decisive test of Portugal, but the IMT decided at this IEC to reject the correction proposed by the LTF and to reaffirm their "new mass vanguard" line.

The situation in regard to the IMT European resolution is now comparable to that of the resolution on guerrilla warfare in Latin America adopted by a majority of delegates at the 1969 World Congress after that line was put to the test of events in Bolivia and Argentina (see "Argentina and Bolivia—the Balance Sheet," International Internal Discussion Bulletin Vol. X, No. 1, 1973). In the test of the class struggle in those countries the line of the majority, which raised guerrilla warfare from a tactic to a strategy in Latin America, led to disaster for those Trotskyist forces that attempted to implement the majority line. Yet the majority failed to rectify their error, and went on to codify it in the document on armed struggle in Latin America adopted by the last World Congress (see *Intercontinental Press*, Dec. 23, 1974).

While the IMT conceded that errors had been made in Bolivia and Argentina, and that "elliptical" and "synthetic" phrases were to be found in the 1969 World Congress resolution, it placed the blame on the Trotskyist forces in Latin America who attempted to carry out the guerrilla warfare strategy. There is a similarity in this regard in the case of Portugal. While reaffirming its basic line, the IMT says that the Internationalist Communist League (LCI), one of the sympathizing organizations of the Fourth International in Portugal, made certain errors in relation to the Front for Revolutionary Unity (FUR). But the IMT makes no mention of its own basic errors in relation to the FUR. From September right up to the eve of the November 25 coup attempt, the IMT adamantly supported remaining in the FUR and viewed the FUR as a positive step forward. Nor did the IMT mention the fact that its line prepared the LCI to take the positions it did, nor its own direct responsibility for the LCI line in view of the fact that it had representatives on the spot acting as political advisors for the LCI throughout the summer and fall of 1975.

(It should be noted that the IMT carried out their political aid to the Portuguese comrades in a highly factional way. The IMT rejected repeated proposals made by the LTF that the United Secretariat delegation to aid the Portuguese comrades be a joint one, composed of people from both the IMT and the LTF. Instead, the IMT appointed a delegation of exclusively IMT members, rejecting common work in this centrally important arena. There was no indication at the IEC that the IMT intends to reverse its factional methods in this regard. Delegations and representatives of the United Secretariat and its Bureau will apparently continue to be in reality IMT factional bodies. This situation can only result in a further deterioration of the authority of the United Secretariat.)

Instead of weighing its own errors, the IMT placed the blame on a section of the leadership of the LCI. Another section of the leadership, which made a "self criticism" about the position of the LCI, was backed by the IMT.

At a recent congress of the LCI, the organization accepted this "self criticism" and a new leadership was elected. In this instance, too, the pattern is comparable to the case of the Argentine PRT (Combatiente). There, the blame was placed on the Santucho leadership of the PRT

(Combatiente), for allegedly not carrying out the line of the 1969 World Congress correctly. The responsibility of the leaders of the majority of the United Secretariat was denied. Those in the PRT (Combatiente) who made a "self criticism" of the PRT (Combatiente) line were backed by the IMT. The outcome in Argentina was a shattered organization.

The line adopted in 1969 by the majority on Latin America represented an ultraleft shift from the Leninist strategy of party building based on the method of the Transitional Program. Persisting in defending this error, even after the test of Bolivia and Argentina, the majority extended it programmatically and geographically. The IMT European resolution was an extension of the turn taken at the 1969 World Congress, placing the strategy of the IMT in Europe on an ultraleft axis, thus increasing the tendency to both adventurist and opportunist errors. The failure of the IMT to correct its position after the decisive test in Portugal represents a further hardening of the IMT line and a deepening of the political differences within the Fourth International. The differences are basically strategic, with the LTF standing on the strategy outlined in the Transitional Program, and the IMT standing more and more systematically on a strategy that constitutes a departure from the Transitional Program. (See the LTF resolution, "The Test of Two Lines in Portugal," *Intercontinental Press*, March 22, 1976).

Despite the setback of November 25 and the regaining of initiative by the ruling class, the mass radicalization remains deep and the organized power and level of expectations of the working class remain strong. Class struggle militants both inside and outside organizations affiliated with the Fourth International can be attracted to the program of Trotskyism from the lessons of the rich experiences the Portuguese working class has gone through. The historic potential for building a revolutionary party in the heat of explosive future struggles remains great.

## Angola

The IMT presented a resolution on Angola. The comrades from the PST-led grouping voted for the IMT resolution. The LTF Steering Committee adopted the general line of a report on Angola, which was presented to the IEC, and stated it was preparing a resolution based on the line of the report which would be submitted to the discussion for the upcoming World Congress, as the IMT resolution has been. The LTF report was along the basic lines of the report adopted by the National Committee of the SWP in January, 1976, contained in the new Pathfinder book, *Angola: The Hidden History of Washington's War*.

Sharp differences over Angola emerged at the May 31-June 1, 1975, meeting of the United Secretariat. At that time the LTF members of the United Secretariat proposed that the Fourth International demand the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Portuguese troops from Angola. The IMT comrades took the position that it was wrong to advance this demand without coupling it with the demand that the Portuguese army turn its arms over to the MPLA-dominated organizations and help train them.

This difference reflected the opposing bases used in deriving political conclusions. The LTF began with opposition to imperialism, including Portuguese imperial-

ism, as the central task of the Fourth International in relation to Angola. The IMT began with an analysis of the three national liberation groups in Angola. From this the IMT decided that the MPLA was more progressive and consequently should be supported as against the FNLA and UNITA in their factional struggle. Demands in relation to imperialism were subordinated to the IMT concern for supporting the MPLA against the other two organizations.

This difference emerged in a new form after the U.S.-backed intervention by South Africa. At the IEC, both the IMT and the LTF reporter were opposed to the U.S.-South African intervention, condemned the FNLA and UNITA for their complicity with this intervention, and sided with the MPLA in its military struggle against that intervention. Both agreed that none of the liberation groups had a socialist program. But the IMT continued to view the MPLA as politically more progressive than the other two groups, and called for support to the MPLA's struggle against them. The LTF reporter stressed that our major fire should be concentrated on opposition to U.S. and South African imperialism. He held that it was wrong for Trotskyists to offer political support to any of the three nationalist groups.

There were other differences expressed in the discussion. One of these concerned the question of the relations among the different ethnic groups in Angola. The LTF reporter analyzed the ethnic roots of the different liberation organizations and called attention to the rivalries and fears each had of domination by the others as a factor in the factional struggle between the three liberation groups, none of which has shown the capacity to project a political course to overcome these divisions. Revolutionists should be conscious of these facts and should include in their program opposition to any national domination of one group over the others. Guarantees, including the right of self-determination, should be demanded against such national oppression. The IMT comrades dismissed the importance of this question, asserting that all that was involved was "tribalism" that would soon be eradicated.

Comrade Peng, who was unable to attend the IEC, sent a letter to the meeting which was read to it (see the minutes of the IEC contained in this bulletin). In his letter he outlined his views on the objective situation in Portugal, and the importance of the Portuguese events for the Fourth International. He urged the unification of Trotskyist forces in Portugal, and outlined a series of programmatic points he hoped could overcome the factional divisions there and in the international. In broad outline, Comrade Peng's points are contained in the LTF resolution, although formulated differently. The IMT and the PST-led grouping indicated they too agreed with the points made by Comrade Peng on the programmatic level. The questions in dispute are on the political level.

In addition to Portugal and Angola, there were informational reports by comrades of the LCR(ETA-VI) and the LC on the situation in Spain, and by a comrade from Lebanon on the situation in that country. There was no vote under these points.

### **The IMT Backs the Splitting Operation Engineered by the Argentine PST**

The IEC was confronted with the measures taken by the

Militant Tendency of the Socialist League [Liga Socialista] in Mexico, which were among the most undemocratic ever registered in the history of the Fourth International. The IEC also was faced with the extremely bureaucratic expulsions of a section of the Revolutionary Workers Party (PRT) in Portugal. (See SWP Internal Information Bulletins No. 2 and No. 3 in 1976, and the report on the expulsions from the PRT included in this bulletin). In both cases, the Argentine PST leadership was deeply involved and helped direct the operations. In both cases, the IMT gave tacit backing at the IEC to the undemocratic actions.

The first expression of this organizational bloc between the IMT and the PST-led grouping occurred under the debate on Portugal. The United Secretariat had previously invited representatives from the two sympathizing organizations of the Fourth International in Portugal, the LCI and the PRT, to send representatives to the IEC. They were to be given time under the Portugal point to present their views. Eleven days before the IEC meeting, the expulsions took place in the PRT. Comrade Ernesto, a leading member of the group expelled from the PRT, and one of the founders of the original group that both the LCI and PRT developed from, expressed his agreement with the general line of the LTF on Portugal, and was invited to attend the LTF Steering Committee and make a report there on the expulsions. The LTF proposed to the IEC that Comrade Ernesto be invited to attend the point on Portugal and be given time to present his position along with the representative of the LCI and the majority of the PRT. The IMT, supported by the PST-led grouping, rejected the request, thus giving tacit approval to the undemocratic expulsions, and further voted to bar Comrade Ernesto from even observing the discussion on this point. The factional intent in barring Comrade Ernesto was further revealed when the comrade representing the PRT took the floor to launch an attack on the expelled comrades in their absence.

Concerning the situation in the Mexican Socialist League, the LTF Steering Committee, meeting before the IEC plenum, adopted a statement condemning the grossly bureaucratic and undemocratic actions of the Militant Tendency led by Comrade Ricardo and supporting the actions of the Bolshevik Leninist Faction in resisting them. This statement was submitted to the IEC. (See IEC minutes elsewhere in this bulletin.)

The IMT, however, failed to condemn or even mention the undemocratic and bureaucratic actions taken by the Militant Tendency at the December convention of the Socialist League. A leading member of the IMT, who is also a member of the IEC and a leader of the Mexican International Communist Group (GCI), attended that convention of the Socialist League. Before the IEC meeting, he publicly characterized the convention as "democratic" and stated that the comrades of the Bolshevik Leninist Faction had put themselves outside the Fourth International because of their decision to defend themselves and the program of the Socialist League publicly against the measures enacted by the Militant Tendency.

The statement of the Leninist Trotskyist Faction called for the opposite course. It concluded: "The Leninist Trotskyist Faction rejects the public demand made by the leaders of the GCI, PST and Tendencia Militante that the comrades of the Fracción Bolchevique Leninista be expelled from the Fourth International. We are opposed to

the expulsion from the Fourth International of any of the groups involved. This would precipitate a split in the Fourth International as a whole. What is called for is sharp condemnation of the methods of the Ricardo clique as alien to the traditions of Trotskyism, and a clarification of the political differences, in order to facilitate the earliest possible unification, on a principled basis, of the forces of Trotskyism in Mexico."

The failure of the IMT to take a position against the actions of the Militant Tendency or to correct the public position taken by the Mexican IMT leaders, amounted to giving cover and backing to these bureaucratic actions.

This tacit support which the IMT gave to the undemocratic operations in the Socialist League and the PRT has further seriously eroded the authority of the IEC. Calculating how best to take advantage of the PST-led split in the LTF, the IMT placed its narrow factional interests above the objective needs of the Fourth International. Their stand, if not reversed, can only accelerate further disintegration of the forces in the Fourth International and encourage similar undemocratic actions in other sections and sympathizing groups. The IMT has given the green light to splitters in any section or sympathizing organization, not led by IMT forces, to utilize whatever methods they wish, with the strong implication that the IMT will let them get away with it as in the case of the Militant Tendency in Mexico.

This was the background to the motion that was adopted by the IEC concerning Mexico (see the minutes of the IEC meeting, included in this bulletin) in favor of a principled reunification of the Trotskyist forces in Mexico.

The resolution contains the following main points: (1) Both the Militant Tendency and the Bolshevik Leninist Faction of the Socialist League remain in the Fourth International. (2) If the GCI and the two public factions of the Socialist League succeed in carrying out the principled unification that the IEC recommends, the unified organization will become the Mexican section in accordance with the motion adopted at the last World Congress. (3) The statutes of the organization must be mutually agreed to before any unification, and these statutes must contain provisions that reverse the bureaucratic measures adopted by the Militant Tendency at the December conference. (4) In regards to the allegation that Comrade Ricardo had police connections, the Bolshevik Leninist Faction states that it has never placed any such charges against Comrade Ricardo, and that it considers him to be a loyal member. The LTF Steering Committee states its concurrence with this statement. (5) The Bolshevik Leninist Faction agrees not to use the name *El Socialista* for its paper. (As a matter of fact, these comrades had already decided to change the name of their newspaper to *Clave* and to present themselves publicly as the Bolshevik Leninist Faction of the Socialist League to avoid confusion with *El Socialista*, the organ of the Militant Tendency of the Socialist League.) (6) To remove any factional contention over the issue, the BLF also agreed to turn over all material (with the exception of personal property) that was present in the Socialist League headquarters at the time of the December congress. These statements by the BLF closed any further dispute over allegations about Comrade Ricardo's being a police agent and the "theft" of material from the Socialist League headquarters, thereby helping to remove obstacles to a principled reunification. (7) Mem-

bers of the Fourth International inside and outside Mexico pledged to abstain from all acts and writings that might hinder the possibility of a principled unification in Mexico. Related to this is the agreement that *Intercontinental Press* would publish both the IEC motion and an article by a member of the Militant Tendency on the disputed questions in the Socialist League so long as that article did not raise new issues.

Comrade Ricardo of the Militant Tendency stated that in agreeing to the formulations in the resolution he had been compelled, much against his inclinations, to make a series of very important concessions. He said that he had instructions from his Political Bureau to demand that the IEC expel Comrades Josefina and Roberto, two leaders of the BLF, from the IEC, expel the entire BLF from the Fourth International, and launch an "investigation" of the SWP. He said he wasn't at all sure that the Militant Tendency leadership would agree to the concessions he had made on this point, and might "hang" him when he got back. It is to be hoped that this represented merely a passing mood, and that the comrades of the Militant Tendency will seek to carry out the IEC resolutions in good faith, as Comrade Roberto of the BLF indicated was his attitude.

### Condemnation of the SWP

The IMT decided to condemn the Socialist Workers Party for allegedly failing to implement the motion concerning the Internationalist Tendency adopted by the February 1975 meeting of the IEC. (See the minutes of the IEC meeting contained in this bulletin.)

The contrast between the position of the IMT in covering up bureaucratic and undemocratic actions of the Militant Tendency in Mexico and the PRT majority in Portugal, and their condemnation of the "unjustified and undemocratic expulsion of the I.T. comrades by the SWP leadership," is instructive as to their purely factional motives in each case.

The democratic rights of the Internationalist Tendency were scrupulously guarded in the SWP. Their positions were fully and completely presented before the entire membership in several conventions and pre-convention discussions spanning a number of years. In the written discussion and in oral discussions in the branches, the membership of the SWP thoroughly debated the IT's political positions on both the domestic and international questions in dispute. Repeated organizational violations of the norms of democratic centralism by IT members were deliberately set aside by the SWP leadership and the party as a whole to assure a complete and thorough political discussion.

The exact opposite occurred in the cases of the Militant Tendency and the PRT majority, whose bureaucratic organizational measures were designed to prevent political discussion. Yet the IMT gave aid and comfort to these bureaucratic actions.

The condemnation of the SWP by the IMT is designed to throw a smokescreen over the facts. The SWP Control Commission discovered secret internal discussion bulletins of the IT, which themselves proved conclusively that the IT had established itself as an organization separate and apart from the SWP, with its own discipline and loyalty

higher than any discipline or loyalty to the SWP. It had a complete party structure and its own political resolutions outlining its own priorities of work and political line in regard to the mass movement and opponent political formations. These were to be implemented by its members in opposition to the priorities and line decided by the SWP convention. It had defined the SWP leadership and rank and file as unreformable. It held a convention where it formally adopted these positions.

In its preconvention discussion, kept secret from the party as a whole, the various groupings within the IT debated when and how they would split from the SWP. At their convention, the IT majority decided on a temporary tactic of remaining in the SWP. There were two reasons for this temporary tactic. One was to gain time to convince the IMT internationally of their analysis of the SWP. The other was to aid their entry work in the Young Socialist Alliance. (Newer comrades can review the facts for themselves, in the report of the SWP Control Commission. See SWP Internal Information Bulletin No. 6 and No. 7 in 1974).

The party leadership, upon receiving the report from the Control Commission, acted to protect the party from the IT wrecking operation, by recognizing the existence of a rival party organization, making it known to the members of the SWP, and striking the names of participants in the splitting operation from the membership roles. The Political Committee further noted that the secret IT documents proved that the IMT itself was complicit with the IT operation, and that this fit into a pattern of secret factional activity by the IMT going back a number of years, including complicity in the split engineered by the IMT forces in the Canadian section. In light of these facts, the Political Committee proposed the convocation of an emergency World Congress of the Fourth International to consider the danger to the Fourth International represented by these facts, and to collectively overcome this danger. The IMT rejected this proposal.

The IMT condemnation of the SWP at this IEC was designed to cover up its own responsibility in the splitting course followed by the IT. The condemnation marked a definitive decision by the IMT to reject correcting the miseducation on organizational questions they have fostered through their secret factional activity in the world movement.

At the February 1975 meeting of the IEC, a motion incorporating the recommendations of the International Control Commission to the IEC was unanimously adopted. The recommendations were as follows:

"1. To make the recommendation that the SWP act in good faith and consider without delay the collective application of the IT for reintegration in the SWP.

"2. We note that the IT states it wants to participate in public activities supported by the SWP. We note that the SWP does not object to this. Until the situation is resolved, we recommend that when the IT and the SWP are involved in the same activities they seek to maintain a cooperative attitude avoiding public attacks on one another.

"3. The problems dealt with in our investigation lead us to the conclusion that it is necessary that the IEC initiate a discussion on the organizational norms of the movement."

Two members of the SWP Political Committee, Comrades Jack Barnes and Joe Hansen, who were present at

the IEC, indicated that they would urge the National Committee of the SWP, which had scheduled a meeting for May 1975, to weigh favorable implementation of these recommendations.

In the discussion on this point at the recent IEC, Comrade Bala Tampoe said that the SWP had made a mistake in allowing the previous IEC meeting to get the impression that the SWP intended to immediately reintegrate all the IT members. Comrade Tampoe did not attend the 1975 IEC meeting, but indicated that this was the opinion he had formed after talking to members of the IMT. Comrade Tampoe's criticism missed the mark, however.

There was no discussion at all at the 1975 IEC meeting of the motion relating to the IT. The SWP members present could not have left any impression about any alleged "interpretation" of the IEC motion. The IEC motion was worked out in a commission. In that commission, SWP leaders made the party leadership's position crystal clear. As the report by Comrade Mary-Alice Waters to the SWP National Committee meeting of May 1975 pointed out (SWP Discussion Bulletin, Vol. 33, No. 4):

"We explained that we considered it likely—though by no means certain—the National Committee would concur with the recommendations unanimously adopted by the IEC. We indicated we would urge such a course. We think the NC and the party as a whole are quite capable of being objective, of acting in good faith, of honestly evaluating the actions and statements of the IT members.

"We also explained that we would not and could not recommend the rapid reintegration of the members of the Internationalist Tendency. That would be the most damaging, explosive course conceivable. Suspicions and hostilities are too deep. Rapid reintegration would only lead to new conflicts, bringing new disciplinary measures. That would not be in the best interests of the Fourth International or in the best interests of building a revolutionary party in the United States."

Comrade Mary-Alice Waters further said that the party leaders present also explained to the leaders of the IMT in that commission that both "the ranks and the leadership of the SWP became convinced over that period of time [half a decade], working with these comrades day-by-day, in branches all over the country, that the ITers were not interested in loyally building the SWP" and were out to destroy the SWP. The IMT leaders disagreed with this evaluation and held that those members of the IT who hadn't wanted to build the SWP had changed their minds. We told them, Mary-Alice explained, "the members of the IT are going to have to prove this to the members of the SWP. They are going to have to prove that our evaluation of them is no longer correct, that they are ready to build. In this process, words, declarations, letters with a copy to the IMT aren't going to count for anything. We've had a lot of words from IT members. When they were in our party we noticed, over an extended period of time, that their words and deeds did not always coincide. So it is by their actions that the ranks will judge them."

If any other impression was conveyed to IMT members of the IEC, the fault does not lie with the SWP members of the commission.

The February 1975 IEC plenum also voted to consider the members of the IT as sympathizers of the Fourth

International, who would be members if it were not for the reactionary Voorhis Act. This was merely an application to the IT of the general formula the last world congress decided to use in situations where Trotskyist forces were divided.

However, the May 1975 plenum of the party's National Committee faced a situation different from the one that existed at the time of the February 1975 IEC. A delegated convention of the IT was held between the IEC and the party NC meeting. At the IT convention, the IT split. Two leaders of the IMT informed the SWP leadership that the split was over what attitude to take toward the SWP, but no documentation was provided concerning the composition or platforms of the various splinters of the IT, whose applications the National Committee had been asked to consider. Faced with this new situation, the National Committee adopted a three-part motion:

"1. To uphold and commend the July 4, 1974 action of the SWP Political Committee, both the procedures followed and the general line of the statement made by the PC evaluating the meaning of the IT split.

"2. To accept the recommendation of Comrades Hansen and Barnes to weigh favorable implementation of the proposals commonly agreed on by the International Control Commission.

"3. To assure objective and equal consideration of all former ITers, regardless of their current affiliations (the original IT referred to in the IEC resolution having broken up), to refer all requests for membership to the appropriate branch unit of the party."

The action by the SWP National Committee clearly accepted the IEC recommendation. The August 1975 SWP convention approved the National Committee action. Thus the IMT's current charge about the SWP renegeing on an agreement is false.

It turned out that only a minority of members of the former IT actually submitted even formal applications to rejoin the SWP. Many of those who did formally apply never made any attempt to collaborate with the party, and dropped away. Others withdrew their applications, or joined opponent groups. For example, Bill Massey, a fraternal member of the IEC, resigned and joined the Workers World Party. (The figures offered by leaders of the IMT on the number of former IT members who still have applications to join the SWP are false. Only 10 former IT members have standing applications at this time, according to information supplied by the branches.)

The IMT motion, as well as Comrade Hovis's report for the IMT on this question at the IEC, blamed the SWP for the fact that so many of the former IT members have rejected the SWP. The IMT motion "condemns the callous way in which honest militants who have shown their loyalty and devotion to the movement to the point of self-denial have been treated and demoralized by the SWP leadership."

The SWP has asked only two things of the members of the former IT. One, that they actually apply to rejoin the party. Most of them have failed that test. Two, that they collaborate in party-building activity. Attending party functions, making financial contributions, selling the press, aiding the mass work of the party constitute "self-denial" only for people who consider it wrong politically to build the SWP.

The actual facts show that responsibility for the course of the majority of members of the IMT lies with the leaders of the IT itself—and the IMT which backed them up. Even a cursory reading of the secret IT documents written in preparation for their May 1974 convention (available in SWP Internal Information Bulletin No. 6 in 1974) reveals that the IT was composed of an unprincipled bloc of groupings with different political positions, held together by common animosity toward the SWP. The rank-and-file IT members were educated to believe that the SWP was an obstacle to the American revolution and had to be smashed. The IT leadership—with the complicity of the IMT leaders—organized the IT as a vehicle aimed at splitting the SWP and emerging as a rival organization. Once on their own, this bloc flew apart because of its internal political contradictions, a process that culminated in the breakup of the IT following the February 1975 IEC. (Undoubtedly, many of the IT members had hoped for a split in the Fourth International at that IEC. When the anticipated split failed to occur, they were faced with the problem of finding some way to relate to the SWP in a positive way. Only a small minority of the IT proved capable of carrying out the elementary activities expected of SWP members.)

Under the discussion of this point at the IEC, Comrade Sakai of the Japan Revolutionary Communist League stated that the SWP was a "bureaucratic obstacle" to the development of the Trotskyist movement in North America. This theme was picked up by Comrade Pierre Frank, although without Comrade Sakai's sweeping characterization. Comrade Frank implied that the SWP has become monolithic. This was indicated by the fact, he said, that for the "past ten years" there have been no divided votes in the SWP National Committee. (Comrade Frank's statement is false, in addition to being irrelevant.) Comrade Hovis, in his summary, went further with this line of attack. He charged that the SWP regime is so constructed that it "just works out" that any member of the National Committee who expresses any difference is pushed off the Committee.

Comrade Moreno said that he thought the SWP leadership had been extraordinarily patient with the IT, in fact too patient. In the PST, he said, such a group would have been expelled "within twenty-four hours." Comrade Moreno, Comrade Tampoe, and Comrade Karl of the German International Marxist Group each introduced their own motions as substitutes for the IMT motion.

The definitive decision by the IMT to reject correcting their own responsibility in the IT case indicates the IMT will continue to act in other sections and sympathizing groups as it did in relation to the IT and the North American Bureau. This will only encourage others to follow the example of the splitting course of the IT, secure in the knowledge that they will have the backing of the IMT.

## **A Sectarian Stance**

An important question before the Fourth International is the shakeup occurring on a world scale among all the currents that consider themselves to be Trotskyist. The Portuguese events have accelerated this process. A broad exchange of political views is beginning to occur. In this situation, the Fourth International has the possibility of



strengthening its forces by participating in the political clarification that is under way. A number of currents have expressed the desire to engage in a discussion with the forces of the Fourth International. Among these are the Organizing Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International (OCRFI); the Lutte Ouvrière formation, an international current that includes Spark in the United States; and groups emerging from the disintegration of the current led by Healy. (See "The Portuguese Revolution and Building the Fourth International," International Internal Discussion Bulletin Vol. XII, No. 6, 1975, and "World Movement Report," SWP Internal Information Bulletin No. 2 in 1976).

The IMT has failed to respond to the openings, and instead has moved toward a more and more ossified factional stance towards these currents in the world Trotskyist movement. As was reported at the January 1976 plenum of the National Committee (see SWP Internal Information Bulletin No. 2 in 1976), this sectarianism of the IMT reached grotesque proportions at the December 1975 meeting of the United Secretariat, when an invitation extended by the French OCI, the largest group in the OCRFI, to attend their convention, with the right to present the viewpoint of the United Secretariat majority, was brusquely rejected by the IMT.

The IMT did not even place this question on the agenda of the IEC. Apparently they hope that if they maintain a firm sectarian attitude long enough, these forces will eventually go away and stop bothering the IMT with the problem of discussing with them political and programmatic questions of concern to the Fourth International and its growth.

The IMT acts as though it feared that some of these forces might be won over and that this would jeopardize its "majority." Against the possibility of finding itself in a "minority" in some future dispute, the IMT prefers not to take the risk of discussing with these groups or opening friendly relations with them. Thus the IMT, placing its narrow interests as a hardened permanent faction above everything else, sacrifices the interests of the Fourth International as a whole.

In line with this sectarian course, the IMT poses as a *precondition* for discussing with the OCRFI, Lutte Ouvrière, etc., a somewhat undefined "strengthening of democratic centralism" within the Fourth International. As the question of the organizational norms of the Fourth International is one of the points proposed for the agenda of the next world congress, perhaps the IMT will spell out more clearly what its views are on this proposed "strengthening of democratic centralism." What this appears to be in practice is to further *centralize* the functioning of the international, transforming the relation between sections and the United Secretariat, with the United Secretariat assuming more authority over the work of the sections, and imposing more "discipline" on the sections, after the requisite "self-criticisms."

What a "strengthening of democratic centralism" means in practice was demonstrated by the adoption of a motion by the IMT at the December 1975 meeting of the United Secretariat instructing the Canadian section to withdraw an invitation the section had previously extended to the Groupe Socialiste des Travailleurs du Québec to attend the convention of the section. In effect, the IMT declared that

"democratic centralism" means the right of the international leadership to decide such tactical questions as what individuals and currents in the workers movement in a given country can be invited to observe that section's convention (see SWP Internal Information Bulletin No. 2 in 1976). By not reversing this position at the recent IEC, the IMT let stand a dangerous organizational precedent.

The IMT decided to avoid even discussing the question of taking advantage of these openings for building the Fourth International. This default, however, did not dispose of the problem. Sections and sympathizing groups are still faced with the necessity to meet all these overtures objectively, in particular, finding ways to carry on the necessary discussions to clarify the key political questions as well as the historical and theoretical ones of concern to the world Trotskyist movement. Possibilities for common actions on a principled basis are being explored in a growing number of countries, such as France, Britain, Canada, and the United States. Instead of helping to lead this process the United Secretariat, by decision of its IMT majority, is at best defaulting on its responsibilities, and at worst sabotaging these opportunities to strengthen the Fourth International.

### The IMT's Organizational Solutions

The IMT appears to be moving toward attempting an organizational solution to the political problems posed by the division of forces of the Fourth International into two or more organizations in many countries. What they seem to have in mind is an organizational formula that would bypass the sharp political differences in the international. They feel uncomfortable over the necessarily public nature of the debate on the events in Portugal and Angola, which all forces in the international had to take up in their press, often with conflicting stands.

Their conception of further "centralizing" the international is dangerous. It ignores the real state of development of the Fourth International and its sections. It would place fresh obstacles in the way of developing indigenous leaderships that earn the confidence of the rank and file in their sections and grow normally in the course of party building in the class struggle. The tendency to blame the leaderships of sections for errors committed by the international leadership, coupled with correspondingly abject "self-criticism" by the leaderships of sections and their selection on this basis, would be encouraged. This in turn would weaken the international leadership, which can only be built through a process of deepening collaboration among the genuine leaders of the sections themselves.

An attempt to further "centralize" the international will not solve the problems the IMT thinks it would. It will not overcome the deep political differences in the international. It will not overcome the present lack of political leadership of the international. Nor will it develop the authority of the United Secretariat and the IEC (an authority already badly compromised by the actions of the IMT). At best, any such attempt will result in the IMT further "centralizing" itself as a faction, and even that would prove to be an illusory gain.

At its meeting of August 1975, the Steering Committee of the LTF proposed that both the LTF and the IMT mutually dissolve as factions. Ideological tendencies would

of course remain in view of the unresolved political differences. The IMT rejected this proposal in its October 10, 1975 statement (SWP Internal Information Bulletin No. 2 in 1976). There was no change in the IMT's position on this question at the IEC meeting.

The IEC called the next World Congress, to take place in approximately a year. The proposed agenda is the following: (1) World Political Situation; (2) Portuguese Revolution; (3) European Perspectives Document; (4) Arab Revolution; (5) Women's Liberation; (6) Balance Sheet of the Indochinese Revolution; (7) Organizational Norms of the Fourth International; (8) Activities Report; (9) Elec-

tion of the IEC. The pre-congress discussion was opened, and there was agreement to publish 24 bulletins of 48 pages each during the discussion. Guidelines on how the written discussion is to proceed remain to be worked out.

A positive step was registered at this IEC in the decision to elect a representative number of leaders of the Argentine PST as consultative members of the United Secretariat. This marked a reversal of the previous factional attitude taken by the IMT against the representation and participation of the PST comrades in the day-to-day work of the international.

March 25, 1976

# AN EVALUATION OF THE FEBRUARY. 1976 PLENUM OF THE INTERNATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

by John Barzman

## A More Political and More Diversified Discussion

This report is being written to briefly summarize for the party membership the views of an American supporter of the International Majority Tendency (IMT) on the recent plenary meeting of the plenary meeting of the IEC. It is difficult to know where to begin since this is my first opportunity to address these questions in this context since the period which immediately followed the Tenth World Congress (Xth W.C.). Furthermore, I am unaware of the extent to which various developments inside the International have been reported to the party as a whole through the branches, or to the supporters of the LTF through the LTF caucuses. At a later point, an actual balance sheet of the experience of the Internationalist Tendency (IT) and a full presentation of the IMT's analysis and line on the events of the class struggle over the past two years will have to be presented to the party. It is a responsibility of the comrades who supported the IMT's political positions to share with the rest of the party the lessons they have drawn from the past period. Similarly, it is the responsibility of those who supported the line of the LTF to make a balance sheet of the several years of international factional activities which have been conducted in their name. However, these topics will be better taken up in the context of a full political discussion. I will therefore try to limit myself here to indicating where the debate presently stands on a number of issues which have been the subject of controversy in the F.I., basing myself on the discussion at the IEC.

The first general observation is that despite the organizational difficulties created by the size of the IEC, the meeting was a real plenary session. One can even say that it was more representative than last year's session of the IEC in that there were more authoritative delegations from Latin America, Spain, Portugal, and Ceylon, at this year's session. The authority of this meeting of the IEC was not challenged by any participant.

Secondly, the debate at this session of the IEC was far more differentiated and open than had been the case previously. For several years now the discussion had become frozen into an exchange of statements between two sides, each presenting a common front. Misrepresentations of the other side's positions, red herrings, and organizational disputes had transformed the discussion into a dialogue of the deaf. The recent split in the LTF between the leadership of the PST of Argentina and those who reflect the views of the SWP leadership, changed that situation. It re-focused the debate on key political ques-

tions, namely Portugal, and resulted in a three-way debate with a free expression of nuances and differences.

Finally, the rise of the revolution in Portugal, and now Spain, has clearly changed the emphasis of the debate away from organizational disputes and toward fundamental programmatic questions and discussion of party-building tactics. The overriding preoccupation was with the growth and political arming of the F.I. so that it can assume the leadership tasks which it is confronted with in more and more countries.

Thus, on the whole, the IEC marked a beginning reversal of the extremely factionalized situation which had prevailed inside the F.I. Many problems remain unresolved and new ones are appearing. But the first steps toward reunification of the movement in countries where it is divided, as prescribed by the Xth W.C. resolution on unity of the F.I., were undertaken. There was unanimous agreement on concrete measures to assure a full and principled reunification of all groups in Mexico which claim to support the F.I. (G.C.I., Rojo, L.S., and F.B.L.), within a period of months, and to begin a fusion process between the LCI and PRT in Portugal. For the first time in this period, centrifugal pressures were clearly brought under control by a united and precise decision of the F.I. leadership, with the agreement of the representatives of the various groups of the country in question. The underlying motivation for these steps unquestionably was the increased realization of the IEC as a whole that the tremendous responsibilities which the FI now faces can only be fulfilled if the resources of the whole F.I. are pooled and applied in a united and disciplined fashion.

## Portugal: Balance Sheet of the Situation Until the IEC

At the time of the last IEC, the F.I. had not yet fully grasped the depth of the revolutionary process unleashed by the toppling of the Caetano dictatorship on April 25, 1974. In fact, at the June 1974 SWP National Committee plenum, the first United Secretariat resolution on Portugal was criticized for placing too much confidence in the government that would issue from the still hypothetical existence of a Constituent Assembly, and for not raising the problem of soviets. Since then, and once again at this IEC, IMT leaders stated they felt they had overestimated the weight of fifty years of the Salazar regime, and underestimated the rapidity with which a broad workers vanguard was reconstituted.

On the other hand, as the revolutionary process unfolded, the SWP leadership's initial reaction, which had

been a sort of orthodox instinct, was overshadowed by a number of other considerations: (1) the rejection as ultra-left of that layer of workers, soldiers, agricultural workers, students, and elements of other intermediate strata who displayed a willingness to take anti-capitalist actions despite or against the reformist leaderships of the CP and SP; (2) the a-priori prioritization of those democratic demands concerning the population as a whole over the democratic demands concerning specifically the working class and over immediate and transitional demands in an imperialist country; and (3) for a whole period, the reluctance to recognize the tactical adjustments of the CP to the rise of the mass movement.

The discussion at the IEC came after the Portuguese revolutionary process had already went through a series of different phases. It was therefore possible to distinguish the more basic and permanent elements of the line presented by the different currents. Ultimately, the basic difference is linked to the analysis of the forms of the current radicalization of the working class in Europe. For the IMT, the general pattern which has emerged since 1968 is a two-fold process. It includes, on the one hand, the emergence of a broad layer of advanced workers and elements of other strata both inside and outside the traditional reformist organizations, whose political views have undergone a radicalization on a series of different issues and who have engaged in various struggles that were unwanted by the reformists. On the other hand, and simultaneously, it involves the growth of the traditional organizations themselves as a result of the overall shift to the left of all layers of the working class and of the ability of these organizations to pose as the realistic alternative to the bourgeois parties.

Under these circumstances, to take the class struggle forward and build the revolutionary party has required that revolutionary Marxists work to strengthen the relative weight and independent expression of the layers breaking with reformism, while preventing their isolation from the masses still influenced by the reformists. This problem is apparent in all the discussions over united front tactics, governmental formulas, the forms of emergence of dual power, and the means by which bourgeois democratic and parliamentary illusions can be broken down. Mistakes have tended to be made in two general directions: over-emphasis on the cohesion, size, and political understanding of the vanguard layers combined with insufficiently frequent and overly vague prescriptions for united front approaches to the major reformist organizations; or the subordination of all actions by the broad vanguard to the hope of united front agreements with the traditional organizations.

In the case of Portugal, the LCI leadership, especially after the second LCI congress in August 1975, was involved in the first type of errors. The reporter for the IMT denied the LTF contention that this was the result of the IMT line. He explained that it was more the result of the failure of the IMT to get its line adopted and of the weaknesses of the LCI leadership. One should remember that the LCI was founded only a short time before the last world congress and did not participate in the pre-congress discussion, or take sides in the debate. Until about June 1975, the LCI leadership had little opportunity for deep discussions with the international leadership. This was due to the inadequate resources of the international center, and in part to the draining of these resources by the

internal debate of the F.I. A comparable situation existed in the PRT which went through a series of zig-zags on the nature of the MFA despite the fact that it drew its inspiration from the LTF. At the August congress of the LCI, a new leadership was elected by a plurality after a confused debate with three other tendencies. It held open differences with the analysis adopted by the United Secretariat on the initiative of its IMT members.

This new leadership, functioning in a very weak and new organization, came under tremendous pressures from the centrist organizations which were tail-ending the "military left". The LCI, despite its misgivings, signed the August 25 accord establishing the F.U.P. The accord objectively tended to subordinate the workers commissions to the MFA and the reformist parties, and gave conditional support to the Fifth Provisional Government. The error was all the more serious in that it was committed at a time when the surging mass movement of soldiers and workers was beginning to openly collide with the MFA and reformist parties.

After the expulsion-resignation of the CP from the F.U.P., four days after the accord was signed, the remaining organizations formed the F.U.R. on a new basis. The F.U.R. could have become a pole of regroupment for the far-left, pressing for broad united front actions with the CP and SP through initiatives of its own in different fields of the class struggles. The work of the S.U.V. was a good example of this perspective. However, the F.U.R. became dominated by the politics of the PRP-BR. The PRP-BR viewed the SP as a bourgeois party. It thought the CP had already thoroughly exposed itself in the eyes of the "revolutionary masses" by leaving the F.U.P. and joining the Azevedo government, and could therefore be stampeded by mass pressure into support for an insurrection. The LCI was unable to successfully confront this line which led to the November 25 revolt and the break up of the F.U.R.

These events stimulated the self-critical re-evaluation which had begun in the LCI at the prompting of the United Secretariat already prior to the signing of the F.U.P. agreement. At the extraordinary congress of the LCI held in January 1976, a new line was adopted and a new leadership elected. The results of this discussion have been published in a self-critical booklet and are reflected in the propaganda of the LCI which now regularly publishes the weekly *A Luta Proletaria*. Concrete proposals for fusion with the PRT were also adopted. The rich discussion which the LCI had gone through was reflected in the report of the LCI representative and the spokesperson for the IMT draft resolution.

The IMT reporter analyzed the post-November 25 situation as a pre-revolutionary situation in the process of ebbing. The main distinctive feature of the pre-November 25 period had been the enormous gap between the depth of the crisis of the bourgeois state apparatus which had become almost incapable of organizing repression, and the unpreparedness of the working class to fill the vacuum due to the still embryonic and atomized character of the organs of workers power and the absence of a revolutionary party capable of aiding their development in a independent direction. Such a situation could not last forever: either the working class would extend and centralize its organs, creating a revolutionary situation of generalized dual power; or the bourgeoisie would reconsti-

tute its ability to strike and drive back the most advanced sectors of the revolution.

The almost uninterrupted and unobstructed nature of the rise of the mass movement over an eighteen months period had created illusions among the centrists that the masses were ready for a seizure of power. In this climate, the government chose to provoke a confrontation over the issue of removing Carvalho from his Lisbon command. The terrain of reshuffles inside the military hierarchy was the bourgeoisie's only strong point. Instead of responding to this move by a further development of the network of soldiers commissions and by the strengthening of the soldiers' links with the working class, thus paralyzing the actions of the newly appointed reactionary commander, the "military left" launched a half-baked and ill-fated revolt.

Their defeat has modified the situation. While the working class as a whole was not involved in the revolt, some of its vanguard sectors, in particular those with the greatest illusions in the "MFA left" have been demoralized. The bourgeoisie has been able to purge and arrest revolutionary-minded soldiers and officers, to reconstitute the nucleus of a military striking force, and to reactivate the police. At present, it is seeking to use this new-found strength to impose its austerity plan on large sectors of the working class. However, there remain various forms of discontent among the soldiers; the workers commissions still stand; and the trade unions have been revitalized, being in many cases the most effective instrument to fight back the economic offensive of the employer class. New sectors of the working class which had preciously stood on the sidelines are now in the forefront. The Socialist Party has been entirely behind the bourgeois offensive, voting for the state of siege in the Constituent Assembly which suspended civil liberties, and denouncing all the mass strikes and demonstrations of the workers as irresponsible and illegal. The CP, although it seeks to maintain an ambiguous attitude, has in fact accepted each new attack on the workers without a major fight. This has resulted in a crisis in the CP, and more obviously in the SP. A recent conference of SP trade unionists called for the election of a new trade union confederation after a democratic discussion with tendency rights and in order to fight the economic assault on their standard of living. This was done over the opposition of the SP leaders.

The bourgeoisie itself is split over the question of how to handle the situation. One wing favors the retention of the CP and SP in the government so as to paralyze any response by the workers. The other wishes to move more rapidly toward a confrontation by basing itself on the mobilization of the conservative middle-class layers. The scheduled elections are meant to renew the authority of a government based on the Assembly to implement one of these two options depending on the relative cohesion of the working class response and of the conservative backlash.

The central strategic task to take the class struggle forward in Portugal remains the development, extension, and centralization of the workers commissions. It must now be advanced as the culmination of a plan of struggle to fight the austerity plan of the government. This plan should be advanced in the trade unions and in the workers commissions. It should include proposals for the organization of support to exemplary strikes and other struggles;

for the dissolution of the police and the freeing of political prisoners; for workers self-defense; for the extension of workers control; for solidarity with Angola and Spain. In each of these proposals, the need for the workers united front, the broadest workers democracy, and the importance of self organization by the workers should be stressed. The campaign for a democratic congress of the trade unions and the coming elections will be approached in this light.

## The Main Differences Over Portugal

A brief review of the points of differentiation between the IMT and LTF should help focus the discussion. We will take up the PST's positions following this review. Cde. Foley again stated that, since October, the differences over fact had considerably diminished. At present, the most pressing differences concern the governmental formula to be used in the forthcoming elections, and the role of the workers commissions. However, the LTF insisted that unless past mistakes were corrected it could not even consider amending the draft resolution submitted by the IMT.

### 1. On the Role of the workers commissions

The LTF recognizes on paper that the situation is a pre-revolutionary one, and that soviets are in order. However, it refuses in practice to recognize the real process through which soviets are, and necessarily will have to, emerge.

The LTF begins from the irreproachable premise that the struggle itself will determine which formations the workers will express their political independence and exercise their power through. It further states that in order to truly exercise political or power functions, these formations must address themselves to the central political questions of the class struggle. However, having said this, the LTF proceeds to define the defense of bourgeois democratic rights as the central political question and notes that no particular organs have really taken the lead and expressed the workers' interests in this central struggle; that until workers commissions, or the trade unions, or some other possible united front-type formations, such as SP-CP coalitions, break with the bourgeoisie on this central question and mobilize the majority of workers, we should not consider or give preference to any of them as developing organs of dual power, and that in fact, until such mobilizations on what the LTF considers the central question begin to appear and to lead to the formation of committees encompassing a cross-section of the working class as a whole, it is premature to call for soviets beyond the most general propaganda. In the fall, with the massive demonstrations of workers for better wages and working conditions, the LTF added the struggle for immediate demands as a central political question. But it still refused to see any more potential for organs of power in the workers commissions than in the trade unions or hypothetical united front committees.

In the view of the IMT, this line of argument is schematic. While democratic rights have remained an important question, objective conditions of national scope, such as unemployment and factory closures, have repeatedly put the issue of workers control at the center of the

political scene. In addition, in the face of repeated coup attempts by the right wing, anti-fascist vigilance—that is the promotion of purges of plotters and fascists, and the organization of self-defense networks—frequently was a key political issue, one at any rate which clearly transcended the relation between employer and employee at one job site. The failure of the LTF to observe these political developments seems related to a pre-conceived schema on the relation between the fight for democratic rights and the socialist revolution in the advanced imperialist countries. To those who recognized the central importance of the issue of workers control and anti-fascist vigilance, alongside immediate demands and democratic demands, it was clear that the workers commissions were in the forefront, mobilizing broad sectors in struggle against the plans of the capitalist class. Today, workers commissions can rekindle their political dimension by taking the lead in various branches of industry in the fight against the austerity plan and by organizing workers control.

Workers' commissions linking up with neighborhood, soldiers, and poor peasant commissions would be the most favorable channel for the emergence of soviets and a dual power situation. This is why the SP counter-offensive sought to isolate the soldiers—by calling for restoration of discipline in the army— and to strip the workers commissions of any national policy concerns—by converting them into mere plant committees. It is also the reason why the Gonçalves and CP plan sought to bind them to bourgeois municipal and military structures. It is true that neighborhood commissions have now dried up, that workers commissions still organize only a minority of the workers and lack a central organ that initiates common actions, and that the trade unions do have a centralized network and a potential for mobilizing around economic demands. But the unions remain extremely restricted by craft structures, bureaucratically managed, and more closely tied to the CP and to a lesser extent the SP. Until it is shown that the commissions are no longer capable of expressing the aspirations and interests of the masses, and other more favorable channels are in gestation, *the gains which the commissions represent as the first and embryonic thrust towards soviets, must be defended.*

Nor is it possible to dismiss the workers commissions as embryonic organs of workers power because the presence of centrists is relatively strong, because they have failed to defend the rights of the S.P. in terms of workers democracy, or because many of their members remain influenced by class-collaborationist ideologies. The fact is that under present conditions in Europe, where the traditional working class majority organizations are long-time and skilled bureaucratic manipulators, with deep roots in the parliamentary illusions of the masses, the most probable channel through which the workers' striving for power organs will initially be expressed is not through formally established united-front committees of the majority organizations, but through ad hoc formations in which the political forces that have already broken with reformism on a variety of issues will naturally be proportionally over-represented. The key problem is to draw the masses into these formations by consistent united front proposals, defense of workers democracy, and the demonstration that they are the most effective vehicle to advance the interests of the masses. Where such

formations don't exist in a pre-revolutionary situation, we will have to call for their establishment; where they are weak, we will have to extend them. It would be incorrect to wait until the majority reformist organizations *officially* enter these formations, or until their class-collaborationist line gets voted down by their own membership, before we project onto these formations functions of workers power. Such a policy would be the worst kind of tail-endism.

The question of the role of the workers commissions is possibly the most basic one, and although the LTF spokespeople at the IEC denounced the IMT position as "*soviétisme*", that position is held not only by the IMT and its supporters, but by the PST, the Kompass Tendency and Cde. Peng Shu-Tse. Cde Peng's letter to the IEC of February 4, 1976, put the matter succinctly: "The call for soviets must be raised at the beginning of a revolution, as we have learned from the Russian Revolution, and the lessons of the defeat of the second Chinese revolution. . . In Portugal, there have existed a number of workers and neighborhood commissions, as well as soldiers and sailors assemblies and committees. These are embryonic soviets. We must be based on these embryonic soviets in order to expand them throughout Portugal, to the cities, the countryside, and in the army."

## 2. On the SP offensive and democratic rights

The LTF contends that the Portuguese bourgeoisie could not tolerate democratic rights and institutions even for the brief period—historically speaking—of a class-collaborationist maneuver of co-optation. This objectively placed the defense of democratic rights and institutions at the very center of the class struggle. This was recognized by the masses who put it at the center of their preoccupations and struggles, forcing the SP to leave the government in protest against an impending military dictatorship, and subsequently, after the SP re-entered the government, to the present crisis in the SP.

The IMT considered that the *Republica* affair was merely a pretext to launch an offensive against workers control and for the restoration of order in the factories and countryside. Had *Republica* not existed, the bourgeoisie would have had to find another pretext. The IMT reporter recognized that due to the CP's bureaucratic maneuvers and to the centrists failure to defend workers democracy, the July demonstrations of the SP had a contradictory character. But the confused workers who sought to defend workers democracy by joining these demonstrations were in fact manipulated into demonstrations whose overall impact was to mobilize anti-Communist sentiment and further divide the working class. There was no MFA plan to smash the SP; Soares was not jailed; SP papers were not banned; and 90 percent of the officer corps did not back the establishment of a military dictatorship but instead supported the democratic counter-revolutionary offensive led by the SP. Since the victory of the SP offensive, the SP has been working hand in glove with the MFA to chase the workers out of the different positions they had won, to silence the media that supported workers struggles, and to purge the army of revolutionary-minded officers and soldiers.

The trade unions and workers commissions launched a counter-offensive for the defense of workers control and for wage demands. The counter-offensive built up during the

late summer and culminated in October and November, a first time. It is the attraction of this counter-offensive, and not the SP leadership's betrayal of the goals of the July demonstrations which has provoked the present crisis in the SP ranks.

### 3. On the "governmental formula"

There is unanimous agreement in the F.I. that the question of the working class taking power must be posed at least propagandistically in Portugal today. In all of its struggles, the working class will reach an impasse unless it moves forward to the formation of a government of its own. This is the key idea which a governmental formula must help to concretize by using already existing working class institutions and going beyond them.

However, there are many different governmental slogans. Some are designed to make a general propagandistic point, others to show the workers the concrete next step they must take to advance toward a government of their own. In the latter case, the slogan must be based on a first-hand detailed appreciation of the relationship of forces, and modified accordingly. In a very fluid situation, or one in which the revolutionary Marxists have very little input, it may be preferable for the revolutionary Marxists not to lock themselves into a rigid and specific formula. To formulate a governmental slogan, revolutionary Marxists must decide which parties should be projected as components of the government, which channels—bourgeois parliamentary institutions or proletarian organs of struggle—should be proposed for electing the government, to whom the government should be responsible, and what tasks it should be expected to carry out. They must also decide which of these aspects of a governmental slogan should be emphasized.

Throughout the whole course of events in Portugal, the LTF has proposed the same governmental formula: "For an SP-CP government based on the majority of the Constituent Assembly and carrying out a socialist program". This is the same formula which Trotskyists almost universally used in the post-war period when the CPs and SPs enjoyed an unchallenged hegemony over the advanced workers. Its use by the LTF for all times and all places seems somewhat dogmatic. But at some points in the unfolding radicalization in Portugal, this dogmatism, if it had actually been applied in practice, would have meant an attitude of procrastination and tail-ending toward the struggle.

In the initial phases of the revolution, and before the Constituent Assembly was elected, the IMT stood for the call for the election of a Constituent Assembly and the formation of a CP-SP government based on the Constituent Assembly.

After the mobilizations of March 11, 1975, in which the far-left played an important role in helping to stop the reactionary Spinoist coup attempt, the IMT felt that a strict SP-CP slogan would freeze out the far left. As was confirmed by the election results, the far-left was able to gather close to 5 percent of the vote, and was steadily growing at the expense of the CP and SP. In the April 1975 elections to the Constituent Assembly, the IMT therefore proposed an open-ended formula which would allow for the workers to give the far left a better relationship of forces vis-a-vis the SP and CP, i.e., "For a government of the

workers organizations" or "For a government of the SP, CP, and workers commissions". At that time, the slogan was still put forward with a view toward a government based on the Constituent Assembly.

In the next period, the workers, neighborhood, and later the soldiers commissions underwent such a development that one of the major debates in Portugal revolved around their potential for becoming the basis of a workers government. The SP took a stand in clear opposition to any "parallel" power structure to the Constituent Assembly. The CP and MFA attempted to co-opt the commissions by tying them to the municipalities and the army hierarchy. Thus, at that time, the idea of the working class taking over the commanding heights of society had to be put forward by emphasizing the call for a workers government based on the centralization of the workers, neighborhood and soldiers commissions. To call for a government based on the Constituent Assembly at a time when the majority of the Constituent Assembly was actively organizing the offensive against the embryos of workers power would have been contributing to strengthening that offensive. It would have been like a call for a "Noske Government" in Germany in 1919, or a "Caballero-Hernandez Government" in Spain in the summer of 1936.

At the same time, the embryos of workers power were not yet generalized or centralized, and their full potential for representing the class as a whole was not realized. It was and remains an eminently transitory situation. Thus the composition of the governmental formula could not be concretized. What could be done was to call on the SP and CP to enter and build the workers, tenants, and soldiers commissions in which the far left was already active, so that these commissions could elect a government truly representative and responsible to the working class, but a government whose composition could not be forecast at this time.

The present conjuncture is seen as a pre-revolutionary situation in the process of ebbing. However, the ebb could be reversed by a massive response of the workers to the government's attack on their standard of living. On the other hand, a successful regroupment of the potential conservative and reactionary bloc could isolate and disperse the positions held by the advanced workers. It is therefore still a highly transitional situation. Should the embryonic organs of workers power further recede, and should the Constituent Assembly emerge as a buffer between a reactionary onslaught and the basic organizations and gains of the working class, the governmental slogan would once again have to be presented as the formation of a workers government based on the Constituent Assembly.

### The PST's Positions

The PST presented its own motion on Portugal to a vote of the IEC, and voted against the IMT and LTF resolutions. Cde. Moreno took the opportunity to announce that the PST leadership would be discussing the formation of a third tendency. To explain his break with the LTF, he said that some dangerous deviations had appeared even before Portugal, but the decisive point had been the LTF's rejection of the building of workers commissions as

already containing the potential for organs of power. He said that he had assumed that after last August, when the LTF Steering Committee meeting took place, everybody agreed that the Constituent Assembly was dead, and the parts of the LTF resolution dealing with it, obsolete.

Cde Moreno then attempted an analysis of Cdes Hansen and Novack's writings on democracy. There were both some valid points and some gross oversimplifications in his presentation. For example, he said that the SWP's line of making defense of democratic rights the axis of its work in the USA, the most advanced imperialist country, was a monstrous form of Pabloism. However, he was not concrete and did not take into account the fact that the liberation of oppressed minorities in the USA and the struggle for women's rights are both considered democratic questions by the SWP. On the other hand he correctly stated that the contradiction between bourgeois democracy and imperialism is relative, that is subject to fluctuations. He said we would defend bourgeois democracy against reactionary attacks, but if a majority of the population voted against a strike in a particular country, we would attack bourgeois democracy.

The line of the PST remains filled with contradictions. The zigs and zags of the PST's line on Portugal, which were partly reflected by the PRT, are clear evidence of this inconsistency: the PST has gone from calling the MFA the tool of big business, to demanding that the MFA be democratized into a soldiers soviet, and then back again. It called for a workers government based on the Constituent Assembly and then called for a national assembly of workers commissions as the only guarantee that a genuine Constituent Assembly could be elected.

If one returns to the LTF's document written by the PST over a year ago, and incorrectly entitled "In Reply to the IMT's letter Number Two", the problem of the PST appears clearly. In response to the United Secretariat's criticisms that the PST was incorrectly identifying the defense of workers rights with the preservation of the Peronist bourgeois democratic institutions, the PST answered by making a very sharp dichotomy between the defense of democratic rights in advanced imperialist countries and in backward semi-colonial and colonial countries. It is now known that the PST rejected the SWP's proposal to base the defense of the PST on analogies with the SWP's work around democratic demands in the USA. The PST, however, finds itself in a contradiction in that it is sometimes difficult to draw a line between some of the more backward "advanced" imperialist countries, such as Portugal, and some of the more advanced "colonial" countries, such as Argentina, especially in situations where the issue does not involve the military or economic intrusion of external imperialism, but a class conflict between the workers and the national bourgeoisie. This will be one of the points of debate between the IMT and the PST.

There are other differences between the PST and the IMT on Portugal. While the PST feels the LTF is strictly propagandist, it feels the IMT is insufficiently preoccupied with reaching the "socialist masses", and feels that all united front proposals should be made as a priority to the Socialist Party and its affiliates. While the IMT recognizes the working class character of the SP, and, especially recently, the vanguard role of socialist workers in some trade union struggles, it rejects any exclusive orientation

to the SP left. The CP remains deeply implanted in whole sectors of the working class and is presently subject to similar differentiations. Further, the MES and UDP, rather substantial centrist organizations, have been undergoing grave crises which require sustained attention on our part. This is especially important given the IMT's conception of an articulated united front approach in which the weight of a coordinated far left is used as leverage to force the SP and CP into action.

## Angola

At the IEC, the discussion on the civil war in Angola was seen within the context of an advance of the revolution in Southern Africa following the defeat of imperialism in Indochina and the crisis of leadership in the imperialist camp. Comrades rejected the notion that Angola should be discussed as an appendix of the discussion on Portugal, or even more narrowly, of the discussion on the MFA.

The position presented by the LTF caucus represented a slight advance over the position which had previously been defended by the SWP. Up until the IEC, the SWP leadership had described the MPLA, FNLA, AND UNITA as equally tribally based, petty-bourgeois, and unwilling to fight imperialism. From this angle, all three were considered equally undeserving of any support. From another angle, the SWP leadership considered all three as genuine national liberation movements and therefore equally deserving of support against imperialism. But the second angle was only applied in the case of Portuguese colonialism.

By contrast, even before the final phase of the MPLA and Cuban victory over the South African invasion, other sectors of the LTF, in particular the Spanish LC, had already adopted a position in favor of extending strictly military support to the MPLA in its struggle against the imperialist interventions of the U.S. and South Africa. The LC applied the same policy to the struggle of the Frente Polisario against the Spanish, Moroccan and Mauretanian interventions into the Sahara. Similarly, the SWL of Australia gave critical support to the struggle of FRETILIN in Timor against the UDT, APODETI, and Indonesian invasion. In both the cases of the Sahara and Timor, SWP representatives in Europe have refused to take sides on the grounds of insufficient information.

Finally, several months after the outbreak of the Angolan civil war, the massive influx of U.S. aid, supplies, arms, and mercenaries to the FNLA and UNITA, and the deep thrust of the South African army into Angola, the SWP leadership recognized that one group was fighting the imperialist intervention while the others were allied with it. The position presented by the LTF was that the MPLA temporarily and partially wandered into our camp in our struggle against South African intervention, but that we should give the MPLA not one ounce of political confidence. It described the MPLA's struggle as almost purely fortuitous, an episode in the shifting game of tribal and imperialist alliances.

For the IMT, the fact that the MPLA found itself struggling against South African imperialism and US-backed indigenous forces was not an accident, but essentially the result of a long process whereby the MPLA and FNLA-UNITA gained different types of social bases.



The draft resolution recognized that all three groups had a mass base. But it also pointed out that the different nature of each group's mass base should be analyzed. Cde Livio who was reporting, presented a picture of the FNLA and UNITA as formations drawing their support through the patronage of tribal notables, heavily dependent on the neighboring neo-colonial states of Zaire and Zambia, and in the case of UNITA, with a history of support from white settlers. On the other hand, the MPLA, after a late start, and while it should still be characterized as a petty-bourgeois nationalist movement, was based on a more mixed ethnic constituency, had more of a political cadre, and relied on de-tribalized petty-bourgeois and plebeian layers. The key differentiation between these organizations occurred after the rise of the urban mass movement which developed outside the channels of all three established national liberation movements. The FNLA and UNITA proved incapable of absorbing this movement into their structure. They even saw its politicized character as a disintegrating influence on their base and attacked it. On the other hand, while there are some instances of MPLA repression of the mass movement which the comrades of the SWP leadership have amply documented, the MPLA basically chose to co-opt the movement by moving in with a top-down structure that seized control of it. The success of the MPLA takeover further antagonized the FNLA and UNITA against the mass movement now identified with the MPLA base committees. Thus the civil war began.

Once the civil war was unleashed, the initial, more tentative differentiations which had guided the choice of the bulk of imperialist forces toward the FNLA and UNITA, hardened. Despite the important role of the Cuban brigades, the MPLA had to organize some mass mobilizations. A close connection between soldiers at the front and the masses developed, especially around Luanda. The UNITA and FNLA became more dependent on South African troops and US aid. Such alignments, although they are subject to change over a period of time, cannot be reversed without major struggles and internal crises. A victory of the South African and mercenary invasion would have led to a bloodbath against the workers movement in Luanda, and to the establishment of a neo-colonial regime free from the pressure of an organized mass movement such as presently exists, and what is more, to a regime with considerable obligations to South Africa. It would have been a disaster for the whole Southern African liberation movement, and for the colonial movement throughout the world. The success or defeat of the South African invasion and of the US attempt to provoke a prolonged and debilitating civil war became inextricably tied up to the fate of UNITA and the FNLA. It became crucial for revolutionaries to contribute to their defeat by supporting the MPLA camp. The call for the FNLA and UNITA to break with South Africa and unite with the MPLA was utopian. Subtle distinctions between invaders, hired hands, puppets, and dupes of imperialism became difficult in such a situation. As Cde Tariq Ali asked the LTF: "What should an MPLA militia do when confronted by an American tank driven by a South African soldier and carrying a UNITA machine gunners unit?"

The problem of extending clear and consistent support to the MPLA's struggle against imperialism, as opposed to a

policy of neutrality, or half-hearted support, was a rather simple debate. The discussion involved some other questions though. The LTF accused the IMT of holding the position that revolutionary Marxists should generally support centralizing tendencies based on the capital city of former colonial territories against separatist tendencies; that they should generally support neo-colonial regimes based on more direct ties with the mass movement in any conflict these regimes might have with other neo-colonial regimes relying more directly on repression and imperialism; and that they should generally support those regimes aligned with the diplomacy of one or another workers state. None of these positions was adopted or even put forward by the IMT. The general approach of the speakers supporting the resolution of the IMT was that these considerations were certainly factors which had to be taken into account, and tied together in more than an enumeration of facts, but that this should be done within the context of a careful concrete analysis of each situation.

The rumor that the IMT had refused to call for the withdrawal of Portuguese troops from Angola because of alleged illusions about the MFA and Admiral Rosa Coutinho was found to have been without any basis in reality. Although there were differences among IMT supporters on the extent of the FNLA and UNITA's mass base and puppet-like relations to the CIA and South Africa, it was felt that these points were not essential to the analysis, and all agreed that the F.I. should call for a military victory of the MPLA not only against the South African invasion, but also against UNITA and FNLA, while not giving any political support to the MPLA leadership and line. The IMT also rejected the notions sometimes raised outside the F.I. that the MPLA is essentially a working class formation, that it should be considered as some kind of revolutionary nationalist tendency despite the sharp class differentiations which have already occurred, or that it could lead a process leading to the establishment of a workers state.

The influence of the F.I. in Angola up to now has been very indirect and haphazard. Comrades involved in African work said that the discussion and resolution on Angola would give the F.I. the tools to intervene among various milieux in Africa and to consolidated the groupings which exist into real nuclei of the F.I. While the line which was adopted on Angola should not be mechanically extended to other African situations which may look similar, the adoption of a resolution on Angola hopefully means that there will be further elaboration and work by the F.I. in Africa.

### **Background to Organizational Disputes**

A large part of the IEC was taken up by a number of organizational disputes. They included: the IT question, the split in Mexico, the Lambertist affair, and problems of disciplined functioning. It is impossible to consider these points seriously without considering the context within which such disputes are arising. It is no secret that these disputes have been explosive and that the F.I. has allocated considerable resources over the past few years to discussing them and attempting to resolve them in a principled fashion. The reason for this is quite simple. The way in which these issues are settled today will constitute precedents for tomorrow. They will shape the character of

the International at a time when it is about to undergo a qualitative expansion.

To understand the line of the IMT on each of these questions it is necessary to go over the discussion which the IMT has had on the various organizational phenomena associated with the present transformation of the F.I. as an international body. For the IMT, the present period of growth of the F.I. necessarily involves a tension between powerful centrifugal tendencies and a deliberate and permanent struggle for increased democratic centralization. This political position stands in contrast to what various others have concluded from the existence of these contradictory trends in the F.I. Some purists maintain that because of these tensions, the F.I. is a disunited unprincipled bloc. At the other extreme, others contend that democratic centralism is impossible on a world scale without either a workers state, the authority of a victorious revolutionary leadership, or already constituted strong national parties.

The centrifugal tendencies in the International today arise from three sets of factors. The first is a permanent problem. It is the problem of the reflection of the uneven development of the class struggle in different countries of the world on the consciousness of revolutionaries in a country which has never experienced a pre-revolutionary situation will have greater difficulty grasping the concept of dual power. The problem only tends to diminish when a revolutionary wave is cresting in many areas more or less simultaneously. Only purists who exist in self-proclaimed Internationals-in-One-Country can avoid such problems.

On a second level, the frequency and often bitter character of the present disputes arise from the fact that we are entering a transition period during which various national Trotskyist traditions which had more or less developed in isolation from each other, with only occasional consultation, are now collaborating more closely with each other. This increased day-to-day coexistence corresponds to a change in the tasks of the F.I. Up to 1968 or so, most sections saw their task primarily as the preservation of the program of the International, as the bearer of that program. They therefore were satisfied with an International that was basically concerned with organizing the struggle for theoretical clarification. Today, the class struggle more and more demands of the Trotskyists that they assume leadership of the mass movement and provide precise answers for political interventions. The International is therefore expected to go beyond manifestos and theoretical production. A process of comparing the practical experiences of different sections and elaborating the line of revolutionary Marxism on the basis of this exchange has begun. This has subjected every section, especially those with a long tradition, to increasing scrutiny and criticism. Tendencies to mechanically generalize the experience of one section into a world panacea, or to retreat toward theories of the exceptionalism of a particular section, have arisen. Before these tendencies can be judged accurately, the F.I. as a whole must develop a minimal understanding of the traditions and activities of the main sections, a common language, and common points of reference with which to discuss these experiences. There is today a tremendous backlog of such discussions which must urgently be held in order to correct long-standing deviations and proceed with the new tasks of the F.I. But frictions inevitably will arise in the process.

Finally, the current rise of the class struggle on a world scale has enabled the sections of the F.I. to penetrate more deeply into the mass movement and to win over whole layers of militants who come to the F.I. as the result of a particular indigenous process rather than as a result of a study of revolutionary Marxism. Thus, the present period aggravates the degree to which the sections of the F.I. are susceptible to various programmatic deviations. These are the type of risks which must be welcomed by the F.I.

The long-standing as well as the conjunctural centrifugal tendencies in the F.I. which we have just described all must be consciously dealt with and combatted. At the most fundamental level, this is because a *truly international program is inconceivable SEPARATE AND APART FROM THE WORLD PARTY through which this program is formulated*. The First International already articulated the need for a world-wide organization that could politically express the striving toward the single goal of world communism which is inherent in the proletarian condition. The Third International was born in the period of the further unification of the world market, revolutionary waves and world wars, and bureaucratization of the mass working class formations. It inaugurated the tradition of a professional international leadership, analyses of the world situation as a whole, and guidance of the struggle in various countries through a democratic centralist relation between the center and the sections. Trotsky codified these advances in the program and organization of the Fourth International. He struggled against federalist currents who wanted to postpone the F.I.'s foundation and centralization.

Since then, the F.I. has grown stronger in numbers, experience, and roots in the mass movement. The means of transportation and communications have tremendously improved. This makes it possible to not only maintain, but also to perfect the minimal level of democratic centralism of the F.I. which is necessary to coalesce a variety of national viewpoints, elaborate general programmatic statements on international events, and submit them to a modicum of public exposure.

But there are today new, compelling, reasons which demand an increased democratic centralization of the F.I. over and beyond that which was required by the need to have an international leadership enrich and defend the world program of Marxism. The International has already begun to play a role in coordinating the intervention of different sections. Such coordinating efforts have included: defense campaigns (Hugo Blanco, ban on the Ligue Communiste, etc.); international actions against the war in Vietnam; continent-wide demonstrations and conferences (Lige 65, Berlin 68, Red Europe 70, Paris Commune 71, Asian Youth Conference 75, etc.); trade union actions against multi national corporations; publication of Trotskyist literature in languages used in several countries where the F.I. has sections (French, English, Spanish, German, etc..) or in countries where Trotskyism is banned (Czech, Russian, Ukrainian, Chinese); travel by organizers to areas where the F.I. has not existed. Taken altogether, these projects are just symptoms of the possibility for an organic development of the F.I. as such. But this development must be politically mastered. For this, the line of the various campaigns of the F.I. as such must be politically thought out by a leadership which has a firm grasp of the overall needs of the world class struggle, the

specific forms of the class struggle in each country, and the organizational maturity of the sections of the F.I.

Finally, the democratic centralization of the F.I. as a world party is a necessary framework to train cadre to think internationally, to transmit our principles and norms and to assimilate whole new organizations in countries with no Trotskyist traditions or with weak Trotskyist nuclei, and to correct deviations in existing organizations of the F.I. Such tasks cannot be accomplished by leaderships of national sections who consider the specific problems of the F.I. as a world party only as their second priority. They require the formation of an international leadership originating in the most capable cadres of the sections, based on a strong organizational center, developed in the process of intervention into various national situations, elected and controlled by a membership educated in internationalism, and capable of synthesizing the experience of the different sections and, in turn, of raising the political level of the sections by imparting them with a more fully evolved world outlook.

Flowing from the existence of these inevitable centrifugal tendencies and the need for increased democratic centralization, a struggle has had to be waged around a number of points relating to the norms of the F.I. and its sections. As of now, they have included: the concept that a section is the embodiment of the world program of the F.I. in each country, the channel through which that program can best be fused with the broad vanguard in that country, and therefore that there can only be one section in each country; that political views which are acceptable in one section should be acceptable in another; that the policy of the International be truly debated in the ranks and determined by a process of proportional representation rather than by federalist bloc votes by whole sections; that all sections consider the building of the F.I. as such, as a top priority in terms of allocation of resources and leadership; that all sections seek to impart their experience to the rest of the F.I., submit it to review by the F.I., and solicit guidance from the F.I.; that organizational norms of democratic centralism in all sections be standardized—taking into account the stage of development of each section and the level of repression, etc., in each country—and that the F.I. be accepted as a higher authority; that the F.I.'s campaigns be effectively implemented by all sections—given their relevance and the strategy of the section in each country; that the F.I. adopt a common front toward contending political forces so as to be able to use its whole weight in insuring the testing of democratically-decided policies.

These concepts are essential to the survival of the F.I. as the embodiment of the highest level of consciousness attained by the world working class and as the instrument for the accomplishment of the world socialist revolution. They are already present in more or less explicit form in the statutes which are presently in effect in the F.I. But recent experience has shown that they need to be explained and reasserted in a political struggle.

### **Condemnation of the Expulsion of the IT From the SWP**

The dispute over the events surrounding the expulsion of the IT involved some of the above-mentioned concepts.

This explains why the IEC returned to the question of the IT for two years in a row, with a good deal of passion, and despite the small number of comrades directly affected by its decision. Observers from the SWP leadership claimed that the resolution which was adopted was a purely factional act which would have no practical effect one way or the other. In order to understand why the resolution was adopted, it is therefore necessary to enumerate the issues that were raised and to recall the sequence of events. Following are a number of these issues. It should be clear that they are only hypothetically involved since the SWP is not a section of the F.I. because of reactionary legislation in this country.

- Whether a section, as a section, can define itself as seeking to build an international tendency or faction, and place the resources of the section at the disposal of that tendency or faction.

- Whether a section can discriminate against applicants for membership or groups seeking fusion on the grounds that they support the views of the F.I., and not the views which happen to be supported by a majority of the comrades of that section.

- Whether a section's decision not to represent a significant political minority, which is in support of the positions of an international tendency or faction, on its national leadership bodies, is in conformity with the norms of democratic centralism.

- Whether a section leadership can define a group of comrades as a rival party implicitly on the basis of their views, as expressed in votes for the world congress resolutions, when these views are those of an international tendency or faction which is accepted everywhere else in the F.I. as an integral part of the F.I.

- Whether actions such as those mentioned above can be appealed to the F.I. as a higher body, and whether a section has the obligation to submit to the ruling of the higher bodies of the F.I. And conversely:

- Whether a group of comrades in a section can act upon the belief that their section is no longer in conformity with the statutes of the F.I., when the F.I. as such has not pronounced itself on the matter.

- Whether a body of the F.I., be it a leadership body or a section, can initiate contacts and entertain relations with groups other than the section in a particular country without the approval of the section.

The full discussion and clarification of these issues will take place within the framework of the discussion of the point on "Democratic Centralism and the Organizational Norms of the F.I." which is on the agenda of the Eleventh World Congress. But the IEC felt that the norms and integrity of the F.I. had to be defended at this time by a clear statement. This was necessary because of the IEC's concern for the healthy development of the American Trotskyist Movement, and for the way in which the membership of the F.I. perceives the present functioning of the F.I.

The last session of the IEC, a year ago, had been thoroughly informed of the events surrounding the expulsion of the IT by the International Control Commission reports of Cdes Karl and Tantalus, and of Cdes Bundy and Gormley. In a spirit of conciliation, the last IEC meeting decided not to formalize its judgement so as to facilitate the adoption of unanimous recommendations aimed at reintegrating the IT. This approach failed in that

the SWP leadership did not act in good faith in carrying out the IEC recommendations. Thus, the IEC faced two questions: bringing judgment first on the expulsion of the IT, and second on the SWP leadership's failure to abide by the recommendations of the IEC. It should be clear that when speaking of "abidance" and "condemnation", no question of discipline is involved since the SWP is not a section of the F.I.

Cde Hovis, speaking as an observer and a consultant of the IEC, reported on the motion submitted by the caucus of the IMT. He summarized the accusation made by the SWP leadership, the self-criticisms of the IT, the actual process at work in the relations between the IT comrades and the SWP as a whole, and what could only be described as the final touches of an attempt by the SWP leadership to destroy IT comrades as political militants. Following are the main points of the report and discussion.

The SWP leadership decided to characterize the IT as a "rival party". In fact, it seems that what is actually meant by the SWP leadership in less pompous and sectarian jargon, is the nucleus of an organization seeking to build the revolutionary party separately from the SWP. Before proceeding further, it should be noted that a pattern of indisciplined activity toward another party, even if generalized, does not constitute the distinctive feature by which a "party" can be identified. A party conducting entry work is perfectly capable of observing the discipline of the party it is entering. Likewise, formations other than a party are capable of displaying a pattern of indiscipline toward their own party. For the characterization of the IT as a party to be accepted, it would have been necessary to clearly establish one of two political positions. Either the IT had crystallized around a qualitatively different world program and become conscious that this called for the creation of a new and separate nucleus; or, the SWP leadership in cognizance of the views of the IT, which were representative of those of the IMT, and of the evolution of the SWP leadership's own views, had decided that although the IT was not aware of the fact, the IT's views in effect constituted the basis of a world program and organization separate from that of the SWP. The SWP leadership never seriously advanced the second justification and it failed to seriously document the first.

Instead, the party leadership used thoroughly organizational and sectarian definitions of the nature of a party, without ever really fully codifying the full implications of these positions. It also misrepresented what actually took place at the April 1974 conference of the IT. That conference did not adopt the "Hank Williams document" but accepted instead an oral report by Vincent, based in part on that document, but which specifically withdrew the characterization of the SWP as a right-opportunist sect as incorrect, and proposed that until further clarification could be achieved, IT comrades should abide by the IMT Bureau's line of building a tendency of IMT supporters seeking to influence the SWP over the long run.

The report of the representative of the SWP leadership reflected the more sober approach to the whole question, which is now possible in retrospect. He barely mentioned the line of argumentation based on the existence of an "IT Party". Instead, it emphasized two points: the alleged generalized pattern of indiscipline and inactivity of IT comrades; and the fact that the IT comrades had undergone attrition and splits since their expulsion. This

supposedly demonstrated that the IT had always been an unprincipled bloc. Cde Sakai, of the Japanese section, pointed out that if the problem had indeed been the acts of indiscipline of various IT comrades, even if it was almost all of them, then the correct procedure would have been to hold a trial. Instead, he said the expulsion had been brutal and unconstitutional.

Cde Hovis pointed out that the IT could not be both an unprincipled anti-leadership bloc and a rival party. In fact, the attrition and splits of the IT after its expulsion demonstrated not that it had been an unprincipled bloc, but rather that it had been a tendency which came together solely to defend certain political positions inside the SWP and got pushed into an impossible position. Any tendency of 100 comrades subject to the same pressures would have suffered similar attrition and splits.

Cde Hovis listed the main points of self-criticism which the IT comrades had formulated shortly after their expulsion. In face of the tremendous organizational pressure to discredit, isolate, provoke, and entrap them, IT comrades: (1) incorrectly implied that they could make up for the SWP's failure to carry out F.I. campaigns by the circulation of F.I. literature; (2) failed to immediately report various efforts of some comrades to recruit to the SWP members of groups claiming to support the F.I.; (3) organized an apparatus which would have been more appropriate to a faction.

The SWP leadership's refusal to accept the existence and guide the development of a rank-and-file oppositional tendency set in motion a process whereby mistakes and suspicions inevitably arose among IT comrades, leading to further after-the-fact rationalizations by the SWP leadership of its original position. The IMT Bureau and an initially substantial, but progressively smaller, number of IT comrades made a series of attempts to break this vicious circle. The list of these attempts stretches all the way to the eve of the IEC meeting which had to express its judgement. April 1974: the IT conference decides to change the behavior of IT comrades and abide by a long-term tendency perspective. This was answered by the expulsion of the IT. July 1974: 65 comrades of the SWP and 69 comrades of the YSA appeal their expulsion. The letter of appeal was never answered. October 1974: new request for a discussion on the reintegration of the IT, accompanied by various demands. No answer was communicated to the IT. November and December 1974: letters withdrawing the incorrect demand for pre-conditions to the reintegration of the IT. No answer was ever communicated to the IT. Winter 74-75: scattered efforts by IT comrades to collaborate with the SWP. These efforts were generally met with derision. February 1975: IT proposal for an immediate consultation between the IT and the SWP in view of arranging joint proposals on the implementation of the IEC recommendations. The answer was postponed until after the SWP Plenum over two months later. April 1975: The IT invites a representative of the SWP leadership to address and attend its conference. Invitation rejected. April 1975: Cdes Barzman and Massey propose that they be allowed to give a report on the evolution of the IT and on the conference where a split had just occurred. Their proposal was rejected. May 1975: the plenum of the National Committee is held without a report by the leaders of the IT being allowed. (The refusal to allow a report by

leaders of the IT is particularly significant since the SWP leadership claimed that it could not collectively reintegrate the IT because it did not know who was in the IT collectivity. Had this been the case, the NC could have easily mandated the PC to establish which comrades constituted the IT collectivity covered by the IEC recommendations, and empowered the PC to collectively reintegrate those comrades. In reality, the SWP leadership continued to plead ignorance even after all the documents of the IT, and the complete list of members of the IT new faction had been handed over to them a couple of days after the plenum. It maintained the same attitude even after the procedure selected by the plenum had allowed the clear identification of a group of 56 comrades who had applied to the branches in the month of May).

June and July 1975: the comrades who agreed to abide by the SWP plenum decision even though it was a violation of the IEC recommendations, proposed that definite criteria of activity and timetables for reintegration be adopted, and that IT comrades be allowed into party fractions and the pre-convention discussion. Each branch gave a different and generally evasive answer. Fall 75 and winter 75-76: a small number of reintegrations are carried out on a totally arbitrary basis, leaving a majority of the surviving applicants outside the party.

The IEC had some difficulty arriving at definite figures concerning the applicants to the SWP because each time the SWP leadership rebuffed one of the IT's overtures, the number of active IT applicants diminished as IT comrades became discouraged. It became more difficult to explain to IT comrades that the SWP really was not a totally bureaucratic and factional organ. The IEC had to consider the meaning and consequences of such a method of dealing with comrades who have differences. It resulted in the loss of a number of comrades to the SWP and to the F.I., and unfortunately, in a limited number of cases, in the bolstering of opponent organizations by embittered former SWP members. It miseducated the party membership in a factional, sectarian, and in-grown spirit which of necessity was reflected in other areas of party work. It considerably reduced the SWP's ability to offer the American left a model of democratic centralist functioning. It is inconceivable that the SWP leadership did not foresee these consequences of its actions. The inescapable conclusion which the IEC had come to grips with was that the SWP leadership had sacrificed the interests of the SWP and the F.I. in favor of narrow and short-sighted factional gains. The reporter concluded by stating that the F.I. could not allow such a sequence of events to take place in a fraternal organization without taking a clear stand on it. Failing to do so would mean that the democratic centralist norms of the F.I. would become a mockery not only in the eyes of those militants it is seeking to attract, but also in the eyes of its own very membership.

Cde Alan Jones, of the IMG, while disagreeing with some minor points of the report, spoke extensively on the incorrectness of the SWP's characterization of the IT as a party. He felt that the distinction between party and faction had to be emphasized in order to arrive at correct organizational measures. After reading a quote from Lenin attacking sectarian and small circle mentality, he reproached the SWP leadership with not having made the slightest overtures to IT comrades. He declared his support for the resolution.

Speakers who were not aligned with either the IMT or the SWP leadership generally tended to favor simple motions urging the SWP to immediately offer reintegration to all remaining applicants, and recognizing the continuance of their status vis-a-vis the F.I. until such a time as the process was completed. Cde. Moreno said the IT should have been called to order much sooner and that the actions of the SWP leadership reflected a total lack of self-confidence. Cde Bala Tampoe of the Ceylon RMP, said the SWP leaders made a mistake in allowing the majority of the IEC members to leave the last IEC session with the impression that the SWP intended to reintegrate the IT. Cde Karl, of the German Kompass Tendency, moved a resolution urging the immediate reintegration of all the applicants.

The last sentence of the resolution adopted by the IEC (see the minutes of the IEC meeting contained in this bulletin.) requires an explanation. The comrade representing the SWP leadership claimed that this sentence meant that the IMT intended to have relations with a group called RMOC (Revolutionary Marxist Organizing Committee). RMOC is an organization founded last November by the L.A. Socialist Union, the Baltimore Marxist Group, a number of former IT comrades who refused to abide by the IEC recommendations to collaborate with the SWP, and a few other elements. RMOC claims to support the F.I. and has submitted a proposal that it be collectively admitted into the SWP. The proposal consisted in a letter of a few lines.

In reply, the reporter for the resolution submitted by the IMT caucus explained in his summary that the last sentence only applied to those comrades who had followed the procedure for re-applying for membership outlined by the SWP in May 1974, and who subsequently had been demoralized by the state of limbo in which they had been kept for so long. According to the resolution, these comrades should get a second chance to re-apply for membership and build the SWP, and thereby to maintain their status vis-a-vis the F.I. *This means that they must leave RMOC in order for the resolution to take effect.* The reporter's explanation of the motion was not amended or challenged by anyone. It therefore stands as the line adopted by the IEC.

The IMT has clearly stated on many occasions over the past three years that it considers the SWP to be *the* Trotskyist organization in the United States. No other group can claim to represent the views of the F.I. Any individual or group in the USA who wishes to build the F.I. can only do so by building the SWP. RMOC has stated that it wishes to build the F.I. and to be collectively admitted into the SWP. The answer to this request is not connected to the IEC recommendations concerning the IT. It should be judged separately, on its own merits. This writer's opinion is that RMOC sincerely wishes to build the F.I. but is criss-crossed by contradictions when it comes to deciding what this means for the USA, and especially in relation to the SWP. The SWP should therefore seek to have a political discussion with these comrades with a view toward bringing them to a point where a principled fusion could be effected.

## Mexico

The series of splits of the Trotskyist movement in Mexico should serve as a warning to the whole F.I. First, the LTF supporters organized a split from the GCI and formed the LS. Next a wing of the GCI split and formed the Rojo group. Finally the LS itself split into two. This last split in particular is the result of a profound miseducation on the distinction between faction and party which has characterized a large segment of the LTF. While the division of the LTF into a maintained faction and a new tendency was perfectly justified due to the political differences over Portugal, the formation of yet another public organization of the F.I. on the basis of these differences is totally unprincipled and detrimental to the building of the FI.

This is the lesson which the GCI has been attempting to explain ever since its last congress when it decided to pursue an aggressive campaign for the immediate unification of F.I. forces in Mexico. The GCI correctly stated that for Leninists, the only principled basis for a split from a previously revolutionary organization is that organization's betrayal of the class struggle. It said that the F.I. which has demonstrated that it is possible to hold a many-sided discussion within the framework of democratic centralism, must now also demonstrate that it is possible for several tendencies to work together to build a single revolutionary combat party. The GCI stood for the immediate unification of all F.I. forces in Mexico so that the united organization could fully assume its role as the Mexican section of the F.I.

Both the FBL and the TM made a series of organizational errors. Many of these errors had precedents in the actions of both the SWP and the PST leaderships. For example, both the SWP and PST leaderships have intervened into the affairs of sections of the F.I. to urge on or restrain various groups in such a way that these groups came to rely more on the support of the SWP or PST than on their own ability to convince and work with the other members of their section. The PST has a tradition of undemocratic discussion. Prior to the last world congress, representatives of the IMT on a tour of PST branches were hooted down by an organized chant. It was then reported that there had been 3,500 votes for the LTF, 0 against, and 0 abstentions. Yet the SWP leadership made no comment at that time. Further, the SWP set a poor precedent by denying the Internationalist Tendency any representation on the National Committee at its 1973 convention, and by the brutal fashion in which the expulsion of IT comrades was effected. The very creation of the LS was an unprincipled split. The SWP despite its initial opposition accepted this split and the split became a basic point of reference in the education of LS members. What happened to the LS in Mexico is the inevitable result of the practice of discarding the norms of democratic centralism and the F.I. for factional reasons.

Fortunately, there is a growing realization in the F.I. that these factional practices are destructive and self-defeating on the long-run, and sometimes even on the medium run. Having concretely witnessed the results of such practices, more comrades understand that they must speak out against any attempt to challenge the norms of

the F.I., regardless of which tendency or faction is responsible for the challenge. The unanimous agreement on Mexico which was reached at the IEC is a positive sign that the trend toward unification and principled functioning within a single organization is gaining ground. The leaders of the GCI, LS, and FBL who were present at the IEC also gave their approval to the agreement.

The main points of the resolution state that there was no reason to question Cde Ricardo's loyalty to the F.I., that *Intercontinental Press* would publish an answer by Cde Ricardo to the article by Cde Hansen, that this would close all further public mention of the internal situation in Mexico, that the GCI would fuse with Rojo, the LS, and the FBL in the immediate next period. Various guarantees of democratic functioning of the branches and representation of minorities on the leadership were outlined. The united organization will be recognized as the official Mexican section of the F.I., in conformity with the decision of the Xth W.C.. Thereafter, there shall be only one organization of the F.I. in Mexico. Any group or individuals refusing to participate in this fusion process will be considered by have placed themselves outside the F.I.

The resolution was precise and unanimous. Its implementation will herald the reversal of the divisive trend of the last few years. It will give the F.I. its strongest organization ever in Mexico, and it will allow for a qualitative extension of the F.I.'s influence in Mexico.

## Lambertists

The question of relations with the OCRFI (Lambertists) has come up in various discussions. The real issue at stake was hidden behind a dispute over the authority of the United Secretariat to regulate relations with opponent international organizations versus the right of the Canadian section to invite guests to observe its convention. The same problem had come up last summer in relation to the SWP convention. The real difference though, is over the place of the OCRFI in the process of expansion, regroupment, and implantation, which will make of the F.I. the mass revolutionary International.

For the SWP leadership, it seems that discussions with the OCRFI, with a view toward fusion, are the immediate and key priority. However, the OCRFI is not the only possible group that the F.I. can orient toward. There are other organizations which claim to be Trotskyists (the Pabloites, Healey's I.C., Lutte Ouvrière's network, I.S.'s network, Spartacists, etc.). There are various important centrist groupings: (French PSU, Italian Lotta Continua, various currents in Latin America, etc.). There are layers of militants in the far left, the CPs, the SPs, or just emerging in the course of struggles, whom we expect to win to our ideas. What approach we should take toward each of these organizations and layers, and in what order we should approach them, must be part of an overall conception of the stages of building the F.I. Otherwise, the forces of the F.I. could become dispersed in empirical efforts to achieve limited gains while missing the bigger opportunities. Unfortunately, the SWP leadership has not given any explanation of how a rapprochement with the Lambertists would fit into an overall perspective on the stages of expansion of the F.I. The only stated explanation for the SWP leadership's interest in the OCRFI is the OCRFI's request for a discussion on Portugal. The fact

that the Lambertists' position on Portugal is close to that of the SWP leadership is possibly not unrelated. This however, is an unacceptable criterion for determining priorities. The fact that an organization agrees with the SWP leadership on one of the points in dispute in the F.I. gives no reliable indication on what role that organization could be called upon to play in the building of the F.I.

For the IMT, the question of our attitude toward the OCRFI must be posed within the context of discussing what are the next steps the FI must take to advance toward the building of a mass revolutionary International. Two goals must be achieved: (1) the strengthening of the present F.I. must enable it to have a decisive weight within the future mass International; (2) various existing organizations must be worked on so that they can be transformed and integrated into the F.I. without this changing the character of the F.I.

This means that the F.I. must have a priority on developing its organization and external intervention while maintaining its internal discussion and conducting selected public debates. The success of operations with other groups will depend on the prior establishment of a firm basis for the democratic centralist functioning of the F.I. As the F.I. achieves major gains in different countries, and as it demonstrates its ability to manage fruitful internal discussion, groups such as the Lambertists may begin to change their attitude and help to build the F.I.

At present, there are a few signs that the OCRFI has modified its tactics toward the F.I. This has to do mainly with its request to participate in the F.I.'s internal discussion. However, physical attacks by the OCRFI against comrades of the FI have continued without ever being disavowed, and the F.I. is still seen as an organism whose function is to organize capitulations to Stalinism and imperialism. Further, the OCRFI wishes to discuss only with the SWP and not with the French section. In the face of such a situation, the F.I. has decided to begin now to educate the OCRFI as to the democratic centralist nature of the F.I. and the need for a loyal attitude toward all of its component parts. This is why the F.I. has demanded that all physical attacks and slanderous accusations cease before discussions can proceed. The F.I. leadership has chosen this course based on its assessment of what the F.I. can achieve by marshalling all its forces in a united and disciplined fashion behind this tactic. If the LTF wishes to propose another approach or to explain its own overall regroupment perspective, it may do so within the framework of the F.I. But no single section can take it upon itself to apply a line contrary to that decided by the international leadership. All relations with the OCRFI and its sections must be in line with the F.I.'s overall approach.

### Other Organizational Problems

A number of other problems could not be taken up by the IEC although they were the subject of grave concern for the IEC. The political resolution adopted by the Xth W.C. called for the building of an international center and outlined a number of tasks of this center. All sections were asked to participate in this project. Further, it was decided that the international work conducted by different sections would be coordinated by the leading bodies of the F.I. rather than by some commission of a section. This was to

avoid overlap and to give political cohesion to the work. Thus efforts toward the Far-East, Africa, the Middle-East, Eastern Europe, new countries in Latin America, and Spain, as well as in specific areas like trade union and women's liberation work, were to be pooled and subjected to the political supervision of the leading bodies of the F.I. In the case of the SWP which is not a section of the F.I. due to reactionary laws in the US, it was hoped that the SWP's international work would be voluntarily adjusted so as to advance these goals. Unfortunately, since that time, the international work of the SWP has not met those expectations.

The SWP leadership has decided not to contribute to those projects which the bodies of the F.I. democratically decided to support. It only contributes to its own international work or to those projects supported by the F.I. with which the SWP leadership agrees. As a result, the F.I. could not give the SWP as much moral credit for the SWP's international work as it gives to sections who pay dues regardless of whether they agree with the projects which their contribution are used for.

Another subject of concern has been the failure of the LTF members of the Bureau of the United Secretariat to observe the normal rules of functioning of any leadership body. They have traveled without even prior notification and have subordinated their participation in leadership bodies of the F.I. to faction activities. They have sought to contact, influence, and organize militants and groupings in several countries without any consideration for the channels and schedules by which the F.I. and its national sections regulate internal discussion.

Finally, there was much concern over the way in which various publications, especially *Intercontinental Press* (IP) have increasingly tended to become public organs of the LTF. It was felt that the balance of articles and editorials of IP should reflect the line of the F.I. as it is expressed in the resolutions adopted by its leading bodies. Otherwise IP could not be considered as a project supported by the F.I. Presently the general line which emerges from IP in a series of issues in dispute is not the line of the F.I. Further, IP has unilaterally opened public debates on Portugal and Angola by publishing articles by members of the SWP or of the F.I. which do not reflect the views of the F.I. Although the United Secretariat did decide eventually to open these debates to the public, IP began publishing contradictory articles before the USec decision. The USec decided it would be best to have the debate on Portugal take the form of an exchange between editors of the magazine. However, in a later article on Angola, the debate is presented to the public as a debate between factions, and the IMT is attacked by name, without the F.I. having ever decided that it considered this approach to be the one most suited to the situation. Finally comrades at the IEC were concerned that positions adopted by the F.I. were constantly being misrepresented as merely positions of the IMT, and that IP even published documents of internal groupings of the F.I.—namely the LTF—before the publication of such documents had been approved by the F.I., and even before such documents had been submitted to any body of the F.I.

In the opinion of the IMT, such practices, when carried out by members of the F.I. or sections of the F.I., which is not the case of the SWP, constitute violations of the norms

of democratic centralism. They only tend to exacerbate the factional tensions and centrifugal forces which have led to splits in a number of countries. These splits are a thoroughly abnormal and temporary condition. They are detrimental to the political cross-fertilization of the F.I. and to its functioning as a single united world party. As is obvious, there remain many serious organizational disputes in the F.I. At the same time, though, there is an increasing rejection by the ranks of the F.I. of all factional maneuvers and a desire for the resolution of all disputes within the framework of clearly established norms of democratic centralism. This is why the unanimous agreement on the reunification of all F.I. forces in Mexico was such an important and hopeful step. The same is true of the decision to fuse the LCI and PRT in Portugal

### **Progress Of the F.I.**

The urgent necessity of resolving the internal problems of the F.I. was underscored by the important gains which have been made by the F.I. in the recent period.

There were informational reports on the rise of the mass struggle in the territory of the Spanish state. They were given by representatives of the LCR-ETA VI and of the LCI, who both agreed that unification prospects were now somewhat more realistic, though not immediate. The organizations of the F.I. are already confronted by a whole series of new issues which had only been foreseen at a programmatic level up to now: the delay between on the one hand the death of Franco and the rise of mass struggles, and on the other hand the fall of the dictatorship; the concrete application of the right of self-determination to the oppressed nations subjected to the Spanish state; the relation between the formerly underground workers commissions and the official vertical trade unions; the content of the call for a central Constituent Assembly; the possible role of a youth organization; the need to seize the opportunities for legal work. The LCR-ETA VI and the LC have begun to tackle these problems in a creative fashion and will no doubt be able to draw on the already substantial experience they have already acquired in the underground in order to intervene in the coming struggles.

The continued growth of the F.I. was reflected in a number of other ways. For example, the Swiss and Swedish sections now have close to 500 members each. The Swiss regularly publish newspapers in four different languages. The Swedish publish a theoretical magazine in Spanish in addition to their own material. Publications of F.I. pamphlets and books in Czech, Polish, Ukrainian, Serbo-Croatian, and other languages used in Eastern Europe have significantly increased. The Japanese section

now conducts regular work in the whole Far East with an especially good development in Hong Kong. The French section which has 3,500 members and 3,500 organized sympathizers is in the verge of launching a daily which will enable it to consolidate its working class following and exercise a real influence on the political scene. The F.I. has also made significant gains in Mexico, Colombia, and Central America.

The F.I. now has a regular bi-weekly organ published by the United Secretariat. *Inprecor* comes out in four languages. The circulation of the French edition is 4,000; of the English 3,000; of the Spanish 2,000; and of the German 1,800. It has been a means of homogenizing the experience of the F.I. and of exposing militants who are interested in the F.I. to a regular presentation of the analyses of the F.I. Selections of articles from *Inprecor* are also published in Portuguese and Japanese, and are reproduced in the press of the sections.

Even the internal debate of the F.I. is a sign of its health and strength. Despite deep differences, the F.I. has remained united and comrades have been able to influence each other across tendency and faction lines. Thus the IMT caucus discussed the draft of a thorough self-criticism of the line of the Ninth World Congress on Latin America. The discussion within sections where the IMT has a majority also reflects the ability of the F.I. to avoid the adoption of hard schematic positions along factional lines. The same can be said of the former LTF. The living revolutionary events in Portugal changed the thinking of a majority of the LTF comrades, such as those of the PST and Cde Peng Shu-Tse. It stimulated a new round of political discussion. A year ago, the LTF projected gaining a majority of the F.I. by the time of the Eleventh World Congress. It is to the credit of the LTF comrades who did not change their views on Portugal that they stood by their position and accepted to become a small minority of the F.I. in order to try to convince it of their line. The high political level of the debate, the fact that it is conducted through commonly agreed upon channels and that it does not undermine the interventionist work of the F.I. is another proof of the viability of the F.I.

The IEC opened the discussion in preparation for the XIth World Congress which is due to be held around April 1977. The preliminary proposed agenda already includes nine points (see *Inprecor* #45). Major differences continue to exist within the F.I., but with the aid of the experience of the last few years, the F.I. can make the forthcoming discussion into the occasion for a qualitative leap forward in the elaboration of its world program and the political understanding of its membership.

March 13, 1976



# MINUTES OF THE INTERNATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

February 12-15, 1976

*Present:* Abel, Adair, Alfonso, Alva, Anders, Anna, Asgar, Aubin, Bob, Brewster, Capa, Carlos, Claudio, Domingo, Duret, Eion (for Atwood), Elliot (for Crandall), Fedeli, Fourier, Franz (for Sylvia), Fred, Frey, Friedrich, Galios, Georges, Ghulam, Hans, Hovis, Hugo, Jaber, Jim, Johnson, Jones, Julio, Karl, Khaldoun, Kurt, Marcel, Marline, Martine, Melan, Metz, Miguel, Mikado, Mitchell, Mogens, Otto, Pepe, Penta, Petersen, Roberto, Roger, Roman, Romero, Rudi, Sakai, Segur, Stateman, Sven, Thinville, Toni, Torben, Walter, Werner, Williams.

*Control Commission Members:* Karl, Tantalus.

*Invited:* Dimitrios, Fransisco, Gabriel, Jorge, Juan.

*SESSION 1. Thursday, February 12. Opened 4:45 by Ghulam.*

*Moment of silence in memory of Georg Jungclas.*

*Proposed agenda and schedule.*

1. Portugal: 1½ hour reports by the International Majority Tendency and Leninist Trotskyist Faction; ½ hour extended discussion time for representatives of the LCI and PRT; 4 hours discussion; ½ hour summaries for the reporters.

2. Angola: 1 hour reports by the International Majority Tendency and Leninist Trotskyist Faction; 2½ hours discussion; 15 minute summaries for the reporters.

3. World Congress Call: 15 minute report; 15 minutes discussion.

4. Greek Appeal: 15 minute report; 15 minutes discussion.

5. Spain Informational Report: 1 hour reports by representatives of the LC and LCR-ETA VI; 1½ hours discussion; 15 minute summaries for the reporters.

6. Lebanon Informational Report: 1½ hour report; 1 hour discussion; 15 minute summary.

7. Balance Sheet on the January 1975 IEC Decisions on the IT: ½ hour reports for the IMT and the SWP; 1½ hours discussion; 15 minute summaries.

8. Mexico: ½ hour report; 1 hour discussion; 15 minute summary.

9. Election of the United Secretariat: ½ hour.

10. Composition of the IEC: 15 minutes.

*APPROVED*

*Proposed that speakers during the discussion have fifteen minutes each.*

*APPROVED*

*Proposed that comrades Abel, Anders, Ghulam and Jim be chairpeople for the plenum.*

*APPROVED*

*Proposed that on all procedural questions there be one speaker for and one against, with ten minutes each.*

*APPROVED*

Chair: Ghulam.

## 1. Portugal.

*Motion by Stateman:* That comrade Ernesto be invited to attend the discussion on Portugal with voice and the same speaking time as the comrades from the LCI and the PRT majority.

*Discussion:* Stateman, Walter.

For: 14

Against: 30

*DEFEATED*

*Motion by Stateman:* That Comrade Ernesto be allowed to attend the session on Portugal as part of the LTF technical staff.

*Discussion:* Stateman, Aubin.

For: 14

Against: 32

*DEFEATED*

*Reporter for International Majority Tendency:* Aubin.

*Recess 6:20 p.m.*

*SESSION 2. 7:30 p.m.*

Chair: Ghulam.

*Continuation of report by Aubin.*

*Reporter for Leninist-Trotskyist Faction:* Roberto

*Letter from Comrade Peng to the IEC Plenum read. (See Attachment A)*

*Motion:* To grant Jorge extended time of 45 minutes.  
**CARRIED**

*Discussion:* Jorge.

Recess 10:45 p.m.

**SESSION 3. Friday, February 13. 9:45 a.m.**

Chair Abel.

Jones proposed the adoption of a statement on the death of Irish Republican prisoner Frank Stagg in a British jail. (See *Inprecor* No. 44, February 19, 1976).

**APPROVED**

*Discussion* on Portugal continued: Fransisco.  
*Motion:* To grant Capa extended speaking time of ½ hour.

**CARRIED**

*Discussion* continued: Capa.  
*Motion:* To grant Capa a 15 minute extension.

**CARRIED**

*Discussion* continued: Capa, Miguel, Eion.

Recess 12:30 p.m.

**SESSION 4. 2:00 p.m.**

Chair: Abel.

*Motion:* To add Romero to the speakers list.

**CARRIED**

*Discussion* on Portugal continued: Sven, Friedrich, Jones, Melan, Sakai, Romero, Walter, Pepe, Ghulam, Adair, Bob, Fourier, Stateman.

*Summaries:* Roberto; Aubin.

Recess 6:40 p.m.

**SESSION 5. Saturday, February 14. 9:50 a.m.**

Chair: Anders.

*Proposed* to extend the Plenum by adding a Sunday afternoon session.

**APPROVED**

## **2. Angola.**

*Reporter* for International Majority Tendency: Claudio.

*Moment of silence* for two Angolan comrades killed in the struggle.

*Reporter* for Leninist-Trotskyist Faction: Mitchell.

*Motion:* That the first two speakers be Gabriel and Capa and they be given ½ hour speaking time each.

**CARRIED**

*Discussion:* Gabriel.

Recess 12:20 p.m.

**SESSION 6. 1:45 p.m.**

Chair: Anders.

*Discussion* on Angola continued: Capa, Melan, Sakai, Williams, Fransisco, Romero, Ghulam, Bob.

*Motion:* To grant Bob a two minute extension.

**CARRIED**

*Discussion* continued: Bob, Abel, Karl, Jorge, Galois.

*Summaries:* Mitchell; Claudio.

## **3. World Congress Call.**

Walter reported for the outgoing United Secretariat.

*Motion:*

The February 1976 plenum of the International Executive Committee calls the Eleventh World Congress (Fifth World Congress since Reunification to take place about May, 1977.

The proposed agenda for the Eleventh World Congress is as follows:

1. World Political Situation
2. Portuguese Revolution
3. European Perspectives Document
4. Women's Liberation
5. Arab Revolution
6. Balance Sheet of the Indochinese Revolution
7. Organizational Norms of the Fourth International
8. Activities Report
9. Election of the IEC

The pre-congress written discussion period opens February 15, 1976. It is agreed to publish a maximum of 24 internal bulletins of 48 pages each during this discussion period. Material accepted for publication in the internal bulletin prior to February 15, 1976, but not yet published, is not to be counted as part of the total of 24 bulletins of 48 pages each.

The IEC empowers the United Secretariat to work out unanimously agreed-upon guidelines as to the timing and composition of these bulletins as to subject and tendencies.

*Discussion:* Fourier, Capa, Romero, Hovis.

*Summary* by Walter.

**CARRIED**

## **4. Greek Appeal.**

Walter reported on an appeal by Comrade Christos of his expulsion from the Greek section.

*Motion:* To establish a fact finding commission composed of two United Secretariat members to visit Greece.

*Discussion:* Dimitrios, Walter.

**CARRIED**

Anna reported on the daily *Rouge*.

Recess 5:45 p.m.

**SESSION 7. 7:40 p.m.**

Chair: Ghulam.

*Proposals on schedule.*

i) *Motion* by Ghulam: To reduce the discussion time on both Spain and Lebanon to 20 minutes for questions.

ii) *Proposal* by Abel to gain additional time by reducing the discussion time on the balance sheet on the January 1975 IEC decisions on the IT and not reduce the time on Spain.

For Ghulam motion: 27

Against: 8

Abstentions: 5

**CARRIED**

## 5. Spain.

*Reporter* for LCR-ETA VI: Toni

*Reporter* for LC: Melan

*Discussion:* Sakai, Jones, Mogens, Fourier.

*Summaries:* Melan; Toni.

Recess 10:45 p.m.

**SESSION 8. Sunday, February 15. 9:40 a.m.**

Chair: Jim.

## 6. Lebanon.

*Reporter:* Jaber.

*Moment of Silence* in memory of the comrade of the GCR killed in the massacre in the Quarantina district in Beirut.

*Motion:* The International Executive Committee of the Fourth International, meeting in February 1976, salutes the Trotskyist militants of the Arab region and particularly those comrades in Egypt confronted by bourgeois repression as well as those of Lebanon confronted by a civil war, one of whom has been murdered by the reactionary militias.

**APPROVED**

*Discussion:* Fred, Sakai.

*Summary:* Jaber.

## 7. Balance sheet on the January 1975 IEC decisions on the IT.

*Reporter* for the International Majority Tendency: Hovis.

*Reporter* for the Socialist Workers Party: Stateman.

Recess 12:30 p.m.

**SESSION 9. 1:45 p.m.**

Chair: Jim.

*Discussion:* Capa, Karl Anderson, Sakai, Jones, Bob, Galois, Fourier.

*Summaries:* Stateman; Hovis.

*Motion* by Hovis:

The IEC Plenum of February 1976 notes:

1) At the February 1975 Plenum of the IEC, it was resolved to recommend "that the SWP act in good faith and consider without delay the collective application of the I.T. for reintegration in the SWP."

2) The same Plenum stated that "every effort should be made to bring them (the I.T. comrades and the SWP) together in a single organization on a principled basis at the earliest possible date" and that "two members of the P.C. of the SWP have pledged that they will urge the N.C. at its coming Plenum to weigh favorable implementation of the proposals commonly agreed on by the I.C.C. in its investigation".

3) Today, that is, *one year* after the adoption of these resolutions, and *one and half years* after the unjustified and undemocratic expulsion of the I.T. comrades by the SWP leadership, 21 out of the 36 comrades, who to this day have not only abstained from any public activity critical of, or hostile to, the SWP, who have not only formally applied for collective reintegration into the SWP, but who have also clearly indicated their readiness to actively build the SWP, have not yet been reintegrated.

4) Even those 15 I.T. comrades who have been reintegrated, have been so after long delays—Cde. Hovis, a consultative member of the IEC, only two weeks ago!—on an individual and arbitrary basis, and without any clear criteria or deadline for acceptance or rejection having at any time, collectively or otherwise, been communicated to them.

5) The SWP leadership clearly has not acted in the best interests of the SWP and of the world movement. This would have necessitated the earliest possible collective reintegration of all those who reapplied for membership and clearly stated their willingness to build the SWP and accept its discipline. Instead, it has subordinated the interests of the SWP to narrow factional calculations, whose sole result will be to cause attrition among comrades who disagree on some issues, and to reduce to a minimum dissent in the ranks of the SWP on issues in the world movement.

The IEC therefore concludes that the SWP leadership has clearly failed to implement the February 1975 IEC recommendations and condemns that failure. It condemns the callous way in which honest militants who have

shown their loyalty and devotion to the movement to the point of self-denial have been treated and demoralized by the SWP leadership.

The IEC calls on the SWP leadership to immediately reintegrate all those I.T. comrades who have reapplied for membership and clearly stated their willingness to build the SWP and accept its discipline. It decides to maintain in the meantime the status of IT comrades kept outside the SWP through no fault of their own, as it was fixed by the February 1975 IEC plenum. This status will also apply to those I.T. comrades who, after being discouraged by the prolonged uncertainty in which the SWP leadership kept them despite their collaborative efforts, may have joined groupings claiming allegiance to the F.I., if they restate their demand for reintegration into the SWP and show in practice their willingness to build the SWP.

*Motion by Julio:*

1) To reject the motivations of the draft resolution, not because they are mistaken or correct, but because they do not respond to the present urgent necessity of the Fourth International's showing the world workers movement and vanguard that not only are we united, but we are engaged in a process of growth and fortification that is centripetal and not centrifugal.

2) With the object of strengthening this process, to recommend to the SWP, the PRT (in Portugal), and all other organizations that have problems with groups of comrades disciplined or expelled for faults in their activities to consider the possibility of reintegrating these comrades as rapidly as possible, not postponing their reintegration more than six months from this date, if loyalty and discipline to the national organization and the Fourth International have been demonstrated.

*Motion by Bob:*

The IEC is of the opinion that the SWP leadership has failed to implement the February 1975 IEC recommendations relating to the collective application of the IT for reintegration into the SWP as it should have done, and calls upon the SWP leadership to immediately reintegrate all those comrades who have reapplied for membership and clearly stated their willingness to build the SWP and accept its discipline. It decides to maintain in the meantime the status of IT comrades kept outside the SWP through no fault of their own, as it was fixed by the February 1975 IEC Plenum. This status will also apply to those I.T. comrades who, after being discouraged by the prolonged uncertainty in which the SWP leadership kept them despite their collaborative efforts, may have joined groupings claiming allegiance to the F.I., if they restate their demand for reintegration into the SWP and show in practice their willingness to build the SWP.

*Motion by Karl:*

The IEC calls upon the SWP leadership to immediately reintegrate all those IT comrades who have reapplied for membership and clearly stated their willingness to build the SWP and accept its discipline. It decides to maintain in the meantime the status of IT comrades kept outside the SWP, as it was fixed by the February 1975 IEC Plenum. This status will also apply to those IT comrades who may

have joined groups claiming allegiance to the F.I., if they leave their present group and restate their demand for reintegration into the SWP and show in practice their willingness to build the SWP.

*Claudio* proposed a moment of silence for the comrades of the PST of Argentina killed by the gangs of reaction since the last IEC Plenum.

## 8. Mexico.

*Reporter:* Walter.

*Motion:*

The February 1976 plenum of the International Executive Committee of the Fourth International notes that as a result of a sudden eruption of political and organizational differences inside the Liga Socialista, one of the two sympathizing organizations of the Fourth International in Mexico, a *de facto* split has occurred in that organization, a minority not recognizing the legitimacy and decisions of the December 1975 congress of the organization. This split has been accompanied by grave public mutual attacks of an organizational nature that threaten to seriously undermine the growing credit which the Fourth International has won in recent years among larger and larger layers of radicalized youth and workers in Mexico.

At the same time, the IEC reaffirms the desirability of implementing the call of the Tenth World Congress (*reiterated* by the resolution of the February 1975 IEC plenum) in favor of the earliest possible unification of adherents of the Fourth International in Mexico on a principled basis. The existing political differences between members of the Fourth International in Mexico can in no way be considered as making it impossible to work in a single organization functioning on the basis of democratic centralism.

There are no provisions in the statutes of the Fourth International or in the decisions of the Tenth World Congress for the recognition of a third sympathizing organization of the FI in Mexico. In addition the IEC considers it inadvisable to legalize *de facto* splits and refusals by minorities to recognize majority decisions of congresses such as would be implied by recognizing the existence of two public factions of the Liga Socialista in Mexico. However, in order not to create additional obstacles to rapid unification of the forces of the Fourth International in Mexico, the IEC deems that all those who were members of the Liga Socialista at the opening of the Liga Socialista congress remain members of the Fourth International today.

This extremely precarious situation of individual membership in the Fourth International outside of an organization that has been recognized can, however, represent only a short-term exceptional measure intended to help overcome the organizational crisis created by the *de facto* split in the Liga Socialista. Its purpose is to help bring about a general unification of the forces of the Fourth International in Mexico.

The IEC, therefore resolves:

1. To recommend to the GCI and LS leaderships that they open negotiations aimed at a principled reunification of the two groups, including all those who were members of the GCI and the LS at the moment of the latest

congresses of both organizations, and the recruits gained since then.

2. In accordance with the provisions set up by the Tenth World Congress, the unified organization will immediately become the Mexican section of the Fourth International.

3. In advance of the unification, a set of mutually agreed on statutes is to be drawn up based upon the statutes of the Fourth International adopted at the Tenth World Congress. Among other things the statutes will include clauses on the duty of minorities to apply majority decisions and to act in public under majority discipline; the right of minorities to form tendencies or factions, to be represented on leadership bodies by representatives of their own choice roughly on the basis of their numerical strength, and to be protected against organizational reprisals or harassment. The statutes will also specify the right of cells and regional bodies to elect their own leaderships, who are committed, of course, to abide by democratic centralism of the national organization.

4. The unified organization will likewise be guided by (a) a principled program, and (b) a common "Theses on the Mexican Revolution," both to be drafted in common, before the unification, by representatives of all those concerned.

5. A preunification congress discussion will be held among all those concerned around one or more draft political resolutions on immediate tactical tasks; that is, determination of the political line of the daily work of the unified organization. Like the common principled program and the common thesis, the drafts of the political resolutions are to be submitted to the ranks for discussion, and to a vote of the reunification congress. At the leadership level, a serious effort should be made to work out an agreed upon general line for the unified organization, and to avoid any harsh methods of forcing comrades engaged in specific fields of intervention to change these fields against their convictions. A common effort will also be made to start immediate common activity in all fields of work before the reunification, including a common electoral campaign of all those concerned, in the presidential elections of Mexico. However, given the rather narrow degree of existing political differences, the IEC recommends that even if such an agreement cannot be reached in all cases, this should not prevent unification; decisions will then be taken by majority vote at the unification congress.

6. It is recommended that the unification take place not later than six months after this IEC plenum.

7. The comrades who did not recognize the legitimacy of the Liga Socialista congress pledge:

(a) That they have not placed any charges against Comrade Ricardo and that they consider him to be loyal to the Fourth International. The Steering Committee of the International Minority Faction states that it has no reason to doubt Comrade Ricardo's loyalty to the Fourth International.

(b) They agree not to publish any newspaper with the name of *El Socialista* and not to speak in public in the name of the Liga Socialista.

(c) They agree to return all the material, except personal belongings, which was present in the Liga Socialista headquarters at the time of the December 1975 congress.

8. All members of the Fourth International in Mexico, and all members or supporters of the Fourth International outside of Mexico pledge to abstain from all acts and writings that might hinder or endanger the course toward a principled unification in Mexico.

9. The IEC appoints a commission of three comrades to observe in Mexico how the present resolution is carried out and to report back to the United Secretariat.

10. (Internal only). This declaration is to be published in English and Spanish in *Intercontinental Press*, which has already published an account of the crisis in the Liga Socialista favoring the course taken by one of the sides involved in this crisis. An account of that crisis from the point of view of the other side that does not raise new issues is also to be published in *Intercontinental Press*. It is recommended that with publication of these statements, debate ceases on the organizational questions involved in the dispute in the public press associated with or sympathetic to the Fourth International outside of Mexico.

*Discussion:* Juan, Miguel, Bob, Stateman.

*Statement by Stateman for LTF:* We are voting for this statement because we are in favor of a principled unification of the forces of the Fourth International in Mexico, as in other parts of the world where comparable situations exist. It is our understanding that this statement is in the form of a recommendation by the IEC to the comrades involved.

*Statement by Leninist Trotskyist Faction Steering Committee:*

Last September an internal struggle broke out in the Liga Socialista between members of the Leninist Trotskyist Faction. The dispute soon resulted in the formation of two Factions, the Fracción Bolchevique Leninista (Bolshevik Leninist Faction) and the Tendencia Militante (Militant Tendency). The latter gained a formal majority at the Second Congress of the Liga Socialista held in December 1975.

The sharpness of the struggle can be judged from the fact that the FBL felt that it had no alternative but to become a public faction, while the TM has admitted publicly (in an article by Ricardo Ramos) that some of its members "have drawn violent conclusions, which we are trying to restrain." As proof of the inclination of the Tendencia Militante to resort to violence, on January 23, about a week after the appearance of the article by Ricardo, members of the FBL who were distributing Trotskyist literature at an election rally were physically attacked by a squad of members of the TM.

Nevertheless, as can be seen from the accompanying fact sheet, no clear differences of political importance emerged in the internal struggle in the Liga Socialista up to and including the Second Congress. The Tendencia Militante did not submit a single political document to justify either its formation as a distinct grouping or its fight to gain a majority. It functioned as an unprincipled organizational clique in a power struggle.

In place of a political differentiation, the clique substituted a simplistic sociological characterization. Thus it dubbed the Fracción as a "petty-bourgeois" grouping that had to be "reeducated" by being sent into the factories. But

an *unprincipled organizational clique* is certainly not proletarian in character; it is petty-bourgeois. Consequently the pedagogical prescription ought to be applied first to the Tendencia Militante.

The clique gained a majority at the September 1975 plenum of the Central Committee by taking advantage of an error committed by two members of the Political Committee. These two members had run across material that led them to think that Ricardo had connections with the police, although they recognized that the material might have been planted. They talked with several other members of the Political Committee and one member of the Control Commission about how best to handle the matter. One of these other members of the Political Committee began at once to circulate the rumor that Ricardo was being slandered.

At the plenum, Ricardo and his backers utilized the mishandling of the case to whip emotions to a high pitch. In this charged atmosphere and on this issue, they won a majority of votes. Besides exploiting the way the question of possible police connections was brought up with individual members of the Political Committee and Control Commission instead of these bodies as a whole, Ricardo and his backers raised other organizational matters that normally would never have led to the formation of tendencies, still less factions.

Following the plenum of the Central Committee, the new majority did not confine its course to trying to rectify the mishandling of the Ricardo case. A discreet investigation was what was actually required, since at bottom the affair may really have involved a *police provocation* intended to sow suspicions and to create disension in the Liga Socialista.

Instead of carrying out a responsible investigation of the kind indicated, Ricardo and his backers acted in the opposite way. They utilized the case to arouse hysteria, to stir up bitter feelings and recriminations, thus setting off such turmoil in the organization as to destroy the possibility of a reasoned discussion on any question.

The congress that had been convoked was held under such circumstances as to catch the ranks utterly unprepared for what happened. For instance, on the political resolution adopted unanimously by the Central Committee in September, the new majority, with no warning, gave a report against the line of the resolution. No documentation was offered in support of this oral presentation. In the very course of the congress, organizational questions, including surprise changes in the statutes, were introduced in such a way as to supersede discussion of political issues. Even consideration of the Portuguese revolution was pushed off the agenda. The way the majority blocked discussion of the Portuguese revolution demonstrated their fear of letting the delegates discuss and vote on political questions.

Thus the nature of the congress was changed while it was being held. From a normal congress of the Liga Socialista it became a hysterical show dominated by an unprincipled organizational clique.

The objectives of the clique became crystal clear in the course of their operation. Their objectives were to entrench the new majority through measures designed to isolate the former leadership, drive it out of the Liga Socialista, and deprive the ranks of the organization as a whole of ways and means to change the new leadership. The rules put

into force by the majority gagged dissent, made it virtually impossible to organize tendencies, decapitated the leadership of the minority, and assured the leaders of the clique self-perpetuating domination of the Liga Socialista.

The lengths to which the clique went were shown among other things by two actions. One was the decision to purge the membership of the Liga Socialista. All members were suspended for a month and could be readmitted to the organization only after passing tests to be determined by the clique. The other was the decision to break off all relations with a sister organization of the Fourth International (in this case the Socialist Workers party which, as is known, is barred from actual membership in the Fourth International because of reactionary legislation in the United States).

Like the leaders of the Fracción Bolchevique Leninista, an unnamed SWP leader was accused of spreading rumors that Ricardo was a police agent. The clique demanded that the SWP carry out a witch-hunt of its leadership modeled on the methods they were introducing in the Liga Socialista. When it became clear that the SWP would instead condemn their methods as alien to Leninist norms they broke relations.

Publicly, the reasons for the rupture with the SWP remain undisclosed. The Ricardo clique hinted at something very dark, saying in their newspaper account of the congress that "it is an affair that we will not ventilate publicly, since it is an internal problem that can only be discussed within the Fourth International." In this way the SWP was smeared publicly, while the truth was covered up.

The actions taken by the Tendencia Militante under the leadership of Ricardo flagrantly violated the platform of the Leninist Trotskyist Faction, which includes among other things upholding the organizational principles of Trotskyism. Consequently the Steering Committee expels Ricardo from the ranks of the Leninist Trotskyist Faction.

Special note must be made of the role played by Greco and Eduardo in the internal struggle in the Liga Socialista. Both of them are members of the Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores (Socialist Workers party of Argentina). Sent to Mexico by the PST, ostensibly to help the Liga Socialista, both of them supported the worst excesses of the clique headed by Ricardo, and even called for more. Without their assistance it is hardly likely that the Ricardo clique could have gained a majority.

We want to stress the fact that Greco and Eduardo were not sent to Mexico by the LTF. At no time did they act as representatives of the LTF, although they were members of it. Responsibility for their conduct and actions lies wholly with the leadership of the PST.

As in the case of Ricardo, the Steering Committee expels Greco and Eduardo for violating the platform of the Leninist Trotskyist Faction, specifically for violating the organizational principles of Trotskyism.

The Steering Committee considers the outcome of the struggle within the Liga Socialista to be a grave setback for that organization. It also represents a setback for the Leninist Trotskyist Faction and for the world Trotskyist movement as a whole. We also believe, however, that the setback will prove to be temporary. The indicated course of action is to seek to bring out the underlying political

differences so that the ranks of the world Trotskyist movement can decide in an objective way on the merits of the dispute.

The Fracción Bolchevique Leninista has shown its understanding of this requisite. This was proven by its resistance to the disruptive course of the Ricardo clique and by its insistence that the clique disclose the political views associated with its organizational course.

These views may soon receive public expression. By way of anticipation, the first issue (January 16-31) of Ricardo's version of *El Socialista*, published an electoral platform that they signed in common with the Mexican Communist party and the Movimiento de Organización Socialista (Socialist Organization Movement). Among other features, the platform recognizes the Mexican Stalinists and the petty-bourgeois MOS as organizations that "do not hide their socialist objectives, nor their revolutionary method to gain them." Thus Mexican Stalinism is provided with a Trotskyist cover.

In addition, the common electoral platform supports "peaceful coexistence," that is, class collaborationism.

As for the Fracción Bolchevique Leninista, such errors as it made in this struggle resulted from lack of experience. This was the first time these comrades had found themselves in such a situation. They are to be commended for standing up and fighting to the best of their ability for the norms and practices of Leninism. From the firmness they displayed in this test, we count on them continuing in the same principled way. In our opinion, they represent the Leninist continuity of the Liga Socialista.

The Leninist Trotskyist Faction rejects the public demand made by leaders of the GCI, PST and Tendencia Militante that the comrades of the Fracción Bolchevique Leninista be expelled from the Fourth International. We are opposed to the expulsion from the Fourth International of any of the groups involved. This would precipitate a split in the Fourth International as a whole. What is called for is sharp condemnation of the methods of the Ricardo clique as alien to the traditions of Trotskyism, and a clarification of the political differences, in order to facilitate the earliest possible unification, on a principled basis, of the forces of Trotskyism in Mexico.

*Summary by Walter.*

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

## 9. Election of the United Secretariat.

*Motion by Walter:* To elect the following United Secretariat of 36 members in order to reflect the growth of the world movement and to integrate in the leading body the authoritative representatives of all the main tendencies.

*Full Members:* Adair, Antonio, Aubin, Brewster, Claudio, Crandall, Domingo, Duret, Fourier, Frey, Georges, Ghulam, Jones, Karl, Kurt, Marcel, Marline, Martinez, Otto, Roman, Rudi, Walter, Werner.

*Fraternal Members:* Atwood, Celso, Galois, Hovis, Johnson, Pepe, Therese.

*Consultative Members:* Capa, Eduardo, Jaime, Julio, Melan, Romero.

*Discussion:* Julio, Jones, Walter, Frey, Walter, Galois, Ricardo, Capa, Walter.

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

## 10. Composition of IEC.

*Walter reported on proposed substitutions in IEC membership and the fact that IEC member Massey is no longer a supporter of the Fourth International (See attachment B.)*

*Statement by Capa, Julio, Romero:*

We would like to make a motion to incorporate Comrade Ricardo into the IEC of the FI and into the United Secretariat so that the Liga Socialista does not remain without representation in the highest bodies of the world party.

This measure flows from two necessary considerations in the Fourth International at the present time rather than from tendency considerations, even though Comrade Ricardo has recently come into agreement with the positions of our party. These reasons are:

That Comrade Ricardo has agreed not to present the resolution of his organization asking the IEC that Comrades Josephina and Roberto be removed from that body. Although the statutes authorize such a resolution, the comrade has accepted the principled resolution of our party that the posts elected are of an individual character and are not by organization. In acting in this way he has left his organization without representation on the IEC. Since none of the comrades concerned has decided to withdraw in order to facilitate this representation, the PST (Argentina) agrees to the withdrawal of comrade Arturo in order to facilitate the election of Comrade Ricardo and the representation of the Liga Socialista.

*Discussion:* Segur, Bob, Galois, Claudio, Karl, Walter, Bob, Walter.

*Motion:* That comrade Lachance replace comrade Fireman.

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

*Motion:* That comrade Juan replace comrade Hector.

For: 41

Against: 2

Abstentions: 3

**CARRIED**

*Motion:* That comrade Nemo replace comrade Josephine.

For: 23

Against: 3

Abstentions: 20

**CARRIED**

*Statement by Jones:*

In my opinion the Mexican IEC representation should have been resolved by replacing Josephina or Roberto by Ricardo. I only voted for Ricardo because I am fully in favor of the leadership of the Liga Socialista elected at the Congress being represented and it was impossible at this stage to discuss removing Josephina or Roberto.

## Voting on Resolutions.\*

### A. Portugal.

*Motion* by Duret: To adopt the resolution "Portugal—First Draft theses for the February 1976 plenum of the IEC" as amended. (For amendment, see attachment C).

*Decisive vote*  
for: 26  
against: 9  
abstentions: 1  
**carried**

*Consultative vote*  
Consultative members for: 11  
against: 6  
abstentions: 0

Control Commission for: 2	Observers for: 1
against: 0	against: 6
abstentions: 0	abstentions: 0

*Motion:* To adopt the general line of the resolution "The Test of Lines in the Portuguese Revolution," and of the report presented by comrade Roberto.

*Decisive vote*  
for: 9  
against: 27  
abstentions: 0  
**defeated**

*Consultative vote*  
Consultative members for: 2  
against: 15  
abstentions: 0

Control Commission for: 0	Observers for: 6
against: 2	against: 1
abstentions: 0	abstentions: 0

*Discussion:* Fourier, Aubin, Jorge.

*Statement* by Capa, Julio, Juan, Romero:

Comrades Capa, Julio, Juan, and Romero declare:

1) That they are voting against the majority document

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\* Members with decisive vote are full members of the International Executive Committee and seated alternate members. Those with consultative vote include alternate members who are not seated to replace a full member, consultative members from sympathizing groups, members of the International Control Commission and observers. Observers include members from organizations which owing to reactionary legislation in their own countries, like the United States and Argentina, are not able to affiliate to the Fourth International and do not cast decisive votes.

on Portugal because they consider that this document still continues to exhibit the same deviations as the European document of the Tenth Congress, which were concretized in the erroneous policy of the majority in Portugal, which led us to the disaster of the FUR and the crisis of the LCI.

2) That leaving aside the general and abstract nature of all of the majority's documents on Portugal, the insistence on the necessity for the development of the organs of workers power as the principal task leads us to believe that in this document as well as in the statements of the comrades of the majority we see indications of a change away from the ultraleft orientation that had such fatal results in Latin America, in Portugal, and in the whole international, and that provoked the current grave factional struggle.

3) We do not know whether this slight indication of change is merely a tactical accommodation to the blows of reality or a genuine beginning of rectification. But we consider it a militant obligation toward the development of the International to aid and accelerate this possibility of change, if it really exists, or to rapidly demonstrate that it is no more than an adaptation to reality within the framework of the same ultraleftist line that refuses to draw the lessons of events.

4) The best test of whether there is a real change will be seen in Portugal: If the two groups, with the collaboration of the United Secretariat, arrive at a principled common program oriented toward work in the workers and mass movement, that will be the best proof that the change has begun to occur.

5) That they are voting against the document presented by the LTF, for it continues the grave error of the "Key Issues" document and of the first draft worked out by the SWP leadership, which is to refuse to accept the principled Trotskyist line of trying to create soviets during a great revolutionary upsurge of the masses, which is concretized in Portugal today in the essential task of developing and centralizing the workers commissions, tenants commissions, and soldiers commissions and thus to respond to the great political and economic tasks raised by the sharpening of the class struggle in this country.

6) That the refusal to incorporate the above as the principled line and task has compelled the leadership of the SWP and the LTF to sketch out some revisionist positions or to develop previous or present dangerous formulations.

7) That the same refusal reduces the weight and conviction both of the correct criticisms made by the LTF of the ultraleftist line of the majority and of the partially correct political, programmatic, and tactical positions of "Key Issues" and the analyses of the LTF.

*Statement* by Mogens, Petersen, Torben:

We vote for the general line of the draft theses on Portugal with the following reservation: The document is inadequate in its treatment of the mass political parties of the working class. Thus it is insufficient in arming the Portuguese Trotskyists with a strategy and set of tactics for helping to break the grip of these parties on the mass of the working class. Amendments drafted in the course of the IEC on the united front, governmental slogans, etc., improved the theses, but weaknesses on the mass parties of the working class remain and will have to be corrected in subsequent elaboration of documents.



*B. Angola.*

*Motion* by Claudio: To adopt the resolution "Draft Resolution on Angola for the February 1976 IEC" as amended.

*Decisive vote*  
for: 26  
against: 9  
abstentions: 0

**carried**

*Consultative vote*  
Consultative members for: 15  
against: 2  
abstentions: 0

Control Commission for: 2	Observers for: 1
against: 0	against: 6
abstentions: 0	abstentions: 0

*Motion:* To adopt the general line of the report by Comrade Mitchell.

*Decisive vote*  
for: 9  
against: 26  
abstentions: 0  
**defeated**

*Consultative vote*  
Consultative members for: 2  
against: 15  
abstentions: 0

Control Commission for: 0	Observers for: 6
against: 2	against: 1
abstentions: 0	abstentions: 0

*Statement* by Capa, Julio, Juan, Romero:

We approve of the majority document, considering that the political position of the document is correct only on the basis that the Portuguese army and Portuguese imperialism have withdrawn from Angola.

*C. Balance sheet on the January 1975 IEC decisions on the IT.*

i) Julio motion

*Decisive vote*  
for: 1  
against: 30  
abstentions: 3  
**Defeated**

*Consultative vote*  
Consultative members for: 4  
against: 13  
abstentions: 0

Control Commission for: 0	Observers for: 0
against: 2	against: 6
abstentions: 0	abstentions: 1

ii) Karl motion

*Decisive vote*  
for: 1  
against: 26  
abstentions: 7  
**Defeated**

*Consultative vote*  
Consultative members for: 0  
against: 15  
abstentions: 2

Control Commission for: 0	Observers for: 1
against: 1	against: 5
abstentions: 1	abstentions: 1

iii) Bob motion

*Decisive vote*  
for: 1  
against: 25  
abstentions: 8  
**Defeated**

*Consultative vote*  
Consultative members for: 0  
against: 15  
abstentions: 2

Control Commission for: 1	Observers for: 1
against: 0	against: 5
abstentions 1	abstentions: 1

iv) Hovis motion

*Decisive vote*  
for: 23  
against: 9  
abstentions: 1  
not voting: 1  
**Carried**

*Consultative vote*  
Consultative members for: 11  
against: 6  
abstentions: 0

Control Commission for: 2	Observers for: 1
against: 0	against: 6
abstentions: 0	abstentions: 0

*IEC Plenum adjourned, 6:30 p.m.*

### Voting Record

(Includes decisive and consultative votes)

<u>NAME</u>	<u>Portugal</u>		<u>Angola</u>		<u>Balance Sheet on January 1975 IEC Decisions on IT</u>			
	<u>IMT</u>	<u>LTF</u>	<u>IMT</u>	<u>LTF</u>	<u>Julio</u>	<u>Karl</u>	<u>Bob</u>	<u>Hovis</u>
<u>Antilles</u>								
Phillipe	not	present						
Jean	not	present						
<u>Argentina</u>								
Capa	Ag	Ag	F	Ag	F	Ab	Ab	Ag
Eduardo	not	present						
Jorge	not	present						
Julio	Ag	Ag	F	Ag	F	Ag	Ag	Ag
Luis	not	present						
Romero	Ag	Ag	F	Ag	F	Ag	Ag	Ag
Saul	not	present						
<u>Australia</u>								
Alva	F	Ag	F	Ag	Ag	Ag	Ag	F
Dunder	not	present						
Ken	not	present						
Martin	not	present						
<u>Austria</u>								
Fred	F	Ag	F	Ag	Ag	Ag	Ag	F
Penta	F	Ag	F	Ag	Ag	Ag	Ag	F
<u>Belgium</u>								
Marcel	Ag	F	Ag	F	Ag	Ag	Ag	Ag
Martine	Np	Np	Np	Np	Np	Np	Np	Np
Phillipe	not	present						
Rudi	not	present						
Tantalus	F	Ag	F	Ag	Ag	Ab	Ab	F
Walter	F	Ag	F	Ag	Ag	Ab	Ab	F
<u>Bolivia</u>								
Huarte	not	present						
Roca	not	present						

Balance Sheet on January  
1975 IEC Decisions on IT

<u>NAME</u>	<u>Portugal</u>		<u>Angola</u>		<u>Julio</u>	<u>Karl</u>	<u>Bob</u>	<u>Hovis</u>
	<u>IMT</u>	<u>ITF</u>	<u>IMT</u>	<u>ITF</u>				
<u>Brazil</u>								
Anna	not present							
Fernando	not present							
<u>Britain</u>								
Adair	Ag	F	Ag	F	Ag	Ag	Ag	Ag
Brewster	F	Ag	F	Ag	Ag	Ag	Ag	F
Ghulam	Np	Np	Np	Np	Np	Np	Np	Np
Jeremy	F	Ag	F	Ag	Ag	Ag	Ag	F
Jones	F	Ag	F	Ag	Ag	Ag	Ag	F
Ned	not present							
Petersen	F	Ag	F	Ag	Ag	Ag	Ag	F
Williams	Ag	F	Ag	F	Ag	Ag	Ag	Ag
<u>Canada</u>								
Abel	Ag	F	Ag	F	Ag	Ag	Ag	Ag
Elliot (for Crandall)	Ag	F	Ag	F	Ag	Ag	Ag	Ag
Fireman	not present							
Gormley	not present							
Jim (for MacKenzie)	F	Ag	F	Ag	Ag	Ag	Ag	F
Khaldoun	F	Ag	F	Ag	Ag	Ag	Ag	F
<u>Chile</u>								
Valdes	not present							
<u>China</u>								
Lee See	not present							
Peng	not present							
<u>Colombia</u>								
Carlos	F	Ag	F	Ag	F	Ag	Ab	NV
Otto	not present							
<u>Denmark</u>								
Asgar	Af	F	Ag	F	Ag	Ag	Ag	Ag
Mogens	F	Ag	F	Ag	Ag	Ag	Ag	F
Torben	F	Ag	F	Ag	Ag	Ag	Ag	F
<u>France</u>								
Anna	F	Ag	F	Ag	Ag	Ag	Ag	F
Aubin	F	Ag	F	Ag	Ag	Ag	Ag	F

<u>NAME</u>	<u>Portugal</u>		<u>Angola</u>		<u>Balance Sheet on January 1975 IEC Decisions on IT</u>			
	<u>IMT</u>	<u>LTF</u>	<u>IMT</u>	<u>LTF</u>	<u>Julio</u>	<u>Karl</u>	<u>Bob</u>	<u>Hovis</u>
<u>France (continued)</u>								
Domingo	F	Ag	F	Ag	Ag	Ag	Ag	F
Fourier	F	Ag	F	Ag	Ag	Ag	Ag	F
Georges	F	Ag	F	Ag	Ag	Ag	Ag	F
Hoffmann	not present							
Jean	not present							
Marline	Np	Np	Np	Np	Np	Np	Np	Np
Nemo	Ag	F	Ag	F	Ag	Ag	Ag	Ag
Pierre	not present							
Roman	F	Ag	F	Ag	Ag	Ab	Ab	F
Segur	F	Ag	F	Ag	Ag	Ab	Ab	F
Thinville	Np	Np	Np	Np	Np	Np	Np	Np
Werner	F	Ag	F	Ag	Ag	Ag	Ag	F
<u>Germany</u>								
Eduard	not present							
Franz (for Sylvia)	F	Ag	F	Ag	Ag	Ab	Ab	F
Friedrich	Ag	F	Ag	F	Ag	Ag	Ag	Ag
Karl	Ab	Ag	F	Ag	Ab	F	Ab	Ag
Kurt	F	Ag	F	Ag	Ab	Ag	Ag	F
Mintoff	not present							
<u>Holland</u>								
Hans	Np	Np	Np	Np	Np	Np	Np	Np
Hugo	Np	Np	Np	Np	Np	Np	Np	Np
<u>India</u>								
Kailas Chandra	not present							
Mohan Gan	not present							
T.T. Roy	not present							
<u>Iran</u>								
Ahmad	not present							
Cyrus	not present							
<u>Ireland</u>								
Conway	not present							
Tim	not present							
<u>Israel</u>								
Mikado	F	Ag	F	Ag	Ag	Ab	Ab	F

<u>NAME</u>	<u>Portugal</u>		<u>Angola</u>		<u>Balance Sheet on January 1975 IEC Decisions on IT</u>			
	<u>IMT</u>	<u>ITF</u>	<u>IMT</u>	<u>ITF</u>	<u>Julio</u>	<u>Karl</u>	<u>Bob</u>	<u>Hovis</u>
<u>Italy</u>								
Alfonso	F	Ag	F	Ag	Ag	Ag	Ag	F
Claudio	F	Ag	F	Ag	Ag	Ag	Ag	F
Fedeli	F	Ag	Np	Np	Np	Np	Np	Np
Silvio	not present							
Simon	not present							
<u>Japan</u>								
Hino	not present							
Kihara	not present							
Sakai	F	Ag	F	Ag	Ag	Ab	Ab	F
<u>Lebanon</u>								
Jaber	F	Ag	F	Ag	Ag	Ag	Ag	F
<u>Luxembourg</u>								
Josef	not present							
Metz	F	Ag	F	Ag	Ag	Ag	Ag	F
<u>Mexico</u>								
Josefina	not present							
Juan	Ag	Ag	F	Ag	F	Ag	Ag	Ag
Miguel	F	Ag	F	Ag	Ag	Ag	Ag	F
Ricardo	not present							
Roberto	Ag	F	Ag	F	Ag	Ag	Ag	Ag
<u>New Zealand</u>								
Key	not present							
Ronald	not present							
<u>Peru</u>								
Martinez	not present							
Tuco	not present							
<u>South Africa</u>								
Tom	not present							
<u>Spain</u>								
Carmen	not present							
Enrique	not present							
Jaime	not present							
Jesus	not present							

Balance Sheet on January  
1975 IEC Decisions on IT

<u>NAME</u>	<u>Portugal</u>		<u>Angola</u>		<u>Julio</u>	<u>Karl</u>	<u>Bob</u>	<u>Hovis</u>
	<u>IMT</u>	<u>LTF</u>	<u>IMT</u>	<u>LTF</u>				
<u>Spain (continued)</u>								
Melan	Ag	F	Ag	F	Ag	Ag	Ag	Ag
Raoul	not present							
Roberto	not present							
Toni	F	Ag	F	Ag	Ag	Ag	Ag	F
<u>Sri Lanka</u>								
Bob	F	Ag	F	Ag	Ag	Ab	F	Ab
<u>Sweden</u>								
Anders	Ag	F	Ag	F	Np	Np	Np	Np
Frey	F	Ag	F	Ag	Ag	Ag	Ag	F
Karl A.	F	Ag	F	Ag	Ag	Ag	F	F
Otto	F	Ag	F	Ag	Ab	Ab	Ab	F
Sven	F	Ag	F	Ag	Ag	Ag	Ag	F
<u>Switzerland</u>								
Carl	not present							
Duret	F	Ag	F	Ag	Ag	Ag	Ag	F
Guillaume	not present							
Roger	F	Ag	F	Ag	Ag	Ag	Ag	F
<u>Uruguay</u>								
Juan	not present							
<u>United States</u>								
Bundy	not present							
Celso	not present							
Eion (for Atwood)	Ag	F	Ag	F	lb	Ab	Ab	Ag
Galois	Ag	F	Ag	F	Ag	Ag	Ag	Ag
Hovis	F	Ag	F	Ag	Ag	F	F	F
Johnson	Ag	F	Ag	F	Ag	Ag	Ag	Ag
Mitchell	Ag	F	Ag	F	Ag	Ag	Ag	Ag
Pepe	Ag	F	Ag	F	Ag	Ag	Ag	Ag
Stateman	Ag	F	Ag	F	Ag	Ag	Ag	Ag
Susan	not present							
Therese	not present							

<u>NAME</u>	<u>Portugal</u>		<u>Angola</u>		<u>Balance Sheet on January</u>			
	<u>IMT</u>	<u>LTF</u>	<u>IMT</u>	<u>LTF</u>	<u>1975 IEC Decisions on IT</u>			
					<u>Julio</u>	<u>Karl</u>	<u>Bob</u>	<u>Hovis</u>
<u>Venezuela</u>								
Antonio			not	present				
David			not	present				

F - For

Ag - Against

Ab - Abstention

Np - Not present for vote

Not present - Not present at IEC plenum

Nv - Not voting

## Attachment A: Letter from Peng Shu-tse

*To the Members of the International Executive Committee*

Dear Comrades:

I regret very much that I am unable to attend this very important plenum of the I.E.C. I should like to submit the following proposal for discussion on the Portuguese revolution.

The revolution in Portugal has been of central importance to the world since the overthrow of the Caetano dictatorship in April 1974.

Unfortunately, up until now, the 4th International has not developed a common political program on this most historical event.

The two Trotskyist groups in Portugal are divided and in opposition to each other. This is a lamentable phenomenon in a revolutionary situation. But, the responsibility for this phenomenon is not with the Portuguese comrades, who are both young and inexperienced. It rests completely with the leadership of the 4th International. Our International remains divided into two major factions, in serious dispute with each other.

This situation—a divided International having no common political program for the Portuguese masses, must end at once. Otherwise, it will create disastrous results for the Portuguese revolution and for the International as a whole.

We must understand that a victorious revolution in Portugal would provide a powerful impetus to the working class in Spain, and the masses throughout western Europe. Inversely, if the revolution is defeated, it will deal an immediate blow to the workers struggle in Spain; demoralize the masses in Europe; and, most serious of all, create severe confusion in the ranks of the world Trotskyist movement.

For these reasons, I must urge all the members of the IEC to seriously reconsider the question of the Portuguese revolution and the political program necessary for advancing that revolution.

The situation in Portugal is quite critical, especially since the formation of the Sixth Government. A government based on the most reactionary officers of the MFA, supported by the SP and PDP. A government which is moving toward the camp of western imperialism.

The Sixth Government is preparing for a real military dictatorship as a transitional step toward a fascist regime. The abolition of democratic rights such as the right to assemble, to demonstrate, strike, etc.; the suspension of the wage increases won by the workers; and the suppression of the ultraleft revolt, are ominous signs of the tendency of this reactionary government.

On the other hand, the working class has not been defeated, but has suffered a temporary setback led by the opportunist Communist Party and Socialist Party.

The antigovernment demonstration of more than 100,000 called by the unions and workers commissions of Lisbon demonstrate clearly the existence of the workers organizations. This action demonstrates the continuing potential for mass revolutionary struggle in Portugal. It is inevitable that the Sixth Government will be plunged into future crises, and these will create new upsurges of the Portuguese working class.

Central to the Portuguese revolution, is the need for a

revolutionary leadership. Unfortunately, there is no mass revolutionary party in Portugal today which can counterpose itself to the opportunist policies of the CP and SP in order to attract and lead workers, peasants and soldiers to a revolutionary orientation.

The Trotskyist organizations in Portugal are small and divided. We cannot create a mass revolutionary party overnight, based on our small, inexperienced cadres.

What the 4th International must do now is offer a correct common political program for the revolution. A program which will enable the two Trotskyist groups in Portugal to unify rapidly. This must be our starting point, it is a decisive one.

A correct political program must be based on the Transitional Program and the experiences of the Russian Revolution. The content of this program should include the following:

### 1. *Land Reform.*

A clear and thorough-going land reform must be a central part of our program. The large landowners' property must be confiscated and distributed to the landless peasants. Some of the large farms in Portugal today have the conditions for collectivization, these must be turned into cooperative farms run by the workers. As to the small and middle farmers, it is not sufficient to call only for "no confiscation of their land"; we must also propose financial support to these farmers with loans, modern agricultural equipment, new irrigation projects, etc.

### 2. *Nationalization of all capitalist property.*

This is a precondition for preparing the base for a planned economy. The Portuguese workers have already, spontaneously, occupied a considerable number of factories, banks, insurance companies, etc. This demonstrates that the Portuguese workers took steps more radical than their brothers in the October Revolution. It was the objective conditions in Portugal that forced the workers to take such steps.

### 3. *For a workers and farmers government.*

The central task of this formula, a "workers and farmers government", ". . . consists in freeing the proletariat from the old leadership, whose conservatism is in complete contradiction to the catastrophic eruptions of disintegrating capitalism and represents the obstacle to historical progress. . . ." Quoted from the Transitional Program.

At the present time, this slogan is raised to expose the "conservatism" of the CP and SP in order to free the masses from their influence.

The call for a "workers and farmers government" is of great educational value to the masses. But, it is not enough to raise only this slogan.

### 4. *For workers, peasants and soldiers soviets.*

In a revolution, the working masses historical task is to take power from the bourgeoisie. The soviets are the only organizational form which can organize the workers, peasants and soldiers together. It is only the soviets which can prepare the insurrection for taking power.

The call for soviets must be raised at the beginning of a revolution, as we have learned from the Russian Revolution, and the lessons of the defeat of the second Chinese revolution.



Because the International has lacked a common program on Portugal, we did not raise this central slogan. It must now be incorporated into our program. In my opinion, as I have already stated, the revolutionary situation still exists in Portugal and it is not too late to correct our weakness on this point.

In Portugal, there have existed a number of workers and neighborhood commissions, as well as soldiers and sailors assemblies and committees. These are embryonic soviets.

We must be based on these embryonic soviets in order to expand them throughout Portugal; to the cities, the countryside and in the army.

It is necessary to emphasize the decisive role of the soldier soviets. In the present situation in Portugal, the soldiers are still controlled by the officers of the MFA. This is a dangerous situation for the revolution. If the worker and peasant masses cannot win the soldiers to the side of the revolution (through the formation of soldier soviets), then the reactionary army officers will use the soldiers to prepare a coup d'etat, thereby suppressing the revolutionary masses.

The experience of the Chilean coup d'etat in 1973 was an important lesson for the working masses and the revolutionary leadership. The failure to organize the soldier soviets led to the defeat of the Chilean revolution. We must learn from this tragic experience and from these lessons propose a correct political program for the Portuguese revolution.

\* \* \*

It is my belief that this IEC meeting must take a program, as I have outlined, as the political orientation for the Portuguese revolution.

In addition to developing a common political orientation on the Portuguese revolution, there are also important practical tasks which the IEC must begin to organize.

1. The International Leadership must launch a campaign to provide financial aid to the Portuguese comrades. In my opinion, each member of the 4th International must be called upon to make financial contributions to the Portuguese revolution. Alleviating the financial pressure from the Portuguese comrades will enable them to carry out the International's program.

We must also call on organizations still outside the 4th International, to financially support the Trotskyist groups in Portugal.

The IEC should appoint a commission of comrades, their task would be to meet with the leadership of such groups as the OCI, LUTTE OUVRIERE, International Socialists, the Pabloite organizations, etc., to discuss the need for financial aid to the Trotskyist groups in Portugal.

2. The International should send capable comrades to Portugal. These comrades can assist the Portuguese comrades in their day-to-day work, especially in regard to the publication of the Trotskyist press, a most important tool for propaganda.

The unification of the two Trotskyist groups in Portugal, based on a common program of the 4th International, will

provide the first step necessary toward influencing the masses, winning the revolutionary elements within the CP and SP to our program, and organizing a revolutionary party capable of advancing the Portuguese revolution.

Another important question before this IEC is the position the International will adopt on Angola.

The civil war in Angola, grows more serious with each day. From the facts available to me, and here I must state that I have not had the opportunity to study the programs of the three nationalist groups in Angola, I believe the general political situation clearly divides the nationalist groups into two camps.

The first camp being that of the MPLA, supported by the Soviet Union and Cuba. The second consisting of the FNLA and UNITA, supported by American and European imperialism, and the South African regime.

In such a situation, it is my opinion, that we should use the tactic of critical support to the MPLA. We should recall that in the Vietnam civil war we gave critical support to the NLF, which was supported by the bureaucratic Stalinists in Moscow and Peking. The criterion for support to the MPLA is the same one we used in giving critical support to the NLF.

It is reasonable for us, at this time, to give critical support to the MPLA. But, a condition for this support must be a call on the MPLA to begin negotiations with the FLNA and UNITA for unification. And, this unification must be based on the condition that all groups break relations with the imperialist powers.

In summary, let me repeat once again, that the IEC must take a definite common political program for the Portuguese revolution. This common program must be used as the basis for unification of the Trotskyist groups in Portugal.

Only by taking these steps will the leadership of the International demonstrate it is responsible to the revolution, and prove itself capable of carrying out the 4th International's historical task. The leadership of the International must be responsible for the revolution, not based on any tendency or faction.

Finally, I should point out, quite frankly, that a dangerous situation exists inside the International. Because of splits in many sections, much of our comrades' time and energy has been spent debating organizational questions.

If the International continues in this fashion, it will fall into disastrous consequences—the degeneration of the 4th International. It is high time to end such a lamentable situation.

The taking of a correct political program on the Portuguese revolution, will be the first step taken to turn the present situation of the International back to a sound one.

I appeal to all the members of the IEC to center our efforts on advancing the Portuguese revolution.

Comradely  
Peng Shu-tse

February 4, 1976

**Attachment B:**

**Letter of resignation from IEC by Bill Massey**

Chicago, Illinois  
April 29, 1975

United Secretariat  
Fourth International  
Brussels, Belgium  
c/o Aubin

Dear Comrades,

I respectfully request that you approve my resignation from what would be an equivalent position to that of an alternate member of the IEC (since reactionary legislation prevents U.S. citizens from holding membership in the Fourth International). My reasons are of a personal nature and are not due to any change of political outlook.

With comradely greetings,  
Bill Massey

cc: file

**Letter from John Barzman**

John Barzman  
Chicago, IL  
June 24, 1975

United Secretariat  
Brussels

Dear Comrades,

This letter is to report some information which may be of use in making a swift disposition with regard to Cde. Massey's letter of resignation. Recently, he has become inactive and dropped out of the IT new faction. Further, at a rally in defense of Joanne Little, held Saturday June 21, 1975, I saw him carrying a bundle of the newspaper "Workers World", the organ of the Workers World Party and Youth Against War and Fascism. Other indications from our former comrades Don Smith and Ed Hoffman seem to indicate that this is part of a general political retreat toward this pro-Stalinist sect. I would recommend an immediate break-off of all party-relations with him and the acceptance of his resignation.

Comradely,  
John Barzman

cc: National Office, SWP, Attn: Barry Sheppard

## Attachment C:

### Proposed Amendment for the IEC Resolution on Portugal

(The following amendment should follow the sentence on p. 44, ending with, ". . . and of the consequent recomposition of the workers movement.")

(The next part of the draft, starting with "Should a new reactionary. . .", ending with, ". . . have to be put forward." is supposed to be withdrawn.)

#### *Concerning the tactical line towards CP and SP in this relationship.*

The fundamental reason for developing a tactical functioning toward the CP and SP is:

—These parties have an important political and organizational influence in the working class (in the unions, in their mass organizations, and illustrated by the electoral result in 1975);

—the development of the level of struggle and consciousness is very uneven;

—the working class is split up (one of the reasons being the political line and practice of these reformist parties);

—the bourgeoisie right now is waging a concrete economic and political attack against the working class.

With a basis in the independent organization and mobilization within the working class (expressed in workers commissions, etc.) and with a basis in the concrete demands, developed in the struggle, which can be put forward (form our program for a workers government), it is possible to take direct, concrete united front initiatives towards the CP and SP.

The initiatives correspond to the general demand to the reformist working class parties to "break with the bourgeoisie," that is to reject collaboration with bourgeois parties and organizations for the bourgeois interests; instead of that to initiate a struggle for an efficient defense of the interests of the working class. This also includes struggling for the creation of a government, which will actually defend the interests of the working class. That is, a demand for a government which starts to carry out the program, which we are proposing, and a government which bases itself on and supports the development of the independent organization and mobilization of the working class and its allies. This independent organization will be necessary in order to force through these demands (for example, concerning workers control) and to develop a defense against the attacks from the bourgeoisie (in the last analysis armed attack).

In this tactical functioning towards the reformist parties it is not a question of leaning back in the armchair and waiting patiently there for a following development of the level of organization and consciousness of the working class and a breakdown of the influence of the exposed reformist workers parties. Such pure propagandistic exposure-politics must be rejected as sectarian and inefficient.

The central aspect in the initiatives of the revolutionary Marxists in relation to the other workers parties is the concrete united front initiatives, initiatives to develop concrete action. Furthermore we stress that it is the task to take initiatives (within the working class vanguard) to concrete class-action, without waiting for the reformist parties to be pressed to action. (This will only happen if there has been a development of independent class actions by parts of the working class.) The development of such exemplary actions from the workers vanguard can help to develop the organizational level and the strength of resistance in front of the bourgeois attacks. Such actions can also have a positive effect in broad layers of the working class still now influenced mainly by the CP and SP. Precisely because the difference between the willingness to take action of the workers vanguard and the broad working masses differs less than the difference in the level of consciousness.

In the case of the not very likely possibility of the creation of a CP-SP government it is clear that revolutionary Marxists will not give political support to such a government just because it is formally a working class parties government, which in reality does not base itself on a program for defense of the interests of the working class. And moreover bases itself on the institutions of the bourgeois state.

—No political support for the 'lesser evil' (which for example in Chile became the 'worse evil').

Revolutionary Marxists can only give political support to a workers government which bases itself on a program for the unconditional defense of the interests of the working class and starts to carry out this program; which bases itself on the independent organizations and mobilization of the working class and its allies. Such a government can thereby lead the struggle of the working class to a total destruction of the economic and political power of the bourgeoisie.

Thus the central task for the revolutionary Marxists remains in any case to develop this independent organization and mobilization, which by the upturn of the struggle for such a program will become the basis for the working class power.

Torben & Mogens

## THE EXPULSIONS IN THE PORTUGUESE REVOLUTIONARY WORKERS PARTY (PRT)

By Barry Sheppard

From February 21 to February 27, I was in Portugal. While there I gathered what information I could about the expulsions of a number of comrades from the Revolutionary Workers Party (PRT) that took place on February 1. The PRT is a sympathizing organization of the Fourth International in Portugal. I met with comrades from the leadership of the PRT, the Internationalist Communist League (LCI—another sympathizing organization of the FI), and with some of the comrades who had been expelled from the PRT.

The meeting with the LCI was held at their headquarters, with one of the LCI leaders and Comrade Aubin of the IMT. They told me that they had no information about the expulsions.

When I met with two comrades of the PRT leadership at their headquarters, they told me they had no written documents concerning the expulsions; but they indicated the PRT leadership was preparing a document. They stated that the charges against those expelled centered around the accusation that they had formed a secret faction without a clear political line.

Most of the information I was able to obtain came from the comrades who were expelled or who resigned from the organization as a result of the expulsions. The following report is based on discussions with the expelled members. These comrades furnished me with what is apparently the only written document about the affair, which was prepared by the leadership of the PRT to initiate the process that resulted in the expulsions ("We Must Stop Unprincipled Anti-Party Factionalism," see Appendix I). This document was presented at a meeting called by the Central Leadership, the official leading body, on January 18, 1976. Attending this meeting were the leaders of the cells of the PRT in Lisbon, and Comrade Sá Leal representing the Central Leadership.

The document consists of seven points. The first states that for "several months" the Central Leadership has been aware of a "series of rumors, comments, and 'criticisms'" which do not have clearly stated political or organizational objectives and which were spread outside the organizational channels of the party. This is contrary to the "elementary norms of functioning in a Leninist combat organization governed by democratic centralism" and "constituted . . . an element of confusion, demoralization, and destruction of the party" that must be "rejected, fought and eliminated by the comrades as a whole."

The second point indicates that the leadership decided to act "calmly and without bias" because of a number of circumstances, including the relative youthfulness of the organization and its members, the complexity of the political situation, the "clarification and development of our own line," which made "possible and understandable

the existence of doubts and differences among some comrades." This led some "weaker or less integrated comrades" into a "swamp" of "dilettantish attitudes."

Point three states that the leadership met this situation by encouraging a step-up in the party's activity, while calling for "frank discussion" of any differences.

Point four states that the persistence of the rumors, comments and "constant partisan objections to one or another aspect of party activity without raising any clear alternative" after the leadership took the steps outlined in point three, are "acts of sabotage and cannot be something accidental." But now the party has "documented proof" that it is being made "victim of secret, antiparty, provocative, factional activity." This "documented proof" consists of two documents that came into the hands of the leadership, that were circulated among some comrades in the Amadora cells. The documents themselves are not reproduced, solely selected quotations from them.

Point five states that it is now time to "cut off the secret factionalism and provocation." The Central Leadership made two proposals. One was that the cells "vote for preventative suspension for all comrades proven to have written, circulated, or discussed these or other documents outside the cells without reporting it to their respective leaderships." Second, that a Commission of Inquiry be established, which would report within 15 days. The cells would then consider the cases of each of the comrades who were suspended or "linked to the acts" in light of the Commission of Inquiry's findings, in order to take the "advisable disciplinary steps."

Point six concerns the necessity of carrying out this process before the opening of the pre-congress discussion period for the projected first congress of the PRT.

The final point is that all members must cooperate with the Commission of Inquiry. While the investigation is going on, party activity should be stepped up.

Comrade Sá Leal, representing the Central Leadership at the January 18 meeting, outlined the points in the document. According to Comrade Adriana, who was at the meeting representing her cell, he introduced other themes that were to play an important role in the process. The "documentary proof" the Central Leadership referred to was two documents written by a group of young comrades, from 14 to 16 years old. Sá Leal made it clear that it was not these comrades who were the main target, however. He names two comrades, Ernesto and Frederico, as among those responsible for creating the climate in the organization in which young comrades could write such documents. Comrade Ernesto had been a founder of the original group from which both the LCI and the group that became the PRT emerged. Comrade Frederico had been a leading member of the PRT.

Sá Leal also charged that Ernesto and Frederico had been trying to draw Adriana into their schemes, and that he knew she had had discussions with them. She replied that she, not Ernesto and Frederico, had initiated these discussions. For example, Frederico had raised some questions during a class given over the Christmas holidays about whether the situation in Portugal was revolutionary or prerevolutionary, and she wanted to find out what his ideas were. At the beginning of the meeting, Sá Leal had suggested that Adriana would be a good person to have on the Commission of Inquiry, but after she "admitted" that she had sought out Frederico to discuss his political views, Sá Leal suggested that after all, she really should be a witness before the commission, and not a member of it. Adriana herself declined to be on the commission, questioning its impartiality.

Sá Leal also raised the likelihood that those who were engaged in the alleged factional activity were *agents provocateurs* of either the ELP, an extreme rightist terrorist group, or of the Front for Revolutionary Unity (FUR). This charge—although no attempt was ever made to prove it in the course of the proceedings against the expelled comrades—was to be an important factor in whipping up an atmosphere of hysteria in the organization.

Following the January 18 meeting, the cells were informed of the decision to set up the Commission of Inquiry. When the report was made in Ernesto's cell, the leadership singled him out as a prime object of the process. Ernesto stated that he intended to make a written criticism of the methods being employed, and was informed he could not do that. No one could write anything, he was told, because it might turn out they were an *agent provocateur*.

The Commission of Inquiry consisted of representatives of the Lisbon cells and two members of the Central Leadership, Januário and Laura. (Laura is one of the comrades of the Argentine PST leadership active in the PRT.) The Commission conducted taped interviews with about one-half of the Lisbon membership. The questioning was along the following general lines: They were asked if they knew of any factional activity, who was engaged in this activity, what were the ideas of such people about the leadership, about the role of the members of the Argentine PST, did they have political differences, did they know the positions of Ernesto and Frederico and had they talked with them?

During Adriana's interrogation, Laura asked her what she talked to Ernesto about, had she been invited to a New Year's party, and wasn't this party really a faction meeting? Had Ernesto talked to her about organizational questions? Had Frederico said anything bad about members of the party?

Another comrade, Gonçalo, was questioned along the same lines: Did he know about rumors against the leadership? What were his connections with Ernesto? What was Ernesto's opinion of the leadership? When he admitted that last fall he had thought of writing a document with Ernesto on party work in the unions and its relations to the workers commissions, Laura told him that was a violation of democratic centralism. On the rest, he hadn't heard any rumors and didn't know Ernesto's opinions.

During the interrogation of Ernesto, he was asked if he had the intention of forming a faction. He explained that

he did not. He also explained that he had no connection with the young Amadora comrades. The Commission of Inquiry was especially interested in a trip Ernesto had made abroad. They wanted to know if he had had discussions with members of the Fourth International abroad, and if he had gone to the United States. He admitted that he had discussions with comrades of the Spanish LC and LCR-ETA (VI), and with comrades of the British IMG. He stated that he had not been to the United States, and when this answer was greeted with skepticism, he offered to produce his passport. (I found that Comrade Aubin had also heard this rumor.) Ernesto admitted that he discussed politics with people outside the PRT, although he defended the positions of the PRT.

The procedure followed was somewhat different than the leadership originally proposed in "We Must Stop Unprincipled Anti-Party Factionalism." The matter was not referred to the cells, but the report of the Commission of Inquiry was made at a plenary meeting of the Lisbon membership of the party on January 31-February 1.

The members were informed at their cell meetings on January 31 of the plenary meeting, to be held that afternoon beginning at 4 p.m. At the plenary, the Central Leadership proposed a three-point agenda, consisting of a report on the reasons for the plenary meeting, the report from the Commission of Inquiry, and voting on the proposed disciplinary actions. Frederico proposed that the meeting begin with a discussion of the methods of the inquiry. Frederico's proposal was voted down after the leadership spoke against it. During the discussion on this point, there were shouts of "provocateur" directed against Frederico. Sá Leal jumped to his feet to threaten Frederico with violence, but was restrained. This set the tone for the rest of the two-day meeting. Critics of the proceedings were met with shouts and charges of being provocateurs.

Comrade Romero, a central leader of the PRT and also of the Argentine PST, presented the first report, stating that there were reasons to believe that *agents provocateurs* were in the organization, and outlined the Central Leadership's reasons for initiating the proceedings, along the lines presented at the January 18 meeting. There was no discussion of this point, and Comrade Januário proceeded with the report from the Commission of Inquiry.

This began with the case of Ernesto. The method used was to read excerpts from the transcriptions of the interviews the Commission of Inquiry held. There were no written or formal charges, or any documents or any written material presented to the membership. The Amadora documents were referred to. Through this method, a number of accusations were insinuated against Ernesto. These were that Ernesto was planning to submit a document to the upcoming congress, that he had a negative opinion of the leadership and was responsible for rumors being circulated against them, and was responsible for the general climate in the organization that made it possible for the Amadora comrades to circulate their documents. He was also charged with being inactive, and not having a job.

Another accusation was that Ernesto had discussed his political positions, including support to some positions of the Socialist Workers party of the United States, with members of the PRT who were not members of his cell. He discussed general political questions with people outside the PRT. In addition, he had had discussions with

members of the Fourth International in other countries without permission.

There was another accusation against Ernesto, that concerned the LIRQI (International League for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International, led by Michel Varga). Some months ago, a Spanish member of the LIRQI came to the PRT headquarters. Ernesto was assigned to talk with him, which he did. Subsequently, a different LIRQI member, from France, came to the PRT headquarters and asked to see Ernesto. Unknown to Ernesto, the PRT leadership had a comrade impersonate Ernesto and talk with the LIRQI member. This ruse did not reveal that Ernesto had any connection with LIRQI, but such a connection was insinuated. Two LIRQI newspapers that this person left for Ernesto were held up in the plenary meeting as evidence. Ernesto's discussion with a member not in his cell, his discussions with members of the Fourth International outside Portugal, and the discussion he was assigned to have with the LIRQI representative were presented as proof of his "lumpen" attitude toward discussion, as opposed to a "Leninist" attitude.

Ernesto had been a founding leader of the Revolutionary Marxist Group, the forerunner of the PRT. Januário took note of this, but added that it was too bad that Ernesto now had joined the camp of the petty bourgeoisie and the counterrevolution. Other members spoke to discredit Ernesto's previous work, asserting he was never a good member.

The session ended Saturday night. Sunday morning, the plenary was resumed. It began with presentations by Comrades Laura and Romero concerning the nature of democratic centralism and of provocations. Then the cases of other comrades were taken up, utilizing the same method of reading from the transcript of the interviews conducted by the Commission of Inquiry. The accusations paralleled those in Ernesto's case—basically that these comrades, especially Frederico, were responsible for the climate of rumors that made it possible for the Amadora comrades to write their document, that they had spoken about their political opinions to members of the party who were not members of their cells, etc.

The Plenary session went until 2 a.m. the next morning. The meeting voted to expel 10 members, including Ernesto and Frederico. Five others were reduced to the rank of sympathizer. Two of these, Gonçalo and Adriana, had solidarized with those accused during the plenary, admitting that they too had discussed political questions with members outside their cell. Gonçalo also admitted that he discussed politics with his wife, who had dropped out of the party. They demanded to be expelled along with Ernesto and the others. They did not accept their reduction to the rank of sympathizer, and resigned from the organization. Following the plenary, eight other people also resigned.

\* \* \*

The document of the Central Leadership of the PRT, "We Must Stop Unprincipled Anti-Party Factionalism," which launched the affair, itself outlined the objective of

the leadership. This was to purge the membership before opening the pre-congress discussion for the first congress of the PRT. The leadership utilized organizational measures to prevent a political discussion in the PRT by expelling those it thought might have criticisms of the line of the PRT and the conduct of the leadership.

Utilizing organizational measures to prevent political discussion violates the elementary norms of Leninist practice. Leaving aside the character of the accusations themselves, which were aimed at intimidating the membership and reducing rank-and-file democracy in the PRT, the correct procedure for the leadership in such a situation would be to do everything possible to assure that the political questions would be fully discussed and clarified in the pre-congress discussion. The membership of the PRT—as well as the Fourth International as a whole—has been deprived of this political clarification by the purge.

The charges themselves are ridiculous. A group of very young comrades circulated a document that contained criticisms of the leadership. This was not done through the proper channels of the organization. But these comrades were, after all, not the main objective of the leadership's witch-hunt. The documents of these young comrades were the pretext for launching the "investigation," which concentrated on a different group of comrades, Ernesto, Frederico and others.

A crude amalgam was made through the charge that Ernesto and Frederico were responsible in some vague way for creating the climate in which such young comrades would develop criticisms. To whip up hysteria, from the beginning the accusation was thrown in that this was probably all the work of *agents provocateurs*. The membership was then grilled about Ernesto's opinions on political questions in dispute in the world Trotskyist movement, and his views on the competency and line of the leadership, creating the impression that differences *per se* are evidence of guilt.

A hysterical plenary session of the membership was held complete with threats of physical violence and with the membership already convinced that they were dealing with provocateurs from other organizations, possibly even the fascist right. For good measure, there was the insinuation that perhaps Ernesto was the "agent" of LIRQI, or the Spanish LC or someone in the IMG. It was asserted that it is a violation of democratic centralism to have political discussions with members outside of your cell, or with members of the Fourth International outside Portugal. (Since the PRT is a new organization, and does not yet have statutes, it is unclear how such "norms" were established, and by whom.) Then, just in case all this didn't stick, the charge was thrown in that Ernesto had been inactive and is unemployed. Obviously, a petty-bourgeois lumpen.

It must be noted that the members of the Argentine PST, comrades Romero and Laura played key roles in the preparation and execution of the purge and in defending it at the January 31-February 1 plenary.

Comrade Ernesto, singled out by the Central Leadership as the main target, was among the founders of the first Trotskyist group in Portugal, and of the Revolutionary Marxist Group that developed into the PRT. Other leaders of the former GMR had dropped away in recent months. The January 31-February 1 purge culminated a process of

liquidating the former leadership of the GMR from the PRT.

The Argentine PST sent Comrades Romero and Laura to Portugal in the summer of 1974. They were quickly recognized by the relatively inexperienced comrades of the GMR as having more political and organizational experience. Romero and Laura in essence became leaders of the GMR and then the PRT, and played a role in helping to develop the organization.

But this intervention by the Argentine PST leadership also had a negative side. The PRT membership was taught that Comrade Moreno is the "Lenin of our time," with the capacity to decide tactics for sections of the Fourth International throughout the world. A political climate was engendered in which any political or tactical ideas on the Portuguese revolution presented by the PST leadership were accepted more or less without question or discussion. For example, when a letter from Comrade Moreno concerning the nature of the Armed Forces Movement arrived in Lisbon last summer (see Appendix II), the PRT immediately changed its position on this important question (see "The MFA and the Revolution in Portugal: a Necessary Rectification," printed in SWP Internal Information Bulletin No.1 in 1975). No convention was held to decide so important a question. Discussion and criticism were discouraged. This was particularly unfortunate, since the line emanating from Buenos Aires changed a previously correct position of the PRT.

Political discussion among the rank and file of the PRT was very restricted. The Amadora comrades' document, at least those portions quoted by the leadership (the document itself was not yet made available to the PRT rank and file at the time I was in Portugal), complains of this lack of discussion. The organization is constructed in a super-centralized cell structure that maximizes instructions from the top and minimizes political discussion in the cells. It is utilized to isolate political discussion. This went so far as to provide the foundation for the charge against Ernesto that he had discussed his political ideas with PRT members not in his cell. From the charges against Ernesto it is also clear that the leadership sought to intimidate members from having political discussions with members of the Fourth International in other countries, with the exception of the Argentine PST. Along these same lines, the international discussion and information bulletins were not distributed to the membership. Only the leadership was permitted to read them.

In place of rounded political activity for the membership, including political education, and discussion as well as outside activity such as sales of the press and action campaigns in the mass movement, the activity of the cell members tended to revolve solely around sales, raising money, etc. Individual members were required to buy bundles of the paper and were then responsible for selling them. Inordinate pressure was placed on the largely young membership to find ways to obtain money from their parents for the organization. Those who grew tired of this one-sided activity were labeled "lumpens" or "petty bourgeois" and many drifted away from the organization.

The political atmosphere in the organization was such that differences were driven underground. Rumors about the leadership, unsavory stories about the role of the PST leaders, complaints about the lack of discussion, became rife. Instead of facing the fact that its own methods were responsible for this degenerating state of affairs, the Central Leadership decided to convert Ernesto and Frederico into scapegoats. But more important, the Central Leadership knew that Ernesto and Frederico had had misgivings about the "turn" imposed on the PRT by the Argentine leadership during the summer, and held reservations about the leadership's rejection of the Leninist Trotskyist Faction document, "Key Issues in the Portuguese Revolution." These two comrades came to agree with the general line on Portugal presented by the LTF. The purge was intended to silence these potential critics and intimidate any others before the opening of the pre-congress discussion.

Following the purge, the expelled comrades, together with those who resigned and others who had dropped away from the organization in recent months, have held a number of meetings. They have decided to reject the purge and the methods utilized by the PRT leadership in carrying it out, and to organize themselves to carry out ongoing political activity. As one of their first tasks, they are reviewing the discussion in the Fourth International to help them hammer out their own positions on the Portuguese revolution and the road forward. At the same time, they are continuing public political work. The PRT was composed mostly of students, and many of those purged were student leaders at either the high school or university level, and have good possibilities for continuing Trotskyist work in this arena.

March 10, 1976

## Appendix I

### We Must Stop Unprincipled Anti-Party Factionalism

Document presented at a meeting called by the  
Central Leadership of the PRT on January 18, 1976.

1. For several months the central leadership and many comrades have been aware of a series of rumors, comments, and "criticisms" that have been launched and spread by some members, which DID NOT HAVE CLEARLY STATED POLITICAL AND/OR ORGANIZATIONAL OBJECTIVES, SUCH ACTIVITY BEING DEVELOPED OUTSIDE THE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURES OF THE PARTY (cells, various levels of the leadership, discussion meetings, internal classes, etc.). This fact, which is contrary to the elementary norms of functioning in a Leninist combat organization governed by democratic centralism, constituted, and still constitutes, an element of confusion, demoralization, and destruction of the party. It must be rejected, fought, and eliminated by the comrades as a whole.

2. The Central Leadership decided to act on the problem calmly and without bias. A compelling reason, among others, for this attitude was the understanding that the youthfulness of the organization and of its activists, the complexity of the political situation, and the clarification and development of our own line, made possible and understandable the existence of doubts and differences among some comrades, and that this was the problem that had to be given priority. Also the holidays and the political adjustments had contributed to causing a certain "impasse" in the organization's activity, an impasse that was a circumstance that could favor—although not justify—dilettantish attitudes among weaker or less integrated comrades, that is, a "swamp" into which some comrades could inadvertently fall. And this too was a question that demanded priority in resolving.

3. Thus the Central Leadership, along with the leadership of the cells and the activists as a whole, concerned itself with encouraging a step-up in the party's activity through the redistribution of cadres, the definition of goals and tactics for the various fronts, the publication of the paper on a weekly basis, and the recruitment of new members. At the same time the Central Leadership promoted and encouraged frank discussion, calling for all the differences or doubts to be expressed, even calling on those who had them to express them in writing and present them for more objective and exhaustive discussion. Over and above the normal cell meetings where they continually insisted on the need to constantly improve discussion and political preparation, they encouraged discussions on a number of occasions, as, for example, with the *Report on the Discussion in the LTF*, given to joint cell meetings by comrade Januário after his trip to the United States; the discussion of the *Projecto de Teses do PRT* [Draft Theses of the PRT] (Discussion Bulletin No.

5); the *Enmenda às Teses* [Amendments to the Theses]; and the *LTF Document*. These discussions were stimulated through a series of materials recommended by the Leadership, like *Revista de América*, and through special issues of the Discussion Bulletin or the LTF Document. Before November 25 discussions were also held on the national situation in which an explicit appeal was made for the discussion and expression of differences. There was an appeal for discussion in the cell meetings to draw the balance sheet on November 25. And more recently, taking advantage of the Christmas holidays, three schools were organized in Lisbon (two for rank-and-file activists). One more is about to be held in Porto. At these schools once again the importance of clear explanations and a complete clarification of the opposition to the party's policy—if there really is any—was insisted on.

4. When the party as a whole undertakes an effort to move forward, when the comrades as a whole have the greatest possibility to seriously discuss their political positions, it becomes possible to strongly suspect that the persistence of rumors and comments made behind the backs of comrades in "select" meetings or "private" get-togethers, that the persistence of constant partisan objections to one or another aspect of party activity without raising any clear alternative, are in the last analysis acts of sabotage and cannot be something accidental. Now the split of some comrades in one cell has some very unclear aspects, since elements who did not belong to the party were involved in its preparation. But today the comrades as a whole have evidence and documented proof, that the party is being made victim of secret, antiparty, provocative, factional activity. Two "documents" written on January 9 and January 12, 1976, were turned over to the Leadership, "documents" that were circulated and discussed outside the cells, behind the backs of the activists as a whole and behind the back of the leadership. These documents, which were circulated already at least among comrades in the student cells at Amadora, again take up some of the favorite themes of the rumor campaigns of the recent past. So that the comrades can have a more concrete idea of this, we cite some paragraphs:

"This text is essentially going to be an elaboration of the leaflet presented by certain activists on January 9, 1976. But over and above elaborating on it, it will present something more that has not even been so much as hinted at." "The PRT is not winning the masses in a revolution-



any way, but in an opportunist way." "It will not be through attacks on one or another political formation that the masses will be won to the revolution, and I say revolution because the main thing is not to win people to the party." "It is this point that I wish to speak on now, especially on the ultrasectarianism that the leadership has been showing toward the CP." "Thus we note the total support the PRT gave to the SP at the time of the fall of the Fifth Government." "The next point doubtless will be the most powerful one with regard to the attacks to be made against the cell leaderships. On this point many comrades will certainly be in agreement." "Thus I could begin by pointing out when the leadership tried to prevent the LTF document from being discussed." "But the maneuvers by the leadership did not begin here. It all began when they 'rejected' the LTF document before it was discussed and voted on among the ranks. The response was the usual one: 'democratic centralism.'" "Let us proceed to another 'centralist' and 'democratic' position the leadership took. I am referring, for example, to the November 16 demonstration. *It was not discussed.* Once again, support for the demonstration was not discussed because the party leadership had already given its approval. Essentially, it was as a result of this that a great number of our activists did not go to the demonstration." "We will have to intensify our fight in the factories since it is there that the revolution is won." "Therefore we will have to cancel certain activities in the schools." "It will not be through taking the utopian position of supporting the bourgeoisie against the bourgeoisie that the bourgeoisie will be destroyed."

And this original document ended with a series of demands, the last of which is "FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF A REVOLUTIONARY PARTY OF THE WORKERS." Just that way, all in capital letters, making clear that our party is neither of these things, or at least leaving this impression. . . . This document, like the "comments" that preceded it, does not attempt to bring out a political line, just as before doubts and "impressions" were left.

We reproduce these paragraphs so that the comrades can check them with their own experience in relation to the "rumors" and the person that circulated them. Later we will publish the cited documents in the discussion bulletin. For the present we do not want to enter into a discussion on their content, but to question the factional, provocative method with which they were circulated and also the entire "climate" that laid the groundwork and certainly made it possible for some more naive or inexperienced comrades to become involved in all this.

5. Because of the coming together of its political and organizational aspects and the ripening of the process to the point where it will be easier to distinguish where ingenuousness ends and calculation and provocation begin, it is essential that the Central Leadership and the activists act together resolutely to cut off the secret factionalism and provocation. We must stop it from functioning and totally clarify in depth its ramifications and aims, and the question of political relations inside and outside the party. To achieve this, the Central Leadership wanted first of all to bring the entire organization up to

date on the facts so that it could respond. And the Central Leadership proposes concretely:

(a) That the cells vote for preventative suspension for all comrades proven to have written, circulated, or discussed these or other documents outside the cells without reporting it to their respective leaderships. During their suspension, the comrades will not be able to participate in cell meetings.

(b) That a Commission of Inquiry be formed immediately (since our organization does not have a Control Commission, which would be the proper body to consider situations such as these), to be composed of comrades designated by the Central Leadership and by a comrade from each cell in Lisbon to be elected by secret ballot in the cells. The comrades in question should be chosen primarily on the basis of their loyalty to the party and their objectivity. The Commission should begin to act immediately and to report in a period of fifteen days. Taking into account the results of the work of the Commission, the cells will consider the cases of each of the comrades who have been suspended or linked to the acts. This will be done in the presence of these comrades and representatives from the Commission, for the purposes of adopting the advisable disciplinary steps.

6. The Central Leadership drafted a proposal to convoke the First Congress of the PRT and prepare draft statutes. But the need to clarify these occurrences takes priority. Before opening the pre-congress discussion period, all of us must know who has the right to discuss and who loses any and all rights within the party for carrying out secret, provocative, factional activity. Because it must be made perfectly clear that within the party during the discussion and at the congress the deepest differences and political discussions are and will be relevant, the only condition being that those having such differences and carrying out such polemics remain loyal to the party and agree to strengthening and building it. On the other hand, those who want to destroy the party, do not and should not have any rights. Thus, when the Commission of Inquiry completes its work, the two discussion bulletins with the congress call and the draft statutes will be issued.

7. Finally, we want to insist that stopping the work of disintegrating the party, bringing to light this entire process, and adopting the necessary measures is a task of all the comrades. Fulfilling it consciously and consistently is the highest expression of comradeship and solidarity, even for those comrades who have been drawn into this through error or lack of understanding. Every comrade must cooperate with all they know to bring the situation quickly to light, giving their information to the Commission of Inquiry. **BUT AT THE SAME TIME, WE MUST NOT FORGET THAT THE BEST RESPONSE TO AN ACT OF SABOTAGE IS TO KNOW HOW TO MAINTAIN AND DEEPEN ALL THE GAINS AND ADVANCES IN THE PARTY'S ACTIVITY. OUR GOAL MUST BE THAT IN FIFTEEN DAYS, WHEN THE COMMISSION OF INQUIRY REPORTS ON ITS ACTIVITIES, THE REPORT ON ACTIVITIES IN EACH OF THE CELLS MUST BE EVEN BETTER THAN IT IS NOW.**

## Appendix II

### Letter from Hugo Moreno to the PRT

From Internal Discussion Bulletin Number 2 of the  
Partido Revolucionario dos Trabalhadores [Revolutionary Workers Party] of Portugal.

#### INTRODUCTION

This Discussion Bulletin is divided into two parts.

The first part is a letter from Moreno directly taken from a report given to the National Committee. It should be pointed out that, as he himself states, this is only a set of working hypotheses that we have to study. In this context it is part of a fraternal discussion which attempts to make a contribution, bringing in new analytical ways to determine the class nature and role of the MFA and arrive at revolutionary Marxist positions on these questions, as well as the tasks posed in the light of the conclusions drawn.

The second part is an analytical document elaborated after receiving Moreno's letter. It should also be noted that *this does not constitute a finished analysis of the question* and even less the "last word." Just the opposite, it is considered as the opening of a discussion that we have to begin here and now.

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#### MORENO'S REPORT ON PORTUGAL TO THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE

Let's go on to Portugal which is very, very important.

We shall begin an exchange of opinions as J. and M. asked. M. says he agrees with J.'s memorandum, which I don't know if you have all studied. In principle, we have many serious doubts about this memorandum which M. supports. It strikes me as a classical analysis; however, each revolution has its own specific characteristics. In the Spanish Civil War, for example, the organizations that took the place of soviets were the anti-fascist committees. On paper they were Popular Front organs which included even the bourgeois parties. Nonetheless, due to the special character of the Spanish Revolution—which Trotsky was the only person in the entire world to understand because he was truly great—these organizations, which on paper were Popular Front organs called Anti-Fascist Committees, were organs of power, Soviets. This is what the Spanish soviets were called.

With regard to Portugal, we think there are some specific characteristics to that revolutionary process.

Everything we say about this is, above all, of a hypothetical nature. We will present different hypotheses because the Portuguese reality has to be carefully studied and well understood.

*First:* The Portuguese Revolution is halfway along the

road between the type of the revolutions characterized by the Russian and the Bolivian revolutions, and we could add, the Spanish revolution. What is the characteristic of these three revolutions? That in each case their February revolutions from the very beginning confronted defeated armies. The Russian Revolution confronted an army defeated by another imperialist power. The Bolivian revolutionary process, unique in the world, the most exceptional, the most perfect revolution to date, confronted an army that had been defeated by the workers movement; this is unique. During the Spanish Revolution a similar situation existed in the cities; but the Spanish Revolution did not completely defeat the army, just the opposite, the army wound up defeating the revolution. But it was partially this way in Spain. But in Bolivia, it was done with perfection: in three days the army disappeared, the working class gobbled it up; this is unique. That's why it is similar to the Russian Revolution. They both faced defeated armies. Or the German Revolution, which did not go any further afterward: in Germany also the army had been defeated by another imperialist power.

We think Portugal fits in with this kind of revolution. Even though this is a very broad generalization, if we did not point it out we would begin by failing to understand the specific nature of the Portuguese revolution. The Portuguese Revolution is half-way between the Bolivian and the Russian, closer to the Bolivian than the Russian. The army is defeated, smashed, overrun and destroyed by *the colonial revolution*, not by the Portuguese workers and peasants. This is very important. The army is *defeated*, destroyed. We say this because if this point is not made very clear we will not be able to focus properly on the question of the Armed Forces Movement.

Since we have to keep this short, I'm not going to take the time to quote from the document though there are some evident contradictions in it.

Companero J.'s document makes the MFA out to be an organization that replaces a bourgeois party in the government. This is where our big doubts begin. That the army as a whole, the navy and the air force, are bourgeois organs and that they are governing in Portugal, yes. We also agree that there is a contradiction between the MFA and the armed forces, that the MFA governs in the name of the armed forces. But it is doubtful, we have very serious doubts, that the MFA is today the organ of the bourgeoisie and not a more complex phenomenon.

What are these doubts? First, at the last IEC meeting we already pointed out to companeros in the leadership of our International (to companero Mandel, to Hansen, to all)

that we were on the verge of a dangerous analysis, a very, very dangerous one, of the Portuguese revolution. It was the following: To judge everything on the basis of a polarization. *Everything is either proletarian, or everything is bourgeois.* What distinguishes a great revolution is that it puts the petty bourgeoisie into motion. The *outcomes* can be bourgeois or proletarian, but there are *three classes in action, three classes intervene in the great revolutionary process: The bourgeoisie, the petty bourgeoisie, and the proletariat.* We say this because this eagerness to see everything as either proletarian or bourgeois (in the *final analysis petty-bourgeois means bourgeois*) was not the line taken by the Bolsheviks toward the Social Revolutionaries in Russia which was a clearly petty-bourgeois party . . . is hypothetical. *One:* Portugal doesn't have a tradition like Russia's, or like that of many of our countries. (For example, Mexico has the best revolutionary tradition in Latin America—leaving aside Cuba which has today replaced Mexico—with its great 1910 revolution which was almost a permanent revolution. It is of fundamental importance to study the Mexican revolutionary process because of its worldwide significance, not just what it means for Latin America.) In Portugal, it is just the opposite, these last forty or fifty years closed off all possibility for political experience, the classes had no chance to build their political organs, neither the petty bourgeoisie nor the proletariat. They have had to build their political organs just now, on a forced march. The Socialist Party and the CP are maintained by international influences: The SP as a reformist current linked to imperialism and the CP as a reformist current linked to Stalinism in Moscow. But the classes themselves, inside of Portugal, have not been allowed to have the experience that could be crystalized in the superstructure. And so there is the possibility that this great, essentially petty-bourgeois movement (it was not the workers revolution that overthrew Caetano, it is essentially petty-bourgeois), appears at the beginning to be somewhat like the Cuban question—because of the petty-bourgeois influence. Or like some other petty-bourgeois movements. It was not an accident that it started on the military plane, in the army, all this is typically petty-bourgeois. The entire petty bourgeoisie has tipped toward the left, pushed by sectors of the bourgeoisie. So, given the inexistence of a Socialist Revolutionary-type party (which can't be built in a day—it took 100 years to be formed in Russia.) it is the MFA that expresses this petty bourgeois ambiguity. The MFA was engendered by this revolution which is also petty-bourgeois in so far as its class character is concerned. And because of this it has distinct wings, distinct currents, which assume a clear political character. This is one possibility, that the MFA is a military variant of the Socialist Revolutionary Party within which all currents are included.

*Second variant:* It could be the beginning, for example, of a politicalization process, of the creation of Councils. (I am going to give a very interesting example in support of this second variant.) It could be the process of Soviet formation, or a kind of soviets, of committees that lead, that has not been started by the workers nor the peasant movement, but, because of the nature of the revolutionary process itself, has been started by the army; the institution most battered by the process of the colonial revolution. So the MFA is the superstructural expression of the begin-

ning of the formation of the soviets in the army. Why do we say this? Because the Russian soviets started in the same way in 1905; the Mensheviks, the opportunists, agreed to them. They were the ones that had the majority and they began to build soviets from *top to bottom.* So maybe this is what the armed forces leadership is doing, *without even knowing it.* Why? If you read the report it says that within the navy, the most left sector, there are already rank-and-file committees with 300 to 500 members—a very large number—which means there are already *rank-and-file sailor assemblies.*

They say the MFA will co-opt these committees, but this is a very interesting question. If there are sailor assemblies all over, and they all support the MFA, but are still built in the form of committees, they are already soviets, whoever they support. They may support an opportunist leadership, but as a social phenomenon the springing up of soldier and sailor committees is an explosive thing, whoever may lead them. We do not know if this is the case, there may be another variant.

To repeat: The MFA may be a petty-bourgeois movement which the armed forces allows to rule. In this sense it is a bourgeois government, but full of contradictions because the petty bourgeoisie is moving to the left.

*Second Variant:* It may be something much broader than the petty bourgeoisie; it may be the beginning of an organization of the mass movement with characteristics of soviet organization. (It could be a combination of the two, or maybe it has not yet defined itself.) It would then reflect the proletarian composition of the soldiers. If this is the case, the traditional approach is dangerous and sectarian (the MFA is going toward a Popular Front government, etc., etc.), is dangerous and sectarian. And *they will* adopt a Popular Front policy. The problem is, how do we face up to this Popular Front danger? If it is a petty-bourgeois movement that reflects the revolutionary process and is moving toward the left, or if it is a soviet process; we cannot send them to the devil and tell them we will have nothing to do with them because they are going toward a Popular Front. We have to struggle within this process, and understand that there are differentiations inside the Armed Forces Movement itself.

J. intuitively got some of this because he suggests that we should do work in the armed forces. I have some doubts whether this may not be the main area for our work, or one of the main areas.

What do we have to do then? Follow a non-sectarian line. For example, two *hypothetical* variants (hypothetical because nothing can replace the reality): The MFA has said it wants to rule for 3 to 5 years. We have told them, "No, go to the devil, we want a workers government." There are two variants: Suppose that we, as good Marxists, decide it is a soviet, that it is the beginning of a soviet: They ask us, "Are you willing to let us rule for 5 years?" Instead of replying, "Go to the devil, you are the government of the bourgeoisie," if it is really a [soviet] movement, we say "Alright, but not for 3 to 5 years, *for life.*" With three conditions.

*First condition:* That rank-and-file committees make all decisions, committees that include all the sailors and soldiers of the MFA. If it is only a movement composed of a hundred-odd officers, we say, "No." If it is a movement which includes all the soldiers and sailors and they choose

their delegates who choose a leadership, that is, if it is a soviet organization, we say, "Yes." This is the first condition: If they are just a hundred-odd, no; if the 70- or 80-thousand soldiers and sailors vote, yes, we agree that they rule. But not for 3 to 5 years. We propose 20, 25, 50, until socialism arrives.

*Second condition:* They share power 50-50. We propose that only the soldiers and sailors do the electing, but that factory delegates also be included. Second important element: soldiers and sailor delegates and factory representation. Taking up what they themselves say, because the MFA says that these steps are needed so that the working class can be the vanguard.

*Third condition:* For the expropriation of capitalism, nationalize foreign trade, nationalize all the land and industry and draw up an economic plan to be decided on by the workers and the people in general.

This is a different way to reply. Now it becomes they who have to tell us, "No." Not we who tell them, "No." And the masses that follow them, which we believe to be a broad, overwhelming majority—we believe that more follow the MFA than the CP and SP—will see that we are in no way at all negativists. Just the opposite.

The soldiers will say, if we propose that they should take the lead through their committees, even though they are MFA committees, the soldiers will say, "The Trotskyists' proposal is very positive; they [aren't against the MFA either,] the only thing they want is that the MFA be broadened to include the soldier sectors instead of being just a hundred-odd officers." What will the soldiers say? Will they say we are sectarians? No, at most they will say, "They overly defend our participation," but not, "They are the village idiots of the Portuguese Revolution."

Suppose it is a petty-bourgeois party, a petty-bourgeois movement. In this case, too, our reply must not be sectarian. We would then have to use the famous Leninist-Trotskyist formulation of a "Workers and Farmers Government." So, if they say to us, "We want to govern," we must reply also: "Excellent." But we are going to

support them (we will not enter the government) if they form a government with the Communist Party, the Socialist Party, throw all the bourgeois parties out of the government, go on to expropriate all industry, nationalize foreign trade, nationalize the land and draw up an economic plan that will guarantee a minimum income to *every single Portuguese*, whether they work or not. We will not be left looking like sectarians here, either. At the most they will say: "They are a little one-sided, they are leftists, but we won't close the door in their face." Is it clear, *companeros*?

These are the points we are going to write *companero J.* about, and we think it is important that all of us here begin to discuss the matter because a basic question is at stake concerning Portugal. We have to study the situation.

\* \* \*

In passing, we want to touch on Spain. Neither of the two Trotskyist tendencies in Spain, neither the one with us, nor the one with the majority, has a clear program for the Constituent Assembly, of struggle for transitional demands, nor any kind of program like that. Neither the one nor the other. What we see there is a sectarian mishmash. It's not an accident that, according to the report you have read, that they are now discussing unity. We can't see any big programmatic differences between the groups except on the question of terrorism and guerrillaism. If they do come to an agreement against terrorism and guerrillaism it will be to latch on to a new religion; the insurrectional general strike. (It seems they are already in agreement, the problem is where the Papacy is to be located, in the East or in the West.) A big agreement on insurrectional general strike, instead of guerrillaism. If they come to agreement on the new dogma, it's possible that the programmatic conditions are already given. Instead of being, as before, armed struggle and guerrillaism, we will see a great deal of, and in a long-winded way, insurrectional general strike, insurrectional general strike, insurrectional general strike.

April 4, 1975

## Report on GSTQ Convention

by Caroline Lund

The second convention of the GSTQ (Groupe Socialiste des Travailleurs de Québec—Socialist Workers Group of Quebec) took place February 26-29, 1976. About sixty people attended, which included eighteen elected delegates, other members of the GSTQ who attended as fraternal delegates or observers, one observer from the Organisation Communiste Internationaliste (OCI) of France, and several from the League for Socialist Action/Ligue Socialiste Ouvrière (LSA/LSO), Canadian section of the Fourth International. At the urging of the Canadian section the SWP Political Committee also sent two observers, Tony Thomas and myself.

In his remarks opening the convention and welcoming the fraternal observers, GSTQ leader Normand Guevre-mont said that the GSTQ had also sent an invitation to the United Secretariat of the Fourth International. By implication this would include the Groupe Marxiste Revolutionnaire (GMR), a sympathizing organization of the Fourth International in Quebec whose leaders support the International Majority Tendency in the international. The GSTQ received no reply, however.

The GSTQ is affiliated with the Comité d'Organisation pour la Reconstruction de la Quatrième Internationale (Organizing Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International—OCRFI). The group was founded sixteen months ago and, as its name implies, is based at present in Quebec. The GSTQ has around fifty members, most of them in Montreal, with a handful in the Toronto area. By comparison, the LSA/LSO has about thirty members in Quebec (180 across Canada) and the GMR about sixty. The GSTQ members in Quebec are all francophone.

Leaders of the GSTQ have their roots in the Quebec trade union movement. They played a leading role in the FRAP (Front d'Action Politique—Political Action Front), a municipal-level embryonic labor party formation in Montreal which lost its mass base in 1970. Today, they have significant strength in several Quebec unions, especially the teachers, transit workers, and professors unions.

The agenda of the convention was: International Political Situation; the Crisis and Tasks of Reconstruction of the Fourth International; Political Situation in Quebec and Canada; the Canadian State and the National Question; Work Among Youth; Work Among Women; workshops on finances and press; Organization Report; and Election of the Central Committee and Control Commission.

I will not attempt to give a rounded account of the analyses and positions of the GSTQ and all the decisions of their convention, but will draw attention to aspects of the convention that would be of particular interest to members of the SWP. Thus far we have been unable to translate any of the major political documents of the GSTQ, and this report is based primarily on notes taken during the discussion.

The resolution and report on the international political situation pointed to the key importance of events in Portugal, with the report concentrating on the lesson of the November 25 coup attempt. Their analysis is very close to that of the SWP and of the Leninist Trotskyist Faction in the Fourth International. In their analysis of the lessons of November 25, however, they tended to aim more of their fire against the centrist and ultraleft groups of the FUR than against the CP and SP.

Their formulation of a government slogan is to call for a congress of workers and peasants to centralize the power of the masses to force the establishment of a CP-SP government.

Interestingly, however, the discussion under this report tended to center not on Portugal but on United States politics. The international political resolution placed before the convention by the GSTQ leadership contained a large section on the United States based explicitly on the main points of the SWP's 1975 political resolution.

The reporter on the GSTQ resolution explained that in order to have an internationalist perspective, revolutionists in Canada have to have a perspective for revolution in the United States. The outgoing leadership recommended to the delegates that the new central committee be mandated to draw up a more thorough document on the United States, to be completed in six months.

Discussion on this report indicated great interest on the part of the delegates in what is going on in the United States and the perspectives of the SWP. Some delegates raised questions about whether the SWP's analysis of the importance of the radicalization and struggles of the 1960s was a concession to "new-vanguardism" and what they call "Pabloist revisionism." Another said that although she thought at first that the SWP resolution sounded a little "Pabloist," she had changed her mind and thought the GSTQ had something to learn from the SWP. She specifically mentioned being impressed with the SWP's work in the Black struggle and with a recent speech by Peter Camejo in Montreal (the Camejo meeting was cosponsored by the LSO, the GSTQ, and the GMR). Other delegates raised questions about the level of strike activity in the United States, about the stage of the fight for a labor party, and about the relationship between the SWP's call for a labor party, a Black party, and a Chicano party.

In his summary under this point, GSTQ leader Roch Denis said he thought that consideration of the positions of the SWP could help the GSTQ overcome a certain limitation in their past positions. He pointed to the GSTQ's trade union work as one of the organization's strengths, but said that they had tended to equate the class struggle with what happens in the unions. The SWP analysis, he said, had convinced them that movements they had previously tended to view as parallel to, or apart from, the class struggle—such as the struggles of women, youth, and Blacks—were actually an integral part of the

class struggle. He stressed the leadership's view that the basic line of the SWP resolution was Trotskyist and consistent with the Transitional Program.

Under the next agenda point, "The Crisis and Reconstruction of the Fourth International," the resolution and report pointed to Portugal as the key test of all currents in the workers movement and indicated agreement with the basic line of the LTF resolution, "Key Issues in the Portuguese Revolution."

The GSTQ's analysis of how to build the Fourth International follows that of the OCRFI. That is, they think that the Fourth International was not simply split in 1953, but was destroyed as an organization by the influence of "Pabloist revisionism." They believe that the reunification of 1963 was not on a political basis that permitted the elimination of "Pabloist revisionism." Today they see big opportunities to "reconstruct" the FI, but stress the need to eliminate from its ranks "revisionist positions contrary to its program and principles."

At the same time, the reporter under this point saluted the initiatives of the LSA/LSO in inviting the GSTQ to its convention last December and in exploring the possibilities for closer collaboration by the two organizations in the class struggle in Quebec and English Canada. The reporter, as well as delegates who spoke under this point, indicated a desire to increase their common work and political discussions with the LSA/LSO around the fight for a labor party in Quebec, work in the New Democratic Party (a labor party based in English Canada), the national question, and other areas.

The discussion under this point ranged over such questions as the nature of "Pabloist revisionism," the meaning of the 1963 reunification, the need for a balance sheet of the OCRFI current's association with the Healy group in Britain prior to 1971, and the OCRFI's overtures to the United Secretariat of the Fourth International.

The contributions to the discussion by the OCI representatives went along the lines of insisting on the importance of "eliminating revisionism" from the ranks of the international while at the same time indicating the desire to pursue as far as possible the OCRFI's request for political discussions with the United Secretariat.

## The National Question

As a step toward developing a position on the national question in Canada, the GSTQ convention passed a resolution called "The Historic Foundations of the Canadian State." This resolution sidesteps almost completely the problem of Quebec as an oppressed nation by concentrating on explaining how the whole Canadian federal state is still formally under the thumb of Great Britain. The resolution places great importance on the fact that what is called the Canadian constitution, established under the British North America Act of 1867 was an act of the British Parliament and remains formally under British control. The resolution calls for a sovereign Canadian constituent assembly to rectify this.

The resolution tends to dissolve the Quebec National question into a Canadian "national question," saying: "For us, the key to the question of the Canadian state, the federation, and the oppression of the French-Canadian population is to be found in the fact that in Canada the

bourgeois-democratic revolution was crushed for both the French and the English populations, and that on its remains was constructed a state of an imperial character, dedicated to the interests of the British Empire, resting on fundamentally antidemocratic foundations."

A lively debate took place under this point, touched off by the OCI representative, who polemicized against the LSA/LSO position of calling for an independent socialist Quebec. He contended that Marxists never call for separation of an oppressed nation, only for the right to self-determination, and concentrated on warning against capitulation to bourgeois and petty-bourgeois nationalism. He was answered by a GSTQ member who argued for the legitimacy of the demands of the Québécois against national oppression. He discussed the history of the Bolsheviks' position on the national question, Marx and Engels' position on Ireland, and the continuing importance of the struggles of the Ukrainians, Crimean Tatars, and other nationalities in the Soviet Union.

The GSTQ delegates were obviously still thinking through the national question. One delegate raised doubts about whether the demand for a pan-Canadian constituent assembly would make sense to working people. Others raised questions about how revolutionists can best counter the influence of the procapitalist Québécois Party (PQ), which appeals to the nationalist aspirations of many Québécois workers; and about why the New Democratic Party (which clearly opposed the right of self-determination for Quebec) has been unable to gain any real support in Quebec.

The GSTQ says that it is still developing its position on the national question, and is planning to hold a special conference later this year to discuss it.

In her greetings to the convention, Colleen Levis of the LSO outlined the position of the Canadian section and urged a continuing discussion between the two organizations on the national question.

## Women's Liberation

The separate point on the agenda on work among women reflected the GSTQ's desire to become more active in this area than they have been in the past. However, the resolution proposed under this point by the outgoing leadership, titled "How Communists Fight for the Emancipation of Women," was strictly historical and theoretical, but it concluded with the need for the GSTQ to get involved in struggles against the various forms of oppression of women.

Some GSTQ members who had begun to get involved in women's liberation work submitted a written contribution to the pre-convention discussion that was a little more concrete. (This was, by the way, the only written contribution other than those put forward by the Leadership.) A report by one of the women who drew up this contribution urged the GSTQ to join in united front actions on specific women's liberation demands as Lenin had urged in his conversations with Clara Zetkin. GSTQ leaders also expressed their intention to give more attention to the defense effort for Dr. Henry Morgentaler, the Montreal doctor jailed for violating the abortion law.

The youth report stated that the GSTQ is in the process of launching a public independent youth group, the *Rassemblement des Jeunes pour le Socialisme* (Youth

Movement for Socialism). The youth group is being built on a broad basis, not on the GSTQ's programme, and does not function according to democratic centralism.

The organizational resolution and report said that the organization had made an error by failing to call for a vote for Paul Kouri, the LSO candidate for mayor of Montreal in the 1974 elections. The resolution said the GSTQ should have supported his candidacy even though they disagreed with the method of the LSO in running its own candidate rather than running a "workers united front" candidate nominated by the meeting of worker militants and trade unionists.

One area where there is a big difference between the GSTQ and the LSA/LSO and (and the SWP) is in organizational structure and traditions. The GSTQ is organized in cells of from five to eight members, with cell members generally involved in the same area of political work. The secretaries of all the Montreal cells meet every two weeks to discuss more general policies. The central

committee appoints several commissions to coordinate specific areas of work.

Under the organizational report, one of the central leaders of the GSTQ spoke about the need to maintain and even tighten up this vertical structure. This was said to be part of the meaning of democratic centralism and Bolshevism. The members were told, for example, that it was their duty as revolutionists not to discuss anything about the activities of their cell with comrades from other cells—especially not with the person they live with!

In general, the observers from both the SWP and the LSA/LSO felt that our attending this convention was an important step forward in getting to know the comrades from the GSTQ. The atmosphere throughout the convention was very comradely. Both the GSTQ members and the LSA/LSO and SWP members were interested to learn about and discuss each other's views and traditions in the light of the important new events in the world revolution.

March 5, 1976

**Statements by Lutte Ouvriere, Spark, Combat Ouvriere, and the African Union of Internationalist Communist Workers**

December 15, 1975

Socialist Workers Party  
Dear Comrades,

Enclosed are copies of a statement about the current situation of the Fourth International, "Rebuilding the Fourth International" (published in *Class Struggle* #32, November, 1975). The statement was signed by Combat Ouvrier, Lutte Ouvrière, Spark, and the Union Africaine des Travailleurs Communistes Internationalistes.

As the statement indicates, we feel that, since the death of Trotsky in 1940, the FI has not been able to establish a leadership which enjoys the political confidence of the whole Trotskyist movement. The result has been that the FI fractured into many pieces. This tendency has speeded up in recent years. The FI must be rebuilt, and its leadership established.

We feel that this can be facilitated if there is an open confrontation of analyses between the various Trotskyist groups. We also feel that the rebuilding of the FI goes hand in hand with the testing out in practice of the political analyses of the various groups. That testing out will happen with the events, and with the intervention in those events by the various groups.

In the meantime, we think it is important for there to be an open exchange of views within the Trotskyist movement. We propose to discuss the FI itself and the causes of its failure, the questions of the Popular Democracies and the underdeveloped countries which have broken free from imperialism, and current events of importance, such as Portugal.

If you are interested in discussing this proposal more concretely, we would be happy to meet with you.

Fraternally,  
SPARK  
Baltimore  
Detroit

P. S. We will be sending copies of this document to all your branches shortly.

**REBUILDING THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL**

(published in *Class Struggle* #32, November 1975)

Of all the parties, organizations, groups, and tendencies that claim they represent the working class or socialism, the only movement taking specific action to create a revolutionary workers' International--following on from the

traditions of the past three Internationals--is the Trotskyist movement. At the same time it is the only movement existing on an international scale that calls for an independent proletarian organization and independent proletarian policies--judging from the basic texts of its program. And it is the only movement whose stated aim is the setting up of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

There is an obvious link between these two aspects. Organizations acting according to the prospect of proletarian revolution, in so far as their program is concerned at least, can only conceive of their activity in an international context. On the other hand, organizations that are against the independent organization of the proletariat, even if they claim allegiance to socialism, communism, or Marxism-Leninism, are necessarily against any idea of a revolutionary International.

The so-called "Maoist" groups, out of all the groups claiming to belong to the revolutionary extreme-left, are the only ones, apart from the Trotskyists, which are present in a large number of countries. But, not only are they inherently incapable of creating an international organization. They are sworn enemies of internationalism. Their populism, whose aim is to make the working class serve bourgeois interests, is by its very nature nationalistic. The international proletariat cannot count on groups of this type to contribute towards giving it an organization. In fact, it will inevitably find such groups against it--at least, if they ever amount to anything.

Of course, there are other groups, outside of the Trotskyist movement, that claim allegiance more or less explicitly to proletarian revolution and to the past three workers' Internationals. Generally speaking, they are various forms of the so-called "state capitalist" groups. These groups reject the basic program of the Trotskyist movement, either because of its analyses of the degeneration of the Soviet state and its view of the Stalinist movement, or, beyond these, over the question of the link with Bolshevism. These very heterogeneous groups have never been able to work out a specific political line or organize themselves on an international level. Some of them state the necessity of doing so. Others have given up the idea. And others simply make vague references to the Fourth International.

It is not impossible of course that some of these organizations could help in the construction of the revolutionary International. But the International could not be built around them, around the lack of program and eclecticism in this domain.

The Trotskyist movement refers back to the last revolutionary program that was still the fruit of the genuine ex-



perience of a vast revolutionary workers' movement. Namely, the Second and Third Internationals, within which Trotsky developed. This program, integrating into past experiences a coherent analysis of the Soviet's state degeneration, is the only possible starting-point for the rebuilding of an International capable of adding its own fund of experience onto what has been handed down from the working class movement in the past.

The Trotskyist movement does exist on an international scale, and there are even international organizations claiming they have taken on leadership of the movement. But the Fourth International has clearly failed so far in its attempt to make up for the bankruptcy of the Third. Thirty-seven years after its creation, it is still made up of small rival groups with no real following.

The absence of a genuine International, that is, of a world revolutionary party solidly implanted in the working class, even if only in a certain number of countries, is glaringly obvious. The "historical crisis of leaderships of the proletariat" has not been overcome since Trotsky wrote the Transitional Program. It is only possible to seriously discuss the tasks for revolutionaries in the future with those who take this fact as their starting-point. This situation is largely due to objective factors. The imperialist countries have found a certain stability over the past three decades, thus adding to reformist illusions within the working class in the West. Imperialism's relative stability has consolidated the Soviet bureaucracy. And the bureaucracy has paid imperialism in return through the stabilizing role played by the Stalinist movement. In the absence of proletarian leadership, the movements of revolt in the Third World countries have all been led into the impasse of nationalism. They have been unable to seriously threaten the stability of the imperialist countries.

The case of the Third World countries is in fact a reminder that there is no watertight division between objective factors and subjective ones, that is, factors depending on revolutionary organizations' ability to confront the tasks of the moment. Since the war, the Trotskyist movement has been unable to create, in any of the Third World countries affected by the wave of national liberation struggles, an organization capable of challenging nationalist organizations for the leadership of the movement.

Was it objectively possible for the Trotskyist movement, during the last three decades, to construct a powerful Fourth International firmly rooted in the proletariat that was Trotsky's objective? Perhaps not. However, it would only be possible to weigh up the role of objective factors if the Trotskyist movement had been able to measure up to circumstances. In fact, what finally makes up the failure of the last three decades is that, after Trotsky's death, the Trotskyist movement has not been able to create an active, competent and effective international leadership—even within the bounds of the present degree of development of

the movement and its possibilities. The only answer to the first question, apart from an academic one, could be given by the success or failure of such a leadership.

Today, given the present degree of development of the Trotskyist movement, the problem is still that of the lack of an international organization coordinating the Trotskyist movement, and the lack of a competent international leadership recognized by the world Trotskyist movement.

The Trotskyist movement is in pieces. There is not one but several international bodies which lay claim to the leadership of the Trotskyist trend. The main one is undoubtedly the United Secretariat, judging by the number of organizations recognizing it. But a large number of national sections of this body have split, following the line of division of the two main factions of the United Secretariat. Apart from the United Secretariat there are the "Posadist" Fourth International, an International Committee formed around the English Revolutionary Workers' Party, an Organizational Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International to which the AJS-OCI Organization in France belongs, the International League for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International which came out of a split of the AJS-OCI, without counting other groups. Moreover, there are a certain number of Trotskyist organizations which do not identify themselves with any of the existing international organizations. Some of these organizations never belonged to any of the international bodies as they exist at present. Others have left these international bodies because they considered that their political disagreements were too important to remain in any of them. And others were excluded because, for these international bodies, exclusion is often a way of settling political disagreements.

This fragmentation of international bodies is actually carried over internally into each of these bodies. Their superficial unity, the unity they present to the outside, usually hides relationships which are in no way based on the mutual confidence of the groups or their confidence toward the international leadership. Yet without such relations, established through a genuine common activity on the basis of a program that is genuinely accepted by all, there can be no international organization. There is only a conglomeration of national organizations. Without a willingness to come to such an agreement, without a common activity, it is not possible to choose an international leadership which has earned its authority not through articles of a statute, but by winning and demonstrating its competence.

A superficial unanimity and a purely formal centralism can cover up the real problem only to those who are not very demanding. But we have serious misgivings about the quality of the relations between groups belonging to the same international grouping. We just have to look at the

speed with which sometimes minor differences of opinion lead to splits instead of disappearing within the international organisms. The same goes for the way in which these splits immediately bring an hostility preventing any form of collaboration.

Let us give a current illustration of this type of relations--one which is unfortunately far from being original. It concerns the Organizational Committee for the Rebuilding of the Fourth International (AJS-OCI) and the LIRQUI which is a split from the former. The former has come to the point of accusing the latter of being in the pay of the KGB and the CIA, and the latter puts most of its energies into defending itself from the former's charges. And this is going on after almost ten years of collaboration between the two within the same international organization. Yet this organization claimed to be a democratic-centralist one, an international leadership in fact. Such relations today are not just coincidental. They stem from the fact that their earlier show of unity was artificial and sterile. And this is not a case apart.

Bureaucratic centralism, that is to say, in which there is no real sense of trust between members, and the scattering into organizations committed to a sterile war between one another, are two aspects of the one phenomenon. This is the phenomenon we must analyse and, above all, overcome. For this is what prevents international organisms from developing on an international level, and from fulfilling their role, which is to cope with the tasks of the day.

Does this mean that the Trotskyist movement not only can but must do without a real international leadership, that is, one which is actually capable of leading, and which is truly international, centralized and democratic? Of course not!

But it means that a leadership cannot just be proclaimed, and even less so, can it proclaim itself. A democratic-centralist organization is forged and built up by starting from what we have, from what the Trotskyist movement actually is. This includes its achievements, but also its weaknesses, and takes into account the current lack of trust characteristic of relations between groups. Making believe that things exist which do not really is no way of building a centralized international organization. It is the best way of never getting there. Let us leave aside those groups which have solved their problems once and for all by refusing the others any right to stand for Trotskyism, and which quite simply declare that the Trotskyist movement is not scattered because they are the only Trotskyists. Most organizations have to admit that the dispersion of the Trotskyist movement is a problem in itself, and at the same time also raises the problem of an international leadership. There are more and more Trotskyist groups which do not belong to any of the international organisms and which criticize the poli-

tics, practices, and methods of the latter. These organisms can be criticized on all these points. But apart from the fact that these criticisms are not necessarily developed from a more correct point of view than that of the organizations to which they are addressed, in themselves they do not enable us to get out of the present blind alley. Moreover, the groups outside the international organisms cannot be said to be original from this point of view. . . the various international organisms are very good at criticizing one another. To group together on an international level by simply excluding the others would only add another sect to the already existing sects.

As we see it, the differences of opinion between the various components of the Trotskyist movement are not serious enough for them to be unable to cooperate in an international organization. This organization should enable them to confront their point of view honestly on all of the major questions which divide the Trotskyist movement. This would include such questions as: the analysis of the national liberation movements in the underdeveloped countries, the analysis of the class nature of the People's Democracies, of Cuba, of China, and also the analysis of the causes of the failure of the Fourth International after Trotsky's death and, of course, current political events.

The aim is not to attribute the viewpoint of one group with a vague international endorsement. Nor is it to put out documents based on compromises which are usually a poor cover-up of differences in opinion.

One can only put forward a common viewpoint, especially when it concerns a political program for the world revolutionary struggle of our time--as a result of an honest confrontation of different opinions. Furthermore, it can only be the result of the confirmation of the various programs through political struggles. What is more important, is that a program that would be adopted by the movement as a whole can only be linked to an international leadership recognized by this movement.

What we can do is engage in this confrontation straight away, and try to isolate the points of agreement and disagreement. We must clarify them as far as possible. But we do not think that these disagreements are an obstacle to working together and we certainly do not have to hide them to do so.

We must go beyond such a confrontation if we wish it to be a step towards the creation of a centralized international organization. It must also be a place where we can examine the political and organizational assistance that the various groups can give to each other. This assumes an international organic structure. But it must correspond to the needs and the political and organizational capacities of the groups which make it up. The rights and the responsibilities of all must be agreed upon, and there must be no victimization. These mutual rights and responsibili-

ties agreed upon by the various groups would grow with the increasing trust the groups would show one another. At the same time a common discipline would emerge.

There is no miracle solution for establishing an international organization which at the early stages could serve as a veritable leadership for the Trotskyist movement as a whole which, as the various groups that make it up get a base in the working class, could become a veritable International. But one thing is certain: the crisis in the leadership of the Trotskyist movement not only concerns but is hurting the movement as a whole. We must resolve it. We must not only have the desire to give ourselves the means of doing so. The fact that an international leadership has been inexistent since the collapse of the Third is heavy with danger for the future of the proletariat and society as a whole. The solution to this leadership crisis is not within the reach of the Trotskyist movement such as it is today. But the movement is preventing itself from facing up to its present responsibilities by not trying to cooperate despite its internal divisions.

Today we should be able to create Trotskyist organizations in every country in the world, especially in the

underdeveloped countries where the present calm will give way to future storms. It would be fatally serious to once again leave these countries at the disposal of petty-bourgeois nationalism.

Not only is it also possible but absolutely indispensable to create organizations working towards the Eastern European countries, but especially towards the Soviet Union. Each of these tasks cannot be achieved separately by each Trotskyist organization, or by each international organism such as they are. But it is possible for the movement as a whole.

What is happening today in Portugal reminds us that historical events sometimes come on very quickly. They do not give the Trotskyist groups the time to evade their responsibilities.

November, 1975

SPARK (United States)  
LUTTE OUVRIERE (France)  
COMBAT OUVRIER (Antilles)  
UATCI (African Union of International Communist Workers) (Africa)

Paris, February 16, 1976

United Secretariat of the  
Fourth International

Dear Comrades,

Our group, together with Spark (USA), Combat Ouvrier (Antilles), and UATCI (Africa), is addressing the document "Putting an End to the Crumbling of the Trotskyist Movement" to the entire Trotskyist movement.

In the name of the four organizations that signed the document, we would like to ask you to forward it, along with the cover letter, to the organizations that belong to or sympathize with the United Secretariat.

Thanking you in advance, we send our internationalist greetings.

Lutte Ouvrière

• • •  
PUTTING AN END TO THE CRUMBLING OF THE FOURTH  
INTERNATIONAL

Nearly forty years after the founding of the Fourth International, the Trotskyist movement is the only one--on an international scale--to refer to the necessity of an independent proletarian political line and organization and to set as its goal the establishment of the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat, on the level of its basic programmatic formulations.

There are other currents which make more or less explicit references to proletarian revolution--in particular the so-called "state capitalist" groups and their various offshoots. But they never structured themselves on an international scale and have in fact even abandoned the idea. They were never able to elaborate a political line of their own. Most of them define themselves with respect to the Trotskyist movement, out of which the majority of them come.

As for the so-called "Maoist" groups, though they exist in almost every country and though they even have a notable influence in a number of under-developed countries, they represent (that is, when they represent anything at all) populist currents, the aim of which is quite openly to put the working class in the row of bourgeois interests. When these organizations are able to develop, their explicit abandonment of the proletarian camp causes them to become organizations representing interests other than those of the proletariat.

The most important assets of the international Trotskyist movement are by far the two following facts: First, it

has maintained, at least in its programmatic references, the political continuity of the revolutionary movement, successively embodied in the International Workingmen's Association of Marx and Engels, in the Second International until World War I, in the Communist International of the 1919-1923 period, and ultimately in the Left Opposition and the Fourth International founded by Leon Trotsky. Secondly, it was the only movement to maintain its tradition during a difficult period, against classical reformism, against Stalinism and against the different varieties of "Third-Worldism" despite their Marxist cover.

Thanks to this maintenance of political continuity, today, after decades during which the revolutionary movement had no real influence on the working class movement, new generations can be trained and educated as proletarian revolutionaries.

However, it must be admitted that the Trotskyist movement has not been able to give itself a living, competent and efficient international leadership, recognized as such by all the forces of the Trotskyist movement.

The emergency of an International, of a world party of the revolution, recognized as a leadership by important fractions of the proletariat itself of course largely surpasses the mere problem of the will or the competence of proletarian revolutionary organizations. The emergence of an International is not dependent only upon the ability of the organizations to measure up to the tasks of the hour on the ideological and practical levels.

Nevertheless, the responsibility of the organizations that make up the Trotskyist movement is great, in the sense that today there does not even exist an international leadership corresponding to the present possibilities of the movement and to its development. The inability to maintain the organizational unity of the movement and the inability to train an international leadership recognized by all the Trotskyist groups are of course two aspects of the same problem.

The scattering of the Trotskyist movement is shown by the number of rival international leaderships, each of which has a variable audience; by the existence of a great number of Trotskyist organizations belonging to none of the existing international bodies; and by the type of relationships existing within each of these international bodies, which are often formal or even fictitious relationships.

No responsible Trotskyist organization, which really wants the Trotskyist movement to play the role that it should, can accept this division, this scattering of groups which is not justified by any programmatic view.

Of course, part of the existing disagreements between Trotskyist groups rest on questions of vital importance.

But it is precisely only inside a Trotskyist movement capable of doing away with sectarianism and ostracism and of allowing a large-scale confrontation of ideas, that the different analyses can be valuably discussed.

Such a confrontation, on the present situation of the Trotskyist movement, on the analysis of the causes of its scattering and on a critical balance-sheet of its evolution since Trotsky's death, appears clearly as a vital and urgent necessity.

No proclamation, address, or unilateral appeal will ever be able to solve a problem concerning the whole of the Trotskyist movement.

It is indispensable that an international framework for such a confrontation be set up. This proposition is not at all incompatible with working toward an International based on the rules of democratic centralism. On the contrary, to try and put an end to the scattered state of the Trotskyist movement is the best way to work toward the building of a democratic and centralized international organization.

Will such an organization be created around one of the existing international organizations? Will it be the fruit of a larger restructuring, and on other bases? The proposed confrontation will have to deal with these questions among others, because there are great differences of opinion as to this problem between the organizations which are members of international bodies and those which are not.

However, the starting point of this discussion must be the undeniable fact that an international organization having a political authority over the whole of the Trotskyist movement does not exist. This remains an aim which must be reached by the organizations existing today. Our task is to build a democratic centralized international organization starting with the presently scattered groups.

The democratic centralism of the international organization to be built will not be suspended in mid-air. It cannot be simply the result of correct statutes. It implies a basic agreement on the program. It also implies a mutual political trust on the part of the groups making up the international organization as well as the trust of all groups and of all their militants toward the leadership.

This trust between groups and this trust toward the leadership of the other groups do not exist at the present time. Unless one group is able to lead significant struggles of the proletariat in its own country and to prove through action that it deserves the political trust of the other groups, the sectarianism which is characteristic of the relations between Trotskyist organizations today will forever preclude the possibility of doing away with the groups'

respective distrust.

The only other way to overcome this distrust is through a loyal confrontation of the points of view and through a common activity. These should be started right away in all possible fields and can be extended afterwards to encompass all the activities of the groups concerned.

In the face of the present sad situation of a scattered Trotskyist movement whose sectarianism presents the first steps toward a solution to be undertaken, the undersigned organizations have taken the initiative to address themselves to the whole of the Trotskyist movement in order to set up an international framework wherein could be discussed the ways and means of creating an international forum within which all the different trends of the Trotskyist movement could coexist.

The framework proposed by the undersigned is not to become a new international body in competition with those already existing.

Neither is it to become a mere discussion group, though it will have to play this role to the fullest, by allowing the participants to outline their points of agreement and disagreement, thus contributing to the clarification needed by the Trotskyist movement.

The undersigned are conscious that the honest confrontation of points of view is just a necessary pre-condition for the establishment of a political program for the world revolutionary struggle of our epoch. Beyond this, the positions of each will have to undergo the test of actual political struggles. The existence of a program adopted by the whole of the movement implies the existence of an international leadership recognized as such by the movement.

The undersigned organizations consider that along with the discussion of the important problems of the Trotskyist movement, the proposed framework must examine the political and organizational help that the various groups can give to each other.

It will be up to the participating groups to determine the degree of collaboration they wish to establish, according to their own needs and to their own political and organizational capacities.

If, beyond the actual differences, the participating organizations deeply want to work toward a closer and closer collaboration; if they feel a concern for the political and organizational problems of the other groups; if they do all they can in order that--beyond the relationships between leaderships--closer and closer ties be established through the exchange of militants, the circulation of discussion material, etc., then, the possibility will

exist for the establishment of relationship based on trust which in the future will form one basis of an ever-growing common discipline; then, leaders accepted by all will be

Paris, January 21, 1976

LUTTE OUVRIERE (France)  
UATCI (African Union of Internationalist  
Communist Workers) (Africa)  
SPARK (United States)  
COMBAT OUVRIER (Antilles)

**Reply to Lutte Ouvrière by Jack Barnes**

March 15, 1976

Lutte Ouvrière  
France

Dear Comrades,

Thank you for your letter of February 16, the attachments, and the copy of the letter to the United Secretariat. We have circulated the two articles, "Putting an End to the Crumbling of the Fourth International," and "Rebuilding the Fourth International," to our National Committee and are reprinting them next week in an information bulletin [IIB No. 6 in 1976] for our members and sympathizers. Thank you for making them available. We look forward to discussing these questions with you.

Comradely,  
Jack Barnes  
National Secretary  
Socialist Workers Party

cc: United Secretariat, Spark