

December 10, 1974

To the Leninist Trotskyist Faction Coordinators

Dear Comrades,

Enclosed is the following material:

1. A report by Thérèse on the November 16-17 meeting of the United Secretariat.

2. Several letters to Ernest concerning: a. the initial proposals made by the IMT for financing the coming IEC; b. other questions to be discussed at the IEC; c. the reaction of the Lambertists and Spartacists to the United Secretariat's decision to accept the OCI's request for a meeting.

Also included are the text of an article that appeared in the November 22 issue of Workers Vanguard (the Spartacists paper in the U.S.) concerning the United Secretariat delegation's meeting with the OCI, and the text of a letter from the OCI leadership to the groups affiliated with their Organizing Committee to Reconstruct the Fourth International.

3. Two letters to comrade Sakai of the Japanese Revolutionary Communist League. One deals with the resolution adopted by the Political Bureau of the JRCL concerning the IT split from the SWP (see material mailed to the faction coordinators on September 27). The other deals with some further observations on the IT split by Sakai. The relevant letters from Sakai to comrade Caroline Lund are also enclosed.

Comradely,

Ed Shaw

REPORT ON THE NOVEMBER 16-17, 1974, MEETING OF THE UNITED SECRETARIAT

by Thérèse

During the informal bull sessions that took place before and after the United Secretariat meeting, a number of important points concerning preparations for the IEC meeting were discussed. The December 7 letter from Mary-Alice to Ernest on IEC finances, and the December 9 letter from Joe to Ernest concerning the composition of the United Secretariat and the opening of the pregress discussion (both enclosed) summarize this discussion.

At the United Secretariat meeting itself several important points were on the agenda.

1. Argentina. The IMT members presented the draft of a reply to the August 20 statement of the PST Executive Committee. The IMT admits that there were several errors in the original United Secretariat majority statement made public last July. However, their new statement argues, the correctness of their criticism of the PST's general line has been reconfirmed by recent events. They reiterate their opinion that the PST's line "breaks with the programmatic continuity of the Fourth International and revolutionary marxism" and that the essence of the PST's line is "an interclass political bloc 'against all who employ violence' in Argentina and thereby threaten 'the process of institutionalization.'" (Their emphasis.)

The IMT members of the United Secretariat insisted that their draft statement be adopted as a United Secretariat document.

United Secretariat members who belong to the LTF resubmitted the motion originally made at the September meeting -- that the United Secretariat "acknowledge that it was mistaken in the conclusions expressed in its resolution of May 29 concerning the political orientation of the PST" and "considers the unfortunate incident to be closed."

The general line of the IMT's statement was adopted by the United Secretariat majority. They indicated it would be edited and published in Inprecor along with the August 20 statement by the PST.

We indicated that the PST would of course be obliged to again reply publicly. Thus the United Secretariat majority's decision could only lead to a new escalation of the public debate.

Karl declined to vote on either the IMT draft statement or our counterposed motion, indicating that since the IMT's draft had been presented to the United Secretariat only in French he was unable to read it. However, he stated that the Compass position was the following:

1. The policy being followed by the PST is wrong and Coral's participation in the meeting organized by the Peronist government on October 8 was a more serious error than participation in the meeting of last March 8 between the representatives of the eight

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parties and Perón.

2. At the same time they are against the campaign that has been mounted by the IMT to single out the PST for special condemnation. For example, if serious errors being made by sections or sympathizing organizations of the international are to be condemned publicly, it should be pointed out that the FCR crossed class lines by calling for a vote for Mitterrand in the presidential elections last May.

3. The IMT campaign has to be seen in the context of the way the United Secretariat majority has consistently acted toward the PST, never trying to collaborate or politically help them, just attacking the PST whenever the slightest pretext arises.

2. Chile. A comrade of the Liga Comunista of Chile was present and made a report on conditions inside Chile. He stressed the fact that illusions among the European left about armed resistance must be punctured. As one example of the type and level of resistance that exists today, he pointed to communal soup kitchens in some slum areas.

He sharply criticized the line of the ~~IMT~~^{MIR} as one of adventurous confrontation with the dictatorship that could only lead to the liquidation of the ~~IMT~~^{MIR} cadres and contribute to the profound demoralization that permeates the working class vanguard. He stressed the need for Chile solidarity work to focus on defense of political prisoners and aid to victims of the repression.

The comrades of the majority expressed no disagreements with the report made by the Liga Comunista comrade (who is an IMT supporter.) They agreed that there had been illusions among Chile solidarity groups in Europe about the character of the resistance in Chile, but indicated that this was starting to change.

Domingo reported that a recent Europe-wide meeting of Chile solidarity committees in which we are active had decided that the axis of Chile work in the coming period should be (1) defense of political prisoners and victims of repression; and (2) promoting boycotts of companies doing business with the Chilean junta.

3. OCI meeting. There was an initial discussion evaluating the October 15 meeting between OCI leaders and the United Secretariat delegation. Comrade Pierre Frank presented a draft of a statement to be made by the United Secretariat, breaking off any further discussions. It was agreed to postpone further discussion and a decision to the December meeting.

Ernest reported on a phone call from a leader of the Pablo group in France, the AMR, who indicated that they had read the documents of the 1974 world congress and would like to discuss them with leaders of the international. It was agreed that a small United Secretariat delegation including both IMT and LTF members should meet with them.

4. Control Commission fund drive. There was a discussion on financing the International Control Commission which plans to

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hold its first meeting in mid-December.

It was agreed to raise a fund of roughly \$3,000 to finance the Control Commission's initial meetings. However, no agreement could be reached on the specific quotas to be requested from various sections and sympathizing organizations. Some of the quotas proposed by majority members seemed unrealistic to us in view of the heavy expenses to be anticipated for IEC travel (e.g., LSA/LSO, \$200; RMG, \$150; SWL, \$100; LC(Spain), \$50; LCR-ETA(VI), \$50; PST(Venezuela), \$50; SAL, \$50). LTF members on the United Secretariat voted against the specific list of quotas proposed by the IMT for that reason, and urged that a more equitable proposal be worked out.

December 9, 1974

December 6, 1974

Brussels

Dear Ernest,

We have been thinking over the proposals made by Comrades Aubin and Smith in the subcommittee that was set up by the United Secretariat at its November meeting to work out the practical details on financing the upcoming IEC meeting. The frame within which the subcommittee was supposed to operate was the motion passed unanimously by the United Secretariat "to establish a travel pool to equalize travel costs to the IEC plenum, taking into consideration the size of the sections and the standard of living of the countries involved."

The motion was in accordance with the procedure used in financing the last world congress, which worked out quite well despite the divisions into factions and tendencies. In our opinion it is a correct approach inasmuch as it is a general leadership responsibility to assure maximum participation at a gathering of this kind.

The proposals made by Comrades Aubin and Smith came as a surprise to us since they were not in accordance with the decision made by the United Secretariat at its October meeting. Their proposals did not equalize costs to the IEC plenum, nor were they based on the size of sections and standard of living of countries. On the contrary, they made the burden of travel costs even more unequal, and were based on the factional divisions within the international.

Specifically, Comrades Aubin and Smith proposed to ignore the travel expenses of 80 percent of the IEC members whose costs, they assumed, would be borne by the sections and sympathizing organizations to which they belong. The expenses for this 80 percent would not figure in the travel pool. Instead, the comrades proposed to establish a restricted travel pool to cover only the expenses of some IEC members from some colonial and semicolonial countries.

They then proposed that 45 percent of this restricted pool be raised by sections and sympathizing organizations in which the majority of the leadership supports the ITF and that 55 percent be raised by sections and sympathizing groups in which the majority of the leadership supports the IMT. They also indicated that unless 45 percent came from what were considered as "ITF groups" there would be no contributions to the travel fund from any of the groups in which the majority of the leadership supports the IMT.

They submitted a list of quotas to be raised from "ITF sources": \$4,000 from sympathizers in the U.S.A.; \$2,000 from sympathizers in Argentina; \$500 from the SAL in New Zealand; \$500 from the SWP in Australia; \$1,000 from the LSA/LSO in Canada; and \$1,000 from the PST in Venezuela.

At first glance these may appear to be relatively modest.

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But they do not represent total contributions to be met by the comrades in these countries. According to the plan submitted by Comrades Aubin and Smith, the sections and sympathizing groups in these countries would begin by underwriting the cost of sending their IEC members or observers. The quotas would be in addition to these travel costs.

The quotas proposed in the same way to cover the 55 percent assigned to "IMT sources" were as follows: FCR, \$5,000; IMG, \$1,200; GIM, \$1,000; IMR, \$1,000; GCR, \$200; RMF, \$800; RSF, \$200; LRT, \$500; LCR(Lux), \$100; Holland, \$200; LCR-ETA(VI), \$500; LC(Australia), \$100.

As in the quotas set for the LTF, these amounts are over and above travel costs to be met by these organizations in sending their own IEC members or observers.

Thus, because they ignore the expenses of 80 percent of the IEC members the quotas do not indicate the total costs to be met by the sections and sympathizing organizations. These have to be taken into consideration if we are to "equalize travel costs." Preliminary to that comes the key question of the location of the IEC meeting.

Since it will be held in Europe, this automatically means relatively low travel costs for most of the European sections and sympathizing groups, which are amongst the largest and richest organizations in the international. Just as automatically, it means relatively high costs for everyone else. To equalize total travel costs thus requires -- as it has in the past -- that sections, sympathizing groups, and friends in Europe and the United States raise sufficient funds to cover travel subsidies for IEC members and observers unable to meet costs through their own organizations.

These interrelated items are left out of consideration in the proposals made by Comrades Aubin and Smith. As a consequence, if adopted, their proposals would mean an extraordinarily heavy burden for those having high travel costs because of their distance from the location of the IEC meeting. For those who live close to the meeting place, their proposals would mean escaping a fair contribution.

For example, the New Zealand comrades would have to begin by spending \$25 per member to send even one of their two IEC members to participate in the meeting. The French comrades, on the other hand would have to raise only 45 cents per member to send all 13 of their IEC and ICC members!

On the basis of the quotas proposed by Comrades Aubin and Smith, the New Zealand comrades would be asked to contribute an additional \$500 after having assumed the cost of sending a representative. This would bring their assessment up to more than \$35 per capita.

The load for the French comrades, even with the proposed additional contribution of \$5,000 would come to less than \$2.50 per capita.

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The figures for the SWL and the CL in Australia work out to something roughly equivalent to those just cited for New Zealand.

In Canada, the comrades of the LSA/ISO would be contributing roughly \$15 per member to send their one ICC and three IEC members to the meeting. Yet Comrades Aubin and Smith proposed assigning them an additional \$1,000.

Belgium (a section roughly comparable in size to the LSA/ISO) will have travel and living costs of approximately \$350 for one ICC and four IEC members. That comes to about \$1.40 per capita, or one tenth of what would be demanded of the LSA/ISO. Yet the Belgian comrades would be asked for only \$500 as an additional contribution.

Even if one were to assume that the standard of living in Canada is twice that of Belgium (which, of course, is not at all the case), it is clear that the comrades in the two countries have not been placed on an equal basis. To achieve that, the IEC members from the LSA/ISO should obviously receive help from the international.

The quota suggested for the PST in Argentina is also out of line under the present circumstances. The PST is the largest party in the Fourth International numerically; but to send even four of their seven IEC members would amount to about \$1.60 per capita -- roughly the same as for the Belgian comrades. Yet the standard of living in semicolonial Argentina is about half that of imperialist Europe. Furthermore in view of the importance of the Argentine situation and the fact that we have unanimously agreed to make it one of the central questions on the IEC agenda, the Argentine comrades -- even if they were financially better off than the European comrades -- should be encouraged to send more of their IEC members to participate.

In actuality, in view of the repeated terrorist raids on the headquarters of the PST and the arrests, wounding, and murder of our comrades in Argentina, the United Secretariat should be considering ways to help them financially to meet the challenges they face.

As for Venezuela the quota of \$1,000 is a puzzler. Is it possible that it reflects the propaganda about the flood of money going to oil-exporting countries? Far from being able to make an additional contribution of \$1,000, the Venezuelan comrades will, in all probability, need a subsidy to send even one person.

As for the United States, it is within reason to propose that sympathizers be asked to contribute about \$10,000 in all -- that is, a \$4,000 quota in addition to the travel and living costs for the SWP's observers. It is significantly more per capita than is asked of comrades in any other country, if we leave aside the proposals made for Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and Venezuela. (For example, it is three and a half times the amount suggested for members of the FCR.) But sympathizers in the United States have always borne a significantly greater share of such costs than sympathizers elsewhere even taking into

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account the high standard of living prevailing in the country as a whole.

The members of the subcommittee reached an informal agreement that we would think over the proposed quotas and consult with sections, sympathizing organizations, and IEC members before our next meeting to determine the possibilities of drawing up a more realistic budget. We hope that such a budget can be worked out.

One of the worrisome aspects of the proposals brought in by Comrades Aubin and Smith is the implication that the IMT might have changed its view of the situation in the international. Their proposals assign costs on the basis of factional lineups. Still worse, the proposals would appear designed to penalize sections and sympathizing organizations in which the majority of the leadership supports the positions advanced by the ITF at the world congress.

If that is the case, then it could only be concluded that the leaders of the IMT have decided not to move in the direction of sharing leadership responsibilities. And it would seem that a line had been adopted to press the differences in the international to new levels of sharpness no matter what the consequences might be.

The big danger is that a shadow would be placed on the IEC meeting. If the proposals of Comrade Aubin and Smith were adopted, the IEC meeting would in all likelihood consist by and large of members representing the sections in the European imperialist countries with a scattering of non-European members mostly from other imperialist countries. Such a meeting would be quite different in composition from the IEC elected by the world congress, and its authority would be placed in grave jeopardy.

We can see only two ways of avoiding this danger. One possibility would be to move the location of the meeting to a different continent. Such a move would automatically readjust the basic costs to a more equitable pattern. The other possibility is to work out quotas in accordance with the formula provided in the motion of the October meeting of the United Secretariat. That seems to us the more feasible alternative in view of the preparations that have already been made.

We realize that Comrades Aubin and Smith may have submitted their proposals without consulting other members of the IMT, or if they did, that the whole question was not thoroughly examined as to its implication. We hope that this is the real explanation and that the needed adjustments can be made in a spirit of mutual responsibility in this matter.

Comradely,

s/Mary-Alice

cc: Johnson

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December 9, 1974

Dear Ernest,

Mary-Alice has written you separately on the problem of working out financial quotas for the IEC meeting in accordance with the lines laid down by the United Secretariat in October.

Since the next United Secretariat meeting will be more rushed than usual, we thought some time could be gained by letting you know in advance our tentative opinions on various other questions that have been raised. We think it is particularly important to go over the preparations for the IEC meeting to ascertain whether possible stumbling blocks can be removed and the possibilities increased of assuring an outcome that all the comrades will regard as a step forward.

In addition to the problem of equitable financing discussed by Mary-Alice, two other questions need attention, in our opinion. The first is the composition of the new United Secretariat to be elected by the IEC. As we understand it, the IMT is considering proposing that the United Secretariat be enlarged so as to leave places open for several more representatives of the Leninist Trotskyist Faction. That would be a welcome step toward ending the present impasse. We would certainly do everything possible to facilitate the establishment of more workable relations.

As against this favorable move, however, we understand that the IMT is considering asking the IEC to place restrictions on the selection of IEC members who adhere to the LTF. If this is so, it would mean that you still hold basically to the position adopted by the IMT following the world congress of denying the Leninist Trotskyist Faction the right to choose its representatives on leadership bodies.

Specifically, a decision to exclude IEC members belonging to the Argentine PST from serving on the United Secretariat, or -- what amounts to the same thing -- a decision to deny the LTF its right to place on the United Secretariat IEC members belonging to the PST would offset other steps intended to ameliorate tensions.

Of course, the same considerations hold in deciding on the composition of the Bureau. The LTF must have the right to choose its own nominees. Perhaps the question of including LTF representatives on the Bureau can now be settled without difficulty.

The worst stumbling block would be the exclusion of the PST from the United Secretariat. It has been argued that the statutes stand in the way of including leaders of the PST. But how could the statutes really be involved? The statutes say nothing about consultative IEC members.

In setting up the category of "consultative" IEC members an exceptional step was taken at the last world congress. The step was designed to meet a concrete situation. It was jointly

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agreed on because we were all concerned about maintaining the unity of the international. Some comrades could have taken the position that establishing a new category of IEC members was precluded on statutory grounds -- the statutes don't provide for it. Instead both sides regarded the situation as a political rather than a statutory problem and agreed to resolve it accordingly.

It seems to us that this was the correct approach and that it still holds good.

Since the statutes contain nothing about the rights and duties of consultative IEC members it is up to the elected leadership bodies to work these out in the best interests of the international. In this, the "Agreement on Measures to Help Maintain Unity of the Fourth International" offers adequate guidelines, it appears to us. If we jointly decide that it would help maintain unity, there should be no big problem about placing a consultative IEC member on the United Secretariat. In fact, a valid precedent can be cited -- the seating of alternate IEC members on the United Secretariat which has been our practice for several years now.

If a decision were nevertheless made to continue to exclude PST members from the United Secretariat this would appear to most comrades to constitute evidence of a decision by the IMT to deepen the divisions in the international. It would inevitably be linked in their minds with the continued public campaign waged by the IMT against the PST.

We recognize that serious differences exist over the evaluation of events since the congress. These include opposing views on the application or, better, violations of the "Agreement on Measures to Help Maintain Unity of the Fourth International." Yet our policy has been to seek a way out of the impasse that followed the congress, in which the leading bodies of the international have been unable to function as they should. Obviously the IEC meeting will not be able to eliminate the differences that have cropped up since last February, but it ought to be possible to establish conditions that would lessen the abrasiveness of those differences. That could be accomplished, we think, through a framework permitting genuine collaboration coupled with continuation of the process of political clarification.

The second question that requires consideration, in our opinion, is preparation for the next regular world congress.

In view of the fact that the delegates at the world congress voted overwhelmingly to concur with the recommendation of the United Secretariat "That the Fifth Congress After Reunification (Eleventh World Congress) be held within two years following the coming world congress," this means that it is scheduled to be held roughly one year from the time of the coming IEC meeting.

In addition, discussion on the points voted on at the last congress was closed for a maximum of one year. Point 6 of the United Secretariat recommendation reads as follows: "That the international discussion on these points be closed following the

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world congress for one year unless the IEC decided to reopen the discussion earlier."

The reason this time schedule was set, as you will recall, was to give the majority a year in which to test its line on the disputed points, but then to reopen the discussion, since the prediscussion period would require at least a year as experience had demonstrated.

Thus, to carry out the provisions laid down by the congress, the prediscussion period for a congress in early 1976 should be opened by the IEC at its coming meeting.

We would propose that one of the points on the agenda for the next congress be the organizational norms of the Fourth International, a discussion that will open on the leadership level at the coming IEC meeting.

We will be able to discuss these questions in detail when we arrive for the next United Secretariat meeting, but it appeared to us that it would facilitate things to let you know our preliminary thinking.

Comradely,

Joe

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November 29, 1974

Dear Ernest,

Just in case no one has as yet happened to send you a copy of the November 22 issue of Robertson's paper, the Workers Vanguard, I am enclosing one. It contains a "WV EXCLUSIVE" -- an English translation of a letter sent by Lambert to the "leaderships of the organizations affiliated with the Organizing Committee," which I understand the Spartacists have been circulating in Paris (I suppose to both FCR and OCI meetings) -- plus an analysis of the document evidently done by Robertson. Of the two items, Robertson's analysis is the more interesting.

The letter, which Robertson says was signed by François Forgue, indicates that the OCI leadership was caught by surprise by the favorable response they received to their request for a meeting. They were faced with the need to explain to their members without delay what had happened. They had to justify what they had done and convince those who doubted its wisdom. They had to reassure those who feared some kind of trap that nothing had been lost and that proceeding further did not involve any violation of principles. So the letter is hardly sensational.

Such an interpretation is verified in part by Robertson himself. According to him, "It is clear that not everyone in the OCI is happy at the 'tactical' turn to the SWP. At a public meeting in November 1973, Lambert was forced to admit that there were comrades in the OCI who did not think that the SWP was 'Trotskyist,' but that they were wrong."

Robertson, with his excellent contacts inside the OCI, is in position to know about internal differences on this point. He is obviously seeking to address certain elements in the OCI.

It should be added, however, that there may well be a few in the Robertson group who may not be "happy" with his reaction. They may feel that Lambert has taken a correct course. The same thought may occur to some in the Healyite camp. Dangerous thoughts of this kind can prove bothersome to the leaders of both sects. It is a safe bet that Robertson will find it difficult to maintain top position in denouncing Lambert after the London and New York Healyites get coordinated on the subject. From the viewpoint of these leaders, Lambert's move represents a new danger.

Although Robertson's attack may rapidly be superseded, he does have the historic honor of having set the themes for Healy and Mazelis (Wohlforth?). "These 'tactical steps' amount to abandoning twenty years of struggle against Pabloist liquidationism," Robertson says. Besides capitulating to Pabloist liquidationism, "The OCI now appears to be in the process of capitulating to the SWP." Or, as he puts it more graphically in a subhead: "THE OCI CAPITULATES TO JACK BARNES."

Not knowing Jack Barnes, the OCI may wonder what Robertson is talking about. Maybe Robertson had a different audience in mind when he said that, or maybe it's a simple case of projection -- if Robertson knows it, everybody knows it. It is not

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altogether bad to see attention center on this new devil, but as you can see from the article, Robertson reminded himself not to forget two other devils, so he included their photographs.

Robertson seems to be concerned primarily with making an impact on members of the OCI. Thus he says that they ought to be concerned because "this meeting and letter" opens the door "to the possibility of an international OCI-SWP-PST bloc." Such an "abomination" would "presage a still further shift to the right for the OCI, toward main-stream social-democratic reformism..." Robertson assumes that the conclusion to be drawn from this is obvious. The concerned members of the OCI ought to join the Spartacist League. But logically it could also be concluded that they ought to join the Front Communiste Révolutionnaire so as to avoid that "further shift to the right."

Robertson is not going to say any such thing, of course. Nevertheless, he appears to consider that it costs him nothing and might gain him a bit of goodwill to alert the FCR to a possibility the FCR might not have thought of; that is, that at the bottom of it all is a bit of skulduggery cooked up by the SWP against the FCR; "The SWP, for its part, is interested in putting pressure on its factional opponents of the USec European majority by pointing out that it has other options open. Hansen must have enjoyed the spectacle of Rousset (who detests the SWP), chaperoning his tryst with Lambert. And if the maneuver makes Mandel squirm a little, so much the better."

The point about "other options" is an unconscious tip-off. Robertson is speculating that if the SWP is prepared to accept "other options," this can include moving away from "main-stream social-democratic reformism" toward the left (viewing "right" and "left" as the unfortunately cock-eyed Robertson sees them). In other words, in this scenario the real movement is not the OCI turning toward the United Secretariat, but the SWP turning toward the positions held by the OCI. However, the OCI's positions -- if they are not now in process of being changed -- coincide with some of the key positions held by the Spartacist League. Consequently, while the possibility appears remote, it must not be excluded -- Robertson speculates -- that the "other options" could include the Spartacist League!

And would the Spartacist League be responsive? Note the reasons Robertson gives for the OCI's move (which he now evaluates as an initiative of the OCI): "The OCI's turn to the SWP and the USec is basically a maneuver caused by the virtually total disintegration of the Organizing Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International..." Similar isolation is also keenly felt by the Spartacist League. If the OCI gains some kind of acknowledgment that it is part of the Trotskyist "family," the temptation will grow in the Spartacist League to consider following in the OCI's footsteps toward the United Secretariat.

Robertson's analysis, of course, represents merely a crude factional response to Lambert's move and the decision of the United Secretariat to give it a fair test. Robertson clearly considered the development to be a defeat for the Spartacist League -- whose isolation will now be intensified unless Lambert's bid and the

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response to it can be blown up somehow.

Because of its subjective bias, Robertson's analysis is not worth much except as an indicator of the buzzing and hopping that will go on in these circles internationally if it turns out that the OCI is not engaging in a petty maneuver and if the United Secretariat handles the OCI's approach in the right way.

I hope you enjoy the "exclusive" if you have not already read it. Also I hope that in a few weeks we can take a couple of hours to discuss the various possibilities in this situation along with some other items that require careful thought.

With best regards,
s/Joe

Enc.

SWP-OCI DISCUSSIONS: WV Exclusive
November 22, 1974, Workers Vanguard

The letter which we reproduce below will no doubt be of great interest both to members of the French OCI (Organisation Communiste Internationaliste) and to members of the "United" Secretariat, in particular of the Front Communiste Révolutionnaire (FCR) in France and the American SWP. Written by the member of the OCI Political Bureau chiefly responsible for international work to member groups of the OCI-led "Organizing Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International" (OCRFI), the letter boasts of the "correctness" of their "tactical steps... to intervene in the crisis of the USec." These "tactical steps" amount to abandoning twenty years of struggle against Pabloist liquidationism.

Domestically the OCI's capitulation has found expression in its position in the 1974 French presidential elections of support to the candidate of the class-collaborationist, popular-front Union of the Left. At the time, we characterized the OCI's electoral line with a quote from Trotsky, "Not just a stupidity, but a crime" (Spartacist, édition française no. 6, 5 May 1974). Now it appears that the crime has borne fruit.

In letters referred to in the text below, the International Bureau of the OCRFI wrote to the United Secretariat requesting observer status at the USec's "Tenth World Congress." In the letter of 10 October 1973 the OCRFI not only proposed exchanging discussion documents but also, in a passage whose exact application is unclear, to "apply democratic centralism":

"It goes without saying that, respecting the principles of the Transitional Program of the Fourth International and workers democracy, on the basis of a broad and full international discussion which alone can create the terrain for defining clear political positions and for accomplishing practical tasks in the rebuilt Fourth International, we are prepared to apply democratic centralism." -- Correspondance Internationale, No. 9, December 1973

In the earlier (May 1973) letter the OCRFI clearly, if not explicitly, renounced the OCI's previous position that, in the words of James P. Cannon, "The essence of Pabloist revisionism is the overthrow of that part of Trotskyism which is today its most vital part....Pabloism is the substitution of a cult and a revelation for a party and a program."

After his initial hesitation in fighting Pablo, Cannon spoke in 1953 of being "at war with this new revisionism," and said that no one in the Party "contemplates any later relations in the same party with the strikebreakers of the Pablo-Cochran gang" (Speeches to the Party). Now, however, the OCRFI letter to the USec takes a different view on the destruction of the Fourth International wrought by Pablo in the 1950-53 period:

"The Fourth International was pushed into a dead end by Pabloism....This bears witness to the need to examine anew the entire field of the international workers movement, to take into

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account changes which have come up, to correctly evaluate the new groupings and, in this framework, to proceed to examine the differences which arose in the Fourth International in 1950-53 and which have grown considerably since then." -- Correspondance Internationale No. 8, July 1973

Despite the pro forma reiteration that the OCRFI would of course "not rally to a method, Pabloism, which we still consider foreign to Marxism," the OCRFI in fact now espouses the "family of Trotskyism" view, that there are simply two (or more) "wings" of the Trotskyist movement which only have "differences" between them. If this is the case, then there can be no war against Pabloism, but merely fraternal criticism among slightly estranged members of the family -- the door leading toward reunification stands open, and indeed beckons.

The Spartacist tendency, on the other hand, still stands by its position, expressed at the 1966 London Conference of the International Committee, that "the family of Trotskyism does not exist," a view which we shared at the time with the OCI.

Now the OCI, by including the SWP in the "family of Trotskyism," substitutes for the programmatic struggle against Pabloite revisionism a secondary, metaphysical notion of "continuity." Thus, the "reconstruction of the Fourth International" is reduced to holding a big family reunion. This can only lead to the formation of a reformist international grouping with the trappings of Trotskyist "orthodoxy," but whose content could be a latter-day version of Kautskyism.

The OCI capitulates to Jack Barnes

The letter reprinted below also stands in sharp contrast to the OCI's former position on the SWP. The letter's author, Francois Forgue, a leading member of the OCI's PB, not so long ago attacked the SWP, and Barnes in particular, correctly pointing out that for the SWP, "...the place of the working class in relation to the means of production is not decisive....to this extent the working class...is of course no longer the class which leads the socialist revolution in the United States.

"Here we are in the midst of full-blown idealism and this boundless revisionism has broken any link with Marxism....Barnes became an 'authority' in the SWP only when it gave in to Pabloism in 1963: this unbridled revisionism is the product of that capitulation." -- Correspondance Internationale No. 1, May 1971

And in his In Defense of Trotskyism, the OCI's "official" account of Pabloism, Stéphane Just states: "It was the Cuban revolution which revealed that the SWP leadership had given up building a revolutionary party in the United States and that henceforth it fixed its goal as winning the leaders of petty-bourgeois movements to the program of the socialist revolution."

But now the OCI characterizes the SWP, which had "broken any link with Marxism" and "given up building a revolutionary party in the United States" as "Trotskyist"!!

It is clear that not everyone in the OCI is happy at the

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"tactical" turn to the SWP. At a public meeting in November 1973, Lambert was forced to admit that there were comrades in the OCI who did not think that the SWP was "Trotskyist," but that they were wrong.

And in the summer of 1973, a leading member of the OCI stated that it was obvious that the situation in the SWP was unstable, that it could not last for a protracted period of time, and that if there were not a major faction fight in the SWP within six months or a year, the SWP would become what the Spartacist League said it already was, namely a reformist organization. But the year -- and more -- has passed, comrades of the OCI, and where are the changes in the SWP? Not only are there no signs of a major faction fight, but the SWP bureaucratically expelled the only opposition which during that time had even attempted in an empirical, peice-meal fashion to make left criticisms of it. The SWP's career as a revolutionary force has long since been over.

The OCI's turn to the SWP and the USec is basically a maneuver caused by the virtually total disintegration of its Organizing Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International: the Varga group (together with the Spanish and Moroccan groups) left in late 1972 when they were on the verge of being expelled, Lora's Bolivian POR appears to now have only tenuous organizational ties with the OCI, and there are serious differences with the other Latin American groups in the OCRFI.

The SWP, for its part, is interested in putting pressure on its factional opponents of the USec European majority by pointing out that it has other options open. Hansen must have enjoyed the spectacle of Rousset (who detests the SWP), chaperoning his tryst with Lambert. And if the maneuver makes Mandel squirm a little, so much the better.

But this meeting and letter should be a cause of great concern to the OCI membership, as they open the door to the possibility of an international OCI-SWP-FST bloc. Such an abomination would presage a still further shift to the right for the OCI, toward mainstream social-democratic reformism, in a bloc which would make the London Bureau of the 1930's seem like a nest of flaming ultra-lefts.

Both the SWP and the OCI originally played a leading role in the struggle against Pabloist revisionism, whatever their weaknesses. The SWP capitulated to Pablo's revision of Trotskyism in the 1963 reunification which produced the United Secretariat. Healy exposed himself as a political bandit in the mid-1960's. The OCI now appears to be in the process of capitulating to the SWP. It is therefore fitting to conclude by quoting Favre-Bleibtreu's 1951 letter to another one-time opponent of Pablo who had capitulated, Ernest Mandel: "Excuse us for not following you in this path, since for us the International is not built by maneuvering, and especially not by your ridiculous maneuvers."

Letter from OCI Leadership to International Affiliates
of the Organizing Committee to Reconstruct
the Fourth International

[translation by Workers Vanguard]

Paris, 20 October 1974

Dear Comrades,

Enclosed we are sending you the minutes of the meeting which took place on October 15 in Paris between a delegation of the United Secretariat led by the SWP, including also two representatives of the FCR (France), and an OCI delegation.

First, the circumstances and composition of this meeting:

It was held at the request of the SWP leadership, of which some representatives were in Europe for a meeting of the United Secretariat or the Executive Committee. The SWP leadership presented it as a response to the fact that on several occasions (in particular during comrade P. Broué's trips) the OCI made it known that it was agreeable to an exchange of views between the leaderships of the two organizations. Explicitly, they defined it as a reply to our International Bureau's letters of May and July 1973, as the minutes note. During a preliminary meeting, the SWP representatives indicated to us that the United Secretariat had agreed to a first informational discussion on the condition that the discussion would not be strictly bilateral, but that the USec would be represented as such, specifically by representatives of its French section, the FCR.

Hence a delegation which was in fact a delegation of the "International Leninist-Trotskyist Faction" under the "supervision" of two leading members of the FCR. The meeting consisted of: Hansen, Barnes, M.A. Waters (SWP); Ridell (ISA-Canada); Pierre Rousset and Olivier (FCR). The OCI was represented by Comrades Lambert, Just, Raoul, François and Vespa. Rousset's presence is significant, as he belongs to the most extreme tendency in the USec majority and he is the one the SWP polemicized with harshly over Vietnam.

Only the initials are contained in the minutes, which are distributed more widely than this letter, addressed only to the leaderships of the organizations affiliated with the Organizing Committee.

The course of the meeting is quite clear from reading the minutes, which saves us superfluous commentary.

We merely want to add here some conclusions and make a proposal.

The conclusions which follow from this meeting are:

1) By its very existence the meeting is a verification of the correct character of the tactical steps taken by the International Bureau to intervene in the crisis of the USec. More basically, it is a confirmation of the correctness of the "open

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conference" method.

2) It is another expression of the intolerable degree differences within the USec have reached.

It is, so to speak, the "objective" development of the crisis which today leads the organizations affiliated to the United Secretariat to agree to a meeting (whose limits must be recognized) in which their fundamental disagreements are expressed.

3) As you will see, one of the characteristics of this meeting is that it took place based on our interlocutors' acceptance of the framework defined by the proposals made in our letters.

We were the only ones to speak in the name of an international mandate: we were intervening in the framework of the mandate established by the decisions of the International Bureau [of the OCRFI] in favor of international discussion. Facing us were delegations from different organizations without any common mandate except to listen to us.

4) Hansen's remarks on the need to preserve an area of political exchanges and common actions, independently of decisions with regard to a substantive discussion, correspond to the fact that:

--on the one hand, by mentioning the possibility of "common actions" in particular with the FCR in France, independent of the political differences and prior to the discussion of these differences, the SWP, as it stated, intends to preserve a link with the USec;

--on the other hand, by insisting on an organization-to-organization exchange of internal bulletins, on activities such as those concerning [...], the SWP reserves for itself the right to pursue discussions whatever the decisions of the USec majority may be.

5) There can be no question of indulging in risky speculations on possible outcomes of this meeting. What is sure is that the dislocation process within the USec can be slowed but it cannot be stopped. What is sure is that maneuvers will multiply on all sides to stop the principled discussion.

For example, in Argentina, where it appears that Moreno is being obliged to take up this discussion, he is trying to short-circuit it by proposing to Política Obrera a 1963-style unification without discussion. But in the conditions which exist today, for us, for the comrades of PO, this maneuver is a springboard from which to act even more forcefully to impose a discussion of principles on the national and international scale.

Thus this event reinforces the importance of our own political intervention: the European Conference, the preparation for a Latin-American Conference become even more important.

It is within this framework that we make the following pro-

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posal:

The International Bureau as such must now invite our interlocutor at this meeting, the SWP (and through it the organizations of the USec and the USec itself, if it wishes), to attend our European Conference (not the meeting of the International Bureau, of course) as observers.

Such an initiative will stress that our desire to carry out -- without prior organizational measures and in whatever form may be arrived at -- the discussion that intersects the questions of principle lying at the origin of the crisis of the Fourth International corresponds not to a maneuver, but to a specific orientation toward rebuilding the Fourth International.

The USec refused to involve us in the discussion preparatory to the Tenth World Congress; for our part we are not afraid to involve it in our discussions.

We request that you take a position on this proposal so that we can extend an invitation quite soon and make it an element of the political struggle.

Since the French post office is currently on strike, do not hesitate to give us a short message by telephone.

Fraternal greetings,
François

November 27, 1974

Japan

Dear Comrade Sakai,

Thank you for the copy of your Political Bureau statement concerning the developments involving the Internationalist Tendency. We have sent it to our National Committee.

If you plan to publish a special bulletin on the question of the IT split, I would suggest that in addition to the items you mentioned in your letter that you consider including three of the key items from the SWP IIB No. 6:

"Resignation from the IT by Berta Langston and Bob Langston," pp. 24-32.

"First National Conference of the Internationalist Tendency," by Alec, pp. 24-39.

"A Reply to Comrade Massey from Los Angeles," pp. 93-96.

I realize that this involves additional translating. But it is important, I believe, to read what prominent members of the IT themselves have said about their policies and methods of functioning. That will enable comrades to best judge whether the conclusions drawn by the SWP Political Committee are justified.

I would like to add a few comments concerning the statement of the JRCL Political Bureau, which raises objections to the procedure followed by the SWP in this case. To answer these objections, I think it is useful to deal with three distinct questions that are raised, implicitly or explicitly, by your statement: 1. Did the SWP follow correct procedure, according to its constitution, in not holding a trial? 2. Even if the SWP's procedure was correct, was it still advisable in this case to hold a trial? 3. Did the absence of a trial violate international norms of democratic centralism?

1. Did the SWP follow correct procedure? A trial is not the only constitutionally designated form for dealing with infractions of the SWP constitution or its organizational principles. The SWP constitution also provides for a Control Commission. It is composed of four rank-and-file members elected by the national convention and one National Committee member designated by the National Committee. According to the SWP constitution, the authority of the Control Commission "shall supersede any local investigation or trial."

As you can see, the procedure followed in relation to the IT was correct: it conformed to the SWP constitution.

It is also worth noting that neither a trial body nor a Control Commission has the power to take any action. These bodies carry out an investigation to determine the facts and then report their findings to the appropriate party unit for action. A trial held on a branch level, for example, would report its findings back to the branch for action. In the case of a Control

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Commission investigation, our constitution states that the Control Commission "shall present its findings to the Political Committee for action."

The procedure followed in this regard also conforms to the SWP constitution.

2. Was it advisable to hold a trial in this case? Trial proceedings are designed to deal with individual violations of discipline in cases where the charges are denied. The accused have the right to confront their accusers, and can attempt to show that the allegations are untrue or unsubstantiated. The purpose of a trial is to establish the facts, that is, to determine if a violation of discipline has occurred. Then, if such a violation has been established at a trial, it is up to the appropriate party unit to decide whether disciplinary action is warranted, and, if so, to decide upon such action.

We faced a different situation in relation to the IT. The Control Commission was called in after the May 11 actions of the IT revealed a nationally coordinated pattern of violations of discipline. There was no dispute over what had happened. In fact, when Bill Massey spoke before the SWP National Committee plenum in June, he said as much: "...since there is no facts in dispute or it hasn't been brought out, since we've taken the position that we've done what you have charged that we have done, we admit that and take responsibility for it, we don't promise to discontinue it at all, there is no need for an investigation to establish what the facts are." (page 131, Internal Information Bulletin, No. 6 in 1974).

Clearly what was involved was more than a matter of an individual case or cases of infraction of discipline. What was called for was not a trial, but a Control Commission investigation to try to find out what was involved.

The Control Commission examined a considerable amount of evidence. In the course of this investigation, the Control Commission examined secret documents of the IT, which showed that the IT was really a rival party, and not a legitimate tendency or faction abiding by the SWP's organizational principles. The Control Commission decided that the secret IT material "was sufficient by itself to enable us to arrive at the conclusions and recommendations that appear below" (my emphasis).

A trial might have been advisable if there had been a question as to the facts upon which these conclusions were based -- i.e. if there had been a question as to the authenticity of the secret IT documents. But this was never in question.

Given that the documents were genuine, all that was left to do was to evaluate them; that is, did the documents show the IT to be a tendency or faction compatible with the organizational principles of the SWP, or did they show it to be an opponent formation doing entry work inside the SWP?

The proper body to decide such a question is the Political Committee or National Committee.

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The IT documents described the policies and methods of functioning of the IT. The IT has argued that it had the right to operate in the manner it did. This was not a denial of facts, but a challenge to the organizational principles of the SWP.

We would not argue with the IT over whether the organizational principles of the SWP are valid; and we certainly would not convene a trial as the place to conduct such an argument. A trial cannot rule on the validity of the SWP's organizational principles. These are established by convention vote, and can be changed only by convention vote. If someone wished to argue, for example, that the SWP's rules governing party-youth relations should be changed, then they must do so at a convention and the preceding discussion period. In the meantime, however, they must abide by these rules.

I believe that the above considerations answer the JRCL Political Bureau statement that the SWP Political Committee "did not give the IT and its members any opportunity to defend itself and themselves from the charges in the 'Report of the Control Commission of the Socialist Workers Party' at any CC and PC meetings before the July 4 decision."

Furthermore, the Control Commission questioned Massey and Barzman about the structure and nature of the IT. But as soon as Massey and Barzman were asked questions in this regard, including such a simple one as whether the IT had a steering committee, they refused to answer! (see page 129.) Their refusal to answer was in itself a violation of the SWP constitution, which states that "it shall be obligatory on every member of the Party to furnish the Control Commission or its authorized representatives with any information they may require."

The reason why Massey and Barzman refused to collaborate with the Control Commission is clear: they knew that they had a lot to hide.

3. Did the absence of a trial violate international norms of democratic centralism? Of course you are aware that reactionary legislation prohibits the SWP from belonging to the Fourth International, and therefore the statutes of the International have no binding powers on the SWP. But even so, the SWP's procedure was not in contradiction with the statutes or norms of the International. According to article 31 of the statutes, the national sections "determine their own statutes," and I have already explained how the procedure followed was in strict accordance with the constitution of the SWP.

If any question of procedure is to be raised at all, it should not be around this particular case, but around the statutes of the SWP. Are the program, constitution, and organizational principles of the SWP "in general conformity with the program and statutes of the Fourth International" as is stipulated in article 31?

The answer, of course, is "yes." The SWP constitution and organizational principles have existed for a long time. Up to the present instance they have never been challenged by anyone in the international.

We would welcome a discussion on the SWP's organizational principles. They are the principles of a Leninist combat party. They also represent the experience of many years in the struggle to build the kind of party required to lead the American socialist revolution to success. The "American Theses" of 1946 and our political resolutions of 1969 and 1971 outline our concept of the nature of the American revolution, and these documents should be read in conjunction with our 1965 resolution on organizational principles.

Perhaps the international will engage in a discussion on the American question as well as on democratic centralism. Clearly, however, such a discussion involves much broader questions than the procedure followed in the specific case of the IT.

But aside from such a discussion, there are two points that ought to be noted about this particular case.

First, with regard to article 29 and article 43 of the statutes, which are cited in the statement of the JRCL Political Bureau. The purpose of these articles is to guarantee the accused the right to defend themselves in cases where the facts are in dispute. However, as I have already explained, that was not involved in this case. Consequently neither of these articles is appropriate to the particular case of the IT.

Second, and most important, this was not strictly speaking a disciplinary action. Article 29 and article 43 deal with disciplinary actions. Their purpose is to guard the rights of individual members charged with specific violations of discipline. But what was really involved in this case was a political evaluation, not a disciplinary procedure.

We were faced with an extraordinary situation: the discovery of a completely autonomous rival party-like organization doing entry work inside the SWP along with autonomous external work. The proper way to deal with this situation was through a political action by the PC, not a trial.

Was the lack of a trial in this instance unprecedented? Not in the history of the SWP, nor in the history of the international. Sections are occasionally confronted with situations in which a group decides to split, but does not wish to take the formal initiative. So it provokes its own expulsion. The case of the IT was unusual only because of the form it took. Instead of provoking an expulsion through committing a specific act of indiscipline (although they did commit many such acts), they engaged in a tactical variety of entryism sui generis. When this was discovered, the SWP simply took the appropriate political response.

Our attitude can be summed up as follows: when a group is formed that considers the SWP "degenerate," when that group sets itself up as a rival organization with an internal discipline higher than that of the SWP, when that group practices entryism sui generis in our party (with the perspective of splitting openly at a moment of its own choosing), the whole objective being to do as much damage as possible to the SWP, then they can expect a political response such as previous similar groups have

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received.

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As to our evaluation of the nature of the IT. I believe that an objective study of the IT documents will lead inescapably to the following conclusions:

1. The IT regarded the SWP as degenerate and beyond reform. They said that the cadre of the SWP was "politically incapable of either understanding or putting into practice a revolutionary line."

2. The IT regarded itself as the "nucleus of the future section of the Fourth International in the United States."

3. The primary orientation of the IT was to build its own organization, This was to be done through a policy combining entry work inside the SWP with independent IT work outside the SWP.

4. The IT set up an organizational structure designed to achieve these tasks -- not the structure of a legitimate tendency or faction.

5. The IT rejected the organizational principles of the SWP. The policy of the IT was to violate the discipline of the SWP whenever it considered it to be necessary to advance its own aims. This policy was camouflaged because of the need to maintain entryism sui generis. In conjunction with this, the IT operated under a "security policy" with regard to the SWP.

6. The IT had the perspective of openly declaring a split from the SWP in the not distant future. Strong sentiment existed within the IT to speed up the split. However, at the May 1974 convention of the IT it was decided to persevere in the entry tactic a while longer. There were two reasons: (a) to facilitate carrying out a factional raid on the YSA; (b) to facilitate arguing inside the IMT for adoption of the IT's evaluation of the SWP. (The RMG of Canada also pledged its support to this "struggle within the IMT to break it of illusions concerning the SWP.")

Further evidence of the correctness of the SWP Political Committee's evaluation is shown by the course of the IT since July 4. The IT continues to reject the organizational principles of the SWP and has been continuing its work with groups that are political opponents of the SWP. Some of its earlier work with these opponents is described in the Control Commission report.

* * *

Was the action taken by the SWP Political Committee politically justified and politically correct? In my opinion this has to be considered from two interrelated points of view: national and international.

From the point of view of constructing a revolutionary Marxist party in any country, no Leninist organization can permit a minority to arrogate to itself the prerogatives the IT sought

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to seize.

What about the SWP Political Committee action from the perspective of the best interests of building the Fourth International today? Did our action harm the unity of the international movement? I don't think so. The dangers of a split or deepening of the divisions stem not from our actions, but from the split course charted by the IT, and especially from the possibility that their line and conduct will be condoned by a majority of the international leadership.

That is why we have been so insistent in warning of the dangers that flow from the IMT's methods of leadership functioning. The IMT's secret factionalism encourages the growth of cliques and unprincipled political combinations that are impelled to violate Leninist organizational norms.

* * *

The upcoming IEC will probably be discussing the organizational questions posed by the IMT's complicity with the IT split. But we do not think that the IEC meeting is a substitute for a special world congress. A world congress is the only recourse at this point, precisely because all the leadership bodies of the international have been compromised by the IMT's methods of secret factional functioning. Such a congress can call the split-minded factionalists to order and recognize the importance of maintaining Leninist organizational norms in our movement. This is the only hope of reversing the drive toward a deepening split.

It is not necessary to wait for an IEC meeting or to hear the results of an international control commission investigation before deciding whether a special world congress is needed. The importance of the internal crisis in the international justifies calling such a congress. According to the statutes the congress can be called by one third of the sections, by the IEC, or by the United Secretariat, acting for the IEC.

I fail to understand how a special world congress would "serve to deepen the danger of a split of the Fourth International," as the JRCL Political Bureau states. A world congress, after all, which is the highest body of the Fourth International, is surely not an irresponsible body. It is certainly not a less responsible place for serious discussion than less authoritative bodies. In fact, things have gone so far that it is not possible to resolve the crisis in less authoritative bodies -- especially since the IMT majority on the United Secretariat and IEC have been compromised by complicity in the IT split.

Of course you are right that a world congress could not act as a control commission. We do not propose this. We propose a political discussion on the organizational principles that guide the Fourth International. We now have a wealth of experience to provide the basis for this absolutely necessary discussion. Only if Leninist organizational norms are reestablished on the basis of such a discussion will we be able to preserve the unity of our movement and continue the political and theoretical discussion on other issues of utmost importance.

* * *

Finally, I want to take up your point 4, concerning the speedy printing of the ITB No. 6, which was available on July 4.

I must admit that I find this argument rather strange as there is nothing very extraordinary about the fact that we were able to get the bulletin out so rapidly.

Of the 146-page bulletin, only 6 pages consist of Political Committee material. The rest is the report of the Control Commission, which had been collecting material and preparing its report since June 20. Once all the documentation was at hand, the technical preparation of the bulletin was facilitated by the fact that most of it consists of photographic reproductions of documents. Such reproduction involves very little time to prepare, as I'm sure you are aware. The bulletin, in fact, was completed in two days.

Of course, this meant that work on the bulletin was begun prior to the July 4 Political Committee decision concerning the IT. There is nothing unusual or improper in this.

The decision to proceed in this way was made by the Political Committee itself. On July 2, the Political Committee met and received the report of the Control Commission. The proposed Political Committee motions and the line of the statement of the Political Committee were also discussed, and general agreement was reached. It was decided to prepare the Control Commission report and the Political Committee motions and statement for publication. Because of the importance of the matter, it was decided to postpone final decision for two days more in order to have time to consider it carefully. In the meantime it was agreed that work on the bulletin should proceed. On July 4, the PC met and made its decision. We were able to mail out the bulletins on the same day.

I hope this explains the "mystery" for you. We frankly admit that we made an effort to get the bulletins into the mail as rapidly as possible. We wanted to inform comrades of what had been decided and make the written record available in order to forestall rumors. We hardly think that is worthy of reprobation or condemnation!

* * *

Well, I hope I have covered the main points that your Political Bureau was concerned with. Actually, I started out simply to acknowledge receipt of your statement and thank you for sending us a copy right away, but as I reread it, I thought it worth drafting a longer reply to some of the points you raise.

Comradely,

s/Mary-Alice

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New York Dec. 2, 1974

Tokyo

Dear Sakai,

I have been wanting to answer your letter of Oct. 17 for a long time, but had to finish some pressing work first.

When I and several other comrades here read your comments on the "American Theses," the Cochran fight, and their relationship to the current discussion in the International, we were very glad to see others in the International seriously looking back into these questions. I think you are right that the "American question" and the disagreements in 1953 over the American Theses are very relevant to the current debate, especially in relation to the question of organizational norms in a revolutionary party.

I have enclosed a copy of a speech on the American Theses by Cannon that was printed in the October 1974 ISR. This speech makes clear that the Theses was fundamentally not a conjunctural document based on the labor upsurge following the second world war, but rather an analysis of the broad perspectives for the American revolution in the postwar period.

I think your characterization of the Theses as "American Messianism" is wrong. The position the document takes about the centrality of the American revolution to the world revolution is a materialist one.

The first two theses state the objective, materialist basis for the coming American revolution. They make clear that the perspectives for the American revolution stem not from any minimization of the importance of the revolution in the colonial world and other parts of the world, but rather from an understanding of the profound implications of the world revolution in undermining U.S. imperialism, not only from the outside, but internally. The Theses say that the revolutionary potential in the U.S. stems precisely from the fact that U.S. imperialism is based on, and rooted in, the world economy, and therefore in its "chronic dislocations" and "revolutionary powderkegs."

As Cannon explains in the speech published in the ISR, the perspectives reoutlined in the Theses were not just the idea of the SWP leaders, but were the result of discussions and collaboration with Trotsky. Cannon cites some of the places where Trotsky wrote about his view of the American revolution -- including the Letter to the American Opposition, which I sent you earlier.

[This letter was printed in the June 1, 1929, issue of The Militant, and will be reprinted in an upcoming volume of the Trotsky Writings series edited by Pathfinder Press. The relevant paragraph reads: "The work to be achieved by the American Opposition has international-historic significance, for in the last historic analysis all the problems of our planet will be decided upon American soil. There is much in favor of the idea that from the standpoint of revolutionary order, Europe and the East stand

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ahead of the United States. But a course of events is possible in which this order might be broken in favor of the proletariat of the United States. Moreover, even if you assume that America which now shakes the whole world will be shaken last of all, the danger remains that a revolutionary situation in the United States may catch the vanguard of the American proletariat unprepared, as was the case in Germany in 1923, in England in 1926, and in China in 1925 to 1927. We must not for a minute lose sight of the fact that the might of American capitalism rests more and more upon a foundation of world economy with its contradictions and crises, military and revolutionary. This means that a social crisis in the United States may arrive a good deal sooner than many think, and have a feverish development from the beginning. Hence the conclusion: It is necessary to prepare."]

In addition to the documents Cannon mentions (I am sending you one of them that you might not have seen -- Trotsky's Marxism in Our Time, in another envelope), the book The Third International After Lenin is illuminating from this point of view. One of the criticisms Trotsky made of Stalin's Draft Program for the Comintern was its ignoring of the whole question of the growing role of U.S. imperialism. The lack of analysis on this question was a reflection of Stalin's general lack of an internationalist and materialist perspective, a consequence of his theory of "socialism in one country." I have enclosed a copy of a page from The Third International After Lenin. (pages 8,9 of new Pathfinder edition) See how Trotsky points to the interrelationship of the world economic crisis, the ruthlessness of U.S. imperialism against its imperialist competitors, and the generation of internal crises in the USA.

In Trotsky's article Marxism in Our Time, he predicts that in the sphere of "an independent class movement of the proletariat" and the spread of "genuine Marxism," "America will in a few jumps catch up with Europe and outdistance it."

Certainly you wouldn't accuse Trotsky of "American Messiahism." His conclusions follow from a materialist understanding that the laws of the class struggle apply with exceptional force in the most highly developed capitalist country because the contradictions there are the deepest -- despite the surface appearance and the temporary backwardness of the American working class.

Also, I think it's important to note that in the speech in the ISR, Cannon explains how the Theses "represent a new stage, in my opinion, in the development of the concept of internationalism in America." It's internationalism -- not Messiahism -- to recognize and take on the responsibilities that face revolutionary Marxists in the United States. Don't you agree?

I also wanted to comment on the connection between what you call our perspective of "American Messiahism" and the organizational norms of the SWP. When we had the discussion of the Internationalist Tendency split in your Political Bureau, I think we were all rather surprised to learn that our organizational concepts were so different. This underscores the need for a thorough discussion of the organizational question in the International.

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I just wanted to raise a couple of ideas here, and hopefully you will respond with your thinking on them.

Perhaps when you refer to the SWP's "American Messiahism" you mean not only that we see the American revolution as key to the world revolution, but also that we say the current SWP cadres, and others trained by them, are going to be the nucleus of the leadership of that revolution. We think the SWP is the nucleus of the revolutionary party in this country, and that we have to build the party right now along the lines of the necessary revolutionary instrument.

And just as our perspectives for the American revolution originated with Trotsky, so too our organizational principles originated with the Bolsheviks. It's Lenin who explained that the revolutionary party has to be a tempered instrument of combat.

When we had the discussion on the IT split last summer, you and the other comrades objected very much to what I said about the requirement of loyalty to the party and the rights of the party as a whole to protect itself from a disloyal minority. But loyalty is necessary in a combat party.

Actually, a certain degree of loyalty is necessary to hold together any voluntary organization -- without it it would fall apart. If you don't want to build an organization, why join it? One of the distinguishing features of Leninism is consciousness of the need for the strongest loyalty in a revolutionary party. This consciousness flows from an understanding of the life-and-death nature of the struggle we are engaged in. We are building parties of people who will have to fight alongside each other, and who have to be willing to place their lives in the hands of their comrades. For such a struggle we need a party only of people who can be trusted as loyal to the party and ready to accept its discipline. We can't postpone the application of such norms "until the time comes," either. We are in that time now.

The norms of democratic centralism apply inside national sections in a different way than within the International as a whole. The reason is that the tasks of the sections and of the International are carried forward on a different level. The national sections have to make the revolution in their countries. Our enemy -- the capitalist class -- has to be defeated on the level of each nation-state.

This is why we place such importance on the building of national leaderships -- real leaders in each country who are selected and trained on the basis of concrete experience in the class struggle of their country. This is also why we think the key to building the International is international collaboration -- helping national leadership to learn to think and act for themselves, not giving orders to sections from the center, and certainly not having the center operate behind the backs of the national leaderships, as the IMT did in the case of the IT splitters.

You are right, I think, to see a continuity between the Cochran fight in 1953 and the IT split, in regard to this question of

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organizational norms (although not, I think, in regard to the content of the political debate). The problem in 1953 was that Pablo looked at the Cochran-Clark grouping from a purely factional standpoint, rather than from the standpoint of building the International. Pablo couldn't see that whatever the political positions of the Cochran grouping were at the time, loyalty to the International meant operating in an honest, collaborative manner with the majority leadership of the SWP, which represented the continuity of valuable cadres, tested and trained in the living class struggle in this country.

I have also enclosed a transcript of a discussion between Cannon and Trotsky that was recently published for the first time in IP (Oct. 7, 1974) -- maybe you have already read it. Some sections relate to this question of organizational norms. I marked a section on page 1307 where Cannon explains why he thinks it is important to neither split easily nor to take splitters back into the party easily. You might have read in Speeches to the Party where Cannon explains the same thing in regard to the Cochran fight.

In your Political Bureau discussion, you comrades seemed to think that the SWP's firmness with the IT splitters was bureaucratism or some kind of power move. It was the opposite; it was from considerations of how best to preserve the revolutionary party and its norms. We think the Leninist attitude is to place the highest value on revolutionary cadres, on the human embodiment of the revolutionary program. This means you do not enforce organizational norms in a light-minded manner. If a comrade violates the norms of the party, you allow him or her every opportunity to see and correct their mistakes. But on the other hand, when it becomes clear that a grouping has discounted loyalty to the party and is consciously out to disrupt or destroy the party, the firmest action is necessary. Otherwise the whole revolutionary fiber of the party becomes undermined, and a deadly cynicism begins to corrode comrades' attitudes toward themselves and their party.

The statement by your Political Bureau on the IT split says that when we found out the IT was acting like a rival party inside the party, we should have simply warned them to cease acting in that way, and give them another chance. But we had warned the IT numerous times before. In fact, the 1973 convention of the SWP issued an explicit warning to the IT. You should read Jack Barnes' report which is printed in SWP Internal Information Bulletin No. 7 (1974). The speech was a clear warning to the IT, but they didn't listen.

One final point related to all this. I remember one of your criticisms of the ITP Political Resolution was that at some points it discusses the question of the party and of leadership as a separate question. You said, "You cannot separate the party from the program." Of course we do not separate it from the program -- the resolution is talking only about revolutionary Marxist leadership. But we have to talk about the importance of the party, specifically, because that is the living instrument of the program; without the party, without human material, you would have a program existing only as an abstraction.

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I think you must agree that singling out the question of leadership and the party for special consideration is one of the key characteristics of Trotskyism. That's what Trotsky was talking about in the Transitional Program when he said that the crisis of humanity was reduced to a crisis of leadership.

Trotsky also wrote about this in his Criticism of the Draft Program of the Comintern, in the chapter "Strategy and Tactics in the Imperialist Epoch." I have enclosed a copy of two pages (82 and 83) where Trotsky explains how the imperialist epoch -- with its sudden political shifts and revolution to counterrevolution -- makes the leadership question all the more important. You need a party of trained, tested, skilled professional politicians that can keep its bearings and hold true to revolutionary principles in intervening amid such pressures and disorienting shifts.

Well, I think I have written a very long letter, but I have been thinking about these questions since last August and wishing we could continue the discussion. I will be interested to hear any comments you have on these things, or on Cannon's Speeches to the Party.

Comradely greetings,

s/Caroline Lund

Tokyo, September 17, 1974.

Dear Caroline,

Received your letter of September 11, and I think you will have received my letter of Sept. 15, when this letter reaches to you. We appreciate your efforts for the South Korean political prisoners, and I will turn the circular letter of your national office to Muraki. I also received the text of our L.A. position paper; thanks to you or Mary-Alice,

Last week, our International Commission had its meeting, and we discussed about the present internal situation of the International. The IC meeting decided to make an extensive study about your SWP and especially about its history. Today our PB had its meeting, and it decided that it should present a special report on your July-4 PC/SWP decision. Our internal bulletin will appear with the materials of the July-4 PC/SWP decision before the coming CC meeting, so the CC meeting will take a position on the question. We will issue another statement supplemental to the former PB/JRCL statement on the matter, and now I am drafting the text for approval of the PB or of Kihara and Kurosawa; Kurosawa was nominated as a candidate member of IEC by the CC/JRCL at its May meeting.

I read the Cochran faction document attached to the "Speeches to the Party", and, after that, I read other documents of the Cochran faction in the issues of "Education For Socialists"/ Toward a History of the Fourth International. Now I have just started to read Cannon's speeches and letters chronologically. Now I feel much more strongly that it is very important to study the history of the SWP in order to understand the present SWP and its LTF majority. I am not quite sure, but it seems to me that there is some continuity through the Cannon-Cochran faction fight, the Robertson case and the IT case of the present day. In any case I will make a study on your history, and I hope to become one of the experts of your party history in the International.

Fraternally yours,
s/Sakai

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[Exerpt from October 17 letter to Caroline Lund from Sakai:]

When we read the "These of American Revolution" now, the 1946 "Theses" explains many things about the present LTF leadership of the SWP. The position of the document is a sort of "American Mesianism" and, at the same time, an economism. If we read the organizational resolution of SWP 1965 convention, the 1946 "Theses" are even now one of the basic programmatic documents for the SWP. Now, I think, the basic political concept of the "American Theses" is very wrong. We can discare about the conjunctual aspects of the document, but its basic understanding about the inter-relation between the US proletarian revolution and the international revolution outside the USA is wrong, which, I think, has been proved by the actual development of the international situation as a whole from 1950s to 1970s, especially

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from the victory of the Chinese revolution in 1949 to the victorious resistance of Vietnamese revolution. Now I feel that our basic political difference with the LTF SWP leadership exists in the understanding of the interrelation between the US proletarian revolution and other international revolution as a whole.

The next meeting of our international commission will have a discussion on the "These on American Revolution" and the "These on the World Role of American Imperialism" adopted at the founding conference of the Fourth International.

In this week, I read "Europe and America" which you sent me and I wrote an article on the pamphlet for a student-paper. I was very much impressed by the two speeches of L.T., and I think that his programatic formulation about the "European-Asiatic federation of peoples", at the last two pages of the pamphlet, is even now absolutely correct in its essence. If possible, please send me a copy of L.T.'s letter of March 1929 to the American Opposition; "Tasks of the American Opposition" in Writings of Leon Trotsky (1929) (see the note 5 of page 305, Leon Trotsky on Britain).

As I said at you in the train to Sendai, I had a hope to collect all works of L.T. on US imperialism, and now I have decided my mind that I would really make the survey and write an article under the title of "L.T. on US imperialism". If possible, I want to write an introduction to the Japanese edition of L.T.'s "Europe and America".