May 8, 1974

To PC Members

Dear Comrades,

The attached letters from Mary-Alice to Ernest and from Ernest to Joe summarize the discussion that took place at the time of the last United Secretariat meeting (April 20).

Comradely,

Mary-Alice

Mary-Alice

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Brussels
April 22, 1974

Dear Ernest,

When you return from your speaking engagements in Britain it would be best if you wrote Joe a response to his letter of April 15 regarding the publication of documents from the world congress.

I have given him a preliminary report so that he and other comrades in the LTF leadership can be considering your proposals. However, I think recent experience has convinced us all that it is not wise to rely on comrades' recollections of what happened or what was said in meetings. It's best to have proposals in writing. For that reason I think you should drop Joe a letter summarizing our discussion of April 21.

Secondly, we hope that the comrades of the IMT will not feel compelled to rush into print with the world congress documents before there is time for us to consider your latest proposals and perhaps make alternative suggestions. We recognize the desirability of publishing the documents as rapidly as possible and will do whatever we can to facilitate this. However, it will certainly be more conducive to relaxing tensions within the international if we can arrive at a common judgment on what documents should be published and in what edited form. I would not exclude the possibility of reaching agreement, and it is certainly worth taking a couple of weeks to try and work it out. The importance of printing Quatrième on May 15 as opposed to June 1, for example, hardly outweighs the importance of trying to resolve so important a question.

At any rate, I will not be back in New York until May 5, so your letter to Joe will not slow things up. It will probably reach New York before I do.

One final point. In addition to the section of the resolution on Argentina dealing with the PST (point 36) there is at least one other section that contains similar accusations and characterizations of the PST. That is point 22 (page 20 of the edited French draft). I would assume from the general tenor of our discussion on Sunday that the comrades of the IEC majority would also agree to delete those references to the PST from the public document. Perhaps in the letter to Joe you could indicate how you would propose to edit point 22 as well.

Comradely,

s/Mary-Alice

cc: Joe

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April 30, 1974

Dear Joe,

This is to confirm the oral acknowledgment of, and answer to, your letters of April 15 and 16, given to Mary-Alice on April 21. As I had to leave that same evening on a previously planned lecture tour in Britain, I was unable to write this confirmation before my return to Brussels, and asked Mary-Alice to inform you immediately about the contents of my reply.

Contrary to what you assume in your April 15 letter, we are ready to drop from the publicly circulated version of the resolution on Argentina adopted by the Xth World Congress all criticisms made of the P.S.T. We propose to put just suspension marks in point 22, and to replace point 36 with the following sentence: "Point 36 of this resolution concerning the orientation of the PST is published in an Internal Bulletin".

Likewise we are ready to change the passage of the resolution which indicates the reasons why the PRT (Combatiente) was recognized as official section of the FI at the IXth World Congress. We propose the following sentence which seems in strict conformity with the record: "The IXth World Congress recognized the PRT (Combatiente) as representing the continuity of the Argentine section of the FI, because it spoke in the name of a national congress convened by the majority of the previously united section's Central Committee, whereas a minority of that Central Committee, which constituted the "La Verdad" group, refused to recognize the authority of that congress". Is this formula acceptable to you?

However, precisely in the light of our dropping all public criticism of the PST -- whose policies we strongly disagree with, which we consider on several key issues in open breach with leninist principles, and which were condemned by the majority vote of the Xth World Congress -- two conclusions become obvious:

1.-The publication, either of your revised version of the article "Argentina, Bolivia, a Balance-Sheet", or of the final two paragraphs of the minority's counter-report on armed struggle, is totally inacceptable to us (With regard to the first paragraph, a few words' change, as indicated to Mary-Alice, could make publication possible). Both these texts contain sharp attacks on our Bolivian section, on our British section, on our Spanish comrades, attacks which, as you so aptly describe, are fallacious, being based on exaggerations, malicious half-truths and outright misrepresentation. These arguments, characteristic of the most vulgar level of deadend factionalism, were answered in various documents during the discussion preparatory to the world congress and again at the congress itself in such a definitive way, that one would think all responsible leaders of the International would join in blocking any new attempt to revive them.

We would consider any publication of such attacks for public circulation as a public attack on the majority tendency of the F.I. and a public attack upon the decisions of the world congress itself. This would leave us no choice but to print also in public the

various answers such attacks have already received in the internal bulletins of the pre-world-congress discussion, as well as additional replies they make necessary.

It strikes us as really inadmissible that you make such a strong case against publishing criticism of the PST adopted by the World Congress, and then calmly go on requesting the right to publish public criticism of a whole series of organizations of the FI supporting the majority. Such double standards are certainly not favorable to a decrease of tensions in the International.

2.-The resolution on Argentina was adopted by the world congress. The criticism on Moreno's past and present policies were not something subrepticiously introduced into that resolution at the last minute, but were part of the original draft, at least in its general line. They had been widely discussed in the world movement. It is therefore impermissible to suppress them from the record. If we can agree that they should not be publicly circulated -- and this only on the basis of a general rule that all polemics against sections and sympathizing organizations should not be made part of the public record of the Xth World Congress -- they have however to be included in the internal minutes of the 10th World Congress.

We note with surprise that, simultaneously with requesting the suppression of these passages from the publicly circulating version of the resolution on Argentina, you rushed ahead publishing the world congress minutes, without including these non-published parts of the resolution on Argentina which you want us to suppress for the general public. Thus you put the leadership of the FI before the dilemma of either to go ahead with the publication in the magazines of these segments of the resolution on Argentina (thereby sharing responsibility in increasing internal tensions in the movement), or to become party to a falsification of the record of what actually was voted at the 10th world congress.

We cannot accept such a dilemma. We shall therefore include in the French and other language versions of the minutes those parts of the resolution on Argentina which are not published in the magazines of the movement.

We also believe that it was unwise on your side to just send us a copy of the minority faction's statement to be included in the world congress minutes, and then immediately to go ahead and print it, without new consultation of the Center. You explicitly asked for the right to make a statement in reply to the majority statement, and to draft it only after having read that statement. Yet you deny the majority the right to reply to your own statement. We are back at the use of double standards, which are inacceptable to us.

We therefore insist upon the right of the majority tendency to make a short reply to the minority faction's statement, a reply which will only concentrate on disputed facts. We are quite ready to grant you the right to make a like rebuttal, provided it keeps to a short statement of similar length. All this should be included in the same record, as should be the statement on the miners strike in Britain, the Chilean repression, the solidarity with the

Greek students and workers, which the IEC was empowered to make in the name of the Congress.

In order to avoid new additional confusion and endless recrimination on these matters, we see no other possibility than to ask you to reprint a complete version of the minutes in English, including a clear indication that the previous version was incomplete, be it through no fault of the editors. We are sorry if this involves additional costs, but we are not responsible for this. May we remind you that you requested, and were granted, a similar procedure of reprinting a whole internal pre-world-congress discussion bulletin already published in French (the minority's draft resolution on China), only because some minor editing changes, which could have easily been reprinted in a subsequent bulletin, had not been introduced into your original draft which, in good faith, we had considered to be a definitive one? Surely, as the present matter involves a problem much more important than that previous one -- i.e. the matter of not falsifying the record of what the world congress actually voted on Argentina -- you will accept this request of ours.

We agree to include comrade Pepe's letter on the March 1974 Un. Secr. minutes as annex to the April 1974 minutes, with a short reply by the Bureau which is responsible for editing the minutes.- To our knowledge, there are no major changes in the printed text of cde Roman's report as compared to his oral presentation; the only possible changes are editorial and very minor ones.

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We do not agree with your interpretation of the reasons why, after the world congress, and contrary to the expressed intentions of both tendencies, there has been a sudden increase in tension. We believe that the responsibility for that increased tension lies squarely on the shoulders of the minority. The refusal to engage its main leaders in the international leadership, and the delay in regularizing its normal participation in the material effort to have a stronger center functioning -- a decision specifically adopted by the world congress -- could only be interpreted by the majority as shirking a major responsibility which it was dutybound to undertake.

We have made it clear many times during the pre-congress discussion and during the congress, that for us the main test for the minority would come after the congress. After having demanded and obtained a volume of internal discussion which, qua duration, cadres involved and resources spent, goes far beyond anything which a revolutionary movement of our size ever did in the past, including the past of Lenin's party itself, the formal ending of the discussion by a majority vote at a democratically convened and elected congress has to imply that thereupon, for a whole period, the stress would be laid upon public activity of party building, along the line of the majority, and that the greatest part of cadres and resources would be devoted to that task.

We understood that the main spokesman for the minority confirmed that common understanding of democratic centralism in his concluding speech at the congress. We expected actions to confirm these intentions. When we however noticed that the minority designated for participation in the leadership bodies of the FI not a

single one of its previous representatives in the United Secretariat, and not a single of its reporters at the world congress, we could not but have serious doubts as to the willingness of the minority to apply its own expressed intentions. When we read your speech delivered before the minority faction caucus in New York of March 12, 1974, we see therein confirmation that you have had second thoughts as to the possibility of applying the normal rules of democratic centralism inside a united world movement, second thoughts which have no relation whatsoever to any "provocative" act of the majority but which are clearly of a political nature, as you say so quite openly. As they turn around a political document which was known to you for months prior to the world congress and which the spokesman of the minority knew (and knew to have been voted) when he made his concluding speech at the World Congress, it seems to us that powerful pressure was brought to bear upon him inside his faction to change his course towards a decrease of tensions, and that these pressures unfortunately have already born fruits.

It is neither a question of the absolute number of minority representatives on the United Secretariat (we made it clear many times that we were quite ready to increase that number, provided the minority designated its real leaders to that body) not a question of the formal right of the minority to designate its own representatives on leadership bodies. It is a question of what is implied by the choice the minority has made of its representatives. For us, it implies a shirking, if not a refusal, to share normal responsibility at leadership level.

We repeat that for us this is the main test: whether the minority is willing to take its share of responsibility in leading cadres and material resources in the leadership of the International, along the line adopted at the 10th world congress. A refusal to do this means, in our eyes, a retreat from Trotsky's concept of an international organization, in the direction of the concept of a loose federation of tendencies or factions. It would imply that the world congress votes and decisions become void of any practical implications for the minority. This would, from the point of view of the majority, degrade the pre-world-congress discussion to the level of exercizes of an international debating club. This is not and will never be our concept of building the F.I., and we shall not accept it.

The proposal announced to us at the last United Secretariat meeting of having comrades Pepe, Crandall and Williams nominated as members of the United Secretariat is at last a step in the right direction, of correcting the mistake made by the minority in selecting its representatives in that body from the exclusive point of view of factional convenience and not from the point of view of building the F.I. We accept these proposals. The nomination of comrade Arturo however we cannot accept. It goes against the 10th World Congress agreement. There never was any question of consultative United Secretariat members, all the more so as all IEC members (including consultative ones) have the statutory right to be present at United Secretariat meetings anyway (but not at the Center's expenses). You yourself did not envisage such a novel interpretation of the 10th World Congress agreement, as you yourself abstained from nominating a representative of your faction's strongest component to the United Secretariat, at the IEC meeting

immediately following the world congress.

On the question of the composition of the Bureau we cannot change our position. It is the duty of the minority to show its willingness to participate in the day-to-day leadership of the International by delegating at least one of its key political leaders to such a function. We are perfectly ready to include comrades Johnson and Martinez also among Bureau members, as soon as that additional nomination occurs.

However, to indicate our good will, we are ready to involve comrades Johnson and Martinez -- as well as comrade Samantha as a technical assistant -- immediately in the day-to-day work as members of the leadership team which does the actual Bureau work, on a full-time basis, provided the resources of the Center are increased (on our present resources we would be unable to do so), and provided this increase is not limited to exactly covering the expenses of the minority members of leading bodies (wages + traveling expenses) but includes a reasonable contribution to support the activities of the international center.

Relaxation of tensions could be instantaneous, as soon as we receive adequate proof that the minority respects the general spirit and letter of international democratic centralism rules. After a long period of democratic internal debate, it should now be ready to take a share in the responsibility and costs of building the FI along the line adopted by majority vote at the world congress. We hope that it will live up to this test and that we shall be able to utilize the increased opportunities for strengthening our International in the coming months and years by a common effort.

Fraternally yours,

s/Ernest