

International Internal Discussion Bulletin

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Key Issues in the Portuguese, Italian, and Mexican Elections

By Barry Sheppard

[This report was adopted by the Twenty-Eighth National Convention of the Socialist Workers Party, held in August 1976.]

At the world congress of the Fourth International held in 1969 the majority of delegates adopted a position in favor of the strategy of rural guerrilla warfare in Latin America. A minority, including the leadership of the Socialist Workers Party, opposed this turn. The minority reaffirmed the Leninist strategy of party building as against the strategy of guerrilla warfare.

In the course of the next three years, the turn taken by the majority was deepened and the differences between the majority and the minority became greater. Two factions were formed. The majority became the International Majority Tendency, or IMT. The minority, which defended the positions held in common by world Trotskyism up until 1969, became the Leninist Trotskyist Faction, or LTF.

The turn taken by the majority in 1969 was an ultraleft turn. The heroic action of a handful was substituted for the strategy of the mobilization of the working class and its allies under the leadership of a Leninist party.

The minority warned that this ultraleft course would lead to disaster, and it did in both Bolivia and Argentina, resulting in a grave setback for our movement in both countries. The minority also warned that unless the turn away from the Leninist strategy of party building was corrected, it would lead to new errors of both the ultraleft and opportunist varieties. Unfortunately the majority persisted in the turn in spite of the disasters in Bolivia and Argentina and did indeed compound and extend the error made in 1969.

In making this adaptation to Guevarism in Latin America, the majority was responding in part to pressures in the milieu of radicalizing youth that developed in the 1960s and 70s. All sectors of the Fourth International welcomed the rise of the new world-wide youth radicalization, seeing it as a harbinger of and spur to more powerful struggles of the working class, and as an opportunity to win significant numbers of fresh new forces to the Trotskyist movement.

This new youth radicalization was based largely among the students, although they were linked by many threads to the rest of their generation. A healthy impulse among these young people was a tendency to go beyond the reformist misleaders of the working class of both the Stalinist and social democratic varieties. For example, we saw this layer take to the streets throughout the world against the Vietnam war, when the reformist labor leaderships failed to take effective action.

But given the inherently transient character of the student condition, the petty-bourgeois aspirations of many students, and the grip of the reformist bureaucracies on the labor movement, petty-bourgeois theories of the "new

left" found fertile ground for development in this new layer of radicalized youth. It was difficult for many to see the working class as the fundamental agent for social change. When this was accepted in words, it was still difficult for many to accept the Marxist strategy of the independent mobilization of the working class to take power.

All kinds of petty-bourgeois substitutes became fashionable. Maoist concepts became the answer for many who developed illusions in the Cultural Revolution. There were also illusions that Che Guevara's strategy of rural guerrilla warfare would lead to quick victories. This led to concepts of urban guerrilla warfare, and then to "exemplary actions"—like bombings, the raiding of embassies of repressive governments, or attempts by small groups to "crush fascism in the egg" by clashes with incipient fascist formations—which would supposedly spark the masses into action or teach them by example.

Anarchist ideas, which reject the need to build a revolutionary proletarian party, were and are strong in this milieu. There is the idea that a movement for "self-management" or for workers control or even for soviets could lead to a socialist transformation without the construction of a Leninist party that wins the support of the majority of the working class and its allies as against the Stalinists and social democrats.

In place of a Marxist class analysis, many of the groups that coalesced out of the student radicalization hold to a vague populism, seeing the struggle in terms of the "people" against bad policies or bad rulers, rather than in terms of the working class and its allies against the capitalist class.

We saw all of these petty-bourgeois theories and strategies here in the United States, where we had quite a development of what the IMT calls the "new mass vanguard." We saw the populism of the Students for a Democratic Society give birth to Maoist currents, to a terrorist wing (the Weathermen), to supporters of McGovern and other Democrats. We saw the Black Panthers turn away from an orientation towards the Black masses in favor of adventurism, and later toward the Democratic party. During the antiwar movement, we conducted a protracted struggle against the anarcho-populists, who came up with all kinds of ultraleft schemes against the strategy we championed of mass mobilizations designed to eventually reach and involve the working class.

It is important to note that we did not turn our backs on the radicalizing youth in sectarian fashion. The SWP and YSA participated vigorously in the youth radicalization. But in doing so we patiently explained and consistently championed the Leninist strategy of party building as well as the other aspects of the Marxist program. Often we were alone. But by persisting on this course we won to revolutionary Marxism the best of the youth, who have become part of our cadre trained in proletarian, Marxist principles.

Turn of 1969 World Congress

The majority chose a different course. The turn of the 1969 world congress indicated a process of adaptation to the weaknesses found in the new radicalized youth. It should come as no surprise that at the 1969 world congress itself a new difference emerged over what strategy revolutionists should adopt towards the youth radicalization.

We had thought, on the eve of the world congress, that we had agreement not only on the analysis of the youth radicalization and the increased social weight of students, but also on a strategy of linking the mobilization of students to the struggles of the working class and other oppressed layers of society. But we found to our surprise that the younger leaders of the French section rejected this strategy.

After the turn of the 1969 world congress, adaptation to the petty-bourgeois theories of the new left, or, as it was soon to be called, the "new mass vanguard," became more pronounced on the part of the majority. In Britain, for example, the comrades turned their backs on the good work they had done in building a massive antiwar movement. This happened throughout Europe, where the majority comprised the leadership of the sections. The new left had grown tired of marching against the war—something we saw here too, but which we fought. It took two years for the majority to begin to make a partial correction on this score, but valuable time and momentum had been lost.

Differences on China and Maoism went back before 1969, but the differences expressed at the 1969 world congress on the Cultural Revolution and Maoism reflected in part a bending to illusions in Maoism among the youth.

In addition to cheering on the guerrilla warfare initiatives taken by Trotskyists in Bolivia and Argentina in line with the turn, so-called minority initiatives in action were tried in Europe.

The new mass vanguard at that time generally held an abstentionist position in regard to elections. The 1969 election campaign of our French comrades had as its main slogan, "Against the electoral farce." In the 1970 elections in Britain, our comrades tended toward the position that there was not a significant difference between the Labour party and the Tories, thereby reflecting the frustration of the new left with the problem of how to deal effectively with the existence of the mass reformist parties.

At the 1969 world congress, a United Secretariat resolution on Europe was not voted on due to doubts by some younger leaders. This resolution did not contain the new mass vanguard line. It was replaced at the end of 1972, when the IMT adopted a new resolution on Europe that justified adaptation to the new left and raised it to a strategy for our sections. A key sentence in that document projected "organizing national political campaigns on carefully chosen issues that correspond to the concerns of the vanguard, do not run against the current of mass struggles, and offer a chance for demonstrating a capacity for effective initiative..." The task was to "transform" this vanguard, "making it an adequate instrument for recomposing the organized workers movement."

Comrade Mary-Alice Waters explained what was wrong with this concept (see International Internal Discussion Bulletin, Vol. X, No. 3, 1973). "The starting point for revolutionary Marxists," she wrote, "is not our own

subjective concerns or the immediate outlook of the 'vanguard.' We start with what is objectively in the interests of the broadest working masses and what must be done to advance the class struggle nationally and internationally. We never start with the vanguard and then try to make its interests and concerns compatible with the needs of the working class. We do just the opposite. We start with the objective needs of the masses. We then mobilize and organize the broadest forces we are capable of reaching and influencing and lead them in struggle to win concrete demands that correspond both to the needs and consciousness of the broad masses, and that can move the struggle forward and thereby heighten their level of consciousness. We employ methods of struggle that increase the confidence of the masses in themselves and teach them to rely on their own independent power.

"The difference between these two starting points—the concerns of the vanguard or the objective needs of the working masses—is neither minor nor hair-splitting. From the two different starting points flow two divergent courses of action. One tends toward maximalist demands and so-called 'militant' actions that presumably reflect the level of consciousness of the 'vanguard.' In reality they are adaptations to its political backwardness. The other is firmly based on the *method* of the Transitional Program, which aims at mobilizing the masses in struggle, whatever their level of consciousness, and moving them forward toward the socialist revolution.

"Even when we are not yet able to mobilize the working masses behind our own banner (or the banner of a united front in which we participate), even though only the 'vanguard' is following us, we still organize that 'vanguard,' large or small, in actions that speak to the needs and consciousness of the masses, not the concerns of the 'vanguard.' We do not proceed according to a two-stage theory—today we win the vanguard; tomorrow the working class. The two aspects of our intervention are totally interrelated and proceed simultaneously. To win recruits to our sections from vanguard elements we must convince them of the correctness of our program for the working masses."

Test of Portugal

This warning was rejected by the IMT. We saw the results in Portugal, which put the IMT new mass vanguard line to the decisive test of a revolution.

In face of the tremendous mass upsurge that followed the April 1974 overthrow of the fascist-like regime in Portugal, the capitalist class found itself in an extremely weak political position. The main political instrument it could rely on was the officer caste of its imperialist army. The Armed Forces Movement, or MFA, became the instrument of continued capitalist class rule in Portugal. The army set itself up as a bonapartist force, that is, a force supposedly above the conflicts of all the contending parties, as the supreme and final arbiter of the nation.

But to maintain support, the officers had to put on a democratic and socialist mask. They were forced to make concessions to the working masses, and made even more promises, while they maintained capitalism. In other words, they used demagoguery to preserve their position. The officers could not have gotten away with this game, however, if it were not for the fact that the Stalinists and

social democrats, the leaders of the two big workers parties, told the workers to support the MFA. The leaders of both the Communist and Socialist parties practice popular frontism. They tell the workers that they have to subordinate their interests for the sake of a bloc with the "good" capitalist politicians, in this case, the MFA.

The new mass vanguard in Portugal and around the world fell into this trap too, especially when a wing of the MFA came out with radical demagoguery last summer. Because they do not look at politics from a class standpoint, but of good guys versus bad guys, the new lefters were easily taken in, especially by then General Otelo Saraiva de Carvalho, who became their hero. They were above all enamored with the "peoples power" schemes the MFA raised last summer. The new left became supporters of "MFA-Peoples Power." They thereby became supporters of continued capitalist rule, although they didn't know that's what they were doing.

At the SWP convention in 1975, we discussed how the IMT was swept along in the trail of the new left. We warned that the IMT, by adapting to the super-leftist conceptions of the "new mass vanguard"—above all the idea that the major political obstacles to the Portuguese revolution could be circumvented by a campaign of calling for the organization of soviets—was being drawn into supporting the MFA demagoguery.

For example, an editorial in the paper of the Belgian section, *La Gauche*, which is edited by Comrade Mandel, said in its July 17, 1975, issue: "The recent plan of the 'MFA-people' calls for the generalized establishment of committees of the masses (with the aim of maintaining and expanding the social base of the MFA in the barracks, the factories, and the neighborhoods). This appeal furnishes the basis for the entire toiling population to organize and arm itself in councils of workers, peasants, neighborhood councils and soldiers councils, INDEPENDENT of the capitalist state apparatus." This and similar statements in *Rouge*, *Was Tun*, and *Red Weekly* fostered the illusions of the new lefters that the MFA plan provided a basis for building up workers power.

The FUR

At the end of August 1975 and the beginning of September, the "new mass vanguard" organizations got together in a front, the Front for Revolutionary Unity (FUR). The FUR was formed on the basis of support to the Fifth Provisional Government, which had just been dumped by the MFA. In other words, the FUR supported a capitalist government. As against the Sixth Provisional Government, which it was opposed to, the FUR did not call for a workers and peasants government, but another "left" government with the left wing of the MFA in power. The FUR also lumped together the Socialist party workers, the majority of the Portuguese workers, in with the fascists and ultrarightists. To achieve their left government, the FUR adopted the adventurist position of calling for an immediate insurrection. They had, in effect, the idea of a minority revolution, one that would be carried out against the majority of workers. The FUR did not represent a class break with the MFA, or offer a revolutionary answer to the opportunism of the Stalinists and social democrats. The FUR was an obstacle that had to be fought.

But the IMT supporters in Portugal, the Internationalist

Communist League (LCI), joined the FUR. The IMT itself was critical of some of the worst points in the FUR platform but considered its formation positive nonetheless and supported the LCI's being in the FUR. Was this because the FUR fit into the IMT scheme of uniting the new left in a single front in the hope that this would constitute an "adequate instrument"?

Although the FUR didn't directly organize the attempted coup of November 25, it helped prepare the ground for that adventure. The November 25 debacle showed what a wretched dead end the FUR really was.

Against this line, the LTF began with the objective need of the working class to break with the capitalist MFA. We projected a line of struggle against the class collaborationism of the Stalinists and social democrats and the illusions of the so-called far left in the MFA. We put forward our own class struggle program, including the demand for a workers government, in the form of a call on the CP and SP to take power and begin the construction of socialism, which is what the workers of Portugal wanted. This demand both raised the need for a workers government, and at the same time exposed the opposition of the CP and SP leaders to fighting for a workers government. It was necessary to fight against the stream of the "new mass vanguard," to fight their illusions and false positions and not adapt to them.

But the IMT rejected calling for a CP-SP government. Here is what IMT leaders Mandel, Frank, and Maitan wrote last November, fifteen days before the coup attempt: "... the masses cannot and will not understand the slogan 'SP-CP government' in any other way than as a government based on the Constituent Assembly, that is, the reconstruction of the bourgeois state apparatus, of bourgeois 'law and order.' That is precisely the immediate goal of the bourgeois counterrevolution; we must oppose it with all our strength." (*Intercontinental Press*, Vol. 13, No. 46, p. 1832.)

What pseudo-revolutionary phrasemongering! The capitalist state has apparently disappeared. The immediate goal of the capitalists is to "reconstruct" it through the Constituent Assembly. Everything is turned on its head. Instead of beginning with the real needs of the masses to break from the *real* capitalist government of the MFA, the IMT concludes it is dangerous to raise a demand that addresses itself to this need and fights the popular frontism of the CP and SP leaders.

At our convention last year, we warned that the line of the IMT was leading it into supporting a wing of the MFA. We pointed to statements like the following, which appeared in *Was Tun*. *Was Tun* said there was a split between bourgeois democrats in the MFA on the one hand, and, "On the other, officers like Rosa Coutinho and Saraiva Carvalho, confused, but uncorrupted left radicals, who—and this is certainly the most important thing in their political development—have understood with astonishing clarity an essential aspect of the socialist revolution and workers power, even though they do not see the need for a revolutionary workers party and a revolutionary program. That is, they have understood the need for the self-guided mobilization of the workers, the independent action of the masses, without bureaucratic reins."

There were many such comments in the IMT press. The IMT leaders were indignant at our warning. Of course they understood the bourgeois nature of the MFA, they said. But we have just had a new test, the Portuguese

presidential elections held in June. In these elections, the IMT came to the position that they should support the demagogue, the bourgeois officer, the aspiring Napoleon, Major Otelo Saraiva de Carvalho, the darling of the "new mass vanguard." (He had been demoted to major after November 25.)

Portuguese Presidential Elections

Before discussing Major Carvalho's campaign we should step back and review Marxist principles in regard to elections.

Our overall aim is the independent mobilization of the working people to take political power in order to begin the construction of socialism. The workers have to take political power away from the tiny minority that now wields it, the capitalist class, and institute their own rule in place of capitalist political power. There is no other way to achieve socialism. There is no other solution to the crisis inflicted upon humanity by capitalism. Either the workers will succeed in taking power in time, or capitalism will throw humanity back into barbarism or destroy us and most other living things altogether.

If we are serious about this objective, our line of march is one of patient and persistent struggle for the organization of a mass working class political party against all capitalist parties, liberal, radical or reactionary, with a revolutionary program to take power and begin the construction of socialism.

Our election policy is placed in this framework. It means we never call for a vote for any capitalist government, any capitalist candidate or capitalist party, no matter how left they talk. We do not call for a vote for electoral or governmental blocs of capitalist and workers parties, called popular fronts since the 1930s when that's the name Stalin gave to this form of class collaborationism. To do so would be to say that it is not necessary to overthrow capitalist class rule and replace it with workers political power, but to say that the capitalists and workers together should rule—which always means in reality continued capitalist power.

For tactical reasons, Marxists at times call for a vote for candidates of parties other than our own in the workers movement. The Marxist movement has developed certain criteria to judge whether it is correct in principle to do so.

One criterion is program. If a candidate or party is putting forward a program that helps advance political consciousness and explain the need for independent political action by the working class, against all forms of class collaboration, then it is within our principles to call for a vote for that candidate.

Our second criterion is class composition. The Stalinists and social democrats do not call for a break with class collaborationism—they are supporters of it. But they are historic currents in the international workers movement. Their base is in the mass organizations of the workers. It is within our principles to call for a vote for such parties despite their programs, if doing so advances the concept of the need to counterpose class against class, if it helps draw the line in the electoral arena between the working class and the capitalists—and if we give no support whatsoever to their class collaborationist programs.

But we never support capitalist politicians, even if they raise some of the same demands socialists do, since to do

so would cut across the need for the workers to organize themselves independent of the capitalists to carry out the socialist program, and would express confidence in the possibility that some layer of the capitalist class could carry out the socialist program.

This is the case with Carvalho's candidacy for president of Portugal. Picking up on the "MFA-Peoples Power" themes of the summer of 1975, Carvalho, in the last two weeks of his campaign, came out for a number of radical demands, including calling for more nationalizations, for workers control, for extension of the land reform, for the development of the workers commissions. But nonetheless, he remained a capitalist politician, a candidate of a section of the officer caste.

For the "far left" groups, this presented no problem. They don't think in class terms. When they organized the FUR, they did not call for a workers government against the capitalist MFA-dominated governments, they called for a *left* government with the Carvalho wing of the MFA. So they had no trouble jumping right in behind Carvalho when he ran for president.

The case of the IMT was somewhat different. As part of the Trotskyist movement, they know about class principles. So what the IMT had to do was go through contortions trying to prove that the good officer was really a working class candidate. One argument they used was that the most advanced workers supported Carvalho, while the bourgeoisie opposed him. Comrades C. Michaloux and A. Udry, writing in the July 8, 1976, issue of *Inprecor*, organ of the United Secretariat, say that no section of the capitalists, in Portugal or internationally, supported Carvalho.

Let's examine this line of reasoning. Is it decisive that a candidate be backed by a significant section of the bourgeoisie for her or him to be a capitalist candidate? (I leave aside here Comrade Michaloux's false assertion that Carvalho had no support from any section of the capitalist class. In fact, he had to have permission from the army to run, and he served an important function for the capitalists by capturing the votes of those young radicals and workers who refused to vote for the capitalists' first choice, Carvalho's fellow officer General Eanes. Carvalho helped keep some of the most radicalized sectors trapped into subordination to the armed forces, and that was a plus as far as the capitalists were concerned.)

There have been many capitalist politicians who didn't have the support of any significant sector of the bourgeoisie in a particular election. Henry Wallace, who ran for president of the United States in 1948 on the Progressive party ticket, didn't have support from any decisive sector of the capitalist class, but he was a capitalist candidate. Fred Harris didn't get much capitalist class backing during the recent Democratic primaries in the United States. There are many examples, in nearly every election.

If we take the other side of this argument, the criteria that the most combative workers, and the "far left" supported Carvalho, we are on just as dangerous grounds. For example, polls predict that the big majority of voters from the most radicalized sectors of U.S. society, the Blacks, women, youth, the most politically conscious workers, are going to vote for Jimmy Carter for president in the fall. But that doesn't make Carter a working class candidate.

Capitalist candidates don't have the problem of getting

votes from the capitalists, who are a tiny minority, but from the workers. To do this, they have to fool the workers. And if a capitalist politician succeeds in doing just that, even fooling the best and most revolutionary minded workers, that doesn't change the nature of that capitalist candidate. It just means that those workers were led back into the blind alley of capitalist politics, and those in the workers movement who led them there have committed a crime against those workers.

Another argument is advanced in a statement signed by IMT members of the United Secretariat (printed elsewhere in this bulletin). They say, in addition to the reasons already discussed, that Carvalho's platform makes him a workers candidate. They claim his platform takes a stand in "clear opposition to private property; a stand in favor of generalized nationalization of the means of production; a stand in favor of generalized workers control; a stand in favor of the defense of the workers interests against those of the employers; a stand in favor of strict independence of the trade unions from the state. No bourgeois political force anywhere could defend such a programme, even in a 'demagogic' stance."

Why not? There are precedents. Just last summer, the MFA government, which the IMT admits was capitalist, put forward essentially the same demagoguery, and for the same reason, to retain the support of the workers.

Capitalist politicians, from fascists to figures like Nasser, using socialist rhetoric are nothing new. Demagoguery of that kind has been utilized before in certain situations when this was the best way to preserve capitalist rule.

The IMT leaders dismiss as secondary other key aspects of Carvalho's platform, such as his denunciation of parties. In particular, he told the workers *they* don't need parties. That's in keeping with his overall bonapartism, his line that the army should run the country for the workers. That's why he stated he was a candidate of the MFA, and pledged to defend the new constitution, which stipulates that the armed forces will continue to hold basic political power.

Carvalho's answer to the question "Who should rule?" is clear: the army, the Portuguese imperialist army. Once that is settled, he can promise anything. Far from proving that his was a working class candidacy, his platform itself spells out his candidacy as that of a capitalist bonapartist demagogue.

And what of Carvalho's outspoken Portuguese nationalism? The nationalism of imperialist nations is reactionary through and through. I recently saw a Carvalho campaign poster proudly posted on the wall in the offices of *Inprecor*, a photo of him superimposed on the Portuguese flag. The IMT downplays the reactionary character of such nationalism, and in general prettifies Carvalho's campaign. The IMT leaders claim that Carvalho is opposed to the capitalists' austerity plan, for example, and takes a "stand in favor of the defense of the workers interests against those of the employers." Here we need only point to his record. As part of the ruling MFA body last year, he was a supporter of the austerity plan, which has been the MFA's answer to the economic crisis consistently from the moment of the April 1974 coup.

The IMT leaders also assert that Carvalho takes a "stand in favor of strict independence of the trade unions from the state." What about his support of the law that allows only one union federation? What about his record of

using the forces under his command to directly intervene into the unions, once against workers who spoke out against the government's austerity plan? Or his record of using troops against strikers?

But here we run up against an astonishing objection from the IMT. Don't talk about Carvalho's history. That's "reducing the class nature of a candidate exclusively to his personal history or to a judgment of his individual character." Apparently, the IMT leaders don't even want us to examine the history of his campaign for president. He started out pretty conservative, you see. He wouldn't even criticize his "fellow officer" General Eanes at first. But forget about that. He got radical in the last couple of weeks of his campaign, and at his last few meetings, the "platform" the IMT bases its case on was distributed by his "far left" supporters (and possibly written by them). That makes him a "workers" candidate.

But Carvalho did not fall from the sky, to run for workers control for two weeks. He comes from a political formation, the Armed Forces Movement. His platform proudly states so. To make him a working class candidate you have to conjure away the real development of the Portuguese revolution, and distort what he stands for.

Some in the IMT were for Carvalho from the beginning of his campaign. But curiously, the bulk of the IMT didn't come to that position until the end of the campaign, and some, not until the campaign was over. Right through the campaign, the Portuguese supporters of the IMT, the LCI, to their credit opposed the demagogue, even after the IMT put the arm on them to make a "self-criticism." Why the panic on the part of the IMT? We don't have to look far for the answer.

Rouge, the newspaper of the French comrades, for example, came under attack from the "new mass vanguard" for initially opposing Carvalho. For example, *Révolution*, the paper of an anarcho-populist group, charged the French comrades with adhering to the Trotskyist principles of class and program. "Revolutionary military officers are not in the Trotskyists' bible," *Révolution* said. "Fortunately," they added, "the principal revolutionary groups" have rallied around "Otelo." Such harsh criticism from the new lefters, who were virtually charging the comrades with being LTFers, was just too much to withstand. And the IMT made its belated "self-criticism" before its new left audience.

Italian FUR

The line of adapting to the concerns of the "new mass vanguard" was evident in another election this summer, in Italy. The Stalinists and social democrats were again peddling popular frontism. The CP called for a governmental bloc with the Christian Democrats, and the SP has been in such a bloc for years.

The "far left" and centrists formed a common slate, called Proletarian Democracy. This Italian FUR was hailed by the IMT. The Italian section of the Fourth International became part of the slate, and the IMT members of the United Secretariat decided to try to launch an international campaign in Europe to back the bloc.

Proletarian Democracy claimed to unite all the "revolutionaries" against the reformists. The groups comprising it were unable to agree on a common platform. However, the two groups most associated with the bloc as far as the

public was concerned were the Party of Proletarian Unity and Workers Vanguard. They issued a common appeal. Like the Portuguese FUR, these groups which dominated Proletarian Democracy did not call for a workers government as against the popular frontism of the CP and SP leaderships. Instead, they called for a government of the left, and made it clear they included capitalist parties in this conception. They called for a more left version of the popular front, one that would exclude the Christian Democrats, or at least the right wing of the Catholic party, but include other capitalist parties. They were ambiguous about whether such a left government could be somehow used by the workers to build up their power and begin to construct socialism without a revolution—they avoided the key question of which class holds state power.

Many planks in their platform are downright reactionary. They gave support to Italian nationalism, which is just as reactionary as Portuguese or American nationalism, even calling for a better deal for "Italy" in the capitalist Common Market. They supported the reactionary anti-Sovietism emanating from Peking, putting U.S. imperialism and the Soviet Union on the same plane, calling for the removal of the Soviet fleet from the Mediterranean and for a "nonaligned" foreign policy.

Without going into a full analysis of the programs of the groups that made up Proletarian Democracy, they did not offer a revolutionary or working class alternative to the reformists. (See Appendix III.)

Campa Campaign in Mexico

There were elections early in July in Mexico, too. The candidate of the ruling capitalist party, the Institutional Revolutionary Party or PRI, ran virtually unopposed for president. The Mexican Stalinists decided to run a candidate on their own, a man named Campa, although he could run only as an illegal write-in candidate.

At the present time there is no mass workers party in Mexico. The Mexican CP was once a party of considerable size. But its line of subordination to the PRI over the years resulted in its discreditment and loss of influence. Why support the CP, when you could support the PRI directly, and maybe get a better job in the bargain?

The Stalinists hoped to use the elections to refurbish their tarnished image, which has been especially damaged among the radicalized youth. Unfortunately they were given a helping hand in this project by one of the Trotskyist groups in Mexico.

Last winter, the Socialist League, one of the two sympathizing organizations of the Fourth International, split into two public factions: the Militant Tendency (which called itself simply the Socialist League) and the Bolshevik Leninist Faction of the Socialist League. Soon after, a very important political difference emerged. The Militant Tendency joined a common electoral bloc with the Stalinists, on the basis of signing a joint platform with them (see Appendix I.).

The joint platform is a Stalinist platform, as you might expect, since the Mexican CP has not changed its spots. Of course, it contains sentences we agree with. So does Gus Hall's platform. But it is a Stalinist platform. For example, on foreign policy, it demands "effective measures to put into practice" a document drawn up by Mexican president Echeverría and adopted by the United Nations, which, the

platform says, calls for "peaceful coexistence." The words "peaceful coexistence" are used by the Stalinists as a code for the Kremlin's policy of subordinating the needs and interests of the world's working people to diplomatic deals with imperialism. This is no small question. It touches the basic difference between Stalinism and Trotskyism.

Stalinist policy has been "socialism in one country" since 1924. Leaving aside that socialism cannot be built in the Soviet Union alone, this policy meant giving up on the world revolution, meant seeking to exchange the prestige of the Russian revolution for diplomatic deals with imperialism. Under this concept the Communist parties of the world were transformed from instruments of proletarian revolution into pressure groups seeking a deal with so-called progressive capitalists to allow the Soviet Union to develop in peace. This is a reactionary utopian concept, since the imperialists never allow the Soviet Union to develop in peace.

In colonial countries this line meant support to the national bourgeoisie. Along this line, the platform hails the foreign policy of the so-called "left" governments of Peru, Panama, and Ecuador, and calls for a political bloc with these capitalist governments. The joint platform says these governments "tend to carry out" a policy that "fundamentally goes in an anti-imperialist direction."

Is that the direction the tin-horn dictator of Panama is going, who recently exiled a revolutionary socialist comrade of ours for advocating the U.S. get out of Panama? Who is negotiating with Washington to let the U.S. keep control of the Canal Zone to the year 2000 and its bases even longer? Does this characterize the policy of the Peruvian military, who have just deported Hugo Blanco again? What a disgrace that a group that calls itself Trotskyist should sign such a platform!

The Militant Tendency, it is true, did put in a timid disclaimer, stating it didn't agree with "some" of the foreign policy planks. But it neglected to mention which ones, and it was the Stalinist line that was contained in the platform and which was hammered at in the Stalinist-controlled campaign.

Consistent with its support of the Kremlin line of international class collaboration, the platform slips in the line the Mexican Stalinists have held for forty years, popular frontism. That's what the phrase in the platform "to advance the unity of the forces that support democracy and socialism" means. Stalinists always cover up their aims with phrases like that. In the U.S. they call for an "antimonopoly coalition." To make sure there was no misunderstanding, the Mexican Stalinists publicly explained what they meant. In an interview given during the height of the campaign concerning the elections, the head of the Mexican CP, Verdugo, explained that their goal is to get together with "some tendencies in the PRI," with "patriotic democratic forces in the army," with some "progressive businessmen," and with "forces rejuvenating the church." (See Appendix I.)

Nowhere does the joint platform call for a break with the PRI. It does not even mention the PRI. It does not raise the need for a workers and peasants government. It is a class collaborationist platform, in harmony with the Stalinists' popular front policy.

The class collaborationist CP is extolled as "revolutionary" and as an organization that does not hide its "socialist objectives" nor its "revolutionary methods." The

Soviet Union and other bureaucratized workers states are falsely labelled "socialist," and their counterrevolutionary foreign policies are hailed.

Small wonder, if the Militant Tendency could swallow all that Stalinist garbage, that when the comrades of the Bolshevik Leninist Faction opposed this platform, the Militant Tendency came to the CP's defense. "The Communist Party is more revolutionary" than the Trotskyists who criticize it, Militant Tendency leader Ricardo Hernandez said in a public meeting for Campa, according to the Militant Tendency's own newspaper of April 1, "because it is participating in the electoral process with a class alternative; it is participating in the class struggle."

The leaders of the Militant Tendency are not in the IMT. But the IMT bears heavy responsibility in this whole affair. The joint platform signed with the Stalinists was known to the world movement in January. It was a public platform. The articles written in defense of the Militant Tendency's line have been known to the world movement as the campaign progressed. At the February 1976 meeting of the International Executive Committee we drew attention to the danger involved in the Militant Tendency's course, but the IMT refused to make any disassociation from that course, even internally. We raised the question again and again, in letters, at the May meeting of the United Secretariat and again in July. But the IMT adamantly refused to disassociate the Fourth International from this error, which only encouraged the comrades making it.

What are the reasons given by the IMT leaders for their default? While stating that they disagree with signing the common platform, they assert that the whole question is merely tactical. A statement (printed elsewhere in this bulletin) signed by leaders of the IMT present at the July United Secretariat meeting, with the exception of Comrade Jones, covers up for the course taken by the Militant Tendency. The IMT leaders' statement claims that the platform does not advocate "the revolution by stages, nor the bloc with the national bourgeoisie, nor peaceful coexistence, nor socialism in one country." As we have seen, this statement is false.

In a letter to Comrade Hernandez (see Appendix II), Comrade Walter states that "you [Comrade Hernandez] say that the electoral platform stresses the unity of the struggle for democracy and socialism, and add that this implies a contradiction with the classical Stalinist concept of the revolution by stages. This is correct. The leaders of the CPM [Mexican Communist Party] who signed that platform have already been charged with 'concessions' (if not capitulation) to Trotskyism on that basis. This is a programmatic concession made by the Stalinists to the Trotskyists, and not vice-versa as your critics assume. You also point out correctly that the Stalinists will pay a price for this in the future."

One wonders who has charged the leaders of the Mexican CP with "concessions" if not "capitulation" to Trotskyism on the basis of the assertion that the joint platform "stresses the unity of the struggle for democracy and socialism." The platform actually calls for the "unity of the forces that support democracy and socialism." We have seen just who these "forces" are: "some tendencies in the PRI," "patriotic democratic forces in the army," "progressive businessmen," and "forces rejuvenating the church."

The default and now attempted cover-up by the IMT leadership has had negative consequences in Mexico. The Militant Tendency was encouraged to plunge ahead on its wrong course, discrediting Trotskyism and helping Stalinism. In addition, supporters of the IMT in Mexico in the Internationalist Communist League (LCI) were disoriented.

The comrades of the LCI, to their credit, unlike Comrade Walter, did criticize the support to the Echeverría plan and to peaceful coexistence contained in the joint platform. They characterized the platform as reformist. But under the guidance of the IMT leadership they saw the formation of the bloc with the CP as merely a tactical question, and later even made a self-criticism on their attitude toward the CP campaign.

Obstacle to Unity of Trotskyists

Consequently, they downplayed the error. Perhaps they did so in a desire to speed up the reunification of Trotskyist forces in Mexico. But the result of the IMT default will be just the opposite. Because the error made by the Militant Tendency is not just a tactical one. The programmatic line of demarcation between us and the Stalinists is not a tactical question. By backing a Stalinist platform, the Militant Tendency obliterated this programmatic line in these elections.

The Militant Tendency grovelled before the Stalinists, not only signing their platform, but making secret deals, accepting conditions for the privilege of supporting the CP line. We don't know what all they promised the CP. Most of their election activity consisted of distributing CP election campaign material, and then, to top it off, the CP made them pay for the CP leaflets. Can you imagine us handing out Gus Hall leaflets—he says he is for the unity of forces who want democracy and socialism, you know—and then having to pay for the privilege?

The IMT has aided and abetted the development of an obstacle to unification of the Trotskyists in Mexico. The comrades of the Bolshevik Leninist Faction are correct when they insist that this question must be cleared up.

I would like to take a brief look at the policy followed by the LCI in the elections. They began from the IMT strategy of attempting to build a bloc of the far left. Instead of calling it the FUR, they called it the FIR, Revolutionary Left Front. The idea was that the FIR would call for a vote for Campa, and at the same time put forward its own platform.

But the centrists and new lefters they approached to join the FIR didn't want to vote for Campa, so the FIR consists only of the LCI. With their FIR hat on they sat down with the pro-Stalinist bloc. They tried to get the Stalinists to take out the worst features of the joint platform. This effort failed, but it shows that the LCI was pulled into the same kind of thinking that led to the error the Militant Tendency made. Even if the CP had agreed to a few of their proposals, that would not have meant that the CP campaign would have changed at all. The CP was in complete control of the campaign. The candidate was their candidate. They explained at every opportunity their support to "peaceful coexistence" and popular frontism.

The statement of the IMT leaders correctly says that to conclude a common "minimum election platform corresponding to key problems of the class struggle in a given

country" is not unprincipled per se. But in every country, including Mexico, the Stalinists and the Trotskyists give opposite answers to the major problems facing the working class and the country, above all the "key problem" of class collaborationism. Any joint platform with them would tie our hands and make it practically impossible to explain what is wrong with the Stalinist program. Our job is not to try to find some vague formula both we and the Stalinists can interpret each in our own—opposite—ways, covering up the differences between us. We seek every opportunity, including using the tactic of critical support when appropriate, to win working people away from the CP program.

As the campaign progressed, the LCI was pulled toward the CP bloc, and their FIR ended up being a rickety little fifth wheel on the cart that the Militant Tendency helped the Stalinists to construct.

The comrades of the Bolshevik Leninist Faction approached the elections in an entirely different way. They did not begin with the concerns of the new left groups. They began with the objective problems confronting the workers and peasants of Mexico.

The key problem for the working people of Mexico is that they have no mass party of their own. The PRI, using both repression and demagogy, controls the unions and peasant organizations. In the past year, a movement for union democracy has gained some momentum, organizing some large demonstrations, one of 150,000. Many of these workers have begun to think about political action.

The Bolshevik Leninist comrades oriented toward this movement, raising the idea that the unions should break with the capitalist PRI and form their own party. As a first step, the comrades proposed that the leader of this opposition movement should be run for president. This line put the Bolshevik Leninist comrades into the debate occurring among these radicalizing workers, and in conflict with the Stalinists, who fought the comrades tooth and nail to try to prevent any criticism of the PRI from reaching the floor of a meeting called by this opposition grouping. In real life, the comrades were able to see whether the Stalinists had changed their line on class collaborationism. As was expected, the bureaucrats and Stalinists were successful in preventing the emergence of any independent workers candidate in the elections. Given this fact, the Bolshevik Leninist comrades called for a vote for Campa as the only candidate of an organization in the working class. At the same time, they rejected his platform, and counterposed the Trotskyist program to the joint platform, and clarified what was wrong with the Militant Tendency's course.

In face of a grave error by the Militant Tendency and the default of the IMT, the Bolshevik Leninist comrades came through with flying colors. They have shown the way forward for Trotskyism in Mexico, and we can hope that through political discussion and clarification, unity of the Trotskyist forces there can be achieved on a principled and firm basis.

JOINT ELECTORAL PLATFORM OF THE MEXICAN CP, MOS, AND LS

[The following is the joint electoral platform of the Partido Comunista Mexicano, Movimiento de Organización Socialista, and Liga Socialista (Tendencia Militante),¹ as published in the January 16-31 issue of *El Socialista*, newspaper of the Liga Socialista (TM).]

* * *

The Partido Comunista Mexicano, Movimiento de Organización Socialista, and Liga Socialista are jointly participating in the current federal election campaign, without diminishing the autonomy of any of the organizations. They are presenting a common platform and are supporting the presidential candidacy of Compañero Valentín Campa, along with a single slate of deputies and senators for Congress.

They propose to encourage united action by the masses, particularly by the working class, for immediate demands and in defense of their economic and political interests. At the same time, they propose the following: to advance the unity of the forces that support democracy and socialism, with the aim of increasing their political weight and mass influence; to strengthen the struggle of the Mexican people against imperialism; to compel respect for the political rights of the Mexican people, including their electoral rights; to combat the repressive political climate of intimidation arising from current governmental practices; in short, to contribute to the organization and development of an autonomous political force capable of challenging the bourgeoisie for power, defeating it, and building Mexican society on a new basis, without capitalist wage slavery, with a higher economic and cultural standard of living for the masses of people, and with truly human conditions of existence.

The organizations that have united together to act in this electoral process do not hide their socialist objectives, nor their revolutionary method to achieve them.

1. Mexican Communist party, Movement for Socialist Organization, Socialist League (Militant Tendency).

They consider it their duty to labor stubbornly to achieve them.

They propose limited objectives of struggle to the working class, peasants, students, to all manual and clerical workers—objectives that take into account the degree of seriousness of the problems requiring solution, the level of class consciousness and organization of the masses, and the necessity that the masses undergo their own experiences, enabling them to understand fully the need for a revolution to bring about deepgoing, radical changes in Mexican society.

The PCM, MOS, and LS recognize that the elections scheduled for the first Sunday of next July will not decide who will become president of the republic, nor the fundamental composition of Congress. Given the undemocratic way in which the electoral system is set up, the question of who will be the next president has already been decided. The highest circles of government will also handpick the vast majority of deputies and senators.

Consequently, these revolutionary organizations are not going to contest the presidency and the congressional seats in the polling booth. They are taking part in the electoral campaign with the aim of helping to raise the consciousness of the masses, whose rights it is their duty to defend. At the same time, they seek to strengthen the independent movement of the people, with the aim of enabling it to influence the nation's political life in a decisive way.

With full clarity of objectives, without illusions of any sort, and placing confidence solely in the power of the masses and their own organization, the Partido Comunista Mexicano, the Movimiento de Organización Socialista, and the Liga Socialista propose to citizens who support democracy and public well-being a platform of struggle that includes the positions, objectives, and immediate demands that correspond to the present situation in the country.

This platform contains both demands on the present government and objectives that are realizable only with the taking of power by the working people. Everything depends on the organized and united strength of the masses and on the mettle of their political leadership.

The platform of the Partido Comunista Mexicano, the Movimiento de Organización Socialista, and the Liga Socialista is the following:

I. Political Rights for All Citizens

It is a well-known fact that Mexico has an undemocratic political system that prevents the majority of citizens from participating in the solution of the most pressing national problems. Paternalism and despotism reign in this country, not democratic methods of rule. The political and social rights of citizens, especially of those who oppose the system and fight for democracy and socialism, are respected by neither the government nor the law. They cannot legally organize in independent political parties, and efforts at democratic trade-union organizing encounter endless obstacles. They cannot freely exercise either the right to vote or to assemble in the streets and public places, particularly in Mexico City, so as to put forward their views on the political issues before the country or on topics of interest to the masses of people. They suffer repression—murder, imprisonment, kidnapping, threats, and so forth—for dissenting from the official point of view, and for taking political and social action independent of the government. The hundreds of political prisoners are a telling example of this reality. Some have been sentenced to prison, others have simply been kidnapped by the government. Many are under indictment, out of jail on bail or “freed under protest,” with their political rights suspended. More than a few have been persecuted and forced to seek exile abroad.

The exercise of political freedom would begin to become a reality under the following conditions:

1. The passage of a general amnesty law that would free all those imprisoned for political motives, while voiding all political trials and halting all persecution of a similar nature.

2. A halt to the repression of the trade-union, peasant, student, and people's movement in general, a practice carried out by the present government.

3. Elimination of Title II of the Federal Penal Code and of other legislation of this sort that involves political repression.

4. Abolition of the present Federal Election Law and the corresponding laws in the states. Replacement of this law by one that would institute proportional representation in Congress; establish a system of registering political parties not on the basis of their

membership strength and the recording of each member with the secretary of state, but on the basis of their actual political existence; institute an autonomous body to organize the electoral process; form an electoral tribunal independent of the government to certify the elections impartially; and finally, establish guarantees that all citizens may freely exercise the right to vote.

5. Elimination from police and traffic regulations of all obstacles to the right to hold demonstrations and public assemblies, especially in the Federal District [Mexico City and the surrounding area].

6. Respect for the right to strike. Freedom of political affiliation for workers and other unionized sectors, and a ban on the incorporation of unions as such into any political party. Elimination of the government requirement that unions be "registered" and an end to any government interference whatsoever in the trade unions.

7. Elimination of all forms of discrimination against women.

8. Defense of the right of every citizen to hold any creed or religion, or none at all.

II. Means for Improving the Standard of Living of All Workers

Workers and their families experience living conditions that grow worse daily. At the same time the exploiters, especially the most powerful capitalists, not only enjoy all the necessities but live in luxury and riches.

Real wages are declining constantly despite nominal increases because the cost of goods and services, particularly the ones that are most necessary, increase systematically. The share of the social wealth that goes to the workers is constantly diminishing, while the bourgeoisie's share grows. The rate of exploitation of the workers is also increasing. The masses of people live in poverty. Lack of the most basic needs marks their lives.

In addition to the insufficient number of housing units and the unhealthy conditions under which the families of workers and peasants live, rents are very high, amounting to as much as half a worker's wages. As if this were not enough, the leases are weighted heavily in favor of the landlords. If they wish to rent housing, tenants are forced to relinquish their rights. Judges almost always rule against tenants; they are paid off by the landlords.

Unemployment is at a very high level. This includes not only those who have been laid off from a large number of companies but also the lack of jobs for hundreds of thousands of youths, men and women, who enter the labor market each year.

For these reasons the organizations that have joined together put forward the following as objectives of struggle:

1. An across-the-board increase in wages, salaries, and pensions.

2. Reduction of the workweek to forty hours, with fifty-six hours pay.

3. Establishment of a sliding scale of wages, that is, pegging them at regular intervals to the increase in the cost of goods. This must be complemented by genuine price controls, on a national scale and with the participation of consumers.

4. Institution of a rent freeze in public housing and passage of legislation making leases a matter of public concern and containing inalienable rights for tenants. Reinstitution of Section XII of Article 123 of the constitution, a provision that compelled employers to provide comfortable and decent housing for their workers. In sum, a struggle for decent, cheap housing for workers.

5. Subsidies for the unemployed from the government and the employers and coverage for the unemployed under Social Security.²

III. Demands of the Agricultural Workers

Bourgeois agrarian reform in our country has not and cannot resolve the pressing problems of the rural masses. More than half a century after the proclamation of land reform, a great proportion of the best land remains private property in the hands of a few persons. The big estates continue to exist up to this day, either openly or in a concealed fashion. The right of landholders to exemption, reestablished under the government of Miguel Alemán, serves to prevent the handing over of land to the peasants. Those who farm public land held in common [*ejidos*] usually lack water for irrigation and farming machinery, as well as sufficient, readily available, low-cost loans. The trend is toward agribusiness combines, through the intervention of the industrial, commercial, and financial capitalist monopolies. Millions of agricultural workers have neither land nor jobs. Field workers do not receive the minimum wage, and their right to an eight-hour day and a day off each week with pay is not respected. Governmental authorities make a mockery of their right to organize in trade unions. An agricultural crisis reigns in our country.

In face of this situation in Mexican agriculture, the organizations united in the present electoral campaign put forward the following demands:

1. Turn over the land to those who work it. Total elimination of the landed estates and the big capitalist landholdings. Encourage collective farming of the common lands on a voluntary and autonomous basis, under the peasants who work them.

2. Repeal Paragraph III, Section XIV of Article 27 in the constitution, which pro-

2. The national health system, which provides certain medical and hospitalization benefits.

protects landholders who have obtained a certificate of exemption.

3. Reduce exempted property to twenty hectares of irrigated land and its equivalent in land of different value.

4. Priority in the allocation of irrigation water to those who farm land held in common and those who hold fewer than twenty hectares.

5. Sufficient, readily available, low-cost loans for those who farm land held in common, and for those who are genuine small landholders. Supervision of the Banco de Crédito Ejidal by genuine representatives of the peasants.

6. An independent organization of the peasants to oversee the sale of crops and all matters related to production in agriculture, cattle raising, and forestry.

7. Respect for the right of wage workers in the fields to unionize and bargain collectively, as well as for the right to an eight-hour day, one day off a week with pay, a minimum wage, social security, and other benefits established under the federal labor act.

IV. Measures to Reorient Government Economic Policy

The crisis of the Mexican economy is reflected in the low rate of growth in production (in agriculture, the rate of growth is lower than the annual rate of increase in the population); in the enormous and growing deficit in foreign trade; in monetary inflation, which in recent years has reached an annual rate of 25 percent; in the government's budget deficit, which is constantly increasing; and in the foreign debt, which now totals more than 250 billion pesos [about US\$20 billion]. All of this is expressed in the very low standard of living of the masses of people.

In its main aspects the government's economic policy is aimed at protecting the interests of the big bourgeoisie, and more narrowly, those of the financial oligarchy.

Consequently, big business pays less than its proportionate share of taxes; the biggest banks and financial holdings are in reality given the most favorable treatment; and the state enterprises are placed at the service of private capital, turning over to it fuel, electrical energy, railway transport, and credit at prices lower than cost.

In short, the government uses inflation, fiscal policy, state capital, state-guaranteed loans, and other measures to stimulate the most exorbitant profits for national and foreign concerns. As these capitalist profits increase, the income of the masses of people decreases proportionally.

This state of affairs can be confronted, in a way that conforms to the public interest, only by adopting these proposals:

1. A fiscal policy that places a heavy and

graduated tax on the huge profits of foreign capital and on those of the big Mexican capitalists.

2. Control of foreign trade and exchange. Effective means to halt the increase in foreign debt.

3. Nationalization of private banks.

4. Nationalization of basic industries, whether in the hands of national capital, foreign capital, or mixed national and foreign capital, as well as of the food and drug industries. Workers control of these nationalized concerns, which means giving the workers access to their real records so that they can report irregularities thereby revealed and demand rectification of them. This would include such questions as workers' share of the profits, payment of taxes, and the possibility of increasing wages, taking into account increases in productivity, the level of profits, and the cost of living.

5. Reorientation of the state sector of the economy, mainly toward productive activity and putting an end to its role as a prop for private enterprise.

6. A halt to monetary and credit inflation through economic measures that will permit an increase in industrial and agricultural production and a limitation on capitalists' profits.

V. A Foreign Policy of Independence and Peace

Despite the establishment of relations with a growing number of countries, including socialist countries, and its participation in some independent-type actions in Latin America, Mexico's foreign policy continues solidly in the orbit of the United States. It continues to remain part of the Organization of American States and has not renounced the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance. The Mexican government is seeking to attract a greater investment of Yankee capital and encourages the joining of Mexican and American capital, thus increasing the country's dependence. In the field of propaganda, the government defends the fallacy of considering the United States and the Soviet Union in equal terms, viewing both as rich countries opposed to the poor ones, including Mexico.

This foreign policy, indelibly imprinted by the crisis of American domination and the present international situation, is neither anti-imperialist nor fully autonomous. For that the popular masses must struggle for:

1. The immediate incorporation of Mexico in the group of nonaligned countries. This camp is composed of both underdeveloped capitalist countries dependent on imperialism and socialist countries. Their foreign policy fundamentally goes in an anti-imperialist direction. It is for that reason

that the Mexican people must demand the inclusion of our country in this group.

2. The strengthening of relations of economic and political collaboration with the Latin American governments that are fighting for the recovery of their resources and for their full autonomy. This category includes Peru, Panama, and Ecuador, which, in varying degrees, tend to carry out the policy described above.

The withdrawal of Mexico from the OAS. Renunciation of the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance. A policy of action against colonialism in Latin America, supporting in particular the people of Puerto Rico, who are fighting for the national independence of their country; the national self-determination of the people of Belize; the autonomy the peoples of the French colonies of Martinique and Guadeloupe are fighting for; and in general the elimination of colonialism in Latin America.

3. An active defense of world peace, and solidarity with the peoples who are struggling for their independence and against imperialist aggression.

4. Effective measures to put into practice the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States.³ In addition to the general points concerning peaceful coexistence among the various states, particular importance is attached to the right to nationalize foreign investments and to trade with all countries, including those under a socialist system—a right that Mexico must exercise. Diversification of foreign trade and defense of the prices of exported raw materials must be put into practice by Mexico, as called for in the charter. The public interest demands the realization of some of the measures called for in the charter—which is subscribed to by 120 countries, including all those under a socialist system, and rejected only by the major imperialist countries—if it is not to become simply a moral statement rather than a document of practical application.

5. The entry of Mexico into the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), that is, into the association of countries that sell raw materials, in this case oil, to protect price levels and the conditions of sale, would be an anti-imperialist measure. It must be pointed out that Venezuela and Ecuador are discriminated against in foreign trade by the United States for being members of OPEC. Mexico must unite with these countries and strengthen the resistance in all matters that concern the export of this raw material.

6. Expansion of commercial and techno-

3. An economic charter proposed by Mexican President Luis Echeverría Alvarez. Adopted by a vote of 120 to 6 in the United Nations General Assembly December 12, 1974.

logical exchanges with the socialist countries.

7. The establishment of diplomatic, economic, and cultural relations with the People's Republic of Korea, the People's Republic of Mongolia, Laos, the democratic state of Cambodia, the People's Republic of Angola, and the other countries that are on the path of liberating themselves from colonialism.

It should be noted that the Liga Socialista differs with some points in this section. However, the three organizations declare their support to the anti-imperialist struggles of the Latin American peoples and of those of other colonial and semicolonial countries, including the struggle of the MPLA (People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola) against imperialist aggression and the forces of reaction in Africa. They call for Mexico to withdraw from the OAS and to denounce the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance. The three organizations also declare their defense of the Soviet Union and other socialist states against any imperialist attack and call for Mexico to establish diplomatic, commercial, and cultural relations with the aforementioned countries.

VI. Democratization of Education

The backwardness of our people, which stems from capitalist exploitation and the country's dependence on Yankee imperialism, is shown in the field of education, to take just one example. There are millions of functional illiterates, the vast majority of whom have not even been able to finish primary school, while only a tiny minority of those who enter secondary school or the university manage to attain a professional career. The children of workers and peasants are practically excluded from higher education.

Education in general is at a low scientific and technical level. It is carried out in an authoritarian and undemocratic way, guided by the interests of the bourgeoisie. The national educational system is in crisis. The organizations that have joined together in this electoral campaign propose to fight for the following:

1. Education for all Mexicans, compulsory and free of charge up to the ninth grade (primary and secondary school).

2. Total elimination of illiteracy. A state monopoly of education at all levels and the elimination of private schools.

3. Autonomy for the university and for all other institutes and schools of this level even if they are not called universities. An end to authoritarian structures in all higher education (universities, institutes, and industrial and agricultural technical schools). Replacement of such structures by forms of self-management exercised by the teachers, students, and workers. Assistance benefits

for students, such as free room and board at school.

4. Professional, economic, and social improvements for the teaching profession at all levels.

5. Unification of the entire national educational system and institution of long-range planning in education. Jobs for all who come out of the secondary schools.

The above represents only the fundamental points that make up the broad electoral platform of the forces of the left that have united in electoral political action. The objectives of struggle they set forward can be won only by a united and organized movement of the masses, by the independent action of the working class, and by an

alliance between the working class, the peasantry, and other sectors of the people. Some points represent demands on the present bourgeois government. Others, which affect above all the property and economic interests of big business, will only be fulfilled with a revolutionary change in which political power passes to the hands of the working people, under the leadership of the working class, and with a reorganization of society leading toward socialism.

The Partido Comunista Mexicano, Movimiento de Organización Socialista, and Liga Socialista call on the working class, the peasants, the students, all manual and clerical workers, men and women, the youth, to hold this platform high, to fight

for it, and to join together in a great independent force opposed to the dependent capitalist system and to the government, to fight the reactionary and profascist forces—so as to emerge from the election campaign stronger in forces and in social and political influence.

Political freedom to advance toward democracy and socialism!

Mexico City
January 12, 1976

Central Committee of the Partido Comunista Mexicano. Political Committee of the Liga Socialista. Secretariat of the National Committee of the Movimiento de Organización Socialista.

INTERVIEW WITH MEXICAN CP LEADER

[As part of its coverage of the Mexican presidential election, scheduled for July 4, the Mexico City weekly *Revista de Revistas* interviewed leaders of various political groups, publishing their remarks in its May 5 issue.

[Of particular interest is the interview with Arnoldo Martínez Verdugo, general secretary of the Mexican Communist party. His remarks help clarify the joint electoral platform signed January 12 by the Central Committee of the Mexican Communist party, the Political Committee of the Socialist League (Militant Tendency), and the Secretariat of the National Committee of the Movement for Socialist Organization.]

political crisis like the one he describes could evolve toward either of two outcomes. "One is a democratic solution; the other is a hardened authoritarianism. And there are forces seeking the latter solution."

To orient the situation toward the first alternative, he adds, the main thing is that not only can the forces on the left be united but also the democratic forces. The former he defines as those that have a revolutionary program and tactics. The latter, he says, are those seeking to reform the system in a positive way, in a democratic way.

"This is the plan," he said, "of what at our last congress we called a policy of broad alliances. The fundamental role in it, clearly, is played by the forces of the left, which have to be the key to an authentic democratic transformation in our country. But we specify that other forces and institutions must also be taken into account.

"Among these, for example, we include the forces that are rejuvenating the church. For any meaningful change in the country, they must be taken very much into account and be included in any strategy for the formation of a new bloc of forces, which is what the left should aspire to."

Martínez Verdugo also mentioned among those that should be considered in a policy of broad alliances, as proposed by the PCM, the university, the "patriotic democratic" forces in the army, and even some progressive sectors of businessmen.

"In such a plan would you include some elements or sectors of the PRI?"¹ he was asked.

"Yes," he quickly responded. "There are some tendencies in the PRI that can be considered to be an official left and that are now becoming reactivated. They must be taken into account. They too can provide important support. Rafael Galván is a member of the PRI and nonetheless it has been possible to forge a relationship of unity with him in the workers movement. Of course, I am not talking about all of the PRI."

The PCM general secretary went into the situation of the Mexican left, which, he said, "is still passing through a period of fragmentation that has caused much harm." He thinks the main factor that has prevented unification is to be found in the tactical conceptions held by some sectors.

"Fundamentally," he said, "it seems to me that the difference lies in the attitude taken toward the governing bloc. For example, the PPS² sticks to the tactical concept that caused the failure of the left starting in 1940; that is, the so-called 'patriotic front,' as they formulate it. This consists of unifying the democratic and left forces around the government and under the leadership of the government.

"I think what is wrong with that tactic is it does not take into account the changes that have taken place in the governing bloc, above all starting with the Miguel Alemán government.³ It does not take into

2. Partido Popular Socialista (People's Socialist party).

3. Miguel Alemán was president of Mexico from 1946 to 1952.

1. Partido Revolucionario Institucional (Institutional Revolutionary party), the ruling bourgeois party.

Arnoldo Martínez Verdugo, general secretary of the Partido Comunista Mexicano, said:

"In face of the political crisis our country is undergoing, we think that unity of the left is the formula through which all those who seek a democratic solution to such crises can wield more effective influence. We see a very clear motivation that should encourage all people on the left, all those who are for democracy, to find points of agreement and bring to bear the weight of this historic current in the search for a democratic solution."

The Communist leader insists that a

account that the interests of the big bourgeoisie began to prevail in the government. Nor does it take into account that state capitalism began to be transformed into monopoly capitalism, above all from the time when the state sector placed itself at the service of the private monopolies. And this meant that the Mexican state no longer represented the interests it was able to represent during the Cárdenas government,⁴ for example.

"In our opinion, what the left should propose now is a struggle for a democratic leadership of the state, for a democratic leadership in national affairs, which requires that the forces on the left join together under their own leadership and not depend on the state apparatus."

Martínez Verdugo makes it clear that forming a grouping of the left like that

4. Lázaro Cárdenas was president from 1934 to 1940.

would not mean the adoption of a sectarian position. The unified left, he explains, could establish effective alliances, agreements with government forces, "so long as it acted in accordance with its own policy, its own tactics, and its own strategy, and not as an auxiliary of the government, which is how the government would like to have the democratic and left forces act.

"As long as the concept is not extended of the left advancing its own alternatives, its own solutions to the economic and political problems of the country, and as long as the left does not act autonomously, it will be difficult to unite the left," he warned.

Then he bemoaned the fact that due advantage has not been taken of the conjuncture presented by the presidential succession.

"Faced with the presidential campaign, the left had big possibilities to present an alternative and to utilize its strength.

However, it ended up neutralized because the PPS decided to follow its same tactic of supporting the official candidates, and the PST⁵ opted for a similar position."

"Concretely, what formula does the PCM propose to achieve a unification of the left?"

"Even now, despite the different positions adopted by the forces on the left toward the electoral campaign, we think an effort can be made so that before the campaign ends the forces of the left will succeed in drawing up a common program. To do that, we suggest the convocation of a national assembly of left forces. That would be a start."

Finally, Martínez Verdugo made the pronouncement:

"When the left really unites, there will be chances for a change in this country."

5. Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores (Socialist Workers party).

Appendix II

Letter from Walter (for the United Secretariat) to Ricardo

July 19, 1976

Dear Comrade Ricardo,

The U Sec meeting of May 1976 instructed the Bureau to write to you to ask some clarifications about formulas contained in your article "Reply to an Essay on Sectarianism", before deciding whether this article should be published in IP or in an English language internal bulletin.

Let us start by saying that you should in any case change the reference in the first paragraph to IP being published by the SWP. This is not the case, and could, in addition, create legal problems for the American comrades.

We agree with you that a revolutionary programme is in and by itself *insufficient* to qualify a group as revolutionists. Active intervention in the class struggle, and intervention in such a way as to further objectively the cause of emancipation of the working class and all the oppressed masses, is an indispensable prerequisite for such a qualification too. In other words: the programme must at least start to be implemented in the living class struggle, a struggle for its implementation must begin.

However, we think it wrong to jump from this statement to the conclusion that possessing a correct programme could be divorced from the need for intervention in the class struggle and implantation in the working class. The two aspects of a revolutionary organization *complement* each other. Without a correct programme, a revolutionary intervention in the class struggle is impossible. Without

revolutionary intervention in the class struggle, the value of the programme is degraded to that of a ritual text. To *counterpose* the programme to the active intervention is as wrong as to counterpose the active intervention in the class struggle to the programme.

Do you agree with this? If not, why? If so, don't you think it would be wise to correct some of your formulations, in order not to allow any misinterpretation of your thought, which allows your opponents to shift the debate towards artificial new issues?

Likewise you are right to state that electoral alliances (as well as any other form of "blocs") with working class organisations are not in and by themselves contrary to revolutionary Marxist principles. They are acceptable, if their programmatic basis is correct, and if they serve the purpose of furthering the class struggle in a concrete situation, by helping the mobilization of the working class, or at least of some of its advanced layers, around the key issues of class politics with which it is objectively confronted. Obviously, such alliances can never be concluded on the full programme of revolutionary Marxism. Therefore, the revolutionary Marxists must always retain their freedom to propagandize that full programme, and to criticize the inconsistencies, weaknesses and opportunism of their temporary allies, when (and especially!) during such electoral periods.

We believe therefore that the accusation directed against you that you have created a "basis for a Popular Front" or

"declared the Stalinists to be revolutionists", are not confirmed by the text of the electoral platform you signed, nor by your general behavior during the election campaign. They smell of demagogy and can be dismissed as an exercise of blind factionalism.

However, some of the formulations of your article, and some of the attitudes of the LS during the election campaign, create ambiguities around other issues. You say that the electoral platform stresses the unity of the struggle for democracy and for socialism, and add that this implies a contradiction with the classical Stalinist concept of the revolution by stages. This is correct. The leaders of the CPM who signed that platform have already been charged with "concessions" (if not capitulation) to "Trotskyism" on that basis. This is a programmatic concession made by the Stalinists to the Trotskyists, and not vice-versa as your critics assume. You also point out correctly that the Stalinists will pay a price for this in the future.

But when dealing with CPs like the Mexican CP, we are dealing with organizations trained in opportunism, i.e., dismissing as secondary considerations about programme and programmatic concessions, whether to the "left" or to the "right". Therefore, for them to sign a platform does not mean so much. This is the balance sheet of the whole past experience with Stalinism, which we should not dismiss lightly. So it is imprudent, to say the least, to write "Whoever stands consistently on this is a revolutionist and our ally", without precisising (1) That what is decisive is *consistent practice* (especially in a prerevolutionary period) and not just signature of platforms; and (2) that we exclude that a party with a record like the one of the Mexican CP could suddenly become qualitatively different from what it has been in the past, at least as long as it has not gone through a basic shake-up and a tumultuous internal upheaval, discussion and split.

Thus, to quote what the old leader of the CPM told you as "proof" that they will never conclude an alliance with some sector of the bourgeoisie is naive, unfounded and miseducates your own comrades and readers, as well as those sympathizers of the CPM whose ears you have caught through the common election campaign (the possibility to make oneself heard in that area is, of course,

an entirely positive outcome of your campaign. But now everything depends upon what you are telling them!). As long as the CP has not basically and in practice broken with Stalinism and the two-stage theory (which it has not up to this day, and which involves much more than signing an electoral platform with you, making some programmatic concessions to Trotskyism), it is most likely that at a moment when a mass upsurge will make this credible, realistic and useful for some sectors of the Mexican ruling class, the leaders of that party will indeed again offer a class collaborationist bloc to such sectors, as they have done in the past.

You could, of course, at that moment use their present statements and formulations against them, and make gains among their members and followers, provided you yourself do not create illusions in future developments of that party. That is why we advise you to eliminate all ambiguity on that question in your current explanations, to your own members and sympathizers as well as to the working class at large.

Finally, we have the impression that, carried away by the "unitary" momentum of the common election campaign (from which, obviously, big gains could be made from a propagandistic and organizational point of view), you have not sufficiently used the occasion to conduct the *independent Trotskyist defense of our full programme* forward during the campaign. We understand that this needs a lot of tactical flexibility and astuteness, in order to avoid looking like sectarians in the eyes of thousands of advanced workers who were reached by the election campaign. Nevertheless it is an absolute duty for a revolutionary organization not to subordinate everything to the purely current (and in this case propagandistic-electoral) aspect of its activity, and to remain capable of defending its own political and programmatic independence. This also pays in the long run, especially when (as is unavoidable) the CPM will make a "right" turn after its current "left" turn.

Please let us have your answer before September 5, so that we can deal with this matter at the September session of the U Sec.

For the United Secretariat/Walter

Joint Appeal of PdUP and AO

[The following joint appeal was published in the June 24, 1976, issue of *Inprecor*. The introduction is by *Inprecor*.]

* * *

On May 30 Avanguardia Operaia and the Partito di Unità Proletaria per il Comunismo (PDUP), the two organizations that originally founded Democrazia Proletaria (DP—Proletarian Democracy), the electoral bloc established for the regional and administrative elections of June 15, 1975 (see *INPRECOR*, No. 30, July 3, 1975), issued a common platform to serve as the basis for DP's campaign in the current elections. This platform was then to be discussed by the organizations included on the electoral slate bearing the DP designation.

On June 8 *Quotidiano dei Lavoratori*, daily newspaper of Avanguardia Operaia, published a document including very large sections of the initial platform. It was signed by four organizations: AO, PDUP, the Movimento dei Lavoratori per il Socialismo (MLS—Movement of Workers for Socialism, a Mao-Stalinist tendency), and the Lega dei Comunisti (League of Communists, an organization created in 1972 by the fusion of the League of Communists of Tuscany and the Rome-based Workers Unity group).

This document was not published in *Il Manifesto*, the daily of the PDUP! *Lotta Continua* has asked to sign it, but had not yet done so as of June 18. The four signing organizations explained the meaning and purpose of this platform as follows:

"The line expressed here and the objectives presented are those around which DP must develop its propaganda during the last days of the electoral campaign and on which DP will have to put the emphasis after the campaign. In addition, it is a concrete exposure of the distortions of the Communist party press, which is seeking to present the DP as an assembly of heterogeneous forces having no common orientation and united only by electoral pressures. For this reason, the document we are publishing here, which must also be distributed as a national DP leaflet, should be used as much as possible not only in political discussion, but also as an instrument of propaganda."

We are publishing below major excerpts from this text. Deletions are marked by ellipsis; the subtitles appear in the original.

It is finally possible to put an end to the Christian Democratic regime; it is possible to open a new phase, to place the forces that represent the working class and the

popular masses at the head of the country, to initiate a phase of struggle for power to those who labor.

This is the meaning of the June 20 elections: to defeat the Christian Democracy not only in order to replace the political personnel of the government with new and honest people, but to give life to a new and different mode of governing, to a system in which the government will be under the constant check and pressure of the mass movement and will have a program based on the needs of the masses and not on the exigencies of capital.

Democrazia Proletaria is the only electoral formation that clearly poses the objective of providing a positive way out of the crisis of the regime through a government of the left in which the historic parties of the working class, the PCI and the PSI, will have decisive weight, a government open to Catholic forces that free themselves of the domination of the political Catholicism of the Christian Democracy, open above all to the movements of struggle within society, whose strength can impose a program based on the popular interest and devoted to its realization.

Democrazia Proletaria considers illusory and dangerous the proposals that have been advanced to somehow assure the continuation of the Christian Democratic presence in the government. The proposal of the PCI for a coalition government which would see the initiative of the left paralyzed and the workers movement torn apart would thereby allow freedom of maneuver to the capitalist power in the country and would leave room for the reorganization of the right. The proposal of the PSI, once the smoke screen is blown away, boils down to a DC-PSI government somehow acceptable to and tolerated by the PCI. Regardless of the many protestations to the contrary, this would be simply a new edition of the center-left.

How to respond to the present crisis

The crisis of the Christian Democracy is the fruit not only of its own internal disintegration and more generally of the crisis of imperialism, but also of the impetuous movement of struggle which began in the factories and has since extended, in new and original forms, to so many aspects of social life. It is out of this movement that the need arises today for a government of the left that would prevent the Christian Democracy from doing further damage to the economy and civil life of our country, from organizing financial terrorism, and from seeking obscurantist and reactionary revenge in the field of community life. To forcefully and coherently confront both immediate problems and those of long-term perspective, a substantial turn is indispensable, a break with the political system that has reigned for thirty years.

What is necessary today, through the June 20 vote and through uninterrupted pressure of struggle, is an advance of the left, of the whole left. But within this general advance a clear political qualification is necessary, and only Democrazia Proletaria is capable of offering it. The advance of the left must not conclude with compromises that somehow perpetuate the Christian Democratic regime, but must have an outlet: the full assumption by the united left of the responsibility of running the government of the state on the basis of a program that accords with the objectives expressed by the movement in struggle. . . .

The only possible and necessary response is to agree unhesitatingly to confront the difficulties, to respond to the blackmail with the mobilization of the masses, and to have a clear action program both for perspectives and for the immediate future.

What distinguishes Democrazia Proletaria from the Communist and Socialist parties is not only the objective of the government of the left, but also the sort of program and mobilization that must back the program up. The context in which the government of the left may arise, in fact, finds all the centers of economic and administrative decision-making in the hands of the capitalists. Only constant mass pressure can bring the government of the left to reject any role of normalization of the workers' struggles and of stabilization of the capitalist system; only thus is it possible to initiate popular control over the decision-making centers in order to open the road to power for the working class.

Our objectives

On the *international level* the objectives of Democrazia Proletaria are:

1. Out of NATO and for a nonaligned policy that achieves a closer connection with the countries of the third world and favors the construction of a new international order. Rejection of the counterposed blocs headed by the superpowers and of the increase in military spending that results from their existence. Withdrawal of the American and Soviet fleets from the Mediterranean.

2. Initiation of a new international division of labor in which Italy establishes economic relations not only with the industrialized countries but also and ever increasingly with the countries of the third world, guaranteeing trade conditions that favor the development of the more backward countries.

3. Radical redrafting of Common Market agricultural policy so as to be able to pursue an independent development of agriculture, limiting the penetration of the multinationals and thus beginning to balance the agricultural deficit; support to public spending and credit with this objective in view.

4. Introduce elements of selection and control of imports, which, while maintaining the market open to abroad, prevent speculation by the big importers, limit luxury and superfluous imports, and guarantee an adequate quantity and egalitarian distribution of mass popular consumer goods as well as raw materials for the productive apparatus.

5. Link foreign investment (of the multinationals) to precise imperatives of job stability and intervene with nationalizations against arbitrary shutdowns.

On the *internal level*, Democrazia Proletaria proposes:

1. Absolute priority to the objective of full employment on the basis of intransigent defense of current employment by means of a ban on layoffs and the intervention of the state and local state bodies to prevent the closing down of productive units.

Expansion of the productive apparatus, directing control and utilization of private industrial investment, credit, and public spending toward this objective. Private and public productive orientation on a priority basis toward the development of agriculture, production of mass popular consumer goods (thus tending to substitute for the greater part of imports), socially useful services (housing, hospitals, schools, transport), initiatives to clean up the big southern cities. All this must be done by implementing a policy that strives for full employment and the elimination of the waste of human and material resources, thus also modifying the very quality of collective needs.

2. Development of workers and people's control over working conditions (against poisonous conditions, use of the labor force with the perspectives of a radical challenging of capitalist organization of labor), control over the search for and assignment of jobs. Extension of the 150 hours (the yearly amount of paid time for workers education), not only in the direction of the transformation of the schools, but also as a basis for concretely challenging the technical division of labor. Intransigent defense of individual and social real wages and introduction of price support for indispensable consumer goods and to assure adequate quantity. Drastic reduction of profits as a decisive factor in this policy.

3. Mobilization of the local bodies and peripheral democratic structures (factory councils, zonal councils, neighborhood councils, etc.) in support of a drastic reorganization of the fiscal system hinged around direct and progressive taxation. Only thus is it possible to bring the methods of assessment up to date, strike drastically at the big tax evaders, and block the flight of capital. . . .

4. Maximum broadening of democracy beginning with full implementation within the sphere of the present constitutional order. Abolition of the fascist and antidemocratic laws. . . .

Democratic rights in the armed forces and the police. Opening of the magistrate system at the local level and the local state bodies to popular representation.

Democratic and popular control over the means of mass communication (public and private radio and television, freedom of the press, etc.).

5. Commitment to accept the demands raised by the feminist movement, understanding the male-female contradiction as an expression of political conflict and creating the conditions for the maximum generalization of struggles, of independent organization of women, and of the demands they themselves express (control of their own bodies and lives, and in this framework, medical care for women, free abortion on demand, clinics controlled by women).

6. Commitment to support all those movements (students, youth, women, etc.) tending to modify social-ideological relations (in culture, morals, and clerical and reactionary ideology).

This battle, which tends to be today's harbinger of a deep proletarian cultural revolution, is a qualifying element, an essential precondition for the political, social, and economic transformations now on the agenda.

Some of the above-mentioned objectives will have to be pursued immediately:

1) Political control of the banking system in order to reduce the export of capital to a minimum and to direct credit toward employment and development.

2) Immediate removal of corrupt and reactionary elements from the main decision-making nerve centers, especially in the banks, foreign trade, and the financial administration.

3) Initiation of an investment policy aimed at the sectors listed as priorities.

4) Ban on layoffs.

5) Redrafting of the restrictive clauses of the Common Market, especially as regards agriculture.

6) Price supports for large-scale consumer goods.

7) Elimination of inequalities in pay scales.

8) Urgent measures and rank-and-file mobilization against tax evasion.

9) Repeal of the Reale laws and the fascist codes.

But no immediate measure, no matter how modest, can be realized without an extensive and deep popular mobilization. This is even more true for the medium- and long-term measures. Democrazia Proletaria upholds the necessity of unreservedly supporting the mass movements that, beginning from popular and proletarian needs and expectations, aim at a modification of the relationship of class forces, at the construction of organs of control and contestation of capitalist power.

Develop workers control

It is exactly these instruments of workers and people's control (workers control in factories over the organization of labor and investment, tenants' control over housing assignments, workers control over the schools of the 150 hours, popular control of reconstruction of Friuli (site of the recent devastating earthquake), etc.) which prepare and bring closer the real conquest of power by the masses.

Democrazia Proletaria firmly supports a strategy and tactics that constantly lead toward the unification of the proletariat of the big and middle-sized factories with the layers of workers whose jobs are marginal and precarious, with the great forces of the unemployed, with the

enormous mass of people who stand outside the labor market only because they know they cannot find work. Unemployed youth, whether intellectuals or not, emigrant workers returning to the country, the great mass of workers laid off by the small industries, and the great number of workers whose jobs are precarious are all, together with the workers, technicians, and those whose jobs are stable, the protagonists of the transformation of society. For this reason, Democrazia Proletaria, which sees the trade union as the essential intermediary between the mass movement and the government of the left, considers itself fundamentally committed to struggle for the unions to be linked to the masses and not to operate as instruments of social stabilization. The unions must place themselves at the head of struggles and must carry through with their unitary reconstitution, begun with the formation of councils; they must thus become ever more capable of drawing together and not curbing the upsurges that arise from the movement itself.

Democrazia Proletaria, while distinguishing itself from the other left parties by its different analysis of the phase through which we are passing and by its different political desires in regard to the struggle for socialism, is committed to putting forward a policy of unity of the left within the movement and within the institutions; it addresses its proposals (and it is open to discussing them) to all the politico-social components of the movement of workers, in the profound conviction that the sphere of revolutionaries includes not only the vanguard but also, as a concrete potentiality, the broad masses.

Democrazia Proletaria fights for a government of the left not as a pure cover for the movement of struggle or as an opportunity to expose the revisionist line, but as an active instrument in a general process of transformation of society. Democrazia Proletaria will feel itself committed to support this government of the left and at the same time to stimulate it through struggles for ever more advanced objectives. It thus puts itself forward as an independent force within a unitary framework. A vote for Democrazia Proletaria is a vote for the renovation of the entire workers movement, for the construction of an advanced line that begins from the needs and experiences of the masses in order to place socialism on the agenda, as is possible today.

Statement on Portuguese Elections by United Secretariat Members Claudio, Duret, Fourier, Georges, Jones, Rudi, Walter, Werner

[The following statement was made at the July 3-4, 1976, meeting of the United Secretariat.]

* * *

Neither by the social forces which it represented or which supported it, nor by the objective function it played in the current phase of the class struggle in Portugal, nor by the contents of its political platforms, can the candidature of Otelo de Carvalho in the presidential elections be considered a bourgeois one. Carvalho did not represent, nor was he supported by, any bourgeois political party or organization, or any sector of the Portuguese or international bourgeoisie, or any sector of the Portuguese bourgeois officer corps. His programme, while inadequate or wrong on many questions, contains general anticapitalist planks which make it unacceptable to the bourgeoisie as a class: a clear opposition to private property; a stand in favor of generalized nationalization of the means of production; a stand in favor of generalized [workers] control; a stand in favor of the defense of the workers interests against those of the employers; a stand in favor of strict independence of the trade-unions from the state. No bourgeois political force anywhere in the world defends such a programme or could defend such a programme, even in a "demagogic" stance.

There are many ambiguities and wrong positions in Otelo de Carvalho's platform, especially with regard to the bourgeois nature of the state, the army, and the Constitution; but on all these issues, the CP—not to speak of the SP—platform shares these ambiguities and errors. In fact, the only political organized forces which supported [the] Carvalho candidacy were centrist working class organizations, a fact which reflects itself in the Carvalho political platform.

Obviously, the decision of the centrists to try—essentially for electoral opportunist reasons—to concentrate the protest vote of the working class against the austerity plan of the bourgeoisie and the social democrats (shamefully supported by the CP leaders) behind a petty-bourgeois demagogue is in itself regrettable, reflects the unprincipled nature of the centrists' politics, should be criticized sharply by the revolutionary Marxists, and gives

the Carvalho candidature an ambiguous and contradictory character. Carvalho's proclamations of "independence" from his "supporters" (at least in the first phase of his election campaign), his "non-party" statements, are part of the same contradictory and combined character of his candidature. Revolutionary Marxists should not fail to criticize all these positions, all the more so as they correspond to certain weaknesses of the class consciousness of the Portuguese working class, still partially marked by 48 years of corporatist regime.

In addition, one should not underestimate the dynamics of these contradictory poles of the Carvalho candidature, with a clear radicalization during the final phase of the election campaign, a campaign characterized by the shameful support given to Eanes by the main working class party, the SP, and by the no less shameful refusal of the CP candidate to attack Eanes and his programme openly. Therefore, in spite of all its weaknesses and contradictions, the Carvalho candidature cannot be declared a "bourgeois" one without falling into schematic formalism, reducing the class nature of a candidate exclusively to his personal history or to a judgment of his individual character.

The objective function of the Carvalho candidature in the given phase of class struggle in Portugal, was not to serve a political maneuver of the bourgeoisie—no sector of that bourgeoisie is opposed to the austerity plan. It was to express, in an indirect and partially inadequate way, the wish of an important sector (in certain places even the majority) of the working class to *oppose* the course of *de facto* acceptance of the bourgeois austerity measures, in which the SP and CP leaderships were engaged from the beginning of the election campaign. If "class independence" means independence from the political designs and interests of the capitalist class, Carvalho was no less and no more independent from these than Pato, not to speak about Soares.

Therefore, we reject the characterization of this candidature as a bourgeois one, and we consider that the question whether to give critical support or not to that candidature was a purely tactical question for the Portuguese Trotskyists to decide, and not a matter of principle.

Statement on the Mexican Elections by Claudio, Duret, Fourier, Georges, Rudi, Walter, and Werner

[The following statement was made at the July 3-4, 1976, meeting of the United Secretariat.]

* * *

1.) We consider that the election campaign of the Liga Socialista, while correctly based upon critical support to the CP presidential candidate—the only working class candidate in that election—made too little criticisms of the CP political line, i.e. did not use all the opportunities created for the defense of the full programme of revolutionary Marxism in Mexico. Critical support of opportunist working class parties and (or) candidates should always be accompanied by propaganda for our full program.

2.) This weak side of the Liga Socialista election campaign was at least partially the result of the electoral agreement with the CP, to have a common election platform. While in principle the conclusion of a common minimum election platform corresponding to key problems

figures being given open or backhanded support by the SP and CP leaders, behind another military figure, thus bolstering the "leftist" side of the armed forces.

3. Carvalho's Platform

Carvalho's platform is a clear case of a clear-cut bourgeois platform. It is a platform in favor of the bourgeois state and against the working class. It is a platform in favor of the bourgeois state and against the working class. It is a platform in favor of the bourgeois state and against the working class.

of the class struggle in a given country at a given stage is admissible, we do not think that this was called for in Mexico at this moment with the CP, nor that the adopted common platform was sufficient to give an answer to the key problems with which the Mexican toiling masses are confronted today.

3.) On the other hand, we believe that the attempts of the Mexican and international minority faction to condemn the LS election policies as "capitulation to Stalinism," and to present the common election platform as Stalinist, are factional exaggerations which did not help clarify the political issues but were intended only to transform the debate around the LS election into cheap factional point scoring. An election platform which in a country like Mexico includes neither the revolution by stages, nor the bloc with the national bourgeoisie, nor peaceful coexistence, nor socialism in one country, cannot be called Stalinism. Healy-Lambert type of witchhunts should not become substitutes for serious political discussions inside the F.I.

Statement by the Leninist Trotskyist Faction on the 1976 Portuguese Presidential Elections

[The general line of the following statement was approved by the Steering Committee of the Leninist Trotskyist Faction at its meeting of August 1976.]

* * *

The Internationalist Communist League (LCI—Liga Comunista Internacionalista) and the Revolutionary Workers Party (PRT—Partido Revolucionário dos Trabalhadores) had originally attempted to run a common candidate for the Portuguese presidential elections held June 20, 1976. When this candidacy fell through on the eve of the opening of the official election campaign period, both organizations decided to call for a vote for Pato, the Communist Party candidate, while opposing Pato's program. They maintained this position throughout the campaign. The press of those sections and sympathizing organizations outside Portugal which hew to the line of the International Majority Tendency (IMT) at first supported the position of the LCI and the PRT.

However, a shift occurred toward the end of the campaign, and an important sector of the IMT came out in favor of a vote for Major Otelo Saraiva de Carvalho. Typical and representative was the position taken in *Rouge*. In the first stages of the campaign, articles by IMT leader Charles Michaloux opposed voting for Carvalho, and supported the LCI-PRT position. Toward the end of the campaign, articles appeared that seemed to give favorable coverage to Carvalho's rallies, and then a public debate was held in *Rouge* in which top leaders of the IMT took the position of calling for a vote for Carvalho, differing on whether to call for a vote for him alone, or for a vote for either Carvalho or Pato.

At the July 1976 meeting of the United Secretariat, after the elections were over, leaders of the IMT submitted a statement which concluded: ". . .we reject the characterization of this [Carvalho's] candidature as a bourgeois one, and we consider that the question whether to give critical support or not to that candidature was a purely tactical question for the Portuguese Trotskyists to decide, and not a matter of principle." [See p. 20.]

The thesis of the IMT leaders was expressed in the first sentence of their statement: "Neither by the social forces which it represented or which supported it, nor by the objective function it played in the current phase of the class struggle in Portugal, nor by the contents of its political platforms, can the candidature of Otelo de Carvalho in the presidential elections be considered a bourgeois one." We shall take up these three assertions about Major Carvalho's campaign.

1. What 'Social Forces' Did Carvalho's Campaign Represent?

The IMT leaders' statement says, "Carvalho did not represent, nor was he supported by, any bourgeois political party or organization, any sector of the Portuguese or the international bourgeoisie, or any sector of the Portuguese bourgeois officer corps." The "only political organized forces which supported [the] Carvalho candidacy were centrist working class organizations. . . ."

It is true that no significant sector of the bourgeoisie called for a vote for Carvalho. This does not exhaust the question, however. Not all capitalist candidates receive such support in any particular election, yet they remain capitalist candidates.

It is also true that none of the bourgeois parties called for a vote for Carvalho.

But contrary to what the IMT leaders say, Carvalho has, from the beginning of the Portuguese revolution, represented a wing of the officer corps, of the Armed Forces Movement (MFA). After the April 25, 1974, coup, the MFA held essential power and preserved capitalist class rule in Portugal in the face of the massive upsurge of the workers and exploited masses. Functioning in a Bonapartist manner, the MFA was a bourgeois political instrument.

The leading bodies representing the officer corps have been modified, and their composition changed, in response to the changing political situation and struggle among the contenders for the role of strongman. Different wings of the officers corps took different political stances, and individual officers, like Carvalho, changed their positions in the changing situation. The MFA, and the Council of the Revolution, which the MFA appointed, have combined repression and concessions, and the utilization of socialist demagoguery to maintain support of their continued rule. Carvalho came to be associated with the wing that put forward the most left-demagogic "MFA-People's Power" position to bolster his bid for power.

The Portuguese bourgeoisie currently does not need to resort to the option represented by Carvalho. But his candidacy helped keep this option for the bourgeoisie alive, in case a future upsurge of the masses again threatens capitalist rule. This must have been an aspect of the calculations of the General Staff, in their decision to give Carvalho the permission he needed to run in the elections.

The fact that "centrist working class organizations" supported Carvalho in no way changes the nature of his candidacy, any more than the support of the Socialist Party leaders changed that of General Eanes. Carvalho's candidacy was that of an aspiring Bonaparte, backed by a

section of the officer corps—a section which, while greatly weakened in the aftermath of November 25, and partially driven underground, still exists and is still ready to take command should the opportunity arise.

2. The 'Objective Function' of Carvalho's Candidacy

"The objective function of the Carvalho candidature," the IMT leaders state, "in the given phase of class struggle in Portugal, was not to serve a political maneuver of the bourgeoisie—no sector of that bourgeoisie is opposed to the austerity plan. It was to express, in an indirect and partially inadequate way, the wish of an important sector (in certain places even the majority) of the working class to oppose the course of *de facto* acceptance of the bourgeois austerity measures, in which the SP and CP leaderships were engaged from the beginning of the election campaign." [Emphasis in original.]

The fact that many workers may have voted for Carvalho as a protest against the austerity measures that the SP and CP leaderships had gone along with has nothing whatever to do with the class nature of Carvalho's candidature. Often in bourgeois elections, when the working class has no real working-class alternative through which to express its needs and desires, voting for this or that capitalist candidate may reflect those needs and desires in distorted form.

In addition, to imply that the Carvalho campaign itself was opposed to the bourgeoisie's austerity program is false and a cover-up of the demagogue's actual position. While Carvalho claimed to stand for the interests of the workers against the capitalists, and, in the last few weeks of the campaign, criticized Eanes as being a tool of the capitalist offensive against the workers, he proposed his own version of the austerity program, dressed up in "socialist" rhetoric. For example, the June 9 issue of the Lisbon daily *A Capital* carried an interview with Carvalho, in which he said: "The Chinese have been able to work seventy hours a week. I don't know if I will ask for the same thing. That depends on the conditions we experience. I don't know if forty hours are sufficient, or if we can ask for seventy or more. During the revolutionary process, I worked up to ninety hours a week."

The June 22 issue of the London *Financial Times* noted that "the only presidential candidate who has come close to spelling out how harsh a future lies ahead has been Otelo Saraiva de Carvalho. But he believes in some sort of siege economy to resolve the problem."

From the beginning of the revolution, all wings of the MFA, including those represented by Gonçalves and Carvalho, have agreed on this one point: The workers must bear the brunt of the economic crisis. And not just in words: In the spring of 1975, Carvalho's military security forces intervened in a metalworkers' meeting to beat up supporters of the forty-hour week. Carvalho simply dressed up the bourgeoisie's austerity program with "socialist" rhetoric and appealed to the example set by the Stalinists in the bureaucratized workers states.

The real "objective function" of the Carvalho campaign has already been indicated: to keep open the option for a shift to a more left-demagogic Bonapartist solution if that should appear to be a necessary gamble for the bourgeoisie in the future, and to corral the support of a section of the militant workers and youth, who balked at the military

figures being given open or backhanded support by the SP and CP leaders, behind another military figure, thus bolstering the "leading role" of the armed forces.

3. Carvalho's Platform

The IMT leaders' statement claims that Carvalho's platform "contains general anticapitalist planks which make it unacceptable to the bourgeoisie as a class: a clear opposition to private property; a stand in favor of generalized [workers] control; a stand in favor of the defense of the workers interests against those of the employers; a stand in favor of strict independence of the trade unions from the state." In addition, "There are many ambiguities and wrong positions . . . especially with regard to the bourgeois nature of the state, the army and the Constitution. . . ."

The IMT leaders assert: "No bourgeois political force anywhere in the world defends such a programme or could defend such a programme, even in a 'demagogic' stance." This is false. There are no particular demands, or set of demands, which, if included in a candidate's formal platform, automatically make his candidature nonbourgeois. Bonapartist and even fascist demagogues may utilize particular socialist slogans to win support. As the example of Portugal itself demonstrated, even the invocation of "soviets" can be used to divert the development of the class struggle.

Carvalho's actual program can be seen from his practice. As part of the ruling group until September 1975, he helped preserve capitalist class rule in Portugal. Forces under his direct command were utilized against strikes, and against the democratic rights of the workers.

The IMT leaders object to looking at Carvalho's political history: ". . . the Carvalho candidature cannot be declared a 'bourgeois' one without falling into schematic formalism, reducing the class nature of a candidate exclusively to his personal history or to a judgment of his individual character."

But Carvalho's political history cannot be simply brushed aside. He has been a major figure in Portuguese politics since April 25, 1974. He was a key leader of the MFA, and played a definite role in that bourgeois political instrument, and in the military-dominated capitalist government through August 1975. To state that this political history should be disregarded, and that the only aspect of his political life that should be considered was the last two weeks of his election campaign, when he escalated his use of radical demagoguery, is to fall into impressionism.

Carvalho's "platform," on which the IMT leaders base their case, was issued only in the final days of the campaign. For a month, Carvalho refused even to criticize his "fellow officer" General Eanes. He switched tactics when he saw that he could make gains with a more "left" approach. But even in terms of the platform itself, Carvalho's position on the key question of who rules cannot be dismissed as merely a "wrong" or "ambiguous" aspect of a generally working-class platform.

The platform pledges to defend the constitution, which is not only bourgeois (which the IMT leaders do note)—it gives final power to the armed forces. Carvalho also asserts that the "Armed Forces" will be the "protectors of

the Constitution," will "fight against counterrevolution and terrorism," and must "guarantee active support to the solution of the most urgent problems of the Portuguese people." This is in keeping with one of the main slogans of the Carvalho campaign, the old "MFA-People's Power" formula.

Carvalho's answer to the question, "Who rules?" is *the army*, that is, the capitalist class through the bourgeois army. This is in keeping with Carvalho's political history, and is the position he and the majority of the officer corps have held since April 25, 1974.

Carvalho's platform itself, even in its most "radical" stance as it appeared a few days before the election, is bourgeois.

The IMT leaders state that the "ambiguities" in Carvalho's platform are more than matched by those of the SP and CP. This misses the mark. The working-class character of the SP and CP does not reside at all in their platforms, which are bourgeois, but in their composition and historical role as tendencies in the working-class movement. Carvalho's bourgeois platform, as well as his political history, however, is that of a Bonapartist demagogue, freely utilizing "socialist" and "revolutionary" rhetoric. There was no way a vote for him could be utilized to explain and advance our perspective of class independence.

Default of the IMT

The draft resolution submitted by the Leninist Trotskyist Faction to the discussion for the next World Congress, "The Test of Lines in the Portuguese Revolution" [see International Internal Discussion Bulletin, Vol. XIII, No. 2, April 1976], points out that the IMT failed to take a correct political course in relation to the Armed Forces Movement throughout the course of the Portuguese revolution. The IMT virtually ignored the central political obstacle to the development of the revolution: the class collaborationism of the SP and CP leaderships in relation to the bourgeois MFA. The IMT developed a "two camps" theory, which apparently placed a wing of the MFA in the working-class "camp." *Rouge, Was Tun, Red Weekly, La Gauche*, and other papers voicing the IMT line hailed the "MFA-People's Power" plan as opening the road to soviets. The same papers spoke of "progressive elements" in the MFA.

Now the IMT leaders have adopted the position that one of the top figures of the MFA is part of the workers movement. The ultraleft course followed by the IMT with regard to the Portuguese revolution led it to fail to project an independent class line. The opportunist position the IMT leaders took of supporting Carvalho's electoral campaign was an extension of their wrong course in relation to the Portuguese revolution as a whole.

Statement by the Leninist Trotskyist Faction on the 1976 Italian Elections

[The general line of the following statement was approved by the Steering Committee of the Leninist Trotskyist Faction at its meeting of August 1976.]

* * *

A common slate of candidates from organizations claiming to stand to the left of the Italian Communist Party (PCI) and Italian Socialist Party (PSI) ran in the July 20, 1976, elections. The slate, called Democrazia Proletaria (DP—Proletarian Democracy), was dominated by centrist organizations, the three most important being the Partito d'Unità Proletaria per il Comunismo (PdUP—Party of Proletarian Unity for Communism), Avanguardia Operaia (AO—Workers Vanguard), and Lotta Continua (LC—The Struggle Continues). Supposedly, the “revolutionists” grouped together in this electoral slate.

The DP bloc was unable to agree on a common platform for the elections, and each organization associated with it put forward its own platform while calling for a vote for the whole DP slate. Nevertheless, the slate was identified with the platforms of the three most important organizations dominating it, and especially with PdUP and AO, organizations that had formed the DP previous to these elections and that formed the backbone of the bloc.

These three organizations failed to put forward a revolutionary alternative to the class collaborationism of the PCI and PSI leaderships. They did not counterpose the need for a workers and farmers government as against the popular frontism of the PCI and PSI. Instead, they called for a “government of the left.” While opposed to the proposal of the PCI to form a government of “historic compromise” with the Christian Democracy, the slogan of the centrist groups was designed to encompass other bourgeois forces. Comrade Livio Maitan wrote in the July 8 issue of *Inprecor* that PdUP and AO, for example, included the Republicans and a right-wing split from the PSI, both bourgeois groupings, in their formula of “government of the left.” The three organizations in fact were calling for a popular front standing further to the left than the one pushed by the Stalinists.

The centrist groups were ambiguous about whether such a “government of the left” could be utilized by the workers to gradually build up their power and begin the construction of socialism without a revolution. Comrade Anna Libera, writing in the May 28, 1976, *Rouge*, said that the PdUP conception is one of a “gradual transformation of the bourgeois state institutions as they come under the dominance of the working class. The entire question of dual power in a perspective of revolutionary crisis is

simply glided over.”

The PdUP and AO signed a joint appeal in the course of the campaign. [See Appendix III, p. 17.] The international planks of this appeal were as a whole reactionary. Reflecting Maoist concepts prevalent in the Italian centrist milieu, the appeal called for “rejection of the counterposed blocs headed by the superpowers. . . . Withdrawal of the American and Soviet fleets from the Mediterranean.” It called for a “nonaligned policy” under which Italy would “increasingly” establish economic relations with “the countries of the third world, guaranteeing trade conditions that favor the development of the more backward countries.” This ambiguously worded demand stood in the interests of Italian imperialism, as did the calls for a “radical redrafting of Common Market agricultural policy”; for the introduction of “elements of selection and control of imports, which, while maintaining the market open to abroad, prevent speculation by the big importers, limit luxury and superfluous imports, and guarantee an adequate quantity and egalitarian distribution of mass popular consumer goods as well as raw materials for the productive apparatus”; and for linking “foreign investment (of the multinationals) to precise imperatives of job stability. . . .” Opposition to Italian imperialism was not mentioned at all.

“Leftist” demands for “workers and people’s control” and a series of immediate demands, some correct in and of themselves, were capped by: “Democrazia Proletaria fights for a government of the left not as a pure cover for the movement of struggle or as an opportunity to expose the revisionist line, but as an active instrument in a general process of transformation of society. Democrazia Proletaria will feel itself committed to support this government of the left and at the same time to stimulate it through struggles for ever more advanced objectives.” That is, the PdUP and the AO pledged in advance to support a “left” capitalist government, which they held can become an “active instrument” in the transformation of society.

In their election propaganda, the centrist groups failed to provide a revolutionary alternative to the PCI or PSI; they failed similarly in their practice. In assessing the elections, the Revolutionary Communist Groups (GCR—Italian section of the Fourth International) stated in the July 5 issue of *Bandiera Rossa*:

“. . . The electoral support the DP got on June 20 was still mostly from petty-bourgeois layers. . . . One of the reasons for this, undoubtedly, was the attitude taken by the PdUP and to a lesser extent by the AO throughout the fight over new contracts. At no point and at no level did these groups try to help build a real alternative to the

bureaucratic leaderships in the unions and plant councils. The role they played, along with the incapacity of the far left in general to offer a credible rallying point for all those activists and cadres—who were in fact very critical of the platforms and methods of struggle—constituted a very serious impediment to the far left widening its influence and improving its class composition. In the given context, this was probably a decisive obstacle.”

The petty-bourgeois centrist groups have also, by and large, failed to provide adequate leadership to movements such as the spreading movement for the liberation of women in Italy. Indeed, the LC became infamous when it used violence to try to force its way into a demonstration of women last spring on the grounds that the women did not have the right to hold an all-women demonstration.

The Italian section entered the DP bloc. Because of the relation of forces, it was allotted only three candidates out of some 700 on the slate. Because the bloc was unable to achieve a common platform, the GCR were able to present their own platform. The GCR called for a PCI-PSI government, and criticized the class-collaborationist content that the centrists put into their “government of the left” slogan.

Nevertheless, the GCR, and in a more pronounced way the leadership of the IMT on the United Secretariat, saw the formation of the DP as a step forward. An international campaign of support to the DP ticket was agreed to by the IMT comrades. This never developed much beyond the announcement of the formation of a French committee of support to the DP, and the organization of a meeting by this committee in Paris.

The support given the DP bloc was an error. The IMT leaders criticized various shortcomings of the positions of the centrist groups, but presented the DP bloc as a revolutionary, working-class alternative to the out-and-out betrayal of the opportunist PCI and PSI. This amounts to

giving critical support to the centrists’ programs as against those of the Stalinists and Social Democrats. The IMT’s support to the DP was not critical support as we have always utilized it, calling for a vote for a formation in the working class in spite of and against its wrong program, but critical support to the centrists’ politics on the grounds that they are not as bad as the politics of the PCI and PSI.

This disarms us in relation to the centrists themselves. In place of critical support, which would at least mean rejecting the programs of the centrists, we adapted to their politics, falsely labeling them revolutionary, even if only “as against” the reformists.

And since the facts are that the centrists were wrong on the fundamental questions that had to be raised against the policies of the PCI and the PSI, this tactic hamstrung our ability to fight the class collaborationism of the Stalinists and Social Democrats.

The support given the DP bloc is related to the IMT line of seeking to transform the “new mass vanguard” into an “adequate instrument.” As in the case of the Portuguese Front for Revolutionary Unity (FUR), this line in practice has meant trying to further a bloc of centrist organizations under the conception that such a bloc would be able to outflank the mass workers organizations and their reformist leaderships. The IMT saw the DP bloc, like the FUR, as a positive step forward, despite the programmatic basis of the bloc or its actual role in the political situation.

In practice, the “vanguard” tends to be defined as those in or influenced by the centrist organizations. Tactics are developed to orient toward these groups. In this case, the tactic developed by the IMT, in addition to being tail-endist in relation to the centrists, cut across our ability to effectively reach radicalizing workers, women, and youth being attracted to the mass workers parties, especially the PCI. The critical support of the centrists’ politics disarmed us in front of both the centrists and the reformists.

Statement by the Leninist Trotskyist Faction on the 1976 Mexican Presidential Elections

[The general line of the following statement was approved by the Steering Committee of the Leninist Trotskyist Faction at its meeting of August 1976.]

* * *

In the July 1976 presidential elections in Mexico, the Stalinists ran a write-in candidate, Valentín Campa. A sector of the Mexican Trotskyist movement, the Liga Socialista (Tendencia Militante) (Socialist League [Militant Tendency]), signed a common electoral platform with the Stalinists, and with a small petty-bourgeois grouping in the Stalinist orbit, in support of Campa's candidacy. [See Appendix I, p. 11.]

The common platform is class-collaborationist, in keeping with the long history of opportunism of the Mexican Stalinists. Its foreign-policy planks support the Kremlin's line of "peaceful coexistence," give credence to a scheme put forward by then President Echeverría, and hail the policies of the "left" bourgeois governments in Ecuador, Peru, and Panama, defining them as "fundamentally" anti-imperialist.

Concerning domestic politics in Mexico, the platform is equally class-collaborationist. It does not characterize the ruling Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI—Institutional Revolutionary Party) as a bourgeois party. It does not call on the workers to break with this bourgeois party and form their own party. It does not call for a workers and farmers government. It calls for the "unity of the forces that support democracy and socialism," a typical Stalinist way of calling for a bloc with the "progressive" bourgeoisie.

In the course of the election campaign the Stalinists, through an interview with top CP leader Martínez Verdugo, made their class-collaborationist aims still clearer. Martínez Verdugo called for unity with "some tendencies in the PRI," with "patriotic democratic" forces in the army, with "progressive" sectors of businessmen, and with "forces that are rejuvenating the church." [See Appendix I, p. 11.]

The Socialist League (MT) made an error in signing the common platform. The fact that these comrades put in a disclaimer, stating that they disagreed with "some" of the foreign-policy points, did not mitigate the error. In the first place, by dissociating themselves from "some" foreign-policy planks, they indicated approval of the domestic part of the platform. Second, they did not indicate *which* points they disagreed with. The disclaimer only served to highlight the overall political support they gave to the

common platform, since their disagreements were obviously secondary or they could not have signed it.

This was not an agreement for united action with the Stalinists, in which the Trotskyists retained the right to present their own positions. This was an electoral platform, that is, a platform of basic governmental policy. In view of the class-collaborationist character of the platform, of the Campa campaign itself, and of the whole record of the Stalinists, giving such political support to their policies was impermissible.

At times it is in order to use the tactic of critical support to Stalinist candidates in an election if the tactic is useful in promoting our class-struggle program and methods as against the class collaborationism of the Stalinists. But to succeed in the tactic of critical support, we must at the same time vigorously oppose the opportunist program and practice of the Stalinists. This cannot be done by politically supporting the Stalinists' own platform, but only through a vigorous campaign exposing their program and practice and counterposing ours to theirs.

A minority of members on the United Secretariat proposed that the United Secretariat dissociate the Fourth International from the course taken by the Socialist League (MT) in the Mexican elections. This step would have clarified the principles involved for the entire international, and helped the comrades of the Socialist League (MT) correct a serious error.

The majority of the United Secretariat rejected the proposals of the minority. Instead, they adopted a statement that embellishes that Stalinist program. [See p. 21.]

To accept the view of the majority of the United Secretariat, one would have to believe that the Mexican Communist Party is no longer Stalinist, and that the Campa election campaign was conducted along basically class-struggle lines. The majority of the United Secretariat does not advance these reasons for their position: The truth is that the Mexican CP remains Stalinist and conducted its electoral activities along class-collaborationist lines.

More importantly, the method subscribed to by the majority of the United Secretariat is wrong. It is not correct to seek vague common programmatic formulations with the Stalinists, which the Stalinists interpret in accordance with their opportunist line. To claim that such formulations advance the class struggle and that the Trotskyists are in programmatic agreement with the Stalinists amounts to giving opportunism a left cover. This indeed is what happened in Mexico. The Socialist League (MT) gave the badly discredited Stalinists left cover.

Politically, it was the Stalinists who gained from this maneuver, and we and the working class who lost.

Signing this platform together with the Stalinists blurred the programmatic distinction between Stalinism and Trotskyism, confusing the banner of revolution with that of counterrevolution and betrayal. Critical support, which has as its essence the *counterposing* of our program to theirs, was in this instance turned into its opposite.

The stand taken by the majority of the United Secretariat encouraged the Militant Tendency of the Socialist

League to deepen their error, to the point where they publicly defended the Stalinists as "revolutionary" against the criticisms of the Fracción Bolchevique Leninista (Bolshevik Leninist Faction) of the Socialist League. It also disoriented the comrades of the Liga Comunista Internacionalista (Internationalist Communist League).

We also note that leading members of the Argentinian PST who were working in the Socialist League (MT) at the time were fully complicit in formulating and carrying out the erroneous policy.

Statement by the Steering Committee of the Leninist Trotskyist Faction

The Steering Committee of the Leninist Trotskyist Faction met at the end of August, 1976. In a discussion on the current situation in the Fourth International, the basic objectives of the LTF at this time were defined as follows:

1. The central goal of the LTF is to attain clarity on the main political questions facing the Fourth International, that is, the questions that have the most immediate implications for the current practice of the national sections.

a. The LTF will continue to press for drawing a balance sheet on the IMT line in Latin America. The crisis in the Fourth International stems directly from the disastrous effects of the ultraleft turn of the 1969 World Congress.

b. The LTF will continue to press for discussion of the consequences of the IMT line in Portugal, the key test so far of the IMT line in Europe. Here, too, the IMT line proved to be disastrous.

Rectification of the errors made in Latin America and Portugal is the top priority. On other questions, too, it is essential to steer the Fourth International back onto a correct course.

c. The LTF will present a critical summary of the results of the IMT line in Europe as a whole. This document will show the results of the error of orienting to the "new mass vanguard," including errors made in election policy, such as adaptation towards popular frontism, confusion about the character of Stalinism, and errors in mass work in areas such as the trade-union movement, the women's liberation movement, the student movement, and national liberation movements.

d. The increasing involvement of the Fourth International in the women's liberation movement makes it more and more crucial to achieve political clarity on this issue. The LTF Steering Committee approved the general line of the resolution submitted to the last world congress by Comrades Abel, Adair, Hans, Juan, Pedro, Stateman, and Thérèse (*IIDB*, Vol. X, no. 22, November, 1973) and added it to the platform of the LTF. An updated document by Comrade Mary-Alice Waters based upon this line is being presented to the current world congress discussion [see *International Internal Discussion Bulletin* Vol. XIII, No. 9, 1976].

e. The LTF Steering Committee adopted a resolution on Angola, and added the general line of this document to the platform of the LTF.

f. Other political positions were adopted concerning electoral policy in Italy, Mexico and Portugal. Short documents on these questions will be presented as part of the world congress discussion [printed elsewhere in this bulletin].

g. The LTF will also again raise the question of Chinese Stalinism as part of the world congress discussion. Two counterposed line resolutions were presented prior to the 1974 world congress, but the question was not discussed or resolved. It was held open for further debate. Differences of analysis on the Chinese revolution and Stalinism underlie the current discussion on Vietnam.

2. The LTF will press for the adoption of an objective,

nonsectarian policy towards the Organizing Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International (OCRFI) and other groups that approach the Fourth International for fraternal discussions. The LTF considers this to be one of the central questions facing the Fourth International today.

3. The LTF will seek to subordinate organizational questions to the goal of achieving clarity on the political questions. Accordingly, the LTF Steering Committee reiterates what it said in its August, 1975, statement: "The two factions in the international have existed for a number of years. Regardless of intentions, such a situation tends to breed combinationism and cliques. It tends to confine the discussion of key political questions within each faction rather than opening it to the international as a whole. From the viewpoint of the LTF, if there are guarantees for a full, free, and democratic discussion, there is no need for a factional structure; in fact, it tends to impede such a discussion. While ideological tendencies are still called for because of the political differences, there would be no objective need to maintain the factions in order to have the necessary discussion. Therefore, the Leninist Trotskyist Faction proposes that both of the organized factions dissolve themselves."

We urge the IMT leadership to study this proposal once again and reconsider its rejection of this proposal.

We also demand that the new international grouping, whose existence was announced by Comrade Moreno at the February 1976 meeting of the International Executive Committee, inform the international of the political basis for its existence and the nature of its organizational structure.

4. The LTF will fight for a democratic and authoritative world congress and against the disintegration of the organizational norms of the Fourth International. Toward this end the LTF will cooperate with all those in the international who agree on this point regardless of their views on other questions.

The precondition for a democratic and authoritative world congress is a full and free democratic discussion and timely publication of all documents while the questions are current.

5. The LTF will continue to press for the development of genuinely collaborative relations at the center.

6. The LTF reaffirms its agreement with the position adopted by the last world congress that in those countries where two or more groups exist because of splits or other reasons, the united moral authority of the Fourth International should be brought to bear for the earliest possible fusion of the groups on a principled basis.

7. The LTF reiterates the August 1973 statement of the Leninist Trotskyist Faction that "faction discipline does not transcend the discipline of sections or sympathizing organizations of the Fourth International," and that "members of the faction must conduct themselves in a completely loyal way in sections of the Fourth International or sympathizing organizations, maintaining their activities and financial obligations in an exemplary way."

WORLD MOVEMENT REPORT

by Mary-Alice Waters

Adopted January 4, 1976 by the National
Committee of the Socialist Workers Party

[The following report, and the two appendices, appear here as printed in the SWP Internal Information Bulletin, No. 2 in 1976. Appendix IV in IIB No. 2, not reprinted here, may be found in International Internal Discussion Bulletin, Vol. XIII, No. 6, November 1976 (Appendix V).]

* * *

There are basically three sections to the world movement report the political committee asked me to prepare for this plenum:

1. The impact of the Portuguese revolution on the Fourth International and the forces outside the Fourth International that consider themselves to be Trotskyist.
2. The evolution of relations within the United Secretariat, and our evaluation of actions taken by the majority faction of the United Secretariat in the last few months.
3. The split that took place at the Liga Socialista convention in Mexico two weeks ago, and the repercussions of that split for the Fourth International and the Leninist Trotskyist Faction.

I. PORTUGAL AND THE TROTSKYIST FORCES INTERNATIONALLY

We have to begin with the broad historical picture that we outlined last August at our party convention. [See "The Portuguese Revolution and Building the Fourth International," IIB Vol XII, No. 6, October 1975.] Our starting point is not only the impact of the Portuguese events on the two main factions within the Fourth International—the International Majority Tendency and the Leninist Trotskyist Faction—and the way the political lines advocated for advancing the revolution are cutting across both factions. We must also take a broader look at the impact of this revolution on all currents that claim adherence to Trotskyism. A shakeup is taking place on an international scale. What is happening in Portugal is affecting every current and tendency, and a broad political debate is beginning to take shape. We have to take a closer look at this process and think about the historical responsibilities that we and other Trotskyist forces have.

It is important to keep this broad framework in mind. If you don't, it's easy to become short-sighted, impatient, or to get lost in minutiae.

Trying to follow what is happening among all the forces on a world scale who consider themselves part of the Trotskyist movement—as Al Hansen commented yesterday—is like trying to follow three or four different chess games being played simultaneously on the same board.

On this broad international and historical plane, where are we and what is happening?

The international political resolution submitted to the last world congress by the Leninist Trotskyist Faction emphasized the turn in the pattern of world revolution, the end of the long detour, the new rise of proletarian struggles especially in the imperialist centers, and the increasingly favorable conditions for the growth of revolutionary marxist forces. [See *Dynamics of World Revolution Today*, Pathfinder Press, 1974.]

The result has been thousands of new recruits to Trotskyism, to the sections and sympathizing organizations of the Fourth International. These new, young forces bring with them the prejudices and erroneous conceptions prevalent in the "new left" milieus from which a large majority have been recruited. They are often marked by the miseducation absorbed in the Stalinist, Social Democratic or Guevarist schools through which they have passed. But they bring with them a desire to make the socialist revolution and a tremendous historical potential for doing so, provided that the Fourth International is politically capable of training and developing them as Trotskyist cadres.

The growth and development of the Socialist Workers party in the last decade has been an integral part of this process that is taking place internationally.

But the forces that are today part of the Fourth International are not the only ones that are growing. Virtually every organization that claims to represent the continuity of Trotskyism is winning new forces. And the political clarification that has emerged from the polemics inside the Fourth International over the last seven years has had repercussions amongst the broader forces that consider themselves Trotskyist. All, without exception, are attracted to and must define themselves in relationship to the broad political lines that have bisected the United Secretariat.

This is true because the issues we have been debating and clarifying are not obscure factional squabbles, but the most fundamental questions of revolutionary strategy and political principles which have been posed by the rising tide of world revolution. And the debate in the Fourth International has posed the issues with maximum clarity and precision. But the international does not exist in a vacuum. It is surrounded with other political forces. All are being affected by and forced to respond to the major historical events that mark our epoch, whether they are inside or outside the Fourth International.

As we noted at our convention last summer, events have affected the international current known as the Organizing Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International (OCRFI)—the "Lambertists"—leading them to request political discussion with the United Secretariat. Forces like Lutte Ouvrière, a "national Trotskyist" organization in France, whose influence is roughly comparable to that of the LCR, are being affected, as are all the groupings emerging from the disintegration of the

Healyite International Committee, and groups that have spun off from the Fourth International in recent years as the process of debate and clarification developed—groups like Spartacusbund in Germany, Rojo in Mexico, and others.

No serious group can escape the political test of the historical events taking place. All are trying to think through the questions of revolutionary perspectives and strategy. More and more, some of these forces outside the Fourth International are beginning to think about the historical responsibilities posed by the revolutionary developments that are certainly on the agenda.

The Portuguese revolution has been the main catalyst in this process. There is increasing recognition that the upsurge has tested all the contending Trotskyist currents. Even more important, bigger tests are coming. Everyone is now watching Spain. But if we are going to be responsible about meeting our political obligations in the coming period, we must prepare, and the first step in that preparation is a broad political discussion and clarification. The goal is not to deepen the lines of cleavage as they now stand, but to engage in a genuine discussion without any preconceived sectarian schema of where such a process of clarification will lead. The goal is to strengthen the Fourth International.

The process taking place on a world scale is in many ways similar to what happened in the 1930s, leading to the foundation of the Fourth International; or in the post-war period; or around the time of the Hungarian revolution, the Twentieth Congress of the CPSU, and the victory of the Cuban Revolution. Major historical events are leading to a political shakeup and bringing new forces toward us. It is not something that happens overnight. It's produced by objective developments in the class struggle that are beyond anyone's control. And subjective, deadend factionalism cannot stop such major historical shakeups either. In the long run politics, not characterizations, are decisive.

There are two significant factors that differentiate the current shakeup from earlier periods, though. The forces involved are more numerous than ever before. And the historical context in which the process is occurring is much more favorable. The opportunities for building the Fourth International today are incomparably greater than the thirties when we faced the rise of fascism and Stalinism, or the postwar years when our forces were decimated by the extended period of reaction and isolation.

It will help to make this more concrete if we take a closer look at some of the forces that will be involved in any political discussion on a world scale, a discussion which is still unorganized at this stage, and sporadic.

Disintegration of Healyism

First of all, political and organizational disintegration of the forces that once made up the rump International Committee of the Fourth International, the Healyites, is accelerating.

Just in the last year and a half, two key leaders, Tim Wohlforth and Nancy Fields, have been expelled from the Workers League, and we are seeing all the obvious signs of crisis in that organization, now under the command of Mazelis.

In Britain the Workers Revolutionary Party (WRP) has

driven out the forces that now comprise the Bulletin group, the British component of the Organizing Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International. And a year ago the WRP expelled a large opposition group, many of whom went on to found the Workers Socialist League (WSL).

In Australia, a group, including the editor of Healy's paper there, broke from the International Committee, formed a group called the Socialist League, and then fused with the Socialist Workers League last October.

There are indications that Healy is having problems in a few other places such as Greece and Peru.

The caliber of the forces that have been driven out in the recent period indicate the advanced stage of decay in the Healyite ranks.

Just as important as the disintegration of Healy's forces, is the fact that amongst those who have gone through the Healy madhouse and survived, some are now willing to reexamine their positions on the Fourth International and engage in serious discussion with us.

They do not necessarily agree with us, but they want to discuss the issues, not as they learned them and our positions from Healy, but objectively. And we assume they want to discuss not for discussions sake or to score points, but with the goal of strengthening the organized world Trotskyist movement, the Fourth International.

This loss of control by Healy, of course, is the main explanation for Healy's grotesque slander campaign against Joe Hansen and the SWP leadership in general.

One of the more important of the groups that have broken from Healy is the Workers Socialist League. Some comrades may have heard this referred to as the Thornett group, because one of the central leaders of the organization is Alan Thornett who is a well-known Trotskyist leader in the large British Leyland auto plant, Cowley, near Oxford. The WSL was formed after the expulsion of about 200 members of the WRP, which included most of Healy's industrial cadres, and the entire fraction at Cowley, with one exception.

After they were expelled, it took the WSL a little time to get themselves organized, regularize their biweekly paper, *Socialist Press*, and begin to think out their positions on a whole range of questions. Until this fall they were reluctant to talk with representatives of other currents in the Trotskyist movement internationally. They told us they had decided not to engage in any discussion until they got their own initial positions sorted out.

In December, after consultation with comrades from the Political Committee of the International Marxist Group (IMG), the British section of the Fourth International, two members of the SWP political committee met with several comrades from the WSL leadership.

They gave us copies of their three-part document on the history of the Fourth International which has just been published in *Socialist Press*, and they informed us that they had come to the conclusion that the next step had to be broad political discussion amongst many of the Trotskyist forces on a world scale to begin to clarify positions.

They want to begin by discussing the post-World War II overturns in Eastern Europe and the 1953 split in the Fourth International; we want to begin by discussing the Portuguese events and the other political questions that confront revolutionists today. But that can be sorted out by starting with the political questions and working back

to clarifying the historical and theoretical points.

The WSL forces broke with Healy essentially over what the auto fraction at Cowley should do. They saw that Healy's line was leading them to disaster and that they were losing support in the plant, and they began to make some correct criticisms, trying to think out how best to apply the basic conceptions of the Transitional Program in that factory. They were expelled before any discussion could take place. But on many other political questions they still accept the validity of the positions they learned in Healy's school. One gets the impression that they are just beginning to think their way through the interrelated aspects of Healy's politics.

But the important thing is that they want to discuss, they feel they need discussion with a broad range of forces in order to move forward and to link up with an international movement.

Another very important development taking place in Britain is the fragmentation of the International Socialists. The British IS is a state capitalist group. It has ties to the American IS, with whom it has much in common politically. But unlike the American IS, in the early 1970's the British IS grew to be one of the most important organizations on the left, with several thousand members. It had some weight amongst radicalized workers.

For the last year or so, the IS has been on a real ultraleft binge. In Portugal they have aligned themselves with the PRP-BR and supported its so called "soviets" and its insurrectionist line. In Britain they have been following a similar ultraleft line. The result has been a series of splits and loss of influence in the working class. Most of the groups leaving IS tend to identify themselves as Trotskyist, disagreeing both with Healy and with the Fourth International. Several of them have set up shop as new Trotskyist organizations.

The number of "Trotskyist" organizations existing in Britain today would be funny, if it weren't so tragic. There are certainly over a dozen (at last count), and the number is still growing. This poses a tremendous obstacle and challenge to the IMG. Can they take the lead in showing the way out of the sectarianism that has plagued British Trotskyism throughout its history and has reached unprecedented proportions today?

Our impression is that the IMG leadership understands the scope and dimension of the problem better than some others in the leadership of the IMT faction. They seem to be genuinely committed to trying to open a dialogue with forces like the WSL and some of the groups that have split from the IS, and understand both the opportunity and the challenge this presents.

Perhaps for this reason, they have taken a less sectarian, less factional, less barren attitude towards the approaches from the Organizing Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International and are against its becoming a factional issue.

Lutte Ouvrière

Another important international current that is worth calling attention to is one whose strongest component is Lutte Ouvrière in France.

Lutte Ouvrière descends from a group in France that broke with the Fourth International on the eve of World

War II and has maintained an independent existence ever since. Not surprisingly, they evolved some unusual variations on Trotskyist positions. For example, they do not recognize the overturn of capitalist property relations in the deformed workers states. They believe that the Soviet Union is the only workers state in the world. They tend towards workerist and economist positions, and are sectarian on the national question especially.

Like the other two Trotskyist currents in France—represented today by the LCR (the French Section of the Fourth International) and the OCI, (the French Section of the Organizing Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International)—they grew significantly in the post-1968 radicalization. In the 1974 presidential elections in France they ran a young woman bankworker, Arlette Laguiller, as their candidate for president, and received a substantially higher vote than did Alain Krivine, the candidate of the LCR. This was a real blow to the LCR, which until that time had been generally seen as the most influential Trotskyist organization in France. The LCR tried to explain away the discrepancy in vote by attacking Lutte Ouvrière for an "opportunist" campaign. A typical criticism was that Laguiller failed to use her campaign to educate on the need for revolutionary violence.

Although it is difficult to get accurate figures, I think it would be correct to say that there is no qualitative difference in size and influence between the three Trotskyist organizations in France. They each have several thousand members and organized sympathizers.

In 1970, Lutte Ouvrière initiated fusion negotiations with the Ligue Communiste, the French section at that time. After rather extensive discussion, by the end of 1970 LO agreed to all the conditions set down by the LC, including the condition that the unified organization be the French section of the Fourth International and operate under its statutes. Given Lutte Ouvrière's history and attitude toward the FI, that was a significant concession on their part.

When the fusion was thus ready to be finalized, the LC broke it off. To us at the time it seemed to be an inexplicable sectarian blunder on the part of a young and politically insecure leadership. We now learn, from some of the LTF comrades in Europe, that the explanation given in the European sections at the time, was that the fusion was off because fusion would bring Lutte Ouvrière into the Fourth International, and if they came in they might agree with the minority position on guerrilla warfare in Latin America, thus turning the minority into a majority!

That is all part of the background.

On the Portuguese events, Lutte Ouvrière has taken more correct positions than the LCR on some of the key questions. In particular, they have been very strong and clear on the need to chart an independent class struggle alternative that breaks from subordination to one or another wing of the MFA, and exposes both the CP and SP lines of class collaboration. LO is also wrong on some of the key questions. For example, they seem to consider the SP to be simply a bourgeois party.

Like other currents in the world Trotskyist movement, they feel the need for broader discussion and clarification.

Last November, LO called an international conference that was attended by the British IS, Lotta Continua from Italy, Spark from the United States, the remnants of the Spanish POUM, Combat Ouvrier from the Antilles, and

the African Union of Internationalist Communist Workers.

The main thing that happened at the conference was a split between Lutte Ouvrière and IS over what policies to follow in Portugal, with the differences overlapping many of the same issues that have divided us inside the Fourth International—the “new mass vanguard” line, problems of the united front, evaluation of the line of the Socialist party, the Communist party, whether dual power exists, all the problems of revolutionary strategy in Portugal today. [See *Intercontinental Press*, Vol. 14, No. 1, pp 31-32, and Vol. 14, No. 4, pp 143-44.]

In December, the leadership of the LCR arranged for two members of the SWP Political Committee to meet and discuss with two comrades from the leadership of the LO. In the course of a discussion that touched on a number of points, the comrades of the LO leadership emphasized what they say has been their long standing position: the need for a broader political discussion on a world scale amongst forces that are today part of different international Trotskyist currents in order to clarify positions, strengthen the Fourth International, and prepare for the decisive political tests that are on the agenda.

Pablo

I should mention in passing that even Pablo is getting back in the picture. The Pablo organization in France (which probably had several hundred members) last year dissolved itself into the Parti Socialist Unifié (PSU), a sizeable centrist party whose right wing recently split and joined the SP.

For the last year, the LCR has been seriously trying to establish what they call a “privileged relationship” with the PSU, a kind of agreement to consult and work together in all areas where they both have forces. This extends to many different areas—the women’s liberation movement, the antimilitarist campaign, the unions—and was supposed to be paralleled by an organized, public discussion of political differences. At least some of the comrades in the LCR leadership say the goal is a fusion with the PSU. Others deny it and say they just want to win over the left wing of the PSU. In any case, the main obstacle in this process has been the reluctance of the PSU leadership to let it go very far.

Meanwhile the Pablo forces are inside the PSU, and as part of the orientation towards the PSU, the LCR leaders have had a number of discussions with them. Recently, Pablo renewed a request he had raised earlier for a formal discussion with a delegation from the United Secretariat to discuss Portugal and other questions. We, of course, were in favor and such a meeting has been scheduled.

Organizing Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International

On the OCRFI, there is not a great deal to add to what we said at our convention last summer when we took note of the fact that they have been drawn increasingly toward the Fourth International, attracted by the discussion and debate taking place, and reacting to the difficulties they have encountered in trying to build their own international current. [See IIDB, Vol. XII, No. 6.]

The leaders of the OCRFI say quite frankly that many of

the same differences that cut across the Fourth International, are to be found in the ranks of the OCRFI. The same kinds of discussions are taking place.

Since the United Secretariat responded to the OCRFI’s overtures a little more than a year ago, and opened the door to probing further discussion and possible areas of collaboration, in some countries, the forces affiliated to the OCRFI have begun to collaborate with sections and sympathizing organizations of the Fourth International on concrete tasks in the class struggle in their respective countries. That has been true in Québec, for example. In the past few months, the LSO (Canadian section of the FI), the GMR (a Canadian sympathizing organization of the FI), and the GSTQ (Quebec component of the OCRFI) have worked together in a number of strike situations and other actions. This process of common work led the Canadian section to invite both the GMR and the GSTQ to attend their convention last week, and to participate in some parts of their pre-convention discussion. They expect this process to continue.

I will return to the question of the OCRFI later in the report. But here it is important to emphasize one thing. The OCRFI poses the same objective challenge as the other groups mentioned. For more than two and a half years, the OCRFI has been raising one simple proposal: let’s discuss. Let’s clarify the issues. Let’s find a way to begin a discussion that must take place on a broad international scale, a discussion that is objectively posed by the course of events themselves. They say to the United Secretariat: you set the conditions, you set the agenda, anything. But let’s discuss.

Over time, the refusal of the United Secretariat majority to engage in such a discussion becomes more and more damaging to the Fourth International. They look more and more like a *sect* that is not interested in politics, but in justifying itself and its own history. More and more, they get trapped in a posture of dead-end factionalism.

Inside the Fourth International

I want to turn now to the forces inside the Fourth International and take a look at how they are being affected by the political differentiation taking place around the Portuguese revolution.

The main thing to emphasize is that the differences cut across all factions and tendencies. Second, the process of clarification and differentiation is only beginning. In most parties of the Fourth International there has been little or no organized discussion in the ranks on the Portuguese revolution. A few parties have had discussions in their central committees. There has been no French language internal discussion bulletin of the international. The Leninist Trotskyist Faction’s two resolutions on Portugal, adopted last August, have not even been published in French, much less the reports from our convention. In reality, the only debate has been the one carried on by Frank, Maitan and Mandel for the IMT and Foley, Hansen and Novack for the LTF in the pages of *Intercontinental Press*. And while Frank, Maitan and Mandel have been published in French, Foley, Hansen and Novack have not.

So the differentiations we are seeing are only the beginning.

Denmark

The Danish section is currently in the midst of a preconvention discussion, in which a reevaluation of the line of the IMT's European resolution figures prominently. The majority of the Danish leadership have been strong supporters of the IMT for several years, but the concrete attempt to implement the European resolution in Denmark, plus the test of the Portuguese revolution, has led some of the Danish majority leaders to rethink a few positions.

Two of the political points they raised with us were disagreement with an orientation towards the centrist "new left" type groups which the IMT generally defines as the "revolutionary left." Some of the Danish leaders think this has led to maximalist type errors in Portugal and in Denmark. Second, there is growing disagreement with the IMT's general refusal to concretize the governmental slogan "for a workers government" and thus present a concrete governmental, class alternative at all times. In Portugal, for instance, they are critical of the IMT's refusal to call for a CP-SP government.

Once you start pulling at the threads of the European resolution on either of those questions, the whole fabric unravels rapidly!

The LTF comrades in Denmark have also found growing agreement on some concrete tasks, and a nonfactional atmosphere of attempting to work together seems to be developing.

Britain

A very interesting political process is taking place in Britain too.

There has been a long-standing division within the IMT supporters in the leadership of the IMG. The differences are not always clear, but there are two groupings that periodically constitute themselves as tendencies. In the most recent period they have been known as Tendency A and Tendency B. That's to distinguish them from "the Tendency" which includes all the LTF supporters in the IMG.

[One of the new organizational theories developed by the IMT in the last few years is that tendencies should not have names, like Leninist Tendency, or Bolshevik Tendency. The theory is that if you name yourself Leninist Tendency you are implying that those outside your tendency are not Leninists. Therefore all tendencies have to be designated by a neutral number, or a letter—one, two, three, four, or A,B,C. Of course, for anyone outside the organization it becomes virtually impossible to follow. It forces you to revert to a less desirable method of designation by referring to the leaders whose names are most familiar to you.]

Leaders of Tendency A include Tariq Ali, Pat Jordan, and Robin Blackburn. Leaders of Tendency B include Alan Jones, Brian Grogan, and Bob Pennington. Tendency B has the support of the majority of the members of the IMG.

On a number of questions both A and B seem wrong to me. They score good points against each other in the debate, but it doesn't go anywhere because neither has a correct line to tie it all together. For that you have to turn to the Tendency. On some issues, however, there are clearer differences, and a real evolution has taken place.

For example, on women's liberation. At one time, the IMG majority leaders were amongst the most bitter critics of our line of women's liberation and especially of the leadership role we played in the struggle to legalize abortion. They accused us of single-issue opportunism, failure to draw a class line in the women's movement and all the rest. But today they are deeply involved in the National Abortion Campaign in Britain and are fighting hard against all the sectarians, workerists and ultralefts, trying to convince them of the need to concentrate on the question of abortion rather than taking up a hundred and one different issues which we all agree are vital to women; and trying to convince them that the axis of the struggle must be around legal abortions, not free abortions. They are having the same fight that we did on almost every aspect of the abortion campaign.

The IMT minority in Britain—the Tariq Ali, Pat Jordan wing—is still strongly opposed to this line.

A similar type of evolution has taken place on the line followed in Irish defense work. The Jones-Grogan majority favors trying to build a troops out movement along lines that we would largely agree with.

The Jones-Grogan leadership has also made a real effort to reduce the factionalism inside the IMG, and to integrate the Tendency comrades in meaningful political work. And as I mentioned before, they are critical of the IMT's dead-end factional stance towards the OCRFI. And they understand that this is not an LTF vs. IMT question but one of general leadership responsibility to reject dead-end factionalism and sectarianism.

They also had a generally favorable impression of our convention last summer. Comrade Jones reported to the United Secretariat that he thought the turn we are making is correct, that it is neither too early nor too late but flows from the changing objective situation we face. He also indicated that he was impressed by the character and the level of the political debate.

However, on Portugal, the surprise comes from the other direction. As comrades heard at our convention, Alan Jones seems to be a strong supporter of the IMT line as presented by Frank, Maitan and Mandel in their polemic against Foley, Hansen and Novack.

But Tariq Ali recently made a tour of Canada speaking on Portugal. The comrades of the LSA tell us that Tariq stressed questions like the central importance of a united-front perspective to win over the workers who follow the SP, the need to win the masses before you can make a revolution, the dangers of any kind of minority revolution perspective, the fact that nothing resembling soviets exists in Portugal—themes that have not exactly been at the heart of the IMT's polemics. We have seen a couple of short written items by Tariq which also give the impression that he does not agree with the IMT's line on every point. [See SWP Internal Information Bulletin No. 4 in 1976, Letter from Tariq Ali to the editor of *Economic and Political Weekly*.]

The result of all this has been quite a change in atmosphere in the IMG. I was quite struck by it when I recently visited the IMG National Office. For the first time in several years I felt like I was greeted as a comrade, not rebuffed as an alien intruder.

I think Comrade Jones meant it when he told our convention last summer that he considered the debate on Portugal to be a debate among revolutionists. And that is

extremely important. As long as that attitude exists, there is a possibility that we will listen to each other, that we can influence each other, that we can learn from each other.

In this sense, I think the attitude of the IMG majority leadership is quite different from some of the other comrades in the IMT who are trying to create the opposite atmosphere, to close comrade's minds, to prevent them from listening to what other revolutionists have to say. They are trying hard to foster the view that we are in the camp of the counterrevolution in Portugal, or as Pierre Frank put it in his scandalous letter to Murry and Myra Weiss, that we are being propelled into the camp of American imperialism.

The fact that there may be some in the IMT who are not yet ready to consign us to the camp of American imperialism, however, simply spurs the factional frenzy of those who are.

And Even in France

There has been no organized discussion on the Portuguese revolution in the membership of the Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire (LCR) in France, but Portugal has been discussed in the LCR central committee, and there have been two discussion bulletins with contributions by Central Committee members on Portugal. We are translating some of these articles and will publish them in an Internal Information Bulletin. [See IIB No. 4 in 1976.] As comrades will see, in the Central Committee, the differences are significant.

A year ago, at the December 1974 convention of the LCR, there were four tendencies. Tendency 1 had about 18 percent of the delegates, Tendency 2 had an absolute majority, Tendency 3 had about 19 percent, and Tendency 4 had about 7 percent.

Tendency 4's platform rejected the IMT's European Perspectives resolution, making many of the same criticisms of the majority line as the LTF makes. Tendencies 2 and 3 both supported the European resolution of the IMT and claimed to be interpreting and applying it correctly for France. Tendency 1 included both supporters of the IMT and comrades who reject the general line of the European resolution. The Central Committee elected by the convention gave roughly proportional representation to each of the four tendencies. Then all four tendencies were instructed to dissolve!

As the debate on the Portuguese revolution proceeded in the Central Committee, some broad areas of agreement began to appear between some ex-Tendency 1 and ex-Tendency 4 committee members. And the points on which they disagree with the LTF are secondary. They seem to consist of differences of emphasis rather than of line. One Central Committee member has joined the LTF.

I think this helps to explain the tone of the polemics by Frank, Maitan and Mandel. It is not only against us they are arguing. They are worried about currents in the IMT as well.

It would be idle to speculate on how the differentiations will evolve. The important thing is that a debate on Portugal is forcing its way to the surface, and a process of clarification is beginning. But it is *just* beginning. Our central task is to prevent it from being closed—either in fact or spirit—before the differences are clear and the test

of the class struggle in Portugal itself can help to resolve the disputed issues.

Portugal and the LTF

Just as the differences on Portugal cut across the IMT, they have emerged in the LTF as well.

The documentation that is available on these differences in the LTF has been submitted to the International Internal Discussion Bulletin [see Vol. 13, No. 1, February 1976], so I will only take time to emphasize a few points.

Prior to the meeting of the Steering Committee of the Leninist Trotskyist Faction last August there were some differences in the faction. In the United Secretariat, one member of the LTF voted against a motion clearly defining the bourgeois character of the MFA. And there was an exchange of correspondence between Comrades Hansen and Moreno in which conflicting opinions were expressed.

Prior to and during the LTF Steering Committee meeting there was extensive discussion on all these points, at the end of which the comrades present at the meeting felt they had reached agreement on the general line. Some secondary differences and differences of emphasis remained, but the discussion around the draft resolution was good, most of the criticisms helped improve the final editing; and the agreement on line was reflected in the unanimous vote to adopt the general line of the draft resolution.

The vote turned out to be mistaken; we were not in agreement. After the edited version of the draft was published [IIDB Vol. 12, No. 4, 1975, or *Intercontinental Press* Vol. 13, No. 37, October 20, 1975] the leadership of the Argentine PST informed the faction that they could not vote for the line of the published document.

Unfortunately, they didn't simply inform the faction that they disagreed with the line of the document and would make a contribution to the discussion on Portugal in the international. Instead, whether deliberately or not, they tried to create a scandal around the document, accusing the SWP leadership of having introduced a different line in to the published document, contrary to the line that had been voted for by the faction leadership.

The members of the LTF Steering Committee who were present at the August meeting were polled to see if others held the same opinion. Twenty-nine comrades responded immediately, unanimously concurring that the line of the published document was the line they had voted for. Five comrades failed to reply, including the comrades of the PST leadership who had been present. The vote definitively settled the fact that the document "Key Issues in the Portuguese Revolution" is the line of the LTF and we hope we can now get down to the real discussion—whether the line of the LTF is correct or not.

On that level, it is much harder to piece together exactly what the PST comrades disagree with. We are waiting for them to write something. In oral discussions with PST leaders, however, they have raised the following disagreements:

1. They define the existing situation in Portugal as one of "atomized dual power," meaning, it seems, that many organs of dual power exist but they are not coordinated or centralized. We disagree. With few exceptions, the workers commissions, tenants commissions and soldiers commit-

tees that did emerge either disappeared, or because of the deep divisions in the working class failed to develop into united-front action committees on broader political questions, or developed into narrow fronts for one or another political tendency of the left. The concept of "atomized dual power" is a contradiction in terms. If it's dual power, it cannot be atomized. If it is atomized, it is not a power parallel to and competing with the bourgeois government and state apparatus.

2. The LTF document is wrong, they say, because it does not state that the task of the Portuguese Trotskyists is to build organs of dual power. We have pointed out that we think it is erroneous to reduce the tasks of the Portuguese Trotskyists to such a narrow framework. The strategic axis of the LTF resolution, from the introduction to the final paragraph is an analysis of the political lines along which the Portuguese workers must move, and the political obstacles they will encounter, if they are to advance towards conscious political and organizational independence from the Portuguese bourgeoisie, the creation of their own organizations for united-front action and eventually power, and the establishment of a workers and peasants government. Like the transitional program, it takes a broad political framework in which soviets crown the program, but they do not substitute for it.

3. The fact that the LTF document does not state that the task of every Portuguese Trotskyist is to build organs of dual power reflects the SWP's "propagandist" conception of party building, according to the PST. We are only interested in publishing Trotsky's writings and circulating a newspaper; they, by contrast, build a party by intervening in the class struggle. I won't bother to comment on this; each member of the SWP knows whether we only "publish" or if we also "intervene" in the class struggle.

4. The PST leadership does not see "organs of dual power" emerging from united-front action committees. In fact they see the problem of the united front as a secondary issue in Portugal today. In his July 17 letter to Joe Hansen last summer, Comrade Moreno emphasized:

"One of the most important modifications in our tactic because of the new revolutionary situation concerns the reformist parties and the united front. Now that the task of developing and centralizing the existing elements of dual power is raised to a much higher plane—offensive and not defensive—our united front tactic toward the reformist parties becomes secondary" [IIDB Vol XIII, No. 1, p. 16].

In other words, the "organs of dual power" Comrade Moreno is talking about do not seem to be much different from the so-called soviets set up by the various sectarian centrist organizations in Portugal today.

Differences over the centrality of the united-front strategy are also revealed in the fact that the PST seems to be against the call for a CP-SP government, unless it is coupled with the demand that such a government must be based on workers commissions.

6. Their position on *República* is fundamentally the same as the IMT's. They argue that while the democratic rights of the SP were violated, the heart of the conflict was the fact that a workers commission was trying to establish workers control over a printing plant. It was wrong to publish Trotsky's article on "Freedom of the Press and the Working Class" [*Intercontinental Press*, Vol. 13, No. 22, June 9, 1975] since Trotsky wrote it only for a special situation in Mexico and it does not apply elsewhere.

Trotsky's views as expressed in that article are irrelevant.

7. The LTF is soft on the Portuguese Socialist party, they argue, because the resolution fails to characterize the SP as the agent of European imperialism. We have pointed out that there is no such thing as "European imperialism": there are many European imperialisms. The Portuguese Socialist party is tied to Portuguese imperialism, and this is primarily manifested today by its subordination to the MFA.

8. The PST leadership disagrees that the MFA is a "bourgeois instrument." They characterize it as a "petty bourgeois movement" and deny that it is the main political instrument of the Portuguese bourgeoisie.

9. In the January 1976 issue of *Revista de América* they characterize the SWP as an agent of imperialism because we refuse to support the MPLA government in Angola in its drive to crush UNITA and the FNLA.

Those are some of the points that have come out in discussions with the PST leaders in the last month. What emerges clearly from a summary of their differences, of course, is the fact that politically their line is converging with the line of the IMT. We hope the PST leadership will soon present their views in writing so they can be discussed throughout the international. We are against a discussion inside the LTF. That is one of the IMT's methods of functioning that we have always condemned. If an initial exchange of views does not clarify differences, the place to have a discussion is not inside one or another of the factions, but in the International Internal Discussion Bulletin where everyone can participate, where everyone can influence the course of the debate and clarification.

Compass too

I should note in passing that a comparable political differentiation is taking place inside the former supporters of the Compass tendency, or the Mezhrayonka tendency at the last world congress.

In Germany, where the Compass tendency had its strongest support, Compass leaders have expressed views that are closer to the IMT than the LTF.

In Denmark and in France, on the other hand, some of the comrades formerly associated with Compass and Against the Stream have indicated no major differences with the LTF document on Portugal.

A real test

The debate inside the Fourth International on what course to follow in Portugal led to one very clear result: a de facto dissolution of the previous faction lines. Despite the fact that the IMT rejected the LTF's proposal last summer that it would be in the best interests of the Fourth International to consciously and deliberately move toward a dissolution of the factions, the course of events seems to be pushing even the IMT along this road. We hope that this can open the way to a genuine political debate. Unfortunately, as we will see in the next section of the report, that does not seem to be the IMT's intention. In fact one can only interpret their organizational moves as an attempt to prevent political clarification.

A second important conclusion emerges from the broad picture we have just sketched: the impact of the Portuguese events on the forces outside of but looking towards the

Fourth International raises a historic opportunity to advance the construction of the Fourth International. Can the international reach out to these forces, engage them in discussion, clarify positions, and bring them closer? Or will the IMT prove incapable of doing this? Will they react as dead-end factionalists and sectarians, refusing to discuss with anyone who is not certified pro-IMT in advance? Are they going to work together with the LTF so the international can move out in a confident, united way to build? Or will they react like an insecure, unconfident combination terrified of losing its 0.5 percent majority, and place narrow factional considerations ahead of the historic interests of the working class, that is, building the Fourth International?

For the last 12 months, we would have to conclude that the majority of the IMT faction has failed this test.

II. THE IMT'S ORGANIZATIONAL OFFENSIVE

Far from trying to open the door to a genuine political discussion with Trotskyist forces attracted towards the Fourth International, the IMT has opened an organizational offensive designed to close comrades' minds to a discussion even inside the international.

The purpose seems to be to shift the axis of the discussion away from Portugal and onto the question of "democratic centralism." By this they hope to convince IMT comrades that the LTF refuses to accept democratic centralism, and therefore the political arguments of the LTF should not be considered in an objective way.

To establish this fraudulent case against the LTF, however, the IMT has adopted motions and "instructions" that go beyond the prerogatives of the elected leadership bodies of the international. Their actions have begun to define what they mean by "democratic centralism."

On one level this is a welcome development, because accusations that the LTF is against a democratic centralist international have been part of the IMT underground campaign for a number of years. We have tried to avoid what could only be an abstract discussion on this issue. If there is any question that demands concreteness, it is the question of organizational norms, and we are now beginning to see very concretely, in practice, how the IMT defines democratic centralism. On another level, however, their recent actions constitute an ominous escalation of the factional frictions inside the international, blocking the necessary political clarification.

The most serious action yet taken along these lines was the motion adopted by the IMT instructing the leadership of the Canadian section, the League for Socialist Action /Ligue Socialiste Ouvrière (LSA/LSO) to withdraw the invitation extended to the Groupe Socialiste des Travailleurs du Québec (GSTQ) to attend the LSA/LSO convention.

Correspondence on this question between the United Secretariat Bureau and the Political Committee of the LSA/LSO has been circulated to the members of the National Committee.*

The implications of the IMT's action are indeed far reaching. In effect, the IMT declares that "democratic centralism" means the right of the international leadership to decide the tactical question of what individuals and

currents in the workers movement in a given country can be invited to observe that section's convention!

As is clear from the sequence of correspondence, the IMT made their decision with full knowledge that the invitation to the GSTQ was based on a series of collaborative activities in the class struggle in Québec. It was not part of the discussions on an international level between the United Secretariat and the Organizing Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International, to which the GSTQ is affiliated.

The IMT has always claimed that they agree with the LTF that decisions on national tactics are the prerogative of the national leaderships, as is specified in the statutes of the international. They have always said that they agree with us that any other method of functioning would be detrimental to the primary goal of the international, to aid the development of strong national sections and leaderships capable of making their own decisions and leading the class struggle in their own countries. But their action in relation to the tactical decision of the LSA/LSO leadership clearly reveals that they have an utterly different conception of the prerogatives and responsibilities of the international leadership than we do, and one that violates even the present highly centralized statutes of the Fourth International.

The second letter from Walter to the LSA/LSO leadership goes so far as to tell them they have no right to even probe the possibility of discussion and collaboration with the GSTQ without the prior approval of the United Secretariat and "all the forces of the F.I."

Once the international leadership assumes the prerogative to make tactical decisions concerning activities to be carried out in Canada, some sticky problems arise. Where do you draw the line? If the United Secretariat can decide whom you invite to your convention and whom not, can they decide whom you recruit? Can they instruct you to recruit person A and not to recruit person B? Can they instruct you to try to engage in united-front actions with group A and to reject collaboration with group B? Can they tell you what line to write in your paper and what not to write? Can they tell you to concentrate on support activity for a strike, and downplay women's liberation work? or vice versa?

If the United Secretariat has veto power over whom you invite to your convention, its right to decide all manner of tactical issues would follow quite logically. The Canadian leadership might just as well fold up shop and say: Okay, run it from Brussels, or send in a commissar to take over.

After fully discussing all these implications of the IMT's concept of "democratic centralism" as outlined in Walter's letters, the convention of the LSA/LSO rejected the right of the United Secretariat majority to instruct them whom they could and could not invite to their convention. We agree with this stand taken by the leadership of the Canadian section. We hope that upon further reflection the IMT will also.

Suppression of the IIDB

A second area in which the IMT has made a series of decisions that help to clarify their concept of democratic centralism is in relationship to material submitted to the International Internal Discussion Bulletin (IIDB).

* See Appendix IV, IIDB, Vol. XIII, No. 6, November 1976.

Comrades who were in the party in 1973 will recall that one of the reasons why the Leninist Trotskyist Tendency felt compelled to convert to a faction was the fact that material submitted to the IIDB was simply not being translated into French and circulated to the French-speaking membership of the international. On July 24, 1973 barely six months before the world congress, we published a list of 62 documents printed and circulating in the English language IIDB that were either out of print or had never been translated and published in French! [See SWP Discussion Bulletin, Vol. 31, No. 27, pp. 36-39.] The lack of translation made a mockery out of the idea that a democratic international discussion was taking place.

After the faction was formed, a major part of the articles listed were translated and published, but some of the more important ones have never to this day appeared in French. For example, Gerry Foley's contribution, "The Test of Ireland," [IIDB, Vol. 10, No. 17, October 1973] was never published.

So the question of the IIDB and a democratic discussion translated into the major languages of the international is not a new issue. But in the last few meetings of the United Secretariat we have reached a new stage, with the IMT simply rejecting material submitted to the IIDB.

The world congress adopted a motion in February 1974 specifying that the international discussion would be closed for a *maximum* of one year on the questions of the world political situation, Argentina, Bolivia, Europe, and the statutes. The motion read, "That the international discussion on these points be closed following the world congress for one year unless the IEC decides to reopen the discussion earlier." The world congress also voted that the written discussion would not be closed at all on the "cultural revolution" and China, the youth radicalization, women's liberation, Middle East, Vietnam and Eastern Europe. The motion specified that the discussion "be continued in literary form following the coming world congress in a monthly bulletin not to exceed 48 pages." [See minutes of the world congress, IIDB, Vol XI, No. 5, April 1974.]

In the intervening 22 months, a total of seven bulletins have been published—two of them devoted to nothing but the minutes of the world congress. In terms of pages, it averages out to less than eleven and a half pages a month!

But that is the English language IIDB, In Spanish not a single IIDB has been published. In French there has been *one* bulletin—a selection of items related to the IT split from the SWP!

We agreed that it was correct to slow down the pace of the literary discussion in the months immediately following the 1974 world congress. We did not submit much material either. But the decisions of the most recent United Secretariat meetings have made it quite clear that the IMT intends to drastically restrict the circulation of information and contributions to the discussion leading up to the next world congress—all in the name of democratic centralism, and asserting the majority's authority.

The LTF's two resolutions, "Key Issues in the Portuguese Revolution" and "The Portuguese Revolution and the New Problems That Face the Fourth International," which have been available in English and Spanish since September, have not yet been published in French.

Instead the LCR published a pamphlet with a selection of articles from *Intercontinental Press* by Gerry Foley and

Joe Hansen, and the first polemic against Foley and Hansen by Pierre Frank, Livio Maitan and Ernest Mandel [see "In Defense of the Portuguese Revolution," *Intercontinental Press*, Vol. 13, No. 31, September 8, 1975]. In the French pamphlet, the Foley and Hansen articles were published under the general title "Military Dictatorship vs. Bourgeois Democracy." (The introduction counterposed this to the position of Frank, Maitan and Mandel, for whom the alternative was "for or against the socialist revolution.") When we objected to this scandalous falsification of our position, the LCR leadership agreed to make a public correction clarifying that Foley and Hansen had not made the selection of articles printed to represent their positions; that the title was not their title; and that the title misrepresented their political position. They also agreed to publish Foley, Hansen and Novack's reply, "For a Correct Political Course in Portugal" [*IP*, Vol. 13, No. 36, October 13, 1975], as a public pamphlet. Neither of these things have yet occurred, but we hope they will.

A motion to publish Pierre Frank's exchange of correspondence with Murry Weiss and Myra Tanner Weiss was rejected by the United Secretariat majority on the grounds that it was "personal correspondence"! [See letters in SWP Internal Information Bulletin No. 3 in 1975, pp. 5-14.]

The United Secretariat called on all sections and sympathizing organizations of the Fourth International to suppress the circulation of the appendix to Jack Barnes' report to our last convention, "The Portuguese Revolution and Building the Fourth International." [See IIDB Vol. XII, No. 6, October 1975.] The appendix contains the "Documents and Correspondence Concerning the Organizing Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International and their Request for Discussion with the United Secretariat." The "reason" given for suppressing this information from the membership of the international is that the procedure followed was irregular, that the appendix was not explicitly submitted to the IIDB as a separate item. Therefore circulation had to be suppressed in order to "teach the minority a lesson."

But it is not only contributions by members of the LTF that are being rejected. The United Secretariat has also rejected immediate publication of a document submitted by the Political Bureau of the Japanese section outlining their views on the character and history of the international; and a contribution by one of the IMT leaders in Britain critical of the European resolution of the IMT. On the latter two items it is clearly a case of the IMT not wanting to publish what are minority views inside the IMT and claiming the right of the IMT majority to publish its documents first to "open" the discussion, which is already open by decision of the last world congress.

All of these decisions to prevent the publication and circulation of material that the membership of the international is entitled to read and study—whatever the particular excuse given for the particular item (and we're sure to get some new ones we can't even imagine at this stage)—are instructive when it comes to understanding what the IMT means when it starts talking about democratic centralism and the organizational integrity of the international.

"Rights of personal correspondence," "teaching the minority a lesson," "structuring the discussion," or whatever, it all adds up to one consistent pattern. Suppressing information that the membership of the

international has a *right* to receive.

It means restricting access to information and views to which the ranks must have access if they are to make *informed* political judgements for themselves. It means undermining the basis for party democracy—*accurate, timely* information.

The IMT has gone too far on this for some of its own members. Comrades Alan Jones and Livio Maitan have either voted against or abstained on some of the motions to prevent publication of material in the IIDB.

Victimizing LTF members

Another instructive example of what democratic centralism means to the IMT can be seen in their attitude toward the SWP membership's right to decide who will be accepted as members of the party and who do not meet the requirements for membership.

This relates to the decisions of our plenum last May and the August convention of the SWP regarding the applications for membership from some former members of the Internationalist Tendency. The IMT voices indignation over the fact that the SWP members decided they had the right to make the decision on each of the individuals reapplying for membership, using an objective criterion—the current party building activities of the former ITers.

As a result of their irritation with the SWP membership, the IMT is starting to victimize individual members of the LTF in the European sections. They also state that they will try to prevent political discussion in the ranks of the international until everyone *they* think meets the criteria for membership in our party is accepted by the SWP ranks.

You will find both of these threats contained in the letter to this plenum from Comrade Aubin for the IMT Steering Committee. [See Appendix I.]

He charges, without any attempt whatsoever to substantiate it that “comrades in political solidarity with the IMT are systematically purged or demoralized inside the SWP,” while comrades in agreement with the LTF are accorded full tendency and faction rights in sections led by the IMT. He then goes on to state explicitly: “Such inequality of chances is obviously intolerable for the IMT. It will not be tolerated by them.”

At the end of his letter Aubin defines recruitment of all IT members applying as a “precondition” for political discussion. “Political differences, important as they may be, can then be discussed.”

Perhaps this throws some light on the IMT's decisions to suppress contributions to the International Internal Discussion Bulletin.

It may also illuminate the recent suspension or expulsion of all but three members of the LTF in the Italian section, including one of the members of the Central Committee who was expelled last month but still has not had any charges presented to him in writing. Two LTF comrades in the French section have also been expelled this fall. The charges against one of them was collaboration with the Lambertists during a teachers strike in the city of Dijon.

The LTF is in the process of trying to document the facts in all these cases so that we can present an accurate picture of what is involved.

But the threat by the IMT, which has now been put down in writing, to victimize LTF members for the

decisions made by the members of the SWP is an extremely ominous development. It says a great deal about their idea of democracy in a “democratic centralist” international.

There is one other point worth noting about Comrade Aubin's letter. The IMT attempts once again to rewrite history as they would have liked it to occur. Aubin states that the February 1975 IEC recommendations have not been implemented. The October 10, 1975, statement of the IMT Steering Committee [see Appendix I] even speaks of a “*violation* of the IEC resolution for collective reintegration”! (emphasis added).

The IEC recommended that “the SWP act in good faith and consider without delay the collective application of the IT for reintegration in the SWP.” The motion is very precise. It does not recommend that the SWP reintegrate the IT. We would have voted against any such motion, and we said so at the time. The motion recommends that we *consider* the collective application of the IT.

The SWP leadership did precisely that at the first plenum following the IEC. Given the split that had just taken place in the IT, after consideration and discussion, we rejected collective reintegration and referred all applications to the branches concerned. In the subsequent months the branches have worked with all the comrades who have shown any interest in collaboration with the SWP and have proceeded to accept the applications of those who demonstrated in practice that they wanted to be active and build the SWP. We acted in good faith and implemented the recommendations of the IEC, all of which we had agreed with and cast our consultative votes for.

Intercontinental Press

The same October 10, 1975, statement by the IMT Steering Committee charges that *Intercontinental Press* has been transformed “into a de facto public faction organ.”

In line with this opinion the IMT adopted a multiple part motion at the November meeting of the United Secretariat recommending to the editor of *Intercontinental Press* that “Articles dealing with issues on which official bodies of the FI have made statements or resolutions (in particular those issues which are in the news, such as Portugal and Angola) and which do not present the line adopted on these issues by the leading bodies, should be identified as contributions which are not within the framework of the orientation of the FI. They should be presented in their totality in such a way that from the point of view of balance, layout, etc. no contrary inaccurate impression could be given as to the general line of *IP*.”

The motions also suggested that official resolutions of the Fourth International should be published in a category separate from “Documents;” that the bureau of the United Secretariat should regularly submit statements and background articles to *IP*; and that the normal practice of publishing public discussion articles be continued.

LTF members of the United Secretariat supported a counter-motion: “that we see no need to suggest considering a change in the way *IP* is being edited, which remains in accordance with the norms followed since its foundation.”

Again, underlying their attempt to make an issue about the way *IP* is edited is their conception of how democratic centralism should be applied in the Fourth International today.

The IMT constantly talks about establishing the authority of the elected leadership bodies of the international. But they try to establish this authority by proclaiming it, showing how little they understand about leadership. Authority flows from respect, which must be earned, and constantly re-earned by showing your political correctness and demonstrating your ability to draw together individuals of varying strengths and abilities into a leadership team. The IMT tries to assert their authority while disregarding the fact that the Fourth International is today divided right down the middle, and the fact that they are acting in such a way as to destroy any authority they might have. Then they wonder why they don't seem to have any authority. So they grow indignant and demand respect. The net result is that the international holds their authority in less and less respect. They respond by talking about discipline and democratic centralism, and teaching the minority lessons.

Intercontinental Press is being edited exactly as it has been since 1963. It is the weekly voice of the Fourth International that carries all the documents and statements of the international, plus news, analysis, signed articles and documents from a wide variety of sources both inside and outside the Fourth International. What has changed is the political reality of the international itself, not the editorial policy of *IP*. Deep political differences have developed on a number of issues. *IP* has reflected this reality, printing signed articles by comrades who support one or another of the organized factions inside the international. As such it plays a unique role in the international.

Joe Hansen, the editor of *Intercontinental Press*, pointed out to the IMT comrades, that if there has been any imbalance in the content of *IP* in the last few years it is because the IMT has boycotted *IP*, rarely submitting articles, despite the fact that several IMT comrades' names are on the editorial board. He pointed out that he welcomed their decision to start regularly submitting statements and background articles. In the past he has had to rely on translating articles from *Rouge*, *La Gauche*, *Was Tun*, and other publications.

Other suggestions such as printing United Secretariat documents in a special category, pose no problem either. In fact the purpose of publishing United Secretariat resolutions under the heading of documents was to call special attention to them, but if comrades want some other way of highlighting them, there's no problem.

You will notice that *IP* has also carried a special box in recent issues calling attention to the fact that signed articles reflect the views of the authors and that regular contributors to *IP* have taken variant positions on issues such as Portugal. The latest article by Comrades Frank, Maitan and Mandel was published under a special heading "Discussion," to clearly indicate its character. These changes are obviously designed to meet some of the concerns of the United Secretariat majority.

However, Comrade Hansen indicated that there was one suggestion which he considered to be an unwarranted change in our norms. That is the suggestion that every article that might possibly contain a line different from

the IMT's had to be accompanied with a disclaimer: Warning: This article may be injurious to your political health! Warning: Read at your own risk! Wrong Line! Incorrect analysis!

Such a policy would be tantamount to barring comrades who support the line of the Leninist Trotskyist Faction from writing regularly for the press of the international. We do not see how that would be in the interests of establishing the authority of the international, contributing to political clarity, or anything else.

The International Executive Committee

The next exhibit in the presentation of how the IMT defines democratic centralism in practice is the meeting of the International Executive Committee that they have called for mid-February.

This is a highly unusual gathering because it has been called as a "restricted IEC." In November the United Secretariat majority voted that only a limited number of IEC members, to be divided proportionately along the tendency lines of the full IEC membership, would be invited to participate. They asked the cooperation of the Leninist Trotskyist Faction in selecting those who would be allowed to participate and those who would be excluded.

The LTF coordinating committee refused, pointing out that no central committee or national committee of any section or sympathizing section in the world would tolerate such a usurpation of authority by its political committee. [See Appendix II.]

At the December United Secretariat meeting the majority responded by deciding to drop the appellation "restricted." Any IEC member who turns up will be allowed to participate. But they still refused to organize a fund drive to finance full participation. So nothing has changed. It remains a "restricted" IEC.

The irony is great. The primary reason given by the IMT for calling a meeting immediately rather than waiting several months in order to be able to raise the funds for such a gathering, is that they need the authority of the IEC behind their resolutions on Portugal, Angola, and other questions. But all they have succeeded in doing is calling a gathering that will have less authority than a full meeting of the United Secretariat.

The most disturbing thing is that they have placed a number of very heated organizational questions on the agenda, including a "balance sheet" on the IT dispute and now the threat to discipline the leadership of the LSA/LSO. That of course, is exactly the kind of point most calculated to exacerbate factional tensions and prevent meaningful political discussion. It makes their claims about calling the IEC for political reasons rather hollow.

Discussion with the OCRFI

The IMT has tried to justify their refusal to respond to the overtures of the OCRFI by invoking democratic centralism and the organizational integrity of the Fourth International. In the October 10 Steering Committee statement of the IMT they even refer to the LTF's use of the term "world Trotskyist movement" as an "ominous sign" of our federalist conception of the international!

In this scheme of things, their dead-end factionalism resembles the heroic posture of Horatio at the bridge holding off the Lambertist hordes bent on storming the international's democratic centralist structure.

In the two and a half years since the OCRFI made the first approach to the international, only one thing has remained constant in the IMT's response: do anything to prevent a political debate with the OCRFI.

The latest event in this chain of responses was the decision to reject the invitation to send a delegation from the United Secretariat to attend the convention of the Organisation Communiste Internationaliste (OCI), the French section of the OCRFI. They also instructed all sections and sympathizing organizations to stay away from the possible source of contamination.

When you think about that decision, it is really quite astonishing. An organization with whom the United Secretariat has decided to meet and explore the possibilities of further discussion, with whom the United Secretariat exchanges all internal documents, with whom the United Secretariat has agreed to probe whether there might be some areas of common activity such as defense work and publication of Trotskyist literature in Eastern European languages, invites the United Secretariat to send a delegation to observe their convention, and even to take the floor if desired. And the United Secretariat refuses the invitation; says, "no we're not interested in what you claim to be, or what you think, or what you have to say."

It is a sectarian stance.

The pretext that was used for refusing to send a delegation to the OCI convention was the charge by the leadership of the Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire (LCR, French section of the Fourth International) that the OCI has a policy of systematically using violence against its opponents within the labor movement.

A serious matter is involved here. But it is clear from the way the IMT has acted that this is being utilized by them as a pretext to block discussion.

To support its contention that the OCI has a policy of systematic violence against opponents in the labor movement the LCR points to four separate incidents that have occurred since the United Secretariat delegation met with a delegation of the OCI leadership in October 1974. Two of the incidents directly involved an organization known as LIRQI (Ligue Internationale pour la Reconstruction de la Quatrième Internationale—International League for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International). One incident at a demonstration in defense of Spanish political prisoners in the spring of 1975, the other at a meeting organized to demand the release of the Ukrainian mathematician Leonid Plyushch in October 1975. A third incident involved the Spartacist group in France and took place at a meeting on Portugal organized by the OCI in early October. A fourth incident allegedly involved a comrade of the LCR at the Tolbiac university center in Paris.

On this fourth incident, the LCR have never publicized anything and apparently didn't even consider it significant enough to mention in *Rouge*. So the facts are not established, and the OCI has never had a chance to respond to the accusation.

On the incident involving the Spartacists, they put out a leaflet claiming they were shoved around by OCI marshalls outside the meeting hall called the Mutualité. We

have not seen any response from the OCI, but we also know that when the Spartacists accuse someone of using violence in the labor movement, it is not always true. More than once they have spread absolutely unfounded accusations against us.

The serious problem is the question of LIRQI. In France they use the name OCI (LIRQI Faction). In the United States the LIRQI group is a descendant of Dave Fender's Communist Faction that split from the SWP in 1971 and now publishes a paper called *Truth*.

The OCI (LIRQI Faction) is a relatively small group that is sometimes also referred to as the Varga group, after one of their central leaders who is a Hungarian exile. Varga took part in the resistance to the Russian invasion of Hungary in 1956, then came to France as a refugee. He was recruited by the OCI. He led or inspired an opposition tendency inside the OCI for several years.

Then the OCI leadership—quite by accident they claim—came into possession of documentation that they believe absolutely confirms that Varga had connections with the CIA and also acted in collusion with the KGB. They published the dossier, making advance copies of it available to other Trotskyist organizations in France, and expelled Varga. They announced that they were willing to turn over the entire archive of documents and evidence to an investigating commission established by organizations in the workers movement. They claim that Varga has never seriously tried to clear himself, nor has anyone else ever refuted the evidence they published.

That is the background, according to the OCI. The problem, they claim, is none of this history, but the fact that today the Varga group functions in France under the name of the OCI (LIRQI Faction). That is, LIRQI comes to meetings organized by the OCI and distributes leaflets signed OCI, leaflets which often have a provocative content. They come to demonstrations and march under banners identifying themselves as OCI. The OCI admits that when LIRQI does this, the OCI tries to take their leaflets or banners away from them. Of course, the result is a physical confrontation, that frequently involves individuals from the LCR and Lutte Ouvrière who come to the defense of LIRQI.

From what we have been able to find out, all the incidents put forward as proof of the OCI's policy of systematic violence in the labor movement stem from this one problem, the OCI leadership's attitude toward LIRQI and the fact that LIRQI uses their name in what they consider to be a very provocative manner.

We have made our attitude on this question very clear—in the United Secretariat, in talking with the LCR, Lutte Ouvrière and others. Even if the OCI's version of the facts is 100 percent accurate, such a stance toward another organization in the workers movement cannot be condoned. It must be unambiguously condemned. This has always been our attitude toward the use of violence in the labor movement, and it always will be. And we consider it our responsibility to use any influence we have with OCI to try to persuade them that such a policy is wrong and can only lead to an escalation of violence in the workers movement, and the isolation of the OCI. We consider it elementary that the Fourth International should approach this question from the point of view of doing what would be most effective in politically convincing the OCI to change its policy.

This is not the attitude of the LCR. From the attitude of the LCR one can only conclude that they are not concerned with stopping the violence but with utilizing it to isolate the OCI and exclude it from the ranks of the "revolutionary left."

This is clear if you look at the sequence of events surrounding this question and the United Secretariat's handling of it.

At the November meeting of the United Secretariat it was decided to postpone a decision about accepting the invitation to attend the OCI convention and "to do everything possible to document the facts on these aggressions." [See Appendix IV.] So two members of the SWP leadership went to Paris to try and document some of the facts.

After getting more of the picture from the LCR leadership and arranging to talk to Lutte Ouvrière, we told the LCR leadership that we intended to go to the OCI leadership, too, and ask them for any material they had on any of these incidents.

The LCR leadership immediately objected. They claimed it would be a violation of the United Secretariat motion on relations with the OCI [see Appendix IV] if we talked to them about any of these incidents. It's okay to listen to the prosecution but not the defense, it seems.

We went to the OCI bookstore anyway and got the material, because we considered the attitude of the LCR leadership to be untenable.

At the December meeting of the United Secretariat we proposed that in light of the facts that had been assembled, the most effective move for the United Secretariat would be to accept the invitation and send a delegation to the OCI convention and take the floor to pedagogically raise the issue of using violence against the LIRQI, explaining our attitude in a fraternal manner that might be able to influence and effect the membership of the OCI. The United Secretariat majority (except for Comrade Alan Jones) categorically rejected this approach.

Instead they sent a letter demanding that the OCI make a public "self-criticism" before the United Secretariat would have anything to do with them, an action designed to make it more difficult for the OCI to back off from its wrong course.

The attitude of the IMT on this question can only be characterized as irresponsible and sectarian. It is not intended to try to influence the OCI or to remove an obstacle to political discussion. Their intention is simply to block any political discussion with a current that has been trying for two and a half years to make a political approach to the Fourth International. It is dead-end factionalism.

There is one other aspect of the OCI/Varga question that I should mention. For some time, the LIRQI has been trying to create a commission—not to investigate the facts or establish the truth about the OCI's accusations, but to condemn the OCI for slandering Varga. [See statement by LIRQI in Appendix IV.] When the LCR and the Spartacists refused to participate in a commission that decided the case before the investigation, the Varga people walked out. Lutte Ouvrière, however, is still interested in trying to set up a commission that will look into both the case the OCI has made against Varga, and the accusation by the LIRQI that the OCI uses physical violence against them.

Given the importance this whole affair has assumed,

when we met with the comrades from the leadership of LO, we told them that we were willing to serve as part of the commission, that we considered it our responsibility to do so. Such a commission, assuming it is objective and honest, would be the best way to handle what has become a serious problem and, if possible, eliminate an obstacle in the path of political discussion and clarification among Trotskyist forces on a world scale.

"Democratic Centralism" is not the issue

Beneath these organizational conflicts that I have enumerated lies the question of the organizational norms of the Fourth International, and differing traditions on how to develop cadres and build authoritative leadership teams nationally and internationally. All this should be discussed out *concretely*, on the basis of the living experience of the international and its sections. It is a political question, that deserves political discussion and clarification like all the rest. But to do that a political atmosphere must be created—not one of threats, reprisals, disciplinary actions.

The IMT faction's attempt to shift the axis of the debate to the question of "democratic centralism" is nothing but an attempt by their split wing to short circuit the process of political clarification around the issues being raised today by the Portuguese revolution.

III. THE SPLIT IN THE LIGA SOCIALISTA

The final major question I want to take up is the split that occurred two weeks ago at the convention of the Liga Socialista in Mexico.

This convention took place so recently and the split itself developed so rapidly, that we have not yet been able to translate some of the key documents and make them available. We will do this as rapidly as possible. [See Internal Information Bulletin No. 3 in 1976.]

Prior to the convention the LS had approximately 225 members. The delegates to the convention were divided about two-thirds, one-third. The split itself resulted from a number of motions adopted by the two-thirds majority at the convention, including a motion to literally *purge* the entire membership. Another motion excluded the leadership of the minority from the incoming central committee. The constitution was revised to eliminate many minority rights.

The majority also voted to sever all relations with the Socialist Workers party.

Comrade Eduardo, representing the political committee of the PST of Argentina was present, as well as a second Argentine comrade, Comrade Greco, who has been resident in Mexico for several months, on assignment from the PST leadership to promote *Revista de América*. The two Argentine leaders played a decisive role in the split. At the convention they spoke explicitly in favor of the organizational measures that were adopted by the majority, in some cases urging that the convention take even more undemocratic steps.

As a result of the new, totally bureaucratic organizational norms adopted by the convention, norms that are alien

to the traditions of Leninism, the minority of the Liga Socialista, the Bolshevik-Leninist Faction (FBL), decided that they had no choice but to constitute themselves as a public faction of the Liga Socialista, and openly denounce the decisions reached by the majority. The first issue of their newspaper, *El Socialista*, which explains what happened at the convention, went on sale in Mexico City yesterday.

We think the comrades of the FBL were correct in their assessment of the situation and their action. They had no choice if the Trotskyist continuity of the Liga Socialista was to be maintained.

I would like to take time to briefly sketch the chronology of events that led up to this split, because I think that will give comrades the clearest indication of what was involved.

The September Central Committee Meeting

The fight broke out in the leadership of the Liga Socialista barely three months before the convention, at a meeting of the central committee held in mid-September. No real political differences surfaced. There was a unanimous vote on preparing a draft political resolution to open the preconvention discussion in the Liga Socialista, and a unanimous vote to adopt a report on Portugal and the tasks for building the Fourth International.

The fight broke out totally unexpectedly, around the organization report. Comrade Horacio, who was assigned by the political committee to give the organization report, thought he was reporting for a unanimous political committee. No disagreements had been expressed prior to the plenum. Much to his surprise, when he finished the report another member of the political committee, Comrade Ricardo, got up and gave a counterreport. The counterreport centered on two points: the structure of the Liga and the need for more activity. The counterreport proposed the immediate reorganization of the Liga to get rid of the branch structure which was described as an obstacle to intervening in the class struggle. Instead it was proposed to organize the Liga according to "fronts" of work. Secondly, the counterreport criticized the low level of activity of the membership and leaders who sat behind desks in offices rather than intervening in the class struggle. It was proposed that members who could not meet the new standards of activity should be demoted to the ranks of a youth organization that would be set up.

The counter organizational report was adopted by a majority vote, and on that basis a new political committee was elected to reflect the majority in favor of "fronts", not branches, and more activity. The organizational secretary of the Liga, Comrade Horacio, was also removed and replaced by Comrade Ricardo.

The most disturbing aspect of the procedure was the refusal of the central committee majority to submit their proposals to a discussion in the membership. The plenum had been called to prepare and formally open the preconvention discussion. When it became clear that there were differences in the central committee, the normal procedure would have been for comrades supporting the alternative positions to write down their views and submit them to the membership for discussion, clarification and

decision at the convention. The majority of the central committee rejected this course, insisting that their organizational proposals be implemented immediately, without any discussion.

Later, when rank-and-file comrades of the Liga objected to implementing some of these measures without any discussion in the branches or fronts, they were informed by members of the political committee majority that they could disagree with the decisions taken, but they had no right to discuss something decided by the central committee or political committee.

As the new political committee majority took over they began to introduce other antidemocratic measures and to take disciplinary actions against members of the political committee minority.

By majority vote the political committee decided that the new fronts being set up would not have the right to elect their own leaderships. Final authority to decide the composition of all local leadership bodies was to rest with the political committee.

At the end of October the political committee majority decided to remove the editor of the paper, Comrade Cristina (a member of the PC minority) for disciplinary reasons. The comrade had been ill for several weeks following two deaths in her family and other personal problems. She had not *formally* notified the political committee that she would be unable to work for several weeks. The political committee minutes note that the decision to remove her as editor was a disciplinary action.

In the middle of November the political committee majority voted to remove the two comrades of the Liga Socialista leadership who are members of the International Executive Committee of the Fourth International (Comrades Cristina and Jaime), on the grounds that they were a minority in the political committee on the question of Portugal. When the PC minority objected to this and the two comrades involved refused to vote in favor of removing themselves from the IEC, the PC majority decided that the minutes of that meeting were not to be circulated to any member of the Fourth International outside the Liga Socialista.

A political difference emerges

The first political difference surfaced only at the end of October—nearly six weeks after the PC majority launched their unprincipled power struggle. It came as a complete surprise.

Comrade Jaime of the PC minority gave a report on Portugal. Comrade Greco who had been invited to attend that meeting then gave a counterreport, attacking the position of the Leninist Trotskyist Faction.

This was how the LTF learned that the Argentine PST leadership did not agree with the line of the faction on Portugal. The PST did not inform the faction directly. They did not even send a letter until almost a month later. The faction found out there were differences on Portugal when a fight broke out among members of the LTF in Mexico.

Following this meeting, the two members of the LTF steering committee in Mexico informed the LTF leadership

what was happening in the Liga Socialista leadership.

As it was clear that more than internal differences in the LS were involved, and that the division there affected the LTF and international as a whole, two members of the LTF coordinating committee went to Mexico City to meet with the LTF comrades. In addition to discussing Portugal and trying to clarify what the difference might be, as the pattern of organizational measures became clear, we raised our concern about the undemocratic actions being taken by the PC majority. Comrade Greco informed us that, on the contrary, in his opinion the PC majority was acting in an extremely responsible and correct manner.

In the middle of November, barely one month before the convention was to be held, two tendencies were formed. The political committee minority constituted the Tendencia Bolchevique-Leninista (TBL) on the basis of a three-point platform: (1) the general line of a document called "For Internal Democracy in the Liga Socialista," (2) the general line of the tasks and perspectives document that had been voted down at the September central committee meeting, and (3) the general line on Portugal that had been expressed in *El Socialista* up until that time. (It was understood that this meant defense of the LTF line on Portugal, but as the document "Key Issues in the Portuguese Revolution" was not available to all LS members in Spanish at the time the TBL was formed the comrades referred instead to the articles in *El Socialista*.)

The PC majority constituted the Tendencia Militante on the basis of the document entitled "Self Critical Balance Sheet," which outlined their organizational proposals. *At no time in the entire course of their power struggle did the TM present a single political document to justify their existence as an organized formation.*

[The Platform documents of the two tendencies are available in IIB No. 3 in 1976.]

Despite repeated demands from the TBL to postpone the convention and allow time for a discussion, the TM refused. In Mexico City delegates were elected on December 12. A number of branches in the provinces did not elect delegates. They did not receive the documents in time to discuss them. For example, Tijuana sent a group of comrades to Mexico City, and only after reading the documents there and discussing with comrades did the Tijuana comrades in Mexico City make up their minds and choose a delegate. Since those still in Tijuana were unable to vote, Tijuana had only one delegate instead of the two they were entitled to.

A proposal to purge the membership

One week before the convention convened, Comrade Ricardo and another comrade submitted a document entitled "Platform for the Dissolution of the Tendencies." The Tendencia Militante announced that the document would be put to a vote at the convention itself.

If you don't have time to read all the materials, you should at least read this document. This is the purge document. No Trotskyist could read it and still have any doubts about the methods of the TM or the character of the organization led by the TM today. Their methods have more in common with Stalinist norms than with Leninism.

The first plank of the "Joint Platform . . ." deals with party membership. The proposal, adopted by the convention, reads:

"Starting immediately after the congress, all comrades who are members of the Liga Socialista will go through a month of testing to determine whether they are full members of the organization. During this month, the rank-and-file and leadership bodies will set concrete tasks for each and every comrade, and will supervise the carrying out of these tasks. On the basis of those assignments, and supervision, a report will be drawn up. This report will be discussed at the end of the month by the appropriate rank-and-file body, which will decide which comrades have fulfilled the minimum level of activity required to be a member of the Liga Socialista and which comrades have not. Comrades who lose their status as full members of the party will not be excluded from party bodies, nor from its activities, nor from its political discussion. They will lose only the right to vote on questions related to the general political line of the organization, to vote in the election of leadership, and to vote on questions of principles."

The convention took place December 19-21, 1975. It was not a political convention organized to discuss political differences and elect a new leadership on the basis of clear counterpositions. It was a gathering organized to drive through a split, holding together an organizational majority by avoiding all political discussion.

For example, the Portugal point was removed from the agenda altogether. The day *after* the convention was over, a panel of five comrades made brief presentations on Portugal, but no discussion was allowed.

The political resolution was supposedly still a unanimous document, supported by both the Tendencia Militante and the Tendencia Bolchevique-Leninista. But at the convention the TM made a report that contained a line different from the line of the document, even though they had never submitted a single criticism of the political resolution prior to the convention.

The TBL then made a counterreport, in harmony with the line of the written resolution. There was less than one hour of discussion, at the end of which the resolution was unanimously adopted, with one abstention. That gives a pretty good indication of the lengths to which the TM was willing to go to avoid all political clarification.

The discussion on the organizational report centered on the motion to purge the membership. The comrades of the TBL did a good job of explaining the implications of the purge motion and other measures that had been taken by the TM leadership in the months leading up to the convention. The TM defended the purge on the grounds that only comrades who did not want to be active could be afraid of voting for such a proposal.

When the purge motion was adopted, the TBL announced that they were organizing themselves as a faction in order to fight against the TM's organizational measures which were alien to the traditions of Leninism.

The next point on the agenda was the statutes. Draft statutes had been prepared several months prior to the convention, unanimously approved by the political committee, and submitted to the discussion. One week before the convention, the TM announced they would probably propose a few amendments, but they submitted nothing in writing. At the convention itself, the TM orally presented extensive "amendments" that constituted a complete revision, codifying all the antidemocratic practices that had been introduced by the TM in the period leading up to the convention. The revised statutes that were adopted

without any delegate being able to even read the changes, included measures denying the right of local bodies to elect their own leaderships and removing clauses guaranteeing minority rights.

Witchhunt of minority leadership

But all that was simply preparation for the final session of the convention which can be most accurately described with terms such as witch-hunt, kangaroo court and massacre.

Formally, the point on the agenda was the election of the central committee. The proposal was to elect a central committee of 24 full and 6 alternate members. Eight full and two alternate members were to be selected by the FBL, the rest by the TM.

When the FBL presented their slate, however, a leader of the TM immediately moved to reject the slate and suspend from all leadership posts six of the central leaders of the FBL. The six included the four members of the outgoing political committee (the four comrades who had been the reporters for the FBL at the convention) and two members of the outgoing control commission.

They were charged with a "violation of proletarian morality," and accused of having circulated the slander that one of the leaders of the Tendencia Militante, Comrade Ricardo, was a police agent.

By this action, Ricardo and the rest of the TM leadership took responsibility for publicly airing a very serious matter that had previously been discussed in the leadership of the LS. Contrary to normal practice, the entire membership of the Liga had been invited to stay for this point on the agenda, as well as representatives of delegations from other sections and sympathizing organizations of the Fourth International.

What was behind such accusations?

Last summer two members of the Political Committee (later to become leaders of the FBL) accidentally came into the possession of material that indicated Comrade Ricardo was a police agent. They concluded that there were two possibilities. Either that the information was accurate, or that it was a plant, designed to sow suspicions and dissension in the leadership of the organization.

Since this was the first time they had ever been faced with this kind of problem the comrades were unsure what to do. Instead of immediately placing the matter before the control commission for investigation, they made a mistake. They sought advice from three other members of the political committee and a member of the control commission on how to proceed.

One of the members of the political committee with whom they consulted began circulating the accusation that Ricardo was being slandered.

The September plenum of the central committee began with a closed session where this matter was discussed. At this central committee meeting, a second mistake was made. Once rumors, suspicions, accusations and counteraccusations of this nature come up, a leadership has no choice but to conduct an immediate, thorough, impartial investigation to substantiate the rumors or to clear the comrades involved. Any other course can have but one result. It will tear the organization apart. The central committee, however, unan-

imously decided that since no charges were being made by anyone, and since the two members of the political committee agreed they had made an error in handling the question, the matter should be considered closed. Members of the central committee were put under discipline not to discuss the matter outside that closed session.

Instead of abiding by the central committee decision, however, Ricardo himself proceeded to raise it with comrades individually and even in the written preconvention discussion, making vague illusions to unscrupulous actions that were exposed by the central committee during an extraordinary closed session. It was used in an underground way to line up comrades throughout the preconvention discussion. Then it was thrown on the floor of the convention, not to rectify the previous errors and defuse an extremely explosive and destructive problem, but for exactly the opposite reason. The only purpose for raising the issue was to try to pillory the leadership of the FBL, to prevent the minority from being represented by its most capable leaders, and to prepare for the further victimization of the minority during the coming purge.

Methods alien to Trotskyism

Furthermore, the manner in which this session was conducted was more reminiscent of the accounts given by some of Healy's victims than anything within the traditions of Trotskyism. It was a genuine witch-hunt in which demands were made that the comrades of the FBL "self-criticize" themselves before the convention for their "methods"; that they "voluntarily" remove themselves from all leadership posts in order to prove that they were willing to be "reeducated"; that they admit their petty-bourgeois weaknesses and lack of proletarian morality.

The methods used came from the school of Stalinism, not Leninism. The majority leaders began with the assumption that the FBL leaders were guilty as charged and that they should be judged *before* any investigation of the facts. The purpose of the witch-hunt was not to condemn the FBL leaders. That was assumed. The purpose was to try to break them as individuals, to force them to thank their accusers for having shown them their sinful ways and saved them from their petty-bourgeois fate.

Fortunately, the comrades of the FBL were stronger than that. They fought back in an exemplary way.

The SWP was a target of the witch-hunt also. The Tendencia Militante circulated the accusation that an unnamed leader of the SWP was responsible for starting the rumor that Ricardo was a police agent. They demanded that the SWP conduct an investigation of its leadership, modeled on the methods they were using in the Liga Socialista, and take disciplinary action against the unnamed comrade who would thus be ferretted out. When it became clear that the SWP would do no such thing, but would instead condemn their methods as utterly alien to everything we stand for, the TM leadership pushed through a motion to break all relations with the SWP.

It is interesting to note that this was the one motion in the course of the entire convention on which the TM was unable to hold its bloc together. Six of the 34 TM delegates broke with them on this motion, three voting against it and three abstaining.

Role of the PST leadership

The role played by the representatives of the Argentine PST leadership throughout the convention was particularly important and reprehensible.

They took the floor numerous times to speak in favor of the measures being proposed by the Tendencia Militante. Comrade Greco spoke during the final session, for example, and argued that it was not sufficient to remove the accused comrades from leadership posts. He urged their expulsion. He gave a lecture about "proletarian morality" explaining that comrades are expelled from the PST in Argentina for "violations of proletarian morality" such as being married in a church, or breaking under torture. He commended the norms being established by the Tendencia Militante as progress in the direction of establishing membership norms more like those in Argentina.

Comrade Eduardo advised the delegates that many petty-bourgeois types fall by the wayside since they are incapable of the kind of commitment necessary to build a Bolshevik party. Thus the delegates should not be overly concerned at the prospect of a split.

Comrade Eduardo's role can also be seen by his "compromise" proposal concerning the motion to break relations with the SWP. He took the floor and suggested that the majority should not adopt a motion to take effect immediately. Instead they should decide to postpone definitive action for six weeks in order to allow the SWP leadership time to conduct an "investigation" and inform the leadership of the Liga Socialista what disciplinary action had been taken!

The PST leadership as a whole has not yet said anything about the conduct of the two comrades sent to Mexico to represent them, and the role they played in splitting the Liga Socialista. Once they get the full picture, we hope they will condemn it as vigorously as we do. However, there are two disturbing indications that they may instead sanction the conduct of Greco and Eduardo in Mexico.

Comrade Mario, the PST leader who is a member of the coordinating committee of the LTF, with whom we discussed our concern over the course of events in Mexico prior to the Liga convention, indicated that he thought it was a waste of time to discuss these "organizational matters" like whether rank-and-file bodies have a right to elect their leadership. The real problem, he argued, was that the line of the Liga had to be changed, and that's what the Argentine comrades were trying to promote.

Secondly, Comrade Eduardo informed us that the PST leadership had discussed Comrade Greco's conduct in the preconvention discussion period; if any criticisms of Greco were raised during the convention the PST leadership had instructed him to defend Comrade Greco's role and conduct.

We hope our fears on this question prove unfounded but we are not optimistic.

A public faction

After the convention was over, the members of the Bolshevik-Leninist Faction met and discussed what their course should be. They decided that the totality of the organizational measures adopted by the majority at the second convention of the Liga Socialista were such that they had no choice but to refuse to submit to them and to declare themselves a public faction of the Liga Socialista. Only by

doing so could they fight to preserve the tradition, program and organizational methods of Trotskyism in Mexico.

The correctness of this course was further confirmed by the measures adopted by the political committee of the Tendencia Militante at the first meeting after the convention. Among other things, it was decided that Comrade Ricardo, as organizational secretary, would make all decisions on the formation of new "fronts," distribution of members in the fronts, naming or removal of members of any secretariat that might be set up, and similar matters. Members of the FBL were to be excluded from any assignment in the party "apparatus" because of their petty-bourgeois character and the need to "reeducate" them.

The Liga Socialista (Bolshevik-Leninist Faction) has a core of members who have gone through an extremely educational experience in the last months. Those who made it through the witch-hunt came out a lot wiser than they began. What mistakes they made were the result of inexperience, and it's not likely they will be repeated again.

The PST and the LTF

By far the most disturbing aspect of the split in the Liga Socialista was the intervention of PST leadership.

If the PST leadership refuses to condemn the organizational method of the Tendencia Militante, and the role played by Greco and Eduardo, it is our opinion that we cannot remain in a common faction with the PST leadership. The methods used by the Ricardo leadership are in total contradiction to the platform of the LTF. The LTF has made defense of democratic norms, and upholding the organizational principles of Trotskyism a fundamental part of our fight in the Fourth International from the very beginning. In our opinion, the LTF has no choice but to expell from the LTF those who were responsible for organizing and leading the unprincipled power struggle in the Liga Socialista using methods that are alien to the Trotskyist movement.

Comrades have also been asking, how do we explain the conduct of the PST leadership?

One of the strengths of the Argentine party has always been its concern with, and commitment to, helping build Trotskyist parties throughout Latin America. This is a tradition that goes back many years, and it has played an important role in the history of Latin American Trotskyism. The Argentine leadership has tried to do this by a number of different methods. They try to help groups financially. They try to publish Trotskyist literature in Spanish that will be useful throughout Latin America. They encourage comrades to send leaders to Argentina for a period of time to participate in their cadre schools and to be active in the PST.

In fact, two of the central leaders of the Bolshevik-Leninist Faction in Mexico are comrades who each spent six months in Argentina working with the PST. They found it an extremely valuable experience and learned a great deal from it which will help them in building a revolutionary party in Mexico. Whatever their disagreements with the PST today, they are glad they had the opportunity to work with them and learn from them in Argentina.

But there has always been a side of the Argentine approach to helping other groups which we considered to be harmful rather than constructive. This is a disagreement that goes back twenty years or more, since the days when they set up the SLATO—the Latin American Secretariat of Orthodox Trotskyists—as a counterpart to Posadas' BLA

(Latin American Bureau), during the 1950s when the international was split into two public factions.

One of the things that the Argentine leadership usually proposes to other, weaker groups in Latin America is that the Argentines send one of their leading cadres to work with the new group—whether it be in Peru, or Venezuela, or wherever. On the surface, this sounds like a very attractive proposition, so the offer is usually accepted with many thanks. The Argentine comrade is usually someone with considerable experience and ability, and political knowledge. When the comrade arrives to work with a relatively new and inexperienced group, he is usually coopted onto the political committee right away and rapidly becomes the dominant leader of the organization. In the process the developing indigenous leadership gets pushed aside. Usually some kind of politically unclear power struggle develops, in which the local leadership that objects to the methods or political line of the comrade sent in from Argentina, gets characterized as “petty bourgeois” and ends up being expelled, or pushed out, because they are too inexperienced to be able to fight back and win.

Time and again, the results of this method have been disastrous. Often when the Argentine leader leaves, the group falls apart because the natural development of a leadership team has been destroyed by the Argentine intervention. You can't build a strong, self-confident leadership team, capable of thinking for themselves and leading the class struggle in their own country, by putting the group in receivership to Buenos Aires.

The PST leadership's attitude toward the development of the Liga Socialista was consistent with this long-standing method of intervention in other groups. Several times the PST leadership proposed to the leadership of the LS that they would be willing to send a leading cadre to Mexico to work with them. Each time the LS rejected the offer because they felt it would not help the development of a leadership team in Mexico. They suggested other forms of collaboration which they thought would be more helpful.

However, last summer, the PST leadership decided to send a leading comrade anyway, despite the objections of the LS leadership. That was comrade Greco, who arrived with the assignment to promote *Revista de América*. But since that assignment didn't take a great deal of time he found ample opportunity to talk with many comrades and offer his advice concerning the organizational problems of the young organization. Although not formally a member of the Liga Socialista, he rapidly became the central advisor to the bloc that emerged as the Tendencia Militante.

All that was like a rerun of a movie being watched for the umpteenth time.

What was different in Mexico was that a strong indigenous leadership had already been forged. They were self-confident, well-read, had several years of experience in the international faction fight under their belts, knew the Argentines well as a result of this collaboration in the international, and they weren't ready to take orders from Buenos Aires, Brussels, New York, or anywhere. They are the kind of leaders who listen to what everyone has to say and then make up their own minds. They think through for themselves all the problems of general line, strategy, tactics, and how to implement them in Mexico, and then they go ahead and build. You can't push that kind of leadership out of the way without a fight, and that is what was new in

Mexico. The FBL didn't win the majority of the organization (yet) but in my opinion they had a victory all the same. They came out of the fight with a cadre that has learned some lessons they will never forget. And they prevented their organization from being destroyed.

If you are looking for cadres who are capable of building something, you are better off putting your money on 80 people who refuse to vote to purge themselves rather than the 150 who raise their hands in favor.

A loyal minority

We have had another difference with the Argentine leadership since the division on guerrilla warfare in Latin America first emerged at the 1969 world congress. From the beginning, the PST leaders were impatient with the slow pace of winning comrades in the sections and sympathizing organizations where those who agreed with us were a minority. They sometimes expressed the opinion that you can never win an argument or prove you are right unless you demonstrate in practice that your line is correct. And you can't do that if you are a minority that is prevented from putting its line into practice. So if you are a minority it is better to get out, intervene in the class struggle and show your line is better.

We disagreed strongly. We thought the PST leadership oversimplified the problems of building a revolutionary international. We think we show something very important about our line by demonstrating our intention and our ability to be a loyal minority. Would it really settle something to go out and set up Trotskyist Organization #27 in Britain? Of course not. As long as there is internal democracy, if you aren't capable enough to carry on a political fight inside the IMG you wouldn't be able to build anything outside either.

This difference came up several times in various forms. Each time the LTF steering committee discussed it, and overwhelmingly rejected the PST's arguments. Each time, the LTF reaffirmed its position. Agreement with the perspective of functioning as a loyal minority within the sections and sympathizing organizations of the Fourth International is a condition of membership in the LTF. After lengthy discussion the PST leadership always voted in favor of making agreement with that perspective a condition of membership.

We didn't try to psychoanalyze them to determine if they really agreed. In a Bolshevik party you never vote for something you disagree with. So we assume that when comrades vote for something it is because they are convinced it is correct. Your common vote defines the basis on which your collaboration takes place.

And the LTF line *was* the basis on which we collaborated for many years. We worked together to prevent splits from taking place and to build the LTF minorities in sections and sympathizing organizations led by the IMT.

But in our opinion a change has taken place in the last year, a progressive deterioration of honest collaboration on the basis of commonly agreed perspectives. The PST has never said that they have changed their opinion and no longer agree with the platform of the LTF. On the contrary, as late as last August they reaffirmed their agreement by voting for the LTF statement entitled “The Portuguese Revolution and the New Problems that Face the Fourth

International," [IIDB Vol. XII, No.6]. But the PST leadership began acting in a different way. Instead of collaborating with, working with leaders of the LTF in the different sections, in Europe and Latin America, they started functioning behind the backs of the LTF. They in fact started to function like a distinct grouping inside the LTF, a grouping that did not declare its existence or its platform.

At the LTF steering committee meeting in August a special session was devoted to a discussion of the norms of leadership relations in the LTF. Comrades from Spain, Britain, and Colombia raised very sharp objections to the way the PST leadership had been functioning, the obvious attempts by PSTers to foster divisions within the LTF in those countries and elsewhere, their refusal to consult before making moves that might erroneously be interpreted as actions decided upon by the LTF and might have repercussions for the comrades on other countries. In each case, Comrade Moreno or Comrade Mario indicated that they agreed mistakes had been made and that they would not be repeated. Unfortunately, as we saw in Mexico, the pattern was not altered.

In retrospect, I think this change in functioning, which set the PST leadership on a collision course with the rest of the faction, began with the eruption of the prerevolutionary situation in Portugal and the opportunities this created for the growth of revolutionary Marxist forces.

Long before there were any differences concerning the political line to be followed by Trotskyists in Portugal, we had a disagreement with the Argentine comrades concerning our attitude toward the LCI, the sympathizing organization of the Fourth International that was recognized by the 1974 world congress. Following their long-standing practice in Latin America, which I have already described, when the political situation opened up in Portugal, the PST leadership decided to send a comrade to Portugal. This was done without any consultation with the LTF. In retrospect, it is clear that they already saw this as a decision to show in practice that their inclinations were correct. Their impatience got the better of them. They went ahead to build an organization in Portugal outside the sympathizing organization led by the IMT.

Several times this was discussed in the LTF and the United Secretariat. The PST leaders always denied their intention was to build a rival organization. Several times the LTF expressed the opinion that we favored a fusion of the LCI and PRT, that we did not believe the political differences in Portugal justified the existence of two sympathizing organizations of the Fourth International, especially under the circumstances of the political upheaval and the tasks that were posed before Portuguese Trotskyists. The PST leadership always stated their agreement with this LTF position. But in practice it became clear over time that they were not using their influence with the PRT to promote the perspective agreed to by the LTF. In practice they were promoting a counter-perspective.

The political differences on Portugal came later.

Ironically, the political convergence between the IMT and PST could now lead them to change their course and favor an LCI-PRT fusion. They will probably even pretend that the IMT has been won to the PST's positions precisely because they helped to build the PRT as a Trotskyist organization and that put pressure in the IMT to correct its errors!

It is important to keep our differences with the PST leadership in perspective. In this report I have concentrated on our differences because that is what is new. But this changes nothing in our appreciation of the PST's strengths. There are, and there remain very broad areas of political agreement between us and the PST leadership. Our collaboration over the last years has been decisive in the struggle to build the Fourth International. The Argentine PST remains the strongest and most important Trotskyist organization in Latin America, and we will continue to collaborate and work with Argentine comrades on all questions where we agree.

We will especially continue the fight to force the IMT to recognize the PST as the organization that would be recognized as the Argentine section of the Fourth International, were it not for reactionary legislation similar to that which exists in the U.S. We hope that the political convergence between the PST and the IMT will help break down some of the blind factionalism against the PST which has prevented them from being so recognized in the past.

We are certainly not happy about the differences that now divide the PST leadership from the LTF. But we are convinced that the only way we will be able to collaborate with the PST in the future is by showing very clearly where we stand. In regard to the PST's leadership's role in the split in Mexico, we can only hope to influence their conduct in the future by taking a hard stand against the totally destructive character of their intervention in the Liga Socialista.

A new stage

When you put all the elements of this panorama together it becomes clear that there has been an acceleration of centrifugal forces in the Fourth International. An authoritative leadership of the international as a whole is more and more undermined by the IMT; the previous faction lines are dissolving; a new destructive split has occurred, this time within one of the two major factions; the first expulsions of LTF members in Europe have taken place—all this at a time when new forces are coming toward the international, thus posing very sharply the need to break down factional and sectarian responses, to turn outward and work to strengthen the Fourth International.

We are at a critical juncture in the evolution of the political struggle in the international. There is no point in speculating about what may or may not happen in the weeks and months to come. The main thing is that we will continue to follow the course we have maintained since political differences emerged in 1969, fighting to preserve the unity of the Fourth International at the same time that we clarify political lines and build the international. The incoming political committee will have to pay very close attention to developments in the world movement.

I want to end by emphasizing the point I began with. This perspective is nothing new for us. But what is changing is the scope of the historical opportunities before the Fourth International. And that makes us optimistic.

It is worth looking back on where we have come from since 1969. It's worth remembering how many countries there were that had no Trotskyist parties at all six or seven years ago. The list includes places like Australia, New Zealand, Iran, Sweden, Spain, Ireland, Portugal, Venezuela, Lebanon, Israel, Colombia, Puerto Rico, the Antilles—and the list goes on. That has changed, and not only has the Fourth

International grown, at the same time a whole layer of cadres have been educated politically because of the struggle we have conducted.

We have learned a lot in this process. We have learned that there are no shortcuts toward the goal of building an international movement. It is a hard task. Even Marx and Engels and Lenin sometimes threw up their hands in despair.

We have been reminded once again, by our own concrete experience, that amongst our comrades we have no permanent friends and no permanent enemies. For us, politics is decisive.

Once upon a time—way back in 1969 or thereabouts—I used to be somewhat naive or perhaps shortsighted. I used to think that someday we would have a plenum or convention when we would be able to give a world movement report that

would inform the comrades—its over! We'd be able to report that we had won the fight in the international, or that we'd lost it, but at least that something was settled. I suspect other comrades had the same idea, even if unconsciously.

One of the most important things we have learned in the last seven years is not to wait for such a report. The terms of the political struggle may be constantly shifting, but the central importance of this task of building the Fourth International does not change. That growing realization has played a fundamental role in the education of the Socialist Workers party in the last years. It has shaped a whole new generation of cadres who understand the importance of building an international movement, who understand that the SWP cannot be built without shouldering our responsibilities in helping to build the Fourth International.

Appendix I: IMT Steering Committee Statements

To the January 1976 Plenum of the National Committee of the Socialist Workers Party

Dear Comrades,

Once again, we want to draw your attention to the serious situation created in the IVth International by the fact that the recommendations of the February 1975 IEC regarding the collective reintegration of the IT comrades into your party have not yet been implemented, practically one year after they were voted and adopted.

We obviously differ on the antecedents of this dispute, and regarding the responsibilities involved. But about one statement of facts there should be no difference of opinion. As long as the February 1975 IEC recommendations have not been implemented, the highest degree of tension will persist in the F.I. between the majority and the minority. Rightly or wrongly, the majority of the leaders and the members of the F.I. are convinced that a matter of basic principle is involved in that dispute: the question of equality of rights between various tendencies inside the F.I.

Rightly or wrongly, the majority of leaders and members of the F.I. believe that your party's leadership has victimized the IT comrades of the I.T. for the "crime" of coming out, as an organized and efficient faction inside the S.W.P., in favor of those positions of the F.I. majority with which you disagree. Under these circumstances, the continuation of the debate in the international Trotskyist movement occurs under conditions of basic inequality of chances for different tendencies. The comrades in solidarity with SWP positions enjoy full tendency rights and in fact operate as highly organized factions inside all those sections which are led by IMT comrades. However, the comrades in political solidarity with the IMT are systematically purged or demoralized inside the SWP. Such inequality of chances is obviously intolerable for the IMT. It will not be tolerated by them.

We urge you to take this fact into account, regardless of whether you agree with the interpretation of events underlying it. Surely the opinion of the majority of the leaders and members of the F.I., an organisation with which you are in general political solidarity in spite of existing tactical differences and even if reactionary legislation prevents you from being members, cannot be a matter of indifference to you. Surely, the question of reintegrating a couple of dozen comrades more into the SWP, comrades who have made unmistakably clear their willingness to accept discipline and the organisational principles of the SWP and to act accordingly, should not be a matter of great concern to an organization of the size of the SWP. Surely, the formal right of local branches to decide upon that matter (i.e. to procrastinate as they have procrastinated since the May 1975 SWP Plenum), should weigh less heavily upon your judgment than the question of normalizing your relations with thousands upon thousands of organized Trotskyists the world over, who regard this matter as *the* key question of the moment, for the above mentioned reason of principle.

We therefore urge you to settle, at your Plenum, once and for all, the collective reintegration of all those members of

the IT who have applied for membership, and who unmistakably declared their willingness to accept the discipline of the SWP, on the basis of their political conviction that the building of the Marxist revolutionary party in the United States is identical with the building of the SWP.

If you act in a responsible manner, as your whole history and tradition commands you to do, we are sure that relations with the FI will become rapidly as normal as they were for many years. Political differences, important as they may be, can then be discussed in a calm and constructive way, without in any way obstructing daily fraternal collaboration. The removal of organisational grievances is a precondition for such normalization.

The IMT Steering Committee,
Aubin
December 23, 1975

IMT Steering Committee Statement, October 10, 1975

1. The Steering Committee of the IMT notes that the political differences inside the Fourth International have deepened considerably as the result of the international minority faction's wrong analyses and reactions to the unfolding of the socialist revolution in Portugal. These wrong positions, now codified in the minority faction steering committee statement of August 31, 1975, have placed the minority on record as giving top priority to the struggle for democratic demands in a revolutionary situation in an imperialist country, not even mentioning the key need to build soviets and to fight for workers power among the six "main axes" of Trotskyist policy in the revolutionary process now unfolding in Portugal. This is a fundamental departure from the line for such situations developed in the Transitional Program and defended by Lenin and Trotsky during the Russian revolution of 1917, the German revolution of 1918-1923, the Spanish revolution of 1936, and the mass upsurge in France in 1934-36. It involves a further development of the incipient revisionism of the minority faction on such questions as nationalism and confusion between the democratic rights of the masses and the institutions of the bourgeois state. It throws significant light on the basic reasons for which the minority faction rejected the "Thesis on the Building of Revolutionary Parties in Europe," and for which it seems obsessed by the fight against "ultraleftism" as the main danger in all countries. The differences now revolve around the central question of how to build revolutionary parties in prerevolutionary and revolutionary situations in imperialist countries, what are the key tasks to be solved during a revolutionary mass upsurge in such countries, and what must be the central thrust of revolutionary Marxist activity within the mass movement in order to make it impossible for the reformist

and Stalinist bureaucracies to prevent this movement from overthrowing the bourgeois state machine and the capitalist mode of production.

2. The Steering Committee of the IMT further notes that the international minority faction has seriously compounded these grave political deviations by organizational measures and attitudes that tend to place into question the existence of the Fourth International as a world party based upon democratic centralism as outlined in the statutes unanimously adopted by the Tenth World Congress. The transformation of *Intercontinental Press* into a *de facto* public faction organ on questions such as Portugal, Angola, and Vietnam, systematically presenting the positions of the minority faction and not those adopted by the democratically elected bodies of the FI; the unilateral decision to invite the OCRFI (Organizing Committee for the Reconstruction of the FI) to the SWP convention without prior consultation with the United Secretariat and without prior agreement on this question; and the use in the minority faction's steering committee statement of the term "world Trotskyist movement" supposedly including some forces outside of the FI are ominous signs of a trend—whether intentional or objective, that remains to be seen—toward transforming the FI into a loose and non-committing federation of factions and national groupings debating on all questions but acting in common only on those questions on which there is unanimous agreement, a concept Trotsky fought against with all his strength during the last seven years of his life.

3. The Steering Committee of the IMT therefore defines the purpose of its tendency fight as a fight to defend the programmatic, political, and organizational integrity of the Fourth International now seriously threatened by the incipient revisionist course of the minority faction. It decides to incorporate the general line followed by the FI leadership on Portugal—as expressed in the USec resolution on Portugal of June 1, 1975, and the article by Comrades Pierre Frank, Livio Maitan, and Ernest Mandel in answer to Gerry Foley and Joseph Hansen of August 15, 1975—into the basic platform of the IMT. It empowers the IMT Bureau to prepare a draft balance-sheet on the analysis and polemics on Portugal for the November 1975 USec meeting, to be incorporated into the basic documents of the IMT.

At the same time, the IMT Steering Committee, while recognizing the gravity of the political differences that have arisen within the FI and the importance of the political debate that has started and will unfold on these differences, reaffirms its basic orientation followed since the Ninth World Congress on the question of the tendency struggle within the FI:

(a) The key priority for the FI today is external expansion and external activity. It is vital for the FI to continue and step up its promising growth since 1968 to intervene in the unfolding prerevolutionary and revolutionary situations, in which we can already intervene with significant forces, in such a way as to make possible a new qualitative leap forward toward the building of revolutionary Marxist mass parties.

(b) The nature of the political differences inside the FI has not created a principled basis for a split of the FI. We are resolutely opposed to any split course, either internationally or nationally. We must make the utmost effort to reverse the dangerous drift toward several organizations being affiliated to the FI in the same country, by struggling for the reunification of these forces at least in a certain number of

countries as a short-term perspective.

4. The Steering Committee of the IMT notes that the statement issued by the international minority faction's steering committee expresses its conviction that organized factions and tendencies should be dissolved in favor of purely ideological formations. The IMT never was a faction and is not a faction today. Its Steering Committee concurs with the conviction that the maintenance of factions and structured tendencies on a more or less permanent basis after congresses is not normal in a Leninist organization and inhibits political clarification, even if it does not break the statutory rules. However, in the opinion of the IMT Steering Committee, the expressed desire of the minority faction to dissolve factions and structured tendencies is strongly contradicted by the practical evolution of that faction, especially since May 1975, which has led to a serious increase of organizational tensions within the world movement:

(a) As a result of the unjustifiable delay in applying the January IEC recommendations concerning a reintegration of the IT into the SWP and the violation of the IEC recommendation for collective reintegration and the substitution of individual reapplication;

(b) As a result of the unjustifiable delay in regularizing the minority faction's support of common projects of the world movement;

(c) As a result of the dangerous drift toward transforming the FI into a federation of public factions or sections, notably through continuous public breaches of discipline with respect to World Congress, IEC, and USec political resolutions, and the growing transformation of *Intercontinental Press* into a public minority faction organ;

(d) As a result of the unilateral decision of the SWP leadership to invite the OCRFI to the SWP convention;

(e) As a result of an increasing functioning of minority faction representatives in disregard of the normal bodies and rules of the movement, operating as a faction that tries in several countries to contact, influence, and organize militants and groupings outside the normal channels of the FI and its national organizations, travel internationally without prior information and consultation of the international leadership, subordination of participation in official leadership bodies to faction activities, etc.

Only if and when the minority faction corrects these violations of the norms of democratic centralism within the FI can organization tensions be reduced, can the debate really center around the serious differences that have arisen around the problems of the Portuguese revolution, and can concrete steps for the actual dissolution of factions and structured tendencies be undertaken in practice, without endangering the organization integrity of the FI. The IMT Steering Committee pledges itself to make all necessary moves in that direction, as soon as the minority faction proves in practice that it is removing the five above-mentioned obstacles on the road toward this commonly desired goal. The IMT Steering Committee reaffirms its conviction that within the framework of respect for democratic centralism as defined by the statutes—which imply the duty of all sections to apply in public the line decided upon by the democratically elected leadership bodies on international questions—publicly conducted debates are not only permissible but useful and in no way contradict the organizational principles of Leninism.

Appendix II:
LTF Coordinating Committee Position
on the February 1976 IEC

December 16, 1975

Dear Ernest,

As you know from the discussions at the November meeting of the United Secretariat, we are deeply concerned about the character of the projected meeting of the International Executive Committee that was decided upon by a majority vote. Members and observers on the United Secretariat who support the Leninist Trotskyist Faction discussed this problem after the last meeting. We want to explain our opinion concerning the IEC, and urge the comrades of the International Majority Tendency to reconsider their decision.

The United Secretariat does not have the right to call a meeting of the International Executive Committee and at the same time arbitrarily deny some IEC members the right to attend that meeting. The United Secretariat is a body subordinate to the IEC, and accountable to the IEC. It cannot exclude members of the IEC from a meeting of the body to which they have been duly elected by a world congress.

This would be comparable to the political bureau of a section or sympathizing organization calling a meeting of their central committee with the proviso that only some of the members would be permitted to attend and that those would be selected by the political bureau. No organization adhering to the Fourth International would tolerate such a usurpation of authority by its political bureau.

Several leaders of the IMT have stated their opinion that the last world congress elected too large an IEC. This may be true, and the next world congress may elect a smaller one. But in the meantime, we are bound by a world congress decision that remains in effect until the next world congress.

When the idea of holding a restricted meeting of the IEC was first broached by you last summer, we agreed that the financial problems of the sections and sympathizing organizations of the international made it imperative to consider the possibility of organizing a gathering that would be smaller than the last IEC meeting. However, it appeared self-evident to us that the IEC meeting could not be reduced

in size by the United Secretariat instructing certain comrades that they would not be permitted to attend. The only way attendance could be limited would be by strictly limiting the character of the agenda and the organizational authority of the meeting. There seemed to be agreement on this at the time, at least implicitly, since we were in initial agreement on a limited two-point agenda: (1) an initial discussion and balance sheet on Portugal in order to prepare written material for the opening of the internal discussion; and (2) convocation of the world congress. With such an agenda, some comrades might have voluntarily decided that it was not necessary for them to attend the gathering since they would be able to make their views known through the IIDB, and the problem of reducing the size of the IEC meeting would have taken care of itself.

The agenda now proposed by the IMT for the February 1976 gathering, which includes several highly debatable political and organizational points, is such that every member of the IEC will undoubtedly feel *obligated* to make the utmost effort to attend. Consequently the United Secretariat becomes obligated to find the resources to make this possible.

This holds all the more in light of the character of the organizational motions adopted by the IMT at recent meetings of the United Secretariat and the sharp tensions that were generated by these moves.

Under the circumstances, we believe that the only responsible decision is the one we proposed at the November United Secretariat meeting: to call a meeting of all full, alternate, and consultative members of the IEC who are able to attend; to immediately begin a fund drive to raise the necessary resources; to set early September as the outside date for the convocation of this IEC.

We hope you will consider this problem carefully and adopt the necessary motions at the next United Secretariat meeting.

Comradely,
Mary-Alice Waters