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Report on October 16-17, 1976, Meeting of the United Secretariat

By Jack Barnes and Joseph Hansen

[The following is a summary of a report to the Political Committee of the Socialist Workers Party, October 25, 1976.]

The results of the October meeting of the United Secretariat were extremely positive for the Fourth International as a whole. The meeting voted unanimously for a motion outlining steps to assure a democratic and authoritative World Congress. There was also agreement on an approach for meeting the initiative of the Organizing Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International (OCRFI), which for several years has been requesting discussions with the United Secretariat.

If implemented, these decisions should go a long way toward breaking down factional attitudes and fears inside the international. They should lay the basis for introducing a rich political discussion among the ranks of the international, at least in the languages that are used by the overwhelming majority of the membership. And they should enable the Fourth International to move forward to take advantage of the existing opportunities for significantly strengthening its forces.

The meeting left some questions unresolved. These revolve around: (1) the character of the publications published in conjunction with the international—that is, *Inprecor* and *Intercontinental Press*; (2) the problem of splits and the pace of fusions in countries where more than one affiliated group or supporting group of the international exists; and (3) the application of democratic centralism on an international level.

There were, however, broad areas of agreement on even these remaining questions. This would indicate that with the implementation of the major motions passed at this meeting it becomes possible to resolve the remaining questions.

The key to moving forward in all these areas remains *political clarification* with the aim of maintaining the continuity of the program of revolutionary Marxism and applying this program in our approach to new events.

If the decisions of the October United Secretariat meeting are adhered to, it will be possible, we think, to hold a democratic world congress that will be accepted as authoritative by the entire world Trotskyist movement.

We arrived at this stage in the course of a series of meetings coincident with the October United Secretariat meeting.

Joint Meeting

The United Secretariat was preceded by a joint meeting of leaders of the two international groupings that are based on stated political platforms, the International Majority Tendency and the Leninist Trotskyist Faction. The meeting was requested by observers from the Socialist Workers Party because of our concern that we were on the

verge of a total breakdown of functioning of the international leadership. We thought a more informal preliminary discussion would aid in tackling these problems.

Leaders of the International Majority Tendency present at the joint meeting were Ernest, Aubin, Ségur, Jones, and Duret. Leninist Trotskyist Faction leaders present were Jack, Joe, and Johnson.

Since we had asked for the meeting, we began the discussion. We outlined the following main points.

The Functioning of the Center

First, we thought there was a general feeling—not only among LTF members—that the functioning of the international center had broken down. We pointed especially to two specific problems—the suppression and lack of translation of contributions to the international internal discussion bulletin, and the lack of collaborative functioning in the United Secretariat Bureau.

In regard to the internal bulletin, we presented a detailed memo outlining where we stood at that point in achieving a democratic internal discussion and accessibility of this discussion to the many new members of the international [See Appendix I to this report]. The memo listed all the documents that had not yet been translated and published in French. It listed documents that were out of print and no longer available in French. It listed contributions that had been rejected or postponed for publication by the majority of the United Secretariat for such reasons as “teaching the minority a lesson,” or the inadmissibility of appendixes or of so-called “private correspondence.” And it listed contributions that had been published in French up to six months or a year after they had appeared in English, thus rendering them less relevant to a living discussion.

The memo also noted which contributions to the Fourth International’s public discussion on Portugal had not yet appeared in French.

We pointed out that all the platform documents of the International Majority Tendency and the Leninist Trotskyist Faction are available in English, but many LTF documents and other key documents from the past are not available in French. This makes it impossible for a new member of the international to become informed of the history of the debate in the international and to fully participate in the discussion.

In addition, we protested the practice of some comrades in the leadership of the French Revolutionary Communist League (LCR) of unilaterally deciding to publish material that was not agreed to and presenting it as representing the position of the LTF. Specifically, this was the case with the publication in France of the booklet *Portugal: l’Alternative*, published in October 1975. In this booklet, the French comrades printed the article “In Defense of the Portuguese Revolution” by Frank, Maitan, and Mandel,

together with a collection of five articles from *Intercontinental Press*. These articles were presented as representing the positions of the minority in the international, even though we were never consulted on the choice of articles. The selection did not include the August 1975 LTF resolution on Portugal, nor the answer by Foley, Hansen, and Novack to the Frank, Maitan, Mandel article. Moreover, we were characterized in an introduction to the booklet as holding the position that the choice in Portugal was between military dictatorship and bourgeois democracy.

Other public material has not yet appeared in French, for example, the SWP resolution "Prospects for Socialism in America," although this was agreed on more than a year ago.

Finally, we objected to the proposals of the IMT comrades that resolutions supported by a majority of the United Secretariat for submission to the pre-World-Congress internal discussion should be submitted in the name of the United Secretariat as a whole, even if a minority of the Secretariat opposes them.

Of course, we did not challenge the right of the majority of the United Secretariat to issue public statements or to release resolutions publicly as the position of the United Secretariat. But for material destined for *internal* discussion, different norms apply. There can be no "United Secretariat discipline" in our internal discussion, or even the appearance of such discipline. Secretariat members cannot be represented as agreeing with resolutions they do not agree with.

Our second major concern over the functioning of the international center was in relation to the operations of the United Secretariat Bureau. In the past, LTF comrades trying to participate on the bureau have run into obstacles. Much of the correspondence between sections and the center has not been available to them. They have not been given assignments for the bureau in countries where the international has faced its major tests. Collaboration in general has been difficult.

Our objective in this discussion, we made clear, was not to assign blame for past problems. We didn't expect agreement on that. Our goal was to collectively rectify those problems so as to be able to move forward. We did note that the main responsibility for solving these problems lies with the comrades of the International Majority Tendency, since they, as the majority, have control of the functioning of the center.

We indicated that we would like to beef up our participation in the bureau, in order to help promote greater collaboration. We proposed that in addition to Comrade Johnson, who had been on the bureau in the past, comrades Galois and Atwood be added. We also proposed that Comrade Rossi be added as part of the full-time staff of the center.

Democratic World Congress

Our second major concern was with preparations for the next world congress. The date that had been set for the congress, spring 1977, was in our opinion impossible. We thought the earliest time at which a democratic world congress could be held was around May 1978.

We were also of the opinion that the agenda thus far set for the congress was inadequate. First, we thought a point

on Latin America ought to be added, especially since leaders of the IMT had stated they were planning to submit a critical balance sheet on the 1969 World Congress line on Latin America.

Secondly, we felt a point on China was necessary. This has become urgent because of the explosive events taking place in China today and the tremendous disparity of views on these events that exist within the Fourth International.

Furthermore, we reminded comrades that two different line resolutions on China had been presented to the 1974 World Congress—"Two Assessments of the Chinese Cultural Revolution: A Balance Sheet," submitted by Abel, Adair, Hans, Juan, Pedro, Stateman, and Thérèse; and "The Differences in Interpretation of the 'Cultural Revolution' at the Last World Congress and their Theoretical Implications," submitted by the IEC Majority Tendency [See International Internal Discussion Bulletin (IIDB) Vol. X, Nos. 13 and 22, respectively]. It was decided at the last moment to take China off the 1974 World Congress agenda and postpone it to the next congress, owing to the pressing discussions on Bolivia, Argentina, and the armed struggle resolution presented by the IMT. This unresolved difference remains to be dealt with at the coming world congress.

In addition to proposing these new points for the agenda, we stated that in our opinion, to assure a democratic congress its date had to be tied to a schedule of prompt publication of the internal bulletin. A democratic congress cannot be held if comrades of any language are hit with a mountain of bulletins, including line resolutions, in the last several months before the congress. This makes it impossible for the rank and file to really participate, and impossible for the national sections and sympathizing groups to hold democratic pre-world-congress conventions to choose their delegates.

Democratic Centralism

The third area in which we expressed concern was the way IMT comrades had been raising the question of "democratic centralism" in the international. This issue had come up, in particular, in relation to the existence of public factions and of splits in the forces of the international in a number of countries, and in relation to the response of the international to the overture of the OCRFI.

In regard to the first point, we stated that we were also concerned about the dangers of permanent factionalism and splits in the international and had in fact proposed mutual dissolution of the factions more than a year ago. As to the splits in the forces of the international in various countries, we repeated the position we expressed at the 1974 World Congress, that none of the splits is justified in principle.

However, we thought there were two equally dangerous courses in trying to come to grips with the splits that have occurred. One is for the leadership of the international to act in such a way as to perpetuate or foment splits. The other is to try to force fusions through administrative measures. The latter course can be just as destructive and unprincipled as the former. It will simply lead to new splits.

In regard to the OCRFI overture, we said we did not think the disagreements over how to respond had anything to do with disagreements on democratic central-

ism. And there is nothing in the nature of democratic centralism that would prevent the international or its sections and supporter groups from moving ahead to take advantage of this opportunity.

In general, we expressed the view that clear differences in principle over the nature of democratic centralism did not yet exist in the international. We pointed to two indications of this: (1) the fact that both sides are still opposed to changing the existing statutes of the international; and (2) the broad agreement on both sides with the concept of democratic centralism outlined in the letter of the United Secretariat to Lutte Ouvrière [for this letter, see IIDB Vol. XIII, No. 5, 1976].

Therefore we saw no reason why any differences on this question could not be resolved through further discussion. Our goal should be to continue to be able to act, as an international, while we are in the process of clarifying this point.

No Suppression of Documents

In responding to our proposals, the comrades of the IMT indicated that there was no difference whatsoever on the question of prompt translation, publication, and circulation of the internal bulletin.

Despite any differences they might still hold over the wisdom or propriety of material that had been submitted or published, the IMT comrades agreed that in the future there would be no suppression or postponement of any contributions or appendixes. At the same time, they insisted on observance of the normal channels for submission of all material to the bulletin.

Later, at the Secretariat meeting, a motion was passed accepting for immediate publication all material that had been submitted to the bulletin in the past. This was voted for unanimously except for two abstentions.

The comrades also agreed that the date of the next world congress must be tied to the schedule of translation and publication of documents. The backlog of untranslated documents was turned over to the French comrades in charge of the French-language bulletin. All of these agreements were included in a motion that was passed unanimously at the United Secretariat meeting. [For text of motion, see Appendix II.]

The comrades agreed further that while the United Secretariat has the right to speak as one body in taking public positions, all internal material should be submitted in the name of individuals or political tendencies.

It should be interjected here that both sides at the joint meeting expressed concern that the Secretariat still had not received the political platform of the Bolshevik Tendency, although well over a year had passed since it had declared itself to be a grouping. Nor had the international been informed as to the stand of the Bolshevik Tendency comrades on past documents of the Leninist Trotskyist Faction which they had previously supported. The BT had been accorded places on the bureau as if they were a tendency, but all comrades felt this could not continue indefinitely in the absence of a political platform defining the basis on which the tendency had been formed.

Additions to the Bureau

Our proposals for additions to the bureau were accepted.

It was agreed that Atwood, Galois, and Johnson would be integrated into the work of the bureau and that whatever the problems may have been in the past, all bureau correspondence would be made available to them.

If these agreements are carried out, we agreed that all the criticisms we had raised over past functioning of the bureau, as well as our charges about the suppression of material in internal bulletins in the past, would become moot. It is to be hoped that these irritating issues can be dropped and we can move forward.

The IMT comrades also agreed that the date that had been scheduled for the world congress was too soon, and that the timing of the congress had to be coordinated with the pattern of translation and publication of bulletins and to the pre-world-congress conferences of the sections. They thought that the end of 1977 would be realistic, as opposed to our proposal of spring 1978. It was decided to poll the members of the International Executive Committee on this alternative. However, whichever date is picked, it will be conditional on the fulfillment of the criteria that are outlined in the agreed-upon motion. During the Secretariat meeting, Comrade Karl of Germany who is not a member of the IMT, LTF or BT, further proposed that the date chosen should be reviewable depending on the dates of submission of the major line resolutions, to allow enough time for them in particular to be discussed adequately.

In regard to the agenda of the world congress, the comrades agreed on the merits of adding China and Latin America, but they were concerned that the agenda might be too long. This point was therefore not included in the common motion, but will be held over for further discussion, including consideration of whether one or more of the existing points on the agenda could be dropped.

We went on to discuss the comrades' concerns in regard to the functioning of international democratic centralism. In view of the agreement that the statutes should not be changed, that both sides claim to be operating in compliance with the statutes as they understand them, and the agreement on the main lines of the explanation of democratic centralism in the letter to Lutte Ouvrière, it was thought that the discussion could get down to concrete cases in which a problem might exist.

The IMT comrades' main concerns were in three areas: (1) the problems of splits and fusions in countries where more than one Fourth International group exists; (2) the two international magazines, *Inprecor* and *Intercontinental Press*; and (3) the response to the OCRFI.

The IMT comrades thought that the splits that exist in a number of countries pose a great danger to the international. They stated their opinion that such splits could not be justified over any long period, and that we had to work together to confront this problem. Their proposal was that the next world congress be taken as the deadline, that fusions must take place everywhere by then, and that if any splits still remain, the largest group should be recognized as the section and the other group would not be recognized even as a sympathizing organization without the official section's permission.

We agreed on the desirability of fusions, but not on how to accomplish the goal. We noted that the origin of the splits in the international lies in the differences that exist on an international scale. In the heat of the international debate, the splits occurred with many of the comrades believing that they were only doing what was going to happen to the international as a whole sooner or later.

Deep bitterness and distrust exists on all sides among the comrades who went through these splits. The first task is to work to overcome this bitterness and distrust.

Furthermore, the role of the international leadership in relation to the splits in sections has been generally negative, not a positive aid to the comrades on the scene. The international leadership has to rebuild its authority in this area.

If fusions were decreed, we said, this would only lead to new blowups. Instead of using force, we need to work patiently with comrades in the split groups to make possible fusions that will last.

There can be no arbitrary deadline after which the guillotine drops and some comrades find themselves outside the international. This would be a greater danger to the international than the problem of two groups still existing in a country at the time of the world congress.

In view of our agreement that (1) fusions are our goal, (2) no groups should be excluded from the international, and (3) the international leadership was at least partially responsible for the situation of splits, it was agreed to make no decision on deadlines at this time, although the IMT comrades did not change their minds on this. It appeared to us that this can be worked out in future discussions.

Inprecor and Intercontinental Press

The IMT comrades expressed the view that the goal of the international should be to move toward a single, significantly improved weekly or biweekly international magazine published in a number of languages. They think that all the energies and resources that currently go into two magazines—*Inprecor* and *Intercontinental Press*—should be combined to effect this change. Such a single publication, they assured us, would include guarantees of public discussion on disputed questions and ample space for expression of minority views.

We agreed that an improved international magazine would be beneficial, but raised the following considerations:

1. The whole character of such a magazine and its editorial policies would have to be discussed. Under its current policy for example, we consider *Inprecor* ineffective as an aid to the sections and sympathizing groups.

2. We did not agree that the way to achieve an improved magazine was to dissolve one of the current, successful efforts at building up an international magazine.

3. We thought that the norm in the international should be—as it was in the Comintern in the days of Lenin and Trotsky—to encourage the national sections to publish international material of their own, just as they should seek to publish material in other fields of special interest. Such efforts add breadth to the training of the comrades in each national section.

The IMT comrades went on to express their dissatisfaction with *Intercontinental Press*. It was their opinion that IP appeared to readers to be an organ of a faction, even though there had been no decision by the international leadership providing for faction organs. They were not accusing the editors of bad intentions, they said, but the very location of the editorial offices made it impossible for it to be edited otherwise.

We disagreed that IP functioned as a faction organ. We

pointed out that it was being edited exactly the same way it has been edited since its founding at the time of the reunification of the Fourth International nearly fourteen years ago.

While it would be perfectly legitimate for the international to mandate the publication of faction organs, we did not desire such a decision or anticipate it.

At the same time, we thought that one of the great strengths and attractive powers of the international over the past years has come from the public discussion of certain issues. Keeping its readers up to date on this public debate as much as possible has been one of the achievements of *Intercontinental Press*.

We noted IP's policy of immediately running all documents submitted by the IMT for publication, and any articles submitted by IMT leaders. IP has translated and reprinted numerous articles by three of its contributing editors—Pierre Frank, Livio Maitan, and Ernest Mandel—from other publications around the world.

The only possible objection that the IMT comrades could raise, we thought, was the lack of balance in terms of the number of signed articles by comrades of the two international political groupings. But even in this area the blame could not be laid on IP. In November 1975, after a discussion of this same question, the three contributing editors of IP agreed to submit articles regularly in order to redress the balance. But that agreement was never lived up to. So far as IP is concerned there is no problem in printing any such contributions; the only problem has been the willingness of the leading IMT comrades to submit them.

Agreement was reached on continuing discussion of this matter. Again, there seemed to be no reason it could not be resolved, since neither side proposed the establishment of faction organs or the dissolution of either of the journals serving the international as a whole.

Discussions With OCRFI Leaders in New York

Before going into their concerns about relations with the OCRFI, the IMT leaders asked for a report on the discussions that SWP leaders had just had with several leaders of the OCRFI who were in New York. We gave the comrades a very thorough report.

When the SWP leadership received word that Comrade Lambert was planning to come through New York and wanted to talk with us, we wrote to John Barzman and asked whether he or another comrade in the United States who agrees with the positions of the IMT would be able to participate in a discussion with the OCRFI comrades. Unfortunately they did not choose to do so. [See Appendix III to this report for correspondence concerning Comrade Lambert's visit to New York.]

We tried to make several important points very clear in our report on the discussions with the three OCRFI comrades. First, we described their visit in as detailed a way as possible, answering all the questions comrades had. Second, we gave our estimates of the meaning of their approach on certain political points. To us they indicated shifts in the thinking of the OCRFI comrades and a genuine openness to collaboration with the Fourth International. Third, on the use of violence in the workers movement, we reported a discussion on this point in which we repeated our position of its absolute inadmissibility and the need for all those who consider themselves Trotskyists

to take a firm stand against it.

The OCRFI comrades were especially interested in the Political Rights Defense Fund and how they could gear in to helping promote the SWP and YSA's suit against the government. They met with comrades involved in Latin American as well as a Soviet and East European defense work. They discussed publishing plans with us; they are especially interested in printing material in Russian and in the East European languages, and writings by Trotsky and Cannon.

They asked to meet with George Breitman, Tom Kerry, Frank Lovell, George Novack, and other older experienced comrades whom they were anxious to talk to about the past, about the history of the American Trotskyist movement, and about these comrades' opinions on the situation in the world Trotskyist movement.

After all the discussions, it was our impression that the OCRFI leaders agreed in the main with the SWP's policies and work in this country, including our work in the Black struggle and women's liberation work; that is, they seemed convinced that we were carrying out a basically Trotskyist line.

We asked the OCRFI leaders what their intentions were in requesting discussions with the United Secretariat. Would they accept being a minority in a unified international? They said yes; they rejected the idea that their aim was to split the international.

Then they explained their view of the split in the international in 1953, when their current in France comprised the majority of the French section and was expelled by Pablo. They insisted that they had been willing to stay in the international despite Pablo, with the only condition being that they be allowed to maintain themselves as an organized tendency as assured in the statutes. They said they were even ready to give up the leadership of the French section and try to go along with the tactic of entristm sui generis even though they were completely against it. However, they said, Pablo refused to grant them tendency rights; and, basically, they were driven out of the international.

We assured them that such an occurrence would be impossible in the international today. We pointed out how we had been in a minority since 1968 and no one has dreamed of imposing a minority leadership on us, or of denying us tendency rights.

We went on to discuss the reunification in 1963. The comrades told us that the reason they had not joined in the reunification was that there remained questions of principle that were not resolved. However, when we went on to discuss the reunification theses, the statement of principles that constituted the basis for the reunification, they indicated that they did not think it was an unprincipled document. [For reunification theses, see *The Dynamics of World Revolution Today*, Pathfinder Press, 1974, pp. 13-23.]

When we reported this at the joint meeting, some of the comrades expressed surprise and agreed with us that this seemed to indicate quite an important shift in the thinking of the OCRFI comrades.

We also asked the OCRFI comrades about their position on Cuba, and whether the Cuban question had played a role in precluding, from their point of view, their joining in the reunification. To our surprise they answered, no. They said they did not know the position of Gerry Healy on this,

but that for them this had not been a question of principle and they would merely have expressed their differences and submitted amendments to the effect that Cuba was not a workers state.

Position on Cuba

As to their current position on Cuba, they said they were divided, with three positions existing in the organization. They said the view held by the majority of the French OCI now is that Cuba is a workers state and has been since the 1960-61 period. A minority holds that it is a capitalist state that has been administered by a workers and farmers government for seventeen years. The third position, held by some comrades is that the Cuban state is a kind of "phantom" capitalist state.

However, they said this question is still being discussed in their leadership, and if a discussion were begun with the United Secretariat forces, everyone in the OCRFI would be free to express their own opinions on this as on all questions.

Several of the IMT comrades were interested in this information as well; they had had no idea that the majority of the OCI considered Cuba to be a workers state.

We discussed the whole experience with Healy with the OCRFI comrades, and they confirmed some of the things we had suspected, namely, that Healy had become antagonistic to the SWP leadership way back in the mid-1950s and began then to prepare his people for a split with us.

The OCRFI leaders wanted to discuss and give us their opinions on several current political questions. One was on the danger of popular frontism. They said the main reason they requested a discussion with us was because they wanted to have a bloc with us against popular frontism. We said we are of course against popular frontism and are ready to bloc with anyone against it; however, we did not see that as the key question in the discussion in the Fourth International. We stated our opinion that if you tried to say there was a problem of raging popular frontism in the international, you could not convince anyone because it is not the case, despite certain weaknesses on that question. Our position on this is well documented [see appendix VII].

The second topic they discussed was their view of the key importance of developments in southern Europe, particularly in Portugal and Spain. Several of their documents are available in English so we will leave this aside.

Thirdly, they felt that the question of China has become very important in view of recent developments there. On this we totally agreed.

In the area of mass work, the only sector we discussed in any detail was women's liberation. They told us they thought that what the SWP had done in its women's liberation work was good. They thought it was correct to fight for democratic demands, for the right to abortion, and that it was correct to support the formation of all-women's organizations. However, at the same time, they maintained there is no significant women's movement to relate to in France.

They stressed to us that they have not fully discussed this question but that they know it has to be discussed. They are clearly aware of how this question is pressing on all Trotskyist organizations. In fact, they told us that

women in the OCI had begun raising the question several years ago.

They went on to tell us about the history of the OCI, how they were reduced to a very small organization in 1958 but began growing steadily, like most other radical organizations, in the 1960s. Now they have about 2,500 members.

We asked about their organizational procedures, especially about their internal bulletin and the extent of internal discussion. They said they had published five to seven issues of their internal bulletin prior to the last OCI convention, and agreed to give us copies of them. We made clear our concern that it was necessary to have a regular internal bulletin and internal democracy.

Violence in the Workers Movement

Finally, we spent quite a bit of time discussing the question of the use of violence in the workers movement and the Varga affair [for correspondence concerning this, see Appendix V to Jack Barnes' report, "How the United Secretariat Majority Mishandled the Fraternal Approach of the OCRFI: The Record of a Default in Leadership," IIDB Vol. XIII, No. 6, 1976].

We tried to convince the OCRFI leaders of two things. First, that their dispute with Varga had grown way out of proportion to its objective importance and that they should try to put it behind them. And second, that they don't have the right to use violence against the Varga people and that we saw this as a matter of principle. The question of violence had to be absolutely clarified. If the ranks of their organization thought otherwise, then the leadership should seek to reeducate them on this matter. Otherwise big problems would arise.

At the United Secretariat meeting itself, according to the minutes, "Walter reported that Celso had given an oral report to the Bureau on a discussion with members of the OCRFI and that no written report would be necessary."

We got to know the OCRFI comrades better through discussing with them. Further discussions and closer acquaintance would be fruitful, we think. Despite major differences and some unresolved problems, we consider them to be a Trotskyist party that belongs in the Fourth International.

Current Relations

The joint meeting then moved on to discuss our current approach toward the OCRFI. We agreed to disagree on our evaluations of past events, and, for the time being, the dispute over the IMT comrades' view as expressed in their motion adopted at the July United Secretariat meeting on "Relations with Trotskyist Organizations, or Groups Claiming to Be Trotskyist, Which are Outside of the Fourth International," and our view as summarized in the "Statement of the Political Committee of the Socialist Workers Party on the Objections Raised to Inviting the OCRFI to Observe the 1976 Convention" [see IIDB Vol. XIII, No. 5, 1976].

The IMT comrades' proposal on how to proceed towards the OCRFI was outlined by Comrade Ségur of the French LCR. He said the main obstacle to discussing with the OCRFI was that they did not characterize us as revolutionary and had in the past even called us counterrevolutionary. This had to be rectified before we could move forward.

He added that it would be necessary to have a long period of testing of relations with the OCRFI, including efforts at united actions, but that this was not a precondition for simply beginning discussions with them.

If the OCRFI could agree publicly that we were a revolutionary organization, the comrades said, this would open up the possibility for an entirely new relationship with the OCRFI, a new policy concerning attendance at one another's conventions, etc.

A motion was drawn up along these lines, to be presented to the OCRFI. The motion said that if agreement was reached on considering each other as revolutionary organizations and that the goal was to "strengthen the forces of the Fourth International as a single international organisation," then the United Secretariat "will open an organised discussion with the OCRFI on the basis of a mutually agreed on agenda." At the United Secretariat meeting, this was passed unanimously. Also passed unanimously was an internal motion saying that "if the OCRFI rejects making any statement along the proposed lines the United Secretariat and the participants supporting it at the meeting agree that an organised political discussion will not be entered into at this time." [For text of these motions, see Appendix IV.]

United Secretariat Delegation Meeting with OCRFI

In the week following the Secretariat meeting on October 19, a delegation from the Secretariat met with representatives of the OCRFI to present this proposal to them.

The United Secretariat delegation included comrades Aubin, Duret, Ernest, Jones, Robs (representing the Political Bureau of the French LCR), Jack, Joe, Galois, and Crandall. Representing the OCRFI were comrades Lambert, Just, François, Lacaze (for the French OCI), Bernd, Antonio, and Jann.

Comrade Aubin presented the United Secretariat's proposal. In the course of the discussion, the OCRFI comrades answered a number of concrete questions that were raised. They said that, contrary to a statement in an article by the group associated to the OCRFI in Britain, they did not consider the gulf between our two international currents to be "unbridgeable." They stated that their goal in asking the United Secretariat to open discussions was to help achieve a single, strengthened Fourth International. They agreed that neither side should be expected to retract things they had said or written in the past, but that both sides had to consider the other to be a revolutionary organization for fruitful discussions to begin. They reaffirmed their earlier agreement to exchange internal bulletins and their commitment that all comrades with differences within their organization should be free to express them in a joint discussion.

At the meeting, the OCRFI comrades gave us a copy of a letter the French OCI had just sent to the LCR proposing a common slate of candidates in an election that was coming up in one district of Paris. [See Appendix V for OCI letter.] This was in response to a proposal from the LCR that a number of left groups get together to run a joint campaign. The OCRFI looked forward to a positive response from the LCR, and saw this as a possible beginning of some joint work by the two organizations.

The OCRFI comrades repeated what they had told us in

New York: that while they considered some of the positions held in the international to be revisionist, they did not write off anyone in the international as irredeemable. They thought that the international had suffered greatly from the split in 1953 but that if the discussions currently proposed had a successful outcome, this would help full recovery from that setback.

At the conclusion of the meeting, the OCRFI comrades wrote their own statement, agreeing with the United Secretariat statement. They even accepted a further proposal by Comrade Aubin to strengthen it by saying that all sections of the international were revolutionary, as opposed to simply the United Secretariat as a whole. [The OCRFI statement is printed as Appendix VI.]

There was agreement on both sides that the statements would be published as soon as possible, and we would soon send them proposals on how to start the discussion. Over the next couple of days, we had some discussion with other Secretariat members on this. We proposed to open the international internal discussion bulletin to the OCRFI for any contributions they might want to make. The IMT comrades were hesitant to do this, and proposed instead a special bulletin to which we would submit our resolutions on certain topics and the OCRFI could contribute their comments or resolutions.

Meanwhile, we began working together more closely with the IMT comrades in the Bureau. It was agreed that one of our comrades would go to Spain to help prepare a joint speaking tour by Linda Jenness sponsored by the two Spanish sympathizing organizations, the LC and the LCR-ETA VI. Similarly, it was agreed to recommend that the scheduled trip by Comrade Mandel to Montreal would be jointly sponsored by the LSO and the GMR in Quebec.

Meeting with IMG Political Committee

Following the meetings in Brussels, Comrades Jack, Joe, and Mary-Alice stopped in London to meet with the Political Committee of the International Marxist Group, at the request of the British comrades. The IMG comrades thought, and we agreed, that it would be good to step up contacts between our two organizations. Because of the common language, as well as our interconnected work on the South Africa issue, Irish work, and other questions, it is clear that we have special responsibilities that have to be worked out in consultation with the British comrades.

We spent a whole day exchanging views with the IMG comrades on the situation in the international, with comrades give and take.

As to concrete areas of collaboration, we discussed first of all the importance of a public meeting scheduled for January 14 to condemn the Healyite slanders against leaders of the international and of the SWP. George Novack and Tim Wohlforth are scheduled to speak at this meeting, along with Ernest Mandel, Pierre Lambert, and others. Another proposal of the IMG comrades is that they build a tour for Tim Wohlforth as part of an offensive to further isolate the Healy forces.

Another major area of collaboration will be our campaign in defense of the Black upsurge in South Africa. We agreed that one of the Black leaders of the SWP would go to England in the spring for a speaking tour on the U.S. role in South Africa and racism in the United States.

Finally, the IMG comrades are anxious to help "internationalize" the SWP and YSA's suit against the American government. In addition, they are preparing for a speaking tour by Evelyn Reed to take place this March.

Appendix I

Memo Concerning the International Internal Bulletin

Documents Not Available in French (of those accepted prior to the September 1976 meeting of the United Secretariat)

[References are to the English-language bulletin—the International Information Bulletin (IIB) and International Internal Discussion Bulletin (IIDB)]

1. **The Relationship and Differences Between Mao Tse-tung and Liu Shao-chi**, by Peng Shu-tse. (IIB No. 2 in 1969.)
2. **Draft Resolution on Our Tactics in Europe** (Prepared by the United Secretariat as Part of the Discussion for the Third World Congress Since Reunification (Ninth World Congress). (IIB No. 7 in 1969.)
3. **An Amendment to the Draft Resolution on the "Cultural Revolution,"** by Ferdinand Charlier. (Submitted for Discussion Prior to the World Congress) (IIB No. 8 in 1969.)
4. **An Unacceptable Amendment**, by E. Germain. (Submitted for Discussion Prior to the World Congress.) (IIB No. 8 in 1969.)
5. **Minutes of the Third World Congress Since Reunification (Ninth World Congress)**. (IIB No. 9 in 1969.)
6. **Report on Tactics in Europe**, by Pierre Frank. (IIB No. 10 in 1969.)
7. **Report on the New Rise of the World Revolution** by E. Germain. (Intercontinental Press, July 14, 1969.)
8. **Report on the Cultural Revolution in China**, by Livio Maitan. (Intercontinental Press, July 14, 1969.)
9. **Minority Report to the World Congress**, By Peng Shu-tse. (IIB No. 10 in 1969.)
10. **Balance Sheet on the Student Movement**, by Daniel Bensaid and C. Scalabrino. (IIB No. 2 in 1970.)
11. **Resolution of the December 1969 IEC Plenum on the Split in the German Section**. (IIB No. 3 in 1970.)
12. **Letter from the Central Committee of the GIM to the Leadership of the IKD**. (IIB No. 3 in 1970.)
13. **Declaration of the Internationalist Communists of Germany (IKD)—Section of the Fourth International—Regarding the Resolution of the December 1969 IEC on the Split in the German Section—January 23, 1970**. (IIB No. 3 in 1970.)

14. **Letter from the United Secretariat of the Fourth International to All Members of the IKD—February 1, 1970.** (IIB No. 3 in 1970.)

15. **Internationalism and the Socialist Workers Party**, by Barry Sheppard. (Report to the 23rd National Convention of the Socialist Workers Party.) (IIB No. 5 in 1970.)

16. **Political Report at the December 1969 Meeting of the International Executive Committee**, by E. Germain. (IIB No. 1 in 1971.)

17. **The Test of Ireland**, by Gerry Foley. (IIB, Vol. X, No. 17.)

18. **How the "Ninth World Congress Turn" Misdirected the Work of the International Marxist Group, British Section of the Fourth International**, by Alan Harris. (IIB, Vol. X, No. 23)

19. **The Crisis of the LCR and the En Marcha Split**, by the Political Bureau of the Liga Comunista of Spain, (formerly Encrucijada tendency of the Liga Comunista Revolucionaria). (IIB, Vol. X, No. 24)

20. **Communique**, by Albert, Juan, Karl, Compass Tendency (West Germany); Roberto, Revolutionary Marxist Tendency (Italy); Krasno, Reiner, Against the Stream (France); Dumas, Lesage (France); H. Sand (Sweden). (IIB, Vol. X, No. 24)

21. **In Defence of the Transitional Programme**, by Rajnarayan Aryan, Communist League of India. (IIB, Vol. X, No. 25.)

22. **Reject Liquidationism!** by Upendranath Roy, Communist League of India. (IIB, Vol. X, No. 25.)

23. **Nationalism and Revolution in Iran**, by Ahmad Heydari and Cyrus Paydar. (IIB, Vol X, No. 26.)

24. **Nationalism and National Struggles in the Middle East**, by Azar Najmi (IIB, Vol. X, No. 26.)

25. **Party and Army in a Strategic Perspective of Prolonged Revolutionary War—Working Notes**, by the Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores (Fraccion Roja). (IIB, Vol. XI, No. 1.)

26. **A Contribution Toward a Program of Struggle for the Working Class**, by PRT (Fraccion Roja). (IIB, Vol. XI, No. 1.)

27. **On the Orientation of the Fourth International in Europe**, by Dieter, Torben Hansen, Marcel, Tony Roberts, Anders Svedlin, and Mary-Alice Waters. (IIB, Vol. XI, No. 3.)

28. **The New Zealand Trotskyists and the Protest Movement Against the War in Vietnam**, by George Fyson. (IIB, Vol. XI, No. 3.)

29. **A Scandalous Document—A Reply to Germain**, by Nahuel Moreno. (IIB, Vol. XI, No. 4.)

30. **Fourth World Congress Since Reunification (Tenth World Congress) February 1974.**

1. Minutes, 2. Voting Record, 3. Attachments to Minutes, 4. Statement of the Majority Tendency at the Conclusion of the Tenth World Congress of the Fourth International, submitted March 17, 1974, 5. Statement of the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction, submitted April 3, 1974. (IIB, Vol. XI, No. 5.)

31. **Fourth World Congress Since Reunification (Tenth World Congress) February 1974. Part II.**

1. IEC Members Nominated by the IMT, 2. IEC Members Nominated by the Japanese Section, 3. Declaration Concerning the 'Statement of the Majority Tendency at the Conclusion of the Tenth World Congress of the Fourth

International' June 9, 1974, 4. IEC Majority Tendency's Reply to the Statement by the Minority Faction, August 8, 1974, 5. Rejoinder by the Leninist Trotskyist Faction, November 13, 1974, 6. Point 36 of the IMT Resolution 'Argentina: Political Crisis and Revolutionary Perspectives,' 7. Concluding Paragraphs of the LTF 'Counter Report on Armed Struggle,' 8. Minutes of the International Executive Committee, February 15, 1974. (IIB, Vol. XII, No. 1.)

32. **The Need for a Special World Congress**, A Statement by the Steering Committee of the Leninist Trotskyist Faction, adopted August 28, 1974. (IIB, Vol. XII, No. 3.)

33. **On the Internationalist Tendency Split from the Socialist Workers Party**, by Gus Horowitz, with five appendixes. (IIB, Vol. XII, No. 3.)

34. **Draft Resolution on Argentina**, by Jose Valdez, submitted to January, 1975, IEC. (IIB, Vol. XII, No. 5.)

35. **Program and the PST's 'Specific, Limited Agreements'**, by Berta Langston and Bob Langston (Socialist Workers Party). (IIB, Vol. XII, No. 5.)

36. **For a Change on our Position on Cuba**, by Dave Keil (Socialist Workers Party). (IIB, Vol. XII, No. 5.)

37. **The Issues in the Portuguese Revolution**, by Barry Sheppard. (IIB, Vol. XII, No. 6.)

38. **Correspondence Concerning the Leninist Trotskyist Faction Resolution on Portugal**, submitted by the Coordinating Committee of the Leninist Trotskyist Faction.

1. January 14, 1976 letter to the Steering Committee of the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction from Mary-Alice Waters.

2. November 28, 1975, mailing to the Steering Committee of the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction.

a. Letter to LTF Steering Committee from Mary-Alice Waters.

b. Letter to LTF members and three attachments from Political Bureau of the PST-Argentina.

c. Letter from Joe Hansen to the Political Bureau of the PST.

3. Hansen-Moreno Correspondence Prior to August 1975 Meeting of the Leninist Trotskyist Faction Steering Committee

a. July 4 Hansen letter to Moreno

b. July 16 Moreno letter to Hansen

c. July 17 Moreno letter to Hansen

d. August 9 Hansen letter to Moreno

(IIB, Vol. XIII, No. 1.)

Articles Rejected or Postponed For Publication by Majority of the United Secretariat

1. Correspondence relating to the OCRFI

Motion Walter: The United Secretariat notes that in the IIB No. 6, 1975, there has been published an exchange of correspondence around the issue of relations with the OCRFI as annexes to comrade Jack Barnes report to the August 1975 convention of the SWP. The USec further notes that while comrade Barnes' report was regularly submitted to the international discussion at the October 1975 Usec meeting as an oral report to be reproduced in a IIB the publication of those annexes was never proposed and therefore represents an irregular procedure. This is all

the more regrettable as it involves a matter—the problem of relations with the OCRFI— on which unilateral initiatives by comrades sympathetic to the minority already have unnecessarily increased tensions inside the movement. In order to clearly demonstrate to the minority that the practice of unilateral decisions and accomplished facts is not only inadmissible but also counterproductive for its own purposes, the Usec therefore rejects the proposal to include the exchange of correspondence around the OCRFI issue in the international internal bulletin and calls upon all sections and sympathizing sections to strictly adhere to this decision. (From minutes of November 1975 United Secretariat meeting)

2. On the International by Sakai

Motion Walter: To publish Sakai text immediately after the publication of a Usec document on democratic centralism and organizational norms of the FI, opening the international discussion on that question. (From minutes of January 1976 Secretariat meeting)

3. Critical Notes on 'The Building of Revolutionary Parties in Capitalist Europe' by Wilcox

Motion Walter: To publish the proposed text after the publication of a new Usec document about perspectives in Europe for the pre-world congress debate. (From minutes of January 1976 Secretariat meeting)

Both of the above had also been submitted at the December 1975 Secretariat meeting.

Motion Fourier: To defer decision on these inclusions till next Usec meeting, for the Bureau to be able to submit precisions in relation to the exact contents and planning of the IIDB. (From minutes of December Secretariat)

4. World Movement Report by Mary-Alice Waters

Motion Walter: To ask the SWP PC to reconsider its proposal of publishing three internal SWP reports presented in a five month period, and reduce them to two, given the bad precedent this creates and the possibility of other organizations imitating these requests. (From minutes of January 1976 Secretariat meeting)

Motion Walter: Given the subject of comrade Mary-Alice Waters' report, given the fact that it comes after the acceptance of two other SWP internal reports for the IIDB, given the fact that comrade Mary-Alice's report is now to be published in the framework of the pre-world congress discussion and will obviously provoke a lot of informative polemics, given the fact that it is unbecoming to *open* the pre-world congress discussion with such type of discussion, the Usec decides:

- a. To accept this report for publication in the IIDB.
- b. To postpone its publication until after the prior printing of at least one political resolution on one of the questions officially scheduled for the world congress agenda by IEC decision. (From minutes of March 1976 Secretariat meeting)

5. Pierre Frank-Weiss correspondence

Motion Walter: It is unacceptable that private correspondence of a leading comrade of the International communicated to the leadership of a section in order to avoid the impression that he acts behind the back of that leadership is inserted in an international internal bulletin without the authorization of that member. This is

independent of a judgment on the content of that letter.

Motion Celso: To approve the publication of the Pierre Frank letter in the international internal bulletin. (From minutes of November 1975 Secretariat meeting)

Material Rejected at September 1976 United Secretariat Meeting

1. Appendixes to "Statement of the Political Committee of the Socialist Workers Party on the Objections Raised to Inviting the OCRFI to Observe the 1976 Convention."
2. Women's liberation resolution approved by Leninist Trotskyist Faction Steering Committee.
3. Documents and correspondence concerning the Organizing Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International (previously submitted as appendixes to Jack Barnes' report to the 1975 convention of the Socialist Workers Party and to Mary-Alice Waters' World Movement Report to the January 1976 National Committee Plenum of the SWP).

Public Material not Printed in French

1. Key Issues in the Portuguese Revolution

Motion Celso: To submit the minority resolution on Portugal to *Quatrième Internationale* for publication.

Motion Walter: The Usec will consider publication of the minority faction August resolution on Portugal in *Quatrième Internationale* if this resolution is submitted to a formal vote at the next Usec (if necessary in annex to a more up-to-date resolution on Portugal). (From minutes of November 1975 Secretariat meeting)

From January minutes:

Galois informs about omission of one motion in the minutes of December Usec.

Motion Galois: To adopt the international minority document on Portugal adopted by its steering committee meeting in August 1975.

Defeated.

Motion to rectify minutes in that sense.

Carried.

2. For a Correct Political Course in Portugal by Foley, Hansen, and Novack.

Motion Pepe: To publish in a pamphlet in France the Hansen-Foley-Novack article and the reply to it and to submit the reply to *IP*.

Carried with one abstention.

(From minutes of November 1975 Secretariat meeting)

3. "Prospects for Socialism in America," SWP 1975 Political Resolution.

4. The Test of Lines in the Portuguese Revolution, Leninist Trotskyist Faction resolution submitted to the 1976 meeting of the International Executive Committee.

5. An article by the Liga Comunista of Spain.

Motion: That under the same rubric "Building the Fourth International in Spain," but with a different title than the one used by the LCR, equal space be provided in the next issue of *Quatrième Internationale* to LC to state its general political orientation but without polemicalizing against the LCR by name.

Carried.

(From minutes of September 1973 Secretariat meeting)

6. Resolution on Angola based on report by Tony Thomas for the Leninist Trotskyist Faction Steering Committee to the February 1976 meeting of the International Executive Committee.

7. Correction in pamphlet *Socialist Revolution vs. Military Dictatorship*.

Articles Published in French More Than One Year Late

1. In Reply to the IMT's Open Letter Number 2, Leninist Trotskyist Faction resolution submitted to January 1975 IEC. (IIDB, Vol. XII, No. 4.)

2. The Erosion of Peronism and the Central Task of Revolutionary Marxists, International Majority Tendency resolution adopted by January 1975 IEC. (IIDB, Vol. XII, No. 5.)

3. Summary to "The Portuguese Revolution and Building

the Fourth International," by Jack Barnes. (IIDB, Vol. XII, No. 6.)

Articles Published in French More Than Six Months Late

1. The Differences Between the United Secretariat of the Fourth International and the PST, by the IMT Bureau. (IIDB, Vol. XII, No. 4.)

(This document, dated May 31, 1975, was, however, printed six months before the "Reply to Open Letter No. 2," dated January 1975.

The report "The Portuguese Revolution and Building the Fourth International" by Jack Barnes, and the summary to that report were published in separate bulletins six months apart.

A statement of October 1975 by the IMT Enlarged Bureau was published in the French-language international internal bulletin, but was never submitted at a United Secretariat meeting.

Appendix II

Motion on Preparation for a Democratic World Congress, Passed Unanimously at October United Secretariat Meeting

To assure a democratic and authoritative world congress, the following additions to the resolution of the February 1976 IEC and the July 3-4 United Secretariat are agreed upon.

1. The United Secretariat takes responsibility for translating and publishing pre-world-congress documents in French and English. It also assumes responsibility for translating these documents into Spanish, but leaves responsibility for publishing and circulating them up to the Spanish-speaking sections.

In addition, the United Secretariat assumes responsibility for keeping in print bulletins that are relevant to the current discussion.

2. Line resolutions are to be translated, published and mailed to the sections by four months before the date set for the world congress.

3. The deadline for submission of line resolutions to the United Secretariat is set at six months before the date set for the world congress.

4. The deadline for submission of other contributions to the United Secretariat is four months before the date set for the world congress.

5. Translation, publication and mailing of such documents to the sections is to be completed within two months of receipt of the documents.

6. Publication of documents received after the deadlines set above cannot be guaranteed.

7. If the deadlines for handling bulletins set above are not adhered to, the world congress is to be postponed until at least three months after these conditions are met.

8. The Parity Committee will make recommendations to the United Secretariat concerning public discussion.

9. The United Secretariat will poll the International Executive Committee for its approval on the date of the world congress.

10. All sections, except those working under extremely repressive conditions, will hold congresses to elect their delegates to the world congress after discussion and vote on the line resolutions.

11. We agree that adherence to the above conditions will assure a democratic and authoritative world congress, as defined by the statutes. This involves the duty of sections and sympathizing organizations to apply world congress decisions as specified in the statutes. We agree not to propose any changes in the statutes at the world congress, but to continue to abide by the statutes adopted at the last world congress.

ADOPTED UNANIMOUSLY BY: Adair, Atwood, Aubin, Capa, Celso, Claudio, Crandall, Duret, Domingo, Fourier, Frey, Galois, Georges, Johnson, Jones, Julio, Karl, Martinez, Otto, Pepe, Roman, Therese, Walter, Werner.
OTHERS PRESENT: Carmen, Petersen, Raul, Roberto, Ricardo, Stateman, Stephan, LCC

Appendix III

Correspondence Between Pierre Lambert and Jack Barnes

Internationalist Communist Organization
(for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International)
Paris, July 23, 1976
To: Jack Barnes, National Secretary of the SWP

Dear Comrade,

I express my personal thanks for your invitation and my regret that I am unable to attend the SWP convention, since I have international commitments that I cannot free myself from. Specifically, I have to go to Portugal at the same time to participate in the congress of our Portuguese comrades. The situation for our work there is so delicate that I am sure you will understand why I cannot change my schedule.

I would, however, like to offer some reflections. And, if you find it convenient, I am ready to meet with you in the United States in September or October.

I inform you that the Political Bureau of the OCI has delegated Comrade François, a leader of our International Commission, to attend your congress.

The fact that there was a revisionist current in the ranks of the Fourth International is something that we together have noted and described since 1950-53. The fact that this revisionist current has not laid down its arms can be seen in the struggle that you, the SWP, for your part have been conducting since 1969 in the ranks of the United Secretariat, and in the one that we, along with the organizations adhering to the Organizing Committee to Reconstruct the Fourth International, have been conducting. The differences now cover all the most important questions of principle, strategy, and tactics. Mandel has just taken a step forward, publicly stating that he considered liquidating the Fourth International, and thus its program, a possibility. At the same time, the LCR leadership has not hesitated to come out in support of the Union of the Left-Popular Front.

As you know, we asked to be allowed to participate in the preparatory discussion for the various international congresses of the United Secretariat, including in setting the agenda. Our proposal had no conditions or strings attached. We agreed in advance to participate in any capacity, whether as delegates or observers. We agreed to help with the finances of these congresses. Of course, this perspective implies the right to express positions freely, to circulate documents freely inside the organizations that claim adherence to the Fourth International. I note that in 1952 we agreed to accept discipline as regards the line adopted by the Third Congress. We asked what the statutes of the Fourth International guarantee, the right to form an international tendency. Pablo refused. It was because we asked for something that Trotskyists should be able to take for granted that the French majority was expelled in 1952 from the International.

Today, what do we see? A complete refusal to discuss with the organizations adhering to the Organizing Committee to Reconstruct the Fourth International. The United Secretariat Majority heaps one pretext on another.

They have asked us for a "less violent" tone in the polemic. We have agreed. But that made no difference. The LCR leadership seized on a provocation mounted by Varga in the ranks of the Trotskyist organizations as a pretext to reject discussion. We agreed to participate in a "Commission of Inquiry." In this commission, a representative of the LCR said:

"I want to say this. Until the contrary is proved, I don't question the authenticity of the documents. Unless I am misinformed, but as far as I know, Varga has recognized their authenticity. And he is in a position to know . . . I think as of now, unless new evidence contradicts this, that these documents have not been forged by you, and if you want a statement to that effect, you have it."

But that made no difference. *Rouge* published a communiqué by the provocateur Varga denouncing so-called acts of violence without even trying to get in contact with the OCI to check out the false allegations made by this provocateur. This wasn't enough. Our Portuguese comrades made a proposal to the LCI leadership to open a discussion. The LCI refused, using as a pretext acts of violence between these two organizations in Portugal, though there was no violence.

It is clear that for the United Secretariat majority, these pretexts have only one end. They are aimed at preventing the opening of discussion among the organizations that claim to be Trotskyist and, what is more, at increasing the obstacles to a real discussion, including in the ranks of the organizations adhering to the United Secretariat. The method of the current close to the PST in Latin America, which is converging with the United Secretariat majority, attests that this is the course the United Secretariat majority has set out on. There can be no doubts about this. Everywhere and always revisionism has operated in this way.

So, a question is posed for our two organizations. Are we going to let the majority faction of the United Secretariat unilaterally define the arena in which the political struggle of Trotskyism against revisionism must take place? Are we going to let them go on much longer taking advantage of a situation where by blocking discussion among the organizations adhering to Trotskyism they can try to isolate the Trotskyists?

"What do labels matter. If in the political arena we find forces that agree with our strategic and tactical orientation but are repelled only by our historical reference point and name, we will drop these inside of twenty-four hours." (Mandel in his interview with *Politique Hebdo*.)

We must take a position and decide, regardless of the cost, to open an international discussion. The forms of course will have to be carefully considered. We must take a position, that is a fact, because the process of disintegration in the Fourth International and in a whole series of organizations formally adhering to it, such as the LCR, is so far along that delay can be gravely damaging to the international movement.

We are ready, for our part, to study together with you the possibilities for beginning to put an end to the dispersion that is now rampant in the ranks of the supporters of the Fourth International.

I wish you the greatest success in the work of your convention.

Fraternal greetings,
/s/Pierre Lambert

14 Charles Lane
New York, N.Y. 10014
September 18, 1976

Pierre Lambert
Paris

Dear Comrade Lambert,

I am sorry for the lateness in responding to your letter. It arrived after I left for Ohio prior to our convention, and, as Comrade François may have mentioned to you, several of us did not come directly back from the convention. François did mention during the convention that there was a letter from you that he assumed had arrived, but thought there would be no reason why it could not be answered when we all returned from vacation.

On a couple of the political points raised in your letter. I do not agree with your interpretation of the statement made by Comrade Mandel in the *Politique Hebdo* article. All I interpret Comrade Mandel to be saying is the straightforward and correct point that there are major maneuvers and fusions still ahead of the Fourth International, which remains small; that entries, regroupments and fusions, will certainly have to take place; and the exact form of these will be subordinated to the political goal of the Trotskyists carrying them out.

Of course, if done in a wrong way, a maneuver can lead toward organizational and programmatic liquidation. It may be your view that that is what Comrade Mandel's goal is, a view I consider a wrong one. But, I can't see how an objective reading of the sentences you quote can reach the conclusion that Comrade Mandel is "publicly proposing the liquidation of the Fourth International and its program."

I take it you have political differences with the line

expressed in that issue of *Politique Hebdo* by some leading individuals of the Fourth International. But that is quite another matter from what you read into that one quote.

I have a similar reaction to your statement that the LCR leadership "has come out in support of the Union of the Left-Popular Front." The LCR leadership has called for a vote for the Union of the Left candidates in specific circumstances. My opinion on the incorrectness of this is a matter of public record. But to say that they *support* a popular front is no more correct than the statement that the OCRFI *supports* reformist workers parties because it calls upon the workers to vote for them in certain countries. The LCR is one of the most vehement critics of the class collaborationism of the Union of the Left.

Even if one holds the view, stated in your letter, that some of the political positions held by the Fourth International are actually revisions of the Trotskyist program, that does not justify exaggerating the actual concrete political positions that are taken. It is an obstacle to having political discussions when that is done.

As to the Varga matter, I am happy that you cooperated with the Commission of Inquiry. I hope the findings put a number of obstacles behind us. Of course, any public statements concerning the OCI or OCRFI coming from Varga supporters should be checked before being printed. If this inadvertently is not done, then an opportunity to respond should be given. This has always been the normal way the press of the workers movement proceeds in matters of this sort. I am sure *Rouge* would rectify the record if an error of fact has been made.

I would be happy to see you if you are going to be stopping in New York on your way to or from a North American visit this fall. Of course, I will not discuss internal matters of the Fourth International. Any discussion along these lines comes within the framework established by the United Secretariat. But, as is our norm, I would be happy to hear your views on the big political questions raised by the class struggle that face revolutionists on a world scale.

Fraternally,
/s/Jack Barnes

cc: United Secretariat
LCR Political Bureau

Correspondence Between Jack Barnes and John Barzman

14 Charles Lane
New York, N.Y. 10014
September 18, 1976

John Barzman
Los Angeles

Dear John,

Enclosed is a letter I received from Pierre Lambert and my response to it. If he comes through New York and wants to present his views on political matters, I would like you to be present. This was the form that the United Secretariat representative to our convention explained the

comrades used in Britain when they met with Pablo, that is inviting both LTF and IMT leaders of the section to be present to hear Pablo's views. If you are not going to be East any time this fall, (as you can tell from the letter, I'm not sure if or when Lambert may drop in), could you suggest an IMT supporter here I might ask to sit in on such a meeting?

Comradely,
/s/Jack Barnes

enc.
cc: United Secretariat

John Barzman
[address in original]

September 28, 1976

Jack Barnes
New York

Dear Jack,

I have received your letter of September 18 with the enclosures: a letter from Pierre Lambert to you dated July 23, and your answer to him dated September 18.

There is no obstacle to my being in New York this fall except the plane fare which I cannot afford as I am unemployed.

Your letter raises the question of what is the correct procedure a section leadership should follow when it wishes to have discussions with the leadership of an international organization claiming to be Trotskyist, or with the leadership of a national organization claiming to be Trotskyist and based in a country where the Fourth International has established a section. You suggest that the presence at these discussions of a comrade from a

tendency other than that which has the support of the majority of the section's leadership is the sole obligation of the section leadership. This is not my understanding of the resolution governing such matters adopted at the August United Secretariat meeting.

I am not familiar with the details of Michel Pablo's visit at the IMG headquarters. I understand however that the United Secretariat had previously decided that it should have a discussion with Pablo, that such a discussion had actually taken place with the presence of the LTF members of the United Secretariat in Brussels, all before the London visit took place. Even if this London visit were to be taken as a model, it does not apply to the case of Lambert.

If you are sincerely seeking to abide by the correct procedure governing our international organization, I suggest that you request the United Secretariat's guidance on the matter.

Comradely,
/s/John Barzman

cc: United Secretariat

Appendix IV

Motion on OCRFI Passed Unanimously at October 1976 United Secretariat Meeting

We propose that the United Secretariat of the Fourth International and the Organising Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International make parallel statements to be printed in *Rouge, Informations Ouvrières* and other publications of the Fourth International and the OCRFI.

1. That the goal of the discussions is to strengthen the force of the Fourth International as a single international organisation based on the program of Trotskyism, including adherence to democratic centralism.

2. That the United Secretariat and the Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire while holding deep differences with some of the positions of the OCRFI and the Organisation Communiste Internationaliste consider them to be revolutionary organisations.

3. That the OCRFI and the OCI similarly affirm that they consider the Fourth International and its French section, the LCR, to be revolutionary organisations although they hold deep differences with some of their positions.

In view of the agreement on these points, the United Secretariat will open an organised discussion with the OCRFI on the basis of a mutually agreed on agenda.

Internal part of motion: If the OCRFI rejects making any statement along the proposed lines the United Secretariat and the participants supporting it at the meeting agree that an organised political discussion will not be entered into at this time.

Appendix V

Letter from the OCI to the LCR

To the Political Bureau
of the Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire

Oct. 18, 1976

Comrades,

Comrade Shapira has reported to us on the meeting that you called together on October 16, at which were present representatives of the Ligue, the OCI, and Révolution. (The PSU and Lutte Ouvrière were absent.)

It seems to us on the OCI Political Bureau that there is a possibility for an agreement between the Ligue and our organization, and therefore we propose such an accord based on the following points:

1. A common slate representing the organizations that declare adherence to Trotskyism and to the Fourth International.

2. A campaign to be conducted on the basis of the following slogans:

- a) Dissolution of the National Assembly.
- b) An SP-CP government without bourgeois ministers.
- c) Counterposing a united front of the working class, in the appropriate form, to the Union of the Left-Popular Front, which is characterized as follows by the Transition-

al Program adopted by the founding conference of the Fourth International:

“‘People’s Fronts’ on the one hand—fascism on the other; these are the last political resources of imperialism in the struggle against the proletarian revolution.”

d) Release of the political prisoners who are victims of bureaucratic and imperialist repression.

This list of slogans is not exhaustive since we will have to counterpose the program of proletarian revolution to the Common Program for class collaboration and bailing out the capitalist system.

Of course, an agreement on a common slate put up by our two organizations does not exclude either from developing its own positions.

The Political Bureau of the OCI considers, we repeat, that in the context of the present political situation, such an accord is possible and necessary. It makes little difference to the OCI what the order of candidates is. We inform you that we would like to run our comrade Pierre Fougeyrollas, a former CP leader and a professor of sociology, in the Seventh Arrondissement of Paris.

Internationalist Communist Greetings

Appendix VI

Statement of the Organizing Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International

The delegation of the International Bureau, mandated by the Organizing Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International, after discussion with the United Secretariat of the Fourth International, considered the following resolution adopted by the United Secretariat:

We propose that the United Secretariat of the Fourth International and the Organizing Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International make parallel statements to be printed in *Rouge, Informations Ouvrières* and other publications of the Fourth International and the OCRFI.

- 1- That the goal of the discussions is to strengthen the force of the Fourth International as a single international organization based on the program of Trotskyism, including adherence to democratic centralism.
- 2- That the United Secretariat and the Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire while holding deep differences with some of the positions of the OCRFI and the Organisation Communiste Internationaliste consider them to be revolutionary organizations.
- 3- That the OCRFI and the OCI similarly affirm that they consider the Fourth International and its French section the LCR to be revolutionary organizations although they hold deep differences with some of their positions.

In view of the agreement on these points, the United Secretariat will open an organized discussion with the OCRFI on the basis of a mutually agreed on agenda.

The OCRFI renews its proposal to open a discussion between the two international organizations, without any conditions or preliminary requisites, the objective being to reconstruct a united Fourth International on the basis of its founding program; in order to try to overcome the differences that were at the origin of a split that lasted for almost a quarter of a century.

That the goal of the discussions is to strengthen the force of the Fourth International as a single international organisation based on the program of Trotskyism, including adherence to democratic centralism.

The delegation of the Organizing Committee holds that ties with the Fourth International and affirmation of the validity of its program characterize an organization as revolutionary.

Both the United Secretariat and its sections, and the Organizing Committee and its organizations affirm the necessity for the Fourth International and the validity of its program. This characterizes both of them as revolutionary organizations.

On the 1973 Legislative Elections in France: May 28, 1973, Letter to the Political Bureau of the Ligue Communiste from the Political Committee of the Socialist Workers Party

New York, N.Y.
May 28, 1973

Political Bureau
Ligue Communiste

Dear Comrades,

We are very sorry that Comrade D. was unable to attend the recent plenary meeting of our National Committee. We had hoped he would be present to participate in the discussion. We were also hoping to have the opportunity to raise with him some questions relating to the recent legislative elections in France.

In the course of our plenum several comrades expressed opinions critical of the line adopted by the Ligue Communiste in the elections. It would have been useful if a leading French comrade had been there to present your views on this as well as other questions.

Since this did not prove possible, the Political Committee has asked me to communicate our views to you and solicit your comments. We realize that our information may be sketchy on some points and would welcome your corrections of any factual errors on our part as well as an explanation of how you arrived at your line.

As you may have noted, *The Militant's* coverage of the French elections focused on two things: the scope, importance and character of the Ligue's campaign, and your denunciations of the program of the Union de la Gauche [Union of the Left].

We also reported on the debate between the parties and organizations of the French "far left" concerning the character of the Union de la Gauche and what attitude revolutionary Marxists should adopt towards it. We deliberately refrained from making any editorial comment about this debate. However, on the basis of the information available to us, we found we could not agree with the totality of the positions advanced in this debate by any group, including the Ligue Communiste. We refrained from commenting on this in the pages of *The Militant* as we preferred to raise our criticisms in the context of the internal discussion preparatory to the coming world congress.

We would like to get your thinking before taking the discussion further.

* * *

In our opinion, the decision of the Ligue to enter a large slate of candidates in the elections, and use the opportunity afforded by the campaign to present the program of the Ligue Communiste to broad layers of the working class was an extremely positive step. Under the current conditions in France any other decision would have been either ultraleft abstentionism (as demonstrated by Révolution!) or factional opportunism (as demonstrated by the Lambertists who ran only a token campaign while calling for a vote for the candidates of the CP and SP on the first round as opposed to the Trotskyist candidates of the Ligue Communiste).

Your ability to carry out a campaign of such large scope is a gauge of the advances the Fourth International has made towards the construction of a mass revolutionary Marxist party in France.

Our differences with the policy you adopted center on three questions: (1) the decision to call for a vote on the first round for all candidates of the "far left," i.e., those whom you defined as "candidates who reject the electoral and peaceful roads to socialism" (Political Resolution, *Rouge*, December 16, 1972); (2) the decision to call for a vote on the second round for the candidates of the Union de la Gauche, as opposed to the candidates of the Communist Party and Socialist Party only; and (3) the ambiguity of your attitude towards the Socialist Party as expressed by the decision taken at your last convention against characterizing the Socialist Party as a working-class party with a bourgeois-reformist program.

* * *

1. As outlined in the political resolution adopted at the Ligue's December 1972 convention, your aim on the first round of the elections was to promote programmatic clarification. One aspect of this was the sharp criticism you directed at the program of the Union de la Gauche. You also criticized the line of the other groups on the French "left."

However, in our opinion, to call for a vote for all candidates who reject an electoral or peaceful road to socialism, cuts across the goal of achieving programmatic clarification. It establishes a new criterion for determining to whom we give critical support in elections.

The Marxist movement has always had definite criteria

for determining whether it is correct in principle to support the candidates of any party or group other than our own. 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 action by the working class, a program that calls for an unequivocal break with 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. While the Stalinist and Social-Democratic parties do not break programmatically with class collaboration—indeed their programs are based on class collaboration—they are historical currents long recognized as established tendencies in the international working-class movement. Their base is in the mass organizations of the working class. It is within our principles to call for a vote for such parties and their candidates, despite their programs, if doing so helps advance the concept of the need for counterposing class against class, if such action helps draw the line in the electoral arena between the working class and the bourgeoisie.

The criterion which the Ligue Communiste used in the first round in this election campaign—rejection of the electoral road—is new to Leninism.

It leads to the conclusion that there is some acceptable minimal "far-left" program with one and only one point: rejection of the electoral road to socialism. In our opinion, such a one-point minimal electoral platform does not constitute an adequate basis to justify voting for certain candidates nor does it contribute to programmatic clarity.

One can reject the "electoral or peaceful road to socialism" and still engage in class collaborationist maneuvers—as the Vietnamese Stalinist leadership does, for example, or as the anarchists did in the Spanish civil war.

The explicit rejection of popular frontism, and all other forms of class collaborationism, should be the basis of any limited electoral platform in France today. But even on that basis, a one-point program would hardly be adequate to achieve programmatic clarity. And at this stage in our development the sections of the Fourth International have no other reason for participating in elections than to utilize the electoral arena for propaganda purposes. Our primary purpose is to take *our program* to the broadest possible layers of the working class.

Under certain circumstances it is in order to try to reach an electoral agreement with organizations like Lutte Ouvrière and the Organisation Communiste Internationaliste (OCI)—the Lambertists. Since the programs of the Ligue Communiste, Lutte Ouvrière and the OCI reject all forms of coalitionism, it would be entirely principled to support each others candidates on the basis of a common, limited platform for the elections, if one could be agreed upon. But in the absence of a more rounded common platform than the one-point criterion of rejecting the electoral road to socialism, a call for a vote for all the "far left" on that basis can only lead to confusion rather than programmatic clarification.

Your attempt to reach an agreement with Lutte Ouvrière and the OCI to run no candidates against each other is an entirely different matter from establishing an electoral bloc on a limited program. A "non-aggression" pact was, we believe, a correct initiative to take. It is a recognition on our part that the biggest obstacle today in the path of the French working class is the Stalinist Communist

Party. Such an agreement in no way indicates programmatic preference for the OCI or Lutte Ouvrière. It is simply in our interests at the present time to focus our fire on the bourgeoisie and the Stalinist misleaders of the working class, and avoid what would seem to the masses of French workers like a sectarian squabble between Trotskyist factions.

* * *

Under the circumstances, it seems to us that it would have been wiser to call for a first-round vote for the candidates of the Ligue Communiste alone.

In our opinion, the tactical error on the first round of trying to put together a "far-left" electoral bloc on the basis of rejecting the peaceful road to socialism is not unrelated to the concept of trying to regroup the so-called "new mass vanguard" and transform it into a revolutionary party, as projected in the United Secretariat majority document on "Building Revolutionary Parties in Capitalist Europe."

* * *

2. On the second round, we believe it was an error to call for a vote for the Union de la Gauche per se, rather than for the candidates of the working-class parties, the CP and the SP. This error was more serious, in our opinion, than the tactical mistake on the first round.

The Union de la Gauche began as an electoral bloc between the Communist Party and the Socialist Party, on a common program based on the reformist programs of those two organizations. However, from the beginning it had a different character, a different *class* character, than either of the two parties making it up. The Union de la Gauche was not an action coalition but a programmatic, electoral bloc, that *solicited* the participation of parties and groups not part of the working-class movement.

From the beginning, its perspective was to draw in bourgeois and petty-bourgeois political forces as soon as possible. That is, its orientation was to transform itself into a vehicle of class collaboration involving real, as opposed to potential, bourgeois forces, as rapidly as objective circumstances would permit.

The crisis of French capitalism is not yet so acute as to impel any major bourgeois forces to turn to the CP as a savior of the nation. Thus, only a few, relatively peripheral bourgeois figures accepted the bid of the Union de la Gauche. Therefore, it would, in our opinion, probably be correct to designate the Union de la Gauche an embryonic or incipient popular front.

There are obviously important differences between the 1936 popular front and the Union de la Gauche, or between the Union de la Gauche and the Liberation government in which the Stalinists took key posts. The Ligue Communiste has pointed out many of the differences. But all three were similar in *essence*, that is, in their character as class-collaborationist electoral coalitions and/or governmental blocs. The relative weight of the various forces within such blocs is secondary. The fact that the CP or the SP may be the dominant force within such a bloc for a period of time in no way negates its fundamental character as a class-collaborationist electoral bloc.

We are not interested in the semantics of the question. Whether we should put the label "incipient popular front" on the Union de la Gauche, or some other designation can be put aside as long as we agree on the essence: that the Union de la Gauche was, from its very inception, an electoral class-collaborationist project of the Stalinists.

It seems to us that many times during the campaign the Ligue Communiste correctly emphasized the similarities between the program of the 1936 Popular Front, the program of the Liberation government, and the Common Program of the Union de la Gauche. The account of the meeting at the Palais des Sports, written by Comrade Pierre Frank for *Intercontinental Press*, for example, (February 26, 1973, pp. 198-99) pointed out that this was one of the themes of Comrade Krivine's speech on that occasion.

The problem with the Union de la Gauche was not simply the presence of the Left Radicals, as the Lambertists claimed. The fatal flaw of the Union de la Gauche lay much deeper. Even if the Left Radicals had not joined the Union de la Gauche, we believe it would have been an error to call for a vote for it *per se*.

The key question was not *when* some section of the bourgeoisie, or as in Spain some "shadow" of the bourgeoisie, might decide to participate in the Union de la Gauche. From its very inception it represented a projected electoral bloc with bourgeois forces, the ultimate goal being a coalition government. Its *essence*, its *purpose* was to prepare for this.

Under those circumstances a vote for the Union de la Gauche *per se* did not represent a vote for independent working-class political action. It was a vote for a petty-bourgeois electoral bloc with a popular front perspective. A call to vote for the Union de la Gauche was qualitatively different from a call to vote for the CP and SP as a way of voting against the bourgeois candidates by voting for candidates of parties of the working class.

We vote for Stalinist and Social-Democratic parties in some circumstances not because of their programs, but despite their programs and in opposition to their programs. We do this in order to draw a line in the electoral arena between our class and the enemy class. With this in mind, it is not incorrect to vote for candidates of the Stalinist and Social-Democratic parties. Whatever their relative weight in any particular country, whatever their conjunctural ups and downs in size and influence, they represent historical currents within the international working-class movement. They are working-class parties with bourgeois-reformist programs.

Calling for a vote for the Union de la Gauche was not the same as calling for a vote for the CP and SP as parties of the working class, despite their programs. It meant calling for a vote for a petty-bourgeois electoral bloc extending beyond the CP and SP. It meant voting for the structure (admittedly a rickety one) set up by the CP and SP in the electoral field.

The fact that the Left Radicals did come into the Union de la Gauche well before the elections was simply an early confirmation of the perspective of the Union de la Gauche.

We agree with the position taken by the comrades of the Ligue Communiste that the Left Radicals did not represent a major bourgeois force, and in that sense the Union de la Gauche was different from the 1936 Popular

Front and from the Liberation government. But a coalition with the bourgeoisie does not necessarily begin with major bourgeois forces.

Or, to put it another way, the embryo of a class-collaborationist coalition looks quite different during the first month and the ninth month.

* * *

3. The error of calling for a vote for the Union de la Gauche appears even more serious if the position of the Ligue Communiste on the character of the Socialist Party is taken into account. At the time of the December 1972 convention of the Ligue, the delegates refused to take a position characterizing the SP as a working-class party with a bourgeois-reformist program.

According to the Political Resolution published in the December 16, 1972, issue of *Rouge*, in face of the weakness of its working-class base, the "SP can be defined today as neither a bourgeois party nor a bourgeois workers party." In short, the Ligue Communiste has no position on the class character of the SP.

Although this was one of the main issues in dispute during the preconvention discussion, and more than 25 percent of the delegates stated unequivocally that they believed the SP to be a bourgeois party, the majority of the convention took the position that it was irrelevant whether the SP was a bourgeois party or not, because the class character of the Union de la Gauche was determined by the dominant weight of the CP within it.

In other words, the position adopted by the Ligue was that it is permissible from the point of view of class principles for revolutionary Marxists to call for a vote for candidates of the SP even if it might not be a working-class party. Also, the Ligue obviously believes it is correct to support an electoral bloc between the CP and SP even if the SP is not a workers party.

If this is indeed your view, we believe it would amount to a revision of the fundamental Marxist position on this question, negating all the lessons that have been learned by the revolutionary workers movement since the time of Millerand.

In our opinion, it is a violation of principles to vote for or support the Union de la Gauche. This is doubly true if you believe that the SP is no longer a component of the workers movement.

It seems to us that the correct position in the March elections would have been to call for a vote for the CP and SP candidates on the second round, as opposed to calling for a vote for the candidates of the Union de la Gauche. By counterposing the two alternatives we could have more clearly explained the nature of the Union de la Gauche.

* * *

The questions raised by the French elections are important to revolutionists throughout the world. The issues and problems involved are relevant to the work of the Fourth International in numerous countries. They will become even more so in the coming period as the rising pressure of the class struggle forces the ruling class in more and more countries to try to gain time and room to maneuver by utilizing popular front type blocs with

the Stalinists and Social Democrats.

Many of the same questions have come to the fore in Chile, for example, where the "Chilean Union de la Gauche," the Unidad Popular, illustrates one variant of popular frontism.

In the recent elections in Chile, held on March 4, our comrades of the Partido Socialista Revolucionaria called for a vote for the candidates of the Socialist Party, but did not call for a vote for the Communist Party or the Unidad Popular. This seems to us to have been a correct decision under the particular circumstances and given the issues over which the SP and CP were divided.

In Vietnam the call of the Provisional Revolutionary Government for the formation of a government of national accord and reconciliation raises similar questions.

In Uruguay, in 1971, the formation of the Frente Amplio posed problems not unlike some of those raised in the recent French elections. As you know from the article written by Joseph Hansen at the time ("The 'Broad Front' Suffers Defeat," *Intercontinental Press*, December 13, 1971, pp. 1086-88), and from the letter he sent to the Uruguayan comrades, which the United Secretariat received a copy of, we believe the comrades of the PRT-U made an error that resembles the error made by the Ligue Communiste in the recent elections in France.

It is precisely because class-collaborationist electoral and governmental blocs can appear in so many different forms and variants that they often pose difficult problems for us. It is sometimes difficult to combine tactical flexibility in responding to the challenge they represent while maintaining absolute inflexibility in our principles. But

that is all the more reason to discuss out the problems and issues and try to clarify the differences.

* * *

Despite the error made by the comrades of the PRT-U we did not believe them to be popular frontists, class collaborationists, or anything of the kind.

Nor do we today characterize the comrades of the Ligue Communiste as class collaborationists. Your criticisms of the program of the Union de la Gauche clearly demonstrated your rejection of a popular front program.

However, we do think a serious mistake was made in calling for a vote for the Union de la Gauche. If left uncorrected, the error could miseducate the ranks of the Ligue Communiste and other sections of the International on our fundamental class criteria in electoral tactics.

* * *

We have tried to state our views briefly, without unduly elaborating or developing them. But we are anxious to know your thinking concerning the points we have raised.

Comradely,
s/ Mary-Alice Waters
for the Political Committee

P.S. For your convenience we are enclosing two items referred to in this letter: (1) a copy of the letter from Joseph Hansen to the comrades of the PRT-U; and (2) a copy of the article from *Intercontinental Press*.

APPENDIX I: January 28, 1972, Letter to the Political Committee of the Uruguayan Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores, by Joseph Hansen

New York, N.Y.
January 28, 1972

Political Committee
Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores
Montevideo, Uruguay

Dear Comrades,

In the December 13, 1971, issue of *Intercontinental Press* I offered some comments on your election campaign, praising it as a whole but criticizing what appeared to me to be some negative aspects. These comments, of course, reflected the views of the Political Committee of the Socialist Workers Party. I have been asked to further explain the reasons for these views in hope of removing any possible misunderstandings and of facilitating a fruitful exchange of opinion.

From the discussions that various members of the SWP have held with members of the PRT, it appears to us that the key difference lies in our judgments as to the nature of the Broad Front. You saw it as an anti-imperialist

movement in the main, whereas to us it appeared to be a popular front.

Before considering the question in detail I should like to reiterate that on all fundamental questions we consider your approach to have been correct. You rejected the illusion that there can be a peaceful electoral road to socialism. You rejected supporting bourgeois governments, including varieties like those headed by Allende in Chile and Torres in Bolivia. You recognized the need for independence from all bourgeois and petty-bourgeois currents. You stressed the imperative necessity of building a Leninist-type party rooted in the mass movement.

The PRT deserves special recognition for its clear rejection of the ultraleftism that has plagued the new generation of revolutionists in Latin America. This firm stand has enabled you to withstand the pressure from such formations as the Tupamaros. Your rejection of ultraleftism also enabled you to avoid the error to be seen on all sides in Latin America in which former ultralefts capitulated overnight, shifting from guerrilla war to support of the bourgeois government of General Velasco

Alvarado in Peru and of the current leading advocate of a peaceful road to socialism, Salvador Allende.

Our common struggle against ultraleftism, which has been the predominant problem faced by the Latin American vanguard for the past decade, must now include its opposite, class collaborationism. This political and ideological struggle requires the clearest possible analysis of such formations as the Broad Front.

Let me take up first the nature of the struggle against imperialism in the colonial and semicolonial countries.

In that area today, the national bourgeoisies will not conduct a consistent struggle against imperialism. Trotsky long ago explained the reasons. First of all, if the working class and peasantry are mobilized, they tend, in following their own class interests, to break through the framework of capitalism. This tendency has become an increasingly paramount feature of the political scene. Secondly, the main class interests of the national bourgeoisie are the same as those of the imperialists, and they serve as their agents.

Leadership in this struggle thus passes to the working class. In any vigorous and massive struggle it can win the majority of the peasantry and either bring in the lower middle classes or neutralize them. In such a combat, the national bourgeoisie will inevitably side with imperialism.

Trotsky taught us nonetheless that the national bourgeoisie is capable of taking actions that are objectively anti-imperialist. A recent example was the nationalization of the International Petroleum Company by the Peruvian government in 1969. While such actions must be supported by the working class, they do not change the fundamental nature of the regimes that undertake them. The working class must not grant them an iota of political confidence. The anti-imperialist actions, whatever their progressiveness in and of themselves, remain within the orbit of continued imperialist relations in which the national bourgeoisie seeks only a more substantial position. This was proved to the hilt in the case of the Mexican bourgeoisie, which undertook some rather spectacular anti-imperialist actions in 1938.

At present, in bending to the pressures of the general upsurge that has marked the colonial world since the end of World War II, the national bourgeoisie has generally felt compelled to give itself an anti-imperialist and even "socialist" coloration that is particularly evident in its propaganda. The objective, of course, is to confuse the masses and to contain the struggle they seek to develop independently against imperialism.

This is often seen to a high degree during electoral campaigns. However, when a national bourgeois party includes democratic and anti-imperialist planks in its platform, this does not change the fact that such a party remains an agency of imperialism. Of course, it is possible that the need to appear anti-imperialist in face of a mass upsurge can bring a national bourgeois formation to endorse, or seem to endorse, mass actions against imperialism. This has occurred in the past but has become rare in recent times in correspondence with the bourgeoisie's increasing fear of the masses. In these cases, *actions* must carefully be distinguished from *electoral promises*.

It is perfectly permissible—in fact, necessary—for a Leninist-type party to endorse, participate in, or initiate an action front against imperialism that includes petty-

bourgeois or national bourgeois formations so long as it does not give up its political and organizational independence, including the right to offer criticisms and to warn the workers on the basically proimperialist nature of the national bourgeoisie and the need for a socialist revolution to win the struggle against imperialism.

Thus the existence of an "anti-imperialist front" hinges on *actions* that are undertaken and not on mere declarations, that is, propagandistic *assertions*. Both the July 26 Movement in Cuba and the National Liberation Front in Vietnam projected programs that were confused and even dead wrong on many fundamental issues, including the role of the national bourgeoisie, but they constituted fronts that engaged in *actions* in the struggle against imperialism.

A popular front is different. This involves an effort by the bourgeoisie, or part of it, to establish a coalition government committed to maintaining capitalism with the support of the workers and plebeian masses. In the colonial world this necessarily includes continuation of imperialist domination. The essence of such a coalition is class collaborationism.

The problem of such class-collaborationist coalitions has faced the socialist movement since the time of Eduard Bernstein and before. Its practitioners have always sought to give it attractive guises. In the thirties, the Stalinists and Social Democrats presented it as an "antifascist front." In China in 1936 it was offered as an "anti-Japanese national united front." In Ceylon in 1964 it was ballyhooed as a "socialist front," as it is today in Chile.

In China in 1936 both a class-collaborationist front and a real anti-imperialist front existed at the same time. Insofar as a concrete struggle was being conducted against Japanese imperialism, it was perfectly correct and necessary—as the Trotskyists insisted—for the Communist Party to reach understandings with the regime of Chiang Kai-shek concerning actions against the imperialist invader on the battlefield and elsewhere. However, the Stalinists engaged in something else that hampered the struggle against imperialism. They pressed for a "new democratic republic," a "joint dictatorship of several anti-imperialist classes, that is, a coalition government in which the workers and peasants" would be tied to the national bourgeoisie.

The name "popular front" or "people's front" can be a source of confusion. It was the "high-flown name," as Trotsky called it, used by Thorez in 1934 when the French Stalinists set out to form a bloc that would include the Radical Party. They succeeded in doing this in May 1935. Several months later at the Seventh World Congress of the Comintern, the Stalinists pointed to this class-collaborationist formation as a model. Trotsky said of the congress:

"It is important if only for the fact that by legalizing the opportunistic turn in France, it immediately transplants it to the rest of the world. We have a curious specimen of bureaucratic thinking in that while granting, on paper at any rate, a liberal autonomy to all sections, and while even issuing instructions to them to do independent thinking and adapt themselves to their own national conditions, the Congress, immediately thereupon, proclaimed that all countries in the world, Fascist Germany as well as democratic Norway, Great Britain as well as India, Greece as well as China, are equally in need

of the 'people's front,' and, wherever possible, of a government of the people's front." ("The Stalinist Turn" in *Writings of Leon Trotsky* (1935-36), p. 13.)

When Trotsky was still alive, our entire movement used the term "popular front" or "people's front" in referring to the class-collaborationist blocs between workers' parties and bourgeois parties seeking governmental power at the time, such as those in Chile, Brazil, China, India, etc. Actually there was little choice in the matter. The term selected by Moscow was universally used in the world press in those years. Trotsky himself, accordingly, used the term in a sweeping way that included the popular front formations in the colonial world.

In arguing on this question, some of the comrades have contended that at least one quotation shows Trotsky to have been of the opinion that a popular front signifies solely a coalition between the *imperialist* bourgeoisie and the workers of an *advanced* country. From this, the argument goes that Trotsky did not believe a popular front could exist in the colonial world. As a consequence, it was deduced by these comrades that the Broad Front in Uruguay could not be properly classified as a popular front and to call it that only confused matters.

Whatever the exact interpretation may be of the quotation found in Trotsky's writings (it is in "For Committees of Action, Not the People's Front" in *Writings of Leon Trotsky* (1935-36), p. 56), the truth is that he would not want us to place so much weight on the interpretation of a single sentence in an article dealing with the popular front in France. He would have asked us why we did not take other things he wrote into consideration, why we did not proceed to a concrete analysis of the Broad Front in Uruguay, and why we did not seek to compare the Broad Front with previous formations of a similar nature.

As an example of Trotsky's way of thinking on such questions, his answer to a request to distinguish between the united front and the popular front is of interest:

"Yes, we make concrete the difference between the two notions. During 1917, all the politics of the Bolsheviks consisted in fighting against the popular front—not so called—in favor of the united front. The Russian bourgeois party, the Kadets—it is from the words Constitutional Democrats which became abbreviated to Kadets—remained as the only bourgeois party. All the bourgeois parties merged with the Kadets in 1917. The Kadets were in an alliance with the Social Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks. It was named at that time the coalition, not popular front as now, but coalition. We addressed the workers, and said to them: 'You must ask of your leaders, the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries, that they abandon their alliance with the bourgeoisie and that they enter into an alliance with us, and the Bolshevik workers are ready to fight with them together in a united front.' It was our policy. Every worker by and by understood our policy. They abandoned the Mensheviks and the Social Revolutionaries, and we became a genuine party of the masses at the turning point." (*The Case of Leon Trotsky*, p. 386.)

From this it is clear that Trotsky drew a straight line from the class-collaborationist bloc called "the coalition" that sought to derail the revolution in backward Russia and the "people's fronts" initiated by Moscow throughout

the world in the mid-thirties.

It is true that Trotsky did not write a great deal about the specific problems of Latin America or about the differences that might be found between popular front formations in the imperialist countries and popular front formations in the colonial countries. What mainly concerned him was their similarities because it is precisely in these that the essence of the matter lies.

A few examples can be cited. In speaking of the decline of popular front governments in the imperialist countries just before the outbreak of World War II, Trotsky wrote:

"But in the colonial and semicolonial countries—not only in China and India, but in Latin America—the fraud of the 'people's fronts' still continues to paralyze the working masses, converting them into cannon-fodder for the 'progressive' bourgeoisie and in this way creating an indigenous political basis for imperialism." ("Manifesto of the Fourth International on the Imperialist War and the Proletarian World Revolution" in *Writings of Leon Trotsky* (1939-40), p. 39.)

It should be carefully noted that Trotsky viewed the popular front in the colonial and semicolonial countries as a vehicle for creating a political basis for imperialism. This is a specific aspect that ought to be explored. An illuminating paper might be written on it based on the experience in various countries in Latin America. Trotsky made his comment following the election of a popular front government in Chile in December 1938 in which Allende served as a minister. Some instructive lessons could be drawn from a comparison of the program, composition, and course of the popular front that was formed in Chile in 1936 and the program, composition, and course of the Broad Front formed in Uruguay in 1971.

Again in the alleged "special national situation" in Spain which the POUM used to justify entering the people's front there, Trotsky wrote:

"The Spanish bloc of the tops of the working class with the left bourgeoisie does not include anything 'national' for it does not differ in the least from the 'People's Front' in France, Czechoslovakia, Brazil or China." (*New Militant*, February 15, 1936, p. 3.)

Trotsky's concept is quite clear. He speaks rather sharply, saying that "it does not differ in the least." He was pointing to what was similar in the blocs—their class-collaborationist essence and their aim of duping the workers and diverting them from independent struggle.

Trotsky's inclusion of the popular front in Brazil is of particular relevance from the viewpoint of our own discussion. The "National Liberation Alliance," formed in 1935, was proclaimed by the Stalinists to be an anti-imperialist front. Their claims sounded plausible since the front was organized under illegal conditions. Yet Trotsky disregarded even that in light of the concealed purpose of the bloc—to create an indigenous political base for imperialism.

I hope that this is sufficient to show that Trotsky made no fundamental distinction between popular fronts in the imperialist countries and in the colonial world. To him, as to all of us at the time, they were class-collaborationist blocs, the essence of which was far from new.

Now what about the Broad Front in Uruguay? To analyze its nature, we must consider its program, its actions, its composition, and its leadership.

The program of the Broad Front was adopted at a meeting held February 5, 1971. The Broad Front took as its goal the formation of a multiclass coalition, including the "progressive sectors" of the bourgeoisie, on a common program. The objective of the coalition was stated to be the establishment of a new government via the electoral road. The projected government, according to the authors of the program, would carry out a series of reforms of a democratic and anti-imperialist nature. Later the Broad Front adopted an electoral platform promising a long list of reforms. The essence of the program and electoral platform was pure class collaborationism.

As to class composition, the Broad Front brought together "workers; students; professors; priests; Protestant ministers; small and middle producers; industrialists and businessmen; civilians and members of the armed forces; intellectuals and artists. . . ."

In political composition, the Broad Front included Stalinists, Social Democrats, various bourgeois and petty-bourgeois formations, including the Christian Democratic Party, and split-offs from the Colorado and Blanco parties.

The leadership was placed in the hands of bourgeois elements, loyally and energetically supported by the Stalinists, trained since 1935 in the school of popular frontism.

As for its actions, the Broad Front was designed as an electoral bloc. Although its program talked about "permanent political activity" going beyond the 1971 election, the nature of this "activity" was not specified. A primary objective of the Broad Front was to instill or reinforce electoral illusions among the masses. This required painting the participation of the Broad Front in the bourgeois electoral process as an action of great moment, the manifestation of a movement of the people against "the imperialist power" and against the domination "of the oligarchy of middle men, bankers, and big landowners."

The campaign unquestionably aroused considerable enthusiasm. Unfortunately a good part of this was based on illusions, on confidence that something might be accomplished at the ballot box, on false hopes of winning the election. The truth is that the Broad Front was set up by a collection of petty-bourgeois leftists, trade-union bureaucrats, Stalinist and Social-Democratic reformists, and bourgeois politicians on the make, who were dazzled by Allende's success in Chile and thought it might be repeated in Uruguay.

They played for the stake of emerging as saviours of Uruguayan capitalism in its hour of need. They deliberately established the Broad Front not to struggle but to contain the struggle of the masses by diverting them into the electoral arena. *They did not form an action front projecting specific actions requiring specific agreements on the part of the participating organizations.*

Of course it can be argued that the Broad Front was formed in response to an upsurge, in response to the fact that the workers, students, slum dwellers, and plebeian masses generally were intensifying their struggles. Precisely. This has always been the basis for popular fronts of any scope. They are formed to co-opt the mobilization of the masses, to advance the careers of reformists and bureaucrats, and to maintain the status quo.

In Uruguay the break with the two-party system is an indicator of the deep economic and social crisis racking the country and of the growing radicalization of the

masses. The rejection of the two old parties is a sign of rising political consciousness among the masses. These are welcome developments. But it was the tendency to break from the two-party system that provided an opening for deployment of the Broad Front as an instrument of the national bourgeoisie and of imperialism. Real progress will begin when the masses break from the *capitalist* two-party system. That would mean rejection of a capitalist *three-party* or multiple-party system. This is what will give reality to the slogan of the revolutionary socialists calling for independent political action.

This brings me to the inconsistencies or ambiguities in the position taken by the PRT toward the Broad Front. You called on the Broad Front to undertake actions going beyond the electoral arena. This was correct from several points of view. Here I will note only that it followed logically from your judgment that it was an anti-imperialist front. The urgings of the PRT met with no response, since the leaders of the Broad Front held a quite different view of its nature and its purpose.

The PRT at the same time proceeded as if the Broad Front were not an anti-imperialist front but could possibly be converted into one—moreover one that would follow a line of independent political action. To achieve this would require wresting the leadership of the Broad Front from the hands of its bourgeois backers and their agents and placing it in the hands of leaders of the workers committed to independent political action. An appropriate slogan for this would have been "Throw out the bourgeois elements!"

The feasibility of such an attempt can be questioned, inasmuch as the founders of the Broad Front made sure—as is always the case in such formations—to keep a tight grip on the organizational machinery, and they were acutely alert to possible challenges from the left. To advance the slogan of throwing out the bourgeois elements would, however, have proved advantageous as part of the propagandistic efforts to expose the real nature of the Broad Front.

Nevertheless the PRT did not raise a slogan of this nature. No doubt that was because of the assumption that the Broad Front *was* an anti-imperialist front.

A further inconsistency was that in a certain way the PRT acted as if the Broad Front were a *popular front*. We noted with satisfaction that you leveled sharp attacks against the bourgeois leadership. You exposed the diversionary aims that motivated the formation of the Broad Front. In opposition to the program of the Broad Front calling for a coalition government you called for a government of the workers and plebeian masses, that is, a government of the working class, the slum dwellers, and poor sectors of the petty bourgeoisie.

Yet, in contradiction to this, the PRT held that the national bourgeois candidates of the popular front were anti-imperialist and that "the electoral victory of the Broad Front would unquestionably create a more favorable situation in the interest of the working class."

The truth is that such a situation would prove highly ephemeral without the development of the working class's own independent mass struggle. And if the electoral victory were gained at the cost of that independent struggle, this would signify a disaster! Against any and all electoral blocs with the national bourgeoisie, the workers must develop their own independent struggle. This brings dem-

ocratic gains for the masses and setbacks for imperialism as by-products.

The fact is that the anti-imperialist propaganda of the bourgeois candidates of the Broad Front amounted to a cruel hoax. Had these candidates won the election and been permitted to take office they would have conceded reforms only under heavy mass pressure, while they carried out their real task of derailing the mass movement.

Although the quotation is rather long, Trotsky's projection of what could happen in the case of India is worth considering in connection with this.

"The Stalinists cover up their policy of servitude to British, French and U.S.A. imperialism with the formula of 'People's Front'. What a mockery of the people! 'People's Front' is only a new name for that old policy, the gist of which lies in class collaboration, in a coalition between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. In every such coalition, the leadership invariably turns out to be in the hands of the right-wing, that is, in the hands of the propertied class. The Indian bourgeoisie, as has already been stated, wants a peaceful horse trade and not a struggle. Coalition with the bourgeoisie leads to the proletariat's abrogating the revolutionary struggle against imperialism. The policy of coalition implies marking time on one spot, temporizing, cherishing false hopes, engaging in hollow maneuvers and intrigues. As a result of this policy disillusionment inevitably sets in among the working masses, while the peasants turn their backs on the proletariat, and fall into apathy. The German revolution, the Austrian revolution, the Chinese revolution and the Spanish revolution have all perished as a result of the policy of coalition. . . . The self-same danger also menaces the Indian revolution where the Stalinists, under the guise of 'People's Front', are putting across a policy of subordinating the proletariat to the bourgeoisie. This signifies, in action, a rejection of the revolutionary agrarian program, a rejection of arming the workers, a rejection of the struggle for power, a rejection of revolution.

"In the event that the Indian bourgeoisie finds itself compelled to take even the tiniest step on the road of struggle against the arbitrary rule of Great Britain, the proletariat will naturally support such a step. But they will support it with *their own* methods: mass meetings, bold slogans, strikes, demonstrations and more decisive combat actions, depending on the relationship of forces and the circumstances. Precisely to do this must the proletariat have its hands free. Complete independence from the bourgeoisie is indispensable to the proletariat, above all in order to exert influence on the peasantry, the predominant mass of India's population. Only the proletariat is capable of advancing a bold, revolutionary agrarian program, of rousing and rallying tens of millions of peasants and leading them in struggle against the native oppressors and British imperialism. The alliance of workers and poor peasants is the only honest, reliable alliance that can assure the final victory of the Indian revolution." (*An Open Letter to the Workers of India* in *Writings of Leon Trotsky* (1938-39), p. 38.)

In still another way, the PRT proceeded as if the Broad Front were a popular front. Against the slate of Broad Front candidates committed to class collaborationism and the objective of putting a coalition government in office, the PRT proposed a slate of worker candidates under the control of workers' organizations. The logic of this,

naturally, was to run an alternative slate in opposition to the slate nominated by the class-collaborationist leaders of the Broad Front.

The PRT did considerable along this course, actually putting up a slate of worker candidates. Precisely here, however, the ambiguities of the PRT's electoral campaign became most clearly expressed. The slate of worker candidates for which the PRT campaigned was headed by the three top bourgeois candidates of the Broad Front.

I appreciate that the comrades of the PRT found it very distasteful to include these bourgeois candidates on their slate and that they did so only because it was the price demanded of them by the organizers of the Broad Front if they wanted their permission to continue to work within the front. In short, the PRT considered it to be a tactical matter and felt that the price was not too high.

The determination of the PRT to take advantage of every possible opening and to avoid a sectarian or dogmatic attitude that could result in isolation from the masses is completely within the spirit of Trotskyism. However, on the particular decision to accept the terms laid down by the organizers of the Broad Front, I would like to advance three considerations:

1. It has been argued by way of analogy that Trotsky favored the tactic of the Chinese Communists entering the Kuomintang and that in the first stage of this experience he was opposed to them leaving. If the tactic was proper in relation to the Kuomintang why not in relation to the Broad Front?

Trotsky's real views on this question are, unfortunately, not well known. The following quotation from a letter that Trotsky wrote to Max Shachtman on December 10, 1930, makes clear what his stand was:

"You are quite right when you point out that the Russian Opposition, as late as the first half of 1927, did not demand openly the withdrawal from the Kuo Min Tang. I believe, however, that I have already commented on this fact publicly somewhere. I personally was from the very beginning, that is, from 1923, resolutely opposed to the Communist party joining the Kuo Min Tang, as well as against the acceptance of the Kuo Min Tang into the 'Kuomintern'. Radek was always with Zinoviev against me. The younger members of the Opposition of 1923 were with me almost to a man. Rakovsky was in Paris and not sufficiently informed. Up to 1926, I always voted independently in the Political Bureau on this question, against all the others. In 1925, simultaneously with the theses on the Eastern Chinese Railway which I have quoted in the Opposition press, I once more presented the formal proposal that the Communist party leave the Kuo Min Tang instantly. This was unanimously rejected and contributed a great deal to the baiting later on. In 1925 and 1927, I had uninterrupted conflicts with the Zinovievists on this question. Two or three times, the matter stood at the breaking point. Our center consisted of approximately equal numbers from both of the allied tendencies, for it was after all only a bloc. At the voting, the position of the 1923 Opposition was betrayed by Radek, out of principle, and by Piatakov, out of unprincipledness. Our faction (1923) [the faction formed in 1923 that made a bloc with the Zinovievists in 1926—JH] was furious about it, demanded that Radek and Piatakov be recalled from the center. But since it was a question of splitting with the Zinovievists, it was the general decision that

I must submit publicly in this question and acquaint the Opposition in writing with my standpoint. And that is how it happened that the demand was put up by us so late, in spite of the fact that the Political Bureau and the Plenum of the Central Committee always contrasted my view with the official view of the Opposition. Now I can say with certainty that I made a mistake by submitting formally in this question. In any case, this mistake became quite clear only by the further evolution of the Zinovievists. At that time, the split with them appeared to the overwhelming majority of our faction as absolutely fatal. Thus, the manifesto [of the International Left Opposition on the Chinese question, issued late in 1930] in no way contradicts the facts when it contends that the Russian Opposition, the real one, was against the Communist party joining the Kuo Min Tang. Out of the thousands of imprisoned, exiled, etc., hardly a single one was with Radek in this question. This fact too I have referred to in many letters, namely, that the great majority of the capitulators were not sure and firm in the Chinese and the Anglo-Russian questions. That is very characteristic! . . ." (*Problems of the Chinese Revolution*, 1932 edition, p. 19.)

2. When the organizers of the Broad Front laid down their antidemocratic proscription against any of the participants in the formation running an independent slate offering workers' candidates as an alternative to the top three bourgeois candidates, I anticipated that the PRT would surely denounce this stricture—which was intended to muzzle and block any independent currents in the Broad Front—and find a way to challenge the decree in a dramatic way, publicly refusing to obey it. Naturally, I could not visualize from a distance what tactical steps might be required to dramatize rejection of the decree. It was a considerable disappointment to learn that the PRT took the opposite course of merely protesting it and then abiding by it.

Was this a case of tactical considerations determining politics and even theoretical appreciation of the true nature of the Broad Front? In any case I think an error was committed that can prove costly, particularly if it goes unrecognized. Placing the names of Seregni, Crottogini, and Villar on the ballot of the PRT outweighed the verbal criticisms leveled against the three, for including them on

the ballot was a way of telling the workers that it was correct to vote for these bourgeois candidates. In short, it was an action that signified political confidence in them and their campaign propaganda.

3. Rejection of a class-collaborationist electoral bloc with the bourgeoisie does not necessarily mean isolation from the masses. So long as the cadres of the PRT participate in the unions and other organizations of the working class, remain with the workers in the plants, and participate in their day-to-day struggles, they cannot be isolated.

If the cadres of the PRT gain a solid reputation as militants, their political opinions will be listened to with respect, even if what they say clashes with enthusiasms of the moment that are based on illusions fostered by the betrayers of the working class.

The main current task facing the PRT is to recruit potential cadres. In this the utmost clarity is required on all programmatic questions, above all on the class collaborationism that served as cement for the Broad Front.

To summarize: When the Broad Front was formed, it was completely correct for Trotskyists to say, "Yes, we will participate in all *actions* of a democratic or anti-imperialist nature." In saying this, however, it was just as imperative to say, "No, we will not participate in any *electoral bloc* designed to advance the interests of bourgeois candidates."

Our criticism is based on the failure to make this differentiation clear.

Let me repeat that we are fully in agreement with your determination to explore and take advantage of all possible openings. This includes your persistence in seeking discussions before the ranks of the Broad Front and in making specific proposals to the Broad Front.

We also consider the intensity of your effort during the campaign to be a model. Particularly notable was the way you got out literature and improved your newspaper both in frequency, size, and appearance.

Comradely yours,
s/Joseph Hansen

cc: United Secretariat

APPENDIX II: Uruguay: The 'Broad Front' Suffers Defeat, by Joseph Hansen

From *Intercontinental Press*, December 13, 1971.

As of November 30, the outcome of the November 28 elections in Uruguay was still in doubt. The Colorado party held the lead with 575,690 votes as against 565,556 for the National party (Blancos) and 252,534 for the Broad Front (Frente Amplio).

Of the seven presidential candidates of the Colorados, Juan Mará Bordaberry, the successor handpicked by President Jorge Tacheco Areco, was in the lead. Wilson Ferreira Alduante held the front position among the three candidates running on Blanco slates. With 10 percent of the vote still to be counted, it may take several weeks to determine which of the twins in Uruguay's two-party system won the presidency and control of the 129-seat parliament.

Although he quickly conceded defeat after seeing the early returns, General Liber Seregni Mosquera was perhaps the one most surprised by the defeat of the Broad Front. On November 26, the presidential candidate of the popular-front formation went on television and radio to give a victory speech, so certain was he that he would be swept into office.

Seregni's confidence evidently stemmed from his estimate of the meaning of the giant demonstration in Montevideo November 24 behind the banners of the Broad Front.

By all accounts it was the biggest turnout yet seen in Uruguay. The Montevideo press reported that half a million persons had joined in the march.¹ The Paris daily

Le Monde reported 200,000 while the *New York Times* cut the figure to 100,000.

It was also an extremely spirited demonstration, reminding observers of the fervor at rallies in Havana in the early days of the Cuban revolution.

Slogans chanted by the more radical participants were readily picked up by tens of thousands of voices, swelling into a roar as they passed for miles along the line of march. Here are some of them:

"El pueblo armado jamás engañado!" (People in arms are never cheated.) "Por la tierra con Sendic!" (For land with Sendic [the leader of the Tupamaros].) "Al gobierno fascista el pueblo te responde con la revolución!" (The people reply to the fascist government with revolution.) "Ni yanquis ni fascista, América socialista!" (Neither Yankees nor fascist, for a socialist America.) "Lucha! Lucha! Lucha! No dejes de luchar por un gobierno obrero y popular!" (Fight! Fight! Fight! Don't stop fighting for a workers' government, workers' and people's.)

The size of the demonstration and its militant tone appeared to be in direct answer to the flood of lies and red-baiting that partisans of the Pacheco regime had engaged in to intimidate supporters of the Broad Front and to influence the vote.

However, the enthusiasm of the Montevideo demonstrators, who were quite youthful in the majority, was not registered at the polls. This was to be expected. The electorate, even when it includes the bulk of the working class, generally lags behind events, tending to register past moods and past relationships in the class struggle rather than the current reality. The voters in Montevideo who waited for hours in long lines to cast their ballots on Sunday were noticeably older than the contingents that marched in the streets on Wednesday.

Another reason for the high hopes of the organizers of the Broad Front was the victory last year of a similar formation in Chile, the Unidad Popular (People's Unity) headed by Salvador Allende Gossens. In October 1970, a month after Allende's triumph, the first trial balloons were floated in Montevideo on making a similar try; and the response, particularly among intellectuals and circles influenced by the Communist party, showed that the effort would gain considerable support.

The main components of the Broad Front consisted of the Communist party, two factions that broke away from the Colorado and Blanco parties, the Christian Democrats, the Socialist party, a number of prominent intellectuals, and a gamut of groupings, ranging from unions to cultural associations.

Among the participating vanguard organizations were the Movimiento de Independientes "26 de Marzo" ("March 26" Movement of Independents, a formation representing the viewpoint of the Tupamaros),² the Partido Obrero Revolucionario (Revolutionary Workers party headed by Juan Posadas, which is sometimes mistaken as Trotskyist because of its claims), and the Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores (Revolutionary Workers party, a Trotskyist grouping that has proclaimed its adherence to the Fourth International but that has not yet been accepted as a section).

The main architect of the Broad Front was the Communist party. Its objective was to divert the current upsurge into safe electoral channels. As proof positive that it hoped to play the role of saviour of the capitalist sys-

tem rather than its destroyer, the Arismendi leadership of the CP made sure that the three leading candidates of the Broad Front would be acceptable to ruling circles in Uruguay. The ex-General Liber Seregni and Dr. Juan José Crottogini were nominated for the presidency and vice-presidency, and Dr. Hugo Villar for mayor of Montevideo.

As the Buenos Aires Trotskyist weekly *La Verdad* correctly noted in its issue of September 29, these nominations, to which "bourgeois circles reacted favorably," represented "another step" in structuring the Broad Front "as a variant of reformism, acceptable to the bourgeois system."³

In its political purpose and main structure (its subordination to a bourgeois leadership), the Broad Front constituted a Latin American variant of the popular front long utilized by the Stalinists and Social Democrats in wheeling and dealing with bourgeois parties in the electoral arena.

It is true that the Broad Front was not a mere replica of the popular fronts seen in Europe in the thirties. Like every political formation in Latin America that seeks popular support today, it stressed anti-imperialism.

Its thirty-point platform included the following planks: An "agrarian reform," the "nationalization of private banks," the "nationalization of the main firms engaged in foreign trade," and "energetic industrial action by the state, including nationalization of the meat-packing industry."

But fitting its platform to the radical mood of the Uruguayan masses did not change the essence of the Broad Front. Like the popular fronts seen elsewhere in the world, it was designed to divert the masses from the road of revolutionary struggle.

The role played by the Tupamaros was of special interest. During the latter part of the electoral campaign, they desisted from guerrilla warfare so as not to embarrass the Broad Front.

La Verdad said of this: "The immediate strategy of the Tupamaros would itself seem to help open up and smooth the road to an electoral triumph for the popular front."

Quite a few of the groupings participating in the Broad Front ran their own slates of candidates (save for the presidency and vice-presidency), which was possible under Uruguay's democratic electoral system. But the Tupamaros, although under heavy pressure to follow the others in this, refused to run a slate of their own.

Through the Movimiento de Independientes "26 de Marzo" they stated publicly on several occasions that they were leaving it up to their followers to vote for whatever slates they wanted to.

For instance, in the November 26 issue of the Montevideo weekly *Marcha*, they explained why they were not running their own candidates. "We are independents. And we are organizing in that way. We do not aspire to electoral burdens. We merely support the common candidates of the Front."

They called attention to a previous declaration in which they had explained that they consider it "more important to organize and train the ranks of the people for the coming decisive struggles than to divert forces in selecting figures to be proposed for consideration in the electoral contest."

The Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores (PRT)

followed a different course. The PRT began only two years ago as a very small grouping of Trotskyists. The intensity of their activities would do credit to a group many times their size, and they have made encouraging progress, including establishing a press of their own. During the latter part of the election campaign, besides huge quantities of leaflets, they published their paper *Tendencia Revolucionaria* (Revolutionary Tendency) as a six-to-eight page weekly.

When the Broad Front was first projected in October 1970, the PRT decided to take an active attitude toward it. In the first phase, in the numerous meetings that were held all over to discuss the issues on which the proposed front should take a stand, the PRT militants did two things: (1) They argued that the platform should be decided through a democratic discussion among the ranks. (2) They presented the program of Trotskyism, stressing democratic and transitional demands in particular.

They gained a favorable hearing, but were not strong enough to block the Communist party from imposing on the Broad Front the kind of platform it wanted.

Similarly on the question of the candidates of the Broad Front, the PRT advocated nominating workers. They stressed the need for labor to run its own candidates and strongly criticized the Communist party for not appealing to the Convención Nacional de Trabajadores (National Workers Convention, the big trade union) to join the Broad Front and run a slate of its candidates on an independent basis.

Again, the PRT was not strong enough to carry its position, although it received a favorable hearing at the meetings where its speakers took the floor.

When the architects of the Broad Front had settled on Seregni and Crottogini, the PRT decided to run a slate of its own. Under the Uruguayan electoral system this was possible only as a sub-slate (sub-*lema*) of the Broad Front.

Here the PRT ran into a snag. The top committee of the Broad Front ruled that while any grouping could run what candidates it wished for local offices or as senators or deputies, all groupings were barred from running any candidates for president and vice-president of the country and mayor of Montevideo except Seregni, Crottogini, and Villar.

This meant that in contrast to the Colorado party with its seven presidential candidates and the National party with its three, the Broad Front would appear on the ballot with only one presidential candidate—Seregni.

The ruling was highly undemocratic. Its purpose was purely factional, since all votes cast for rival candidates of the Broad Front would have counted against the Colorado and National parties. The ruling was intended to block vanguard groupings like the PRT from exercising their right to gain a line on the ballot that would indicate their proletarian opposition to Seregni, thereby complicating things for the publicity experts engaged in converting the nondescript figure of Seregni into the "choice of the people."

The PRT decided to bow to this decision since to defy it would have meant exclusion from the ballot. On the ballots listing their slate of workers' candidates, they included the names of Seregni, Crottogini, and Villar under the slogan, "La liberación de los trabajadores es obra de los trabajadores mismos" (The freeing of the workers is the task of the workers themselves).

In my opinion, this was an error. More than a tactical question was involved, since objectively to issue a ballot with Seregni's name on it was to ask voters to vote for him, that is, vote for the bourgeois leadership of the Broad Front. It would have been better to try to make a scandal over the undemocratic ruling and to avoid issuing a ballot that included the name of a figure whose program was in complete opposition to that of the PRT.

It is true that from abroad it is difficult to determine what weight Seregni's name actually represented in Uruguay. Among the groupings that ran slates of their own candidates in addition to Seregni, Crottogini, and Villar, one notices the stress they place in their political advertisements on the candidates identifying their grouping as such and the completely subordinate position they give to Seregni. In many instances his name is not even included.

It seems, too, that the ballot designations are discounted to a certain extent by the voters. The Broad Front itself appeared on the ballot only by courtesy of the Christian Democratic party, which made its standing place on the ballot available to the Broad Front. Thus every ballot of all the Broad Front slates starts out with the line: "Partido Demócrata Cristiano."

But the Christian Democrats were so far from thinking that this meant an automatic vote for their party, that they ran their own slate, designating it in big type as Partido Demócrata Cristiano, Lista 808; and they campaigned for votes on that basis.

In addition, it must be noted that in its election literature, the PRT did not campaign at all for Seregni. A good example of what they said can be found in the article from *Tendencia Revolucionaria* published on the eve of the election, which is included elsewhere in this issue.

Nevertheless, the objective meaning of including the names of Seregni, Crottogini, and Villar on the slate of Candidatos Obreros (Lista 1968) remains.

In Wall Street, the defeat of the Broad Front was received with a sigh of relief. The *New York Times* in an editorial December 3 saw the outcome as giving "one of the traditional parties a new five-year opportunity to transform the country." As an afterthought the editors added: "It may be the last chance for the Uruguayan democracy."

It is doubtful that Uruguayan capitalism will win a five-year breathing space. The deep economic crisis that has racked the country for the past fifteen years continues unabated.

The Uruguayan workers will hardly wait for a half a decade to go through another experience with a broad front. It is much more likely that they will pour into the streets by the hundreds of thousands as they did on November 24—but this time to change the entire system. And they will do it in perhaps less than the ten days that it took the Russian workers in 1917.

1. The impressiveness of this figure can be judged from the fact that Montevideo's estimated population in 1968 was 1,348,000. The estimated population of the entire country in 1970 was only 2,900,000.

2. This was listed erroneously in an article that appeared in translation in our October 25 issue (p. 916) as "July 26 Movement."

3. See the October 25, 1971, issue of *Intercontinental Press*.