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14 Charles Lane
New York, N.Y. 10014
May 11, 1971

Dear Ernest,

Enclosed is a letter to the United Secretariat that the Political Committee of the Socialist Workers Party voted to send at its May 11, 1971, meeting. The letter is self-explanatory.

The Political Committee also voted to send a copy of the letter to the Political Bureau of the La Verdad grouping for its information. A copy of that letter is likewise enclosed.

Comradely yours,

Jack Barnes
Organization Secretary

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14 Charles Lane
New York, N.Y. 10014
May 12, 1971

Political Bureau
La Verdad

Dear Comrades,

Enclosed for your information is a copy of a letter from the Political Committee of the Socialist Workers Party to the United Secretariat.

The decision to send the letter, and to provide you with a copy for your information, was made at a meeting of the Political Committee held yesterday.

Comradely yours,

Jack Barnes
Organization Secretary

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14 Charles Lane
New York, N.Y. 10014

May 11, 1971

To the United Secretariat
of the Fourth International

Dear Comrades,

At the March 20-21 meeting of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International, Comrade Pedro reported on a recent trip he had made to Latin America. Among other things, he reported that a mimeographed bulletin containing a lengthy letter signed by "Domingo" was being circulated among the sections there.

The bulletin appeared to have official sponsorship. It was called INFORMACION INTERNACIONAL (International Information) and the body publishing it listed itself as the "Comite uruguayo (IV Internacional)" [Uruguayan Committee (Fourth International)]. The letter, dated November 24, 1970, and entitled "La crisis del movimiento trotskista en Argentina" ("The Crisis of the Trotskyist Movement in Argentina"), purported to be a balance sheet of the tendencies in our movement in that country as of that date.

Upon returning from Europe, Comrade Pedro reported to us that at the meeting of the United Secretariat Comrade Livio Maitan said that he had written the letter, using "Domingo" as a pen name. The other members of the United Secretariat, according to Comrade Pedro, disclaimed any knowledge of the existence of such a letter.

The minutes of the March 20-21 meeting of the United Secretariat did not include anything about this -- neither Comrade Pedro's report on this point and his questions about it, nor Comrade Maitan's statement as to the authorship of the letter, nor any indication as to the comments of the others present.

All of this was so surprising to us that we asked Comrade Hansen to place it on the agenda at the next meeting of the United Secretariat on April 17-18.

According to Comrade Hansen, at that meeting Comrade Maitan again acknowledged being the author of the letter.

The other members of the United Secretariat said that they had no knowledge of the letter before Comrade Pedro's report, and that they still had not seen it. None of them knew what the "Comite uruguayo (IV Internacional)" was or whom it represented. Comrade Maitan insisted that the letter

he had written was "private," that it had been circulated without his consent or knowledge, and that to circulate a private letter without the permission of the author was a mistake. He did not volunteer any information as to the identity of the recipient of his letter.

Other members of the United Secretariat, without yet knowing the content of the letter, defended the right of leaders of the world Trotskyist movement to engage in private correspondence and to have that privacy respected.

The only action taken by the United Secretariat was to pass the following motion: "That copies of that letter be made available to the United Secretariat."

After discussing this entire development, we reached the following conclusions:

1. We do not question the right of any leader, or for that matter, any member of the world Trotskyist movement to engage in private correspondence. However, in our opinion, that issue is not involved in this instance.

2. Comrade Maitan, we understand, is the head of the Latin American Commission and therefore intimately involved in all the relations between the United Secretariat and the sections and sympathizing groups of the Fourth International in Latin America. Copies of all of his correspondence written in that official capacity with the sections and sympathizing groups in that area, along with their replies, should therefore be available to members of the United Secretariat whenever they wish to read them.

3. The letter in question is not -- in the proper meaning of the term -- a private letter, as can be seen at once upon reading it. The signer of the letter uses the term "we" throughout and speaks as if he were expressing the collective and considered opinion of the Latin American Commission, if not the United Secretariat as a whole.

For example, the author writes: "For our part, we consider the situation extremely grave and judge that a discussion on this problem must be developed between now and the world congress... By means of this letter we are attempting to suggest the lines of this discussion, at the same time putting forward some opinions. We may make some errors... But we cannot accept the alternative of letting things slide any longer."

Another example: "...the La Verdad group, disregarding the responsible attitude the congress took in striving to keep the discussion on a political level and adopting a solution that permitted the dissident minority to remain within the framework of the international Trotskyist movement, has indulged in unacceptable factional maneuvers,

provoking a deterioration in its relations with the International."

The evidence cited for this condemnation -- which purports to express the judgment of no less than the "International" -- carries the same implication of emanating from the Latin American Commission, if not the United Secretariat as a whole: "The La Verdad group held its national congress without giving advance notice to the International, without sending the documents adopted, or information on the debates. What is worse: a representative of the International minority was invited to attend the congress and in fact participated in it."

The alleged "representative of the International minority" was in actuality a member of the Socialist Workers Party who was in Argentina by coincidence at the time the underground congress was held. He reported the entire matter to the United Secretariat at its meeting of September 19-20, 1970, a meeting attended by Comrade Maitan. This was two months before Comrade Maitan wrote his letter.

4. The fact that the United Secretariat was not consulted in either the decision to draw up and send such a letter or in formulating it has implications that will surely not escape experienced comrades in the International. Either the United Secretariat was not carrying out its responsibilities in overseeing the work of the Latin American Commission, or Comrade Maitan operated behind the back of the United Secretariat, without informing it of a most important action on his part that could gravely affect the internal situation not only in Latin America but in the world Trotskyist movement as a whole.

5. The fact that even a month after this matter was reported, the United Secretariat continued to remain ignorant of the content of a letter that had been mimeographed and widely circulated in Latin America makes matters still worse. Was Comrade Maitan deliberately trying to keep the United Secretariat from knowing the content of the letter even at this late date? Or was the United Secretariat uninterested in pursuing the matter further, even after its attention had been called to the existence of the letter at its previous session?

6. The chief target of Comrade Maitan's letter is Comrade Nahuel Moreno of the La Verdad group. In attacking him, Comrade Maitan goes back to 1951; that is, eleven years before the Reunification Congress; and he also raises doubts concerning the relation of the Argentinian comrades with the International Committee before the reunification and at the time of the reunification. This is a very serious matter, in our opinion, for Comrade Maitan has thereby injected differences into the international pre-congress discussion that were considered superseded at the time of the reunification. By doing this, he indicates that he holds doubts about the

reunification itself.

7. The main objective of the letter is transparent. It seeks to advance political grounds for maintaining the recognition of the El Combatiente group as the Argentinian section in place of the numerical grounds used at the last world congress. The author thereby fans factional fires to the injury of the discussion preparatory to the next world congress, not the least injury being the one done to his own contributions to that discussion by the revelation that they are accompanied by narrow factional objectives of his own.

8. The attitude displayed by the author of the letter toward the La Verdad grouping and Comrade Moreno is not of recent origin, as is shown by the content of the letter itself. "The question arises," says the author, "why we have not discussed the problems of the Argentinian section in the past.... We note...that it was difficult for us to intervene in the period immediately following the entry of the Argentinian organization into the International in the aftermath of the reunification and that we relied on a process of progressive assimilation."

A declaration of that nature indicates that Comrade Maitan (and whoever else he is referring to when he says "us" and "we") held reservations about the reunification in 1963 and that he (in agreement with those he refers to by "we") has acted since then in accordance with these reservations. It is impossible not to wonder about the role played by Comrade Maitan in the split that occurred in the Argentinian section prior to the last world congress. The circulation of this particular letter -- which only came to our attention by accident -- inevitably suggests that perhaps other similar actions have been undertaken in the same sub rosa way.

9. In view of these considerations, we suggest that it would be in order for the majority of the United Secretariat to issue a statement: (a) making it absolutely clear that the impression created by the content of the letter that the author was speaking in behalf of the Latin American Commission and the United Secretariat has no correspondence with the truth; (b) specifically dissociating the United Secretariat in its majority from the views expressed in the letter, particularly the factional attack on the La Verdad group and Comrade Moreno; (c) informing the movement what the "Comite uruguayo (IV Internacional)" actually represents, and -- if this still remains unknown to the members of the United Secretariat -- indicating that an investigation will be undertaken to ascertain the facts.

10. We suggest further that the letter written by Comrade Maitan, which has already been circulated among the sections in Latin America, be made available to the member-

ship of the world Trotskyist movement as a whole by publishing it in the Internal Bulletin of the Fourth International, together with the suggested clarifying statement by the majority of the United Secretariat and this letter expressing our opinion.

Comradely yours,

Political Committee
Socialist Workers Party