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The Key Issues in the Portuguese Revolution

The following resolution was passed unanimously by the Steering Committee of the Leninist Trotskyist Faction at a meeting held August 30, 1975.

The opening of the Portuguese socialist revolution stands at present at the center of the international class struggle. A working-class victory in Portugal would sound the death knell of European capitalism and deal a staggering blow to the main powerhouse of international capitalism in the United States.

In view of the size and power of the Portuguese working class relative to the bourgeoisie and its reactionary contingents, why hasn't it already established its own government? The answer is that the Portuguese workers, like the workers in other countries, are faced with "a crisis of leadership," to cite Trotsky's words in the Transitional Program.

The crisis in leadership can be overcome only by the construction of a team of cadres capable of providing correct political guidance. The nucleus of such a team is very small in Portugal today. The prime problem is to expand that nucleus. This means constructing a revolutionary-socialist party in the very heat of the revolution.

Achievement of this difficult requisite demands, above all, a precise Marxist analysis of all the contending political forces, and, in particular, the political issues at the heart of the developing class struggle. The greatest possible concreteness is demanded. Instructive as analogies with other revolutions may be, they cannot take the place of analysis of the Portuguese events themselves and determination of their political meaning in the living context of national and international contending forces.

This resolution is intended as a contribution in that task, which is a collective responsibility of the world Trotskyist movement as a whole.

Of course, more than accurate analysis and political prognosis are required. Unless the small nucleus of Trotskyist forces in Portugal succeeds in taking full advantage of the openings provided by the revolution, they will not be able to expand sufficiently and at a swift enough rate to gain leadership of the revolutionary-minded masses.

Fortunately, the pattern of the Portuguese revolution favors their efforts. It is preemi-

nently *proletarian*. Among other things, this means that it is centered in the cities where the Trotskyists are also based, giving them extraordinary opportunities to spread their ideas among the radicalizing layers of workers.

In a developing revolution, the proletariat has enormous advantages. These include its economic and social weight, the power of its numbers when they move in unison, the effectiveness of its natural methods of organization and battle in the plants and in the streets, the radicalizing and mobilizing effect of its struggles on its allies in the city and countryside, and above all its inclination to move toward socialism, a trend clearly evident in Portugal today.

In accordance with this pattern, the Portuguese workers in their first upsurge began to organize militant unions and to establish workers control of industry. Action committees appeared in many factories, as did similar forms in the armed forces and in some neighborhoods, giving promise of the rise of soviets or comparable

bodies. The direction of movement obviously favors the growth of Trotskyism.

Such phenomena, along with the universal determination among the masses to finish with Salazarism, or anything resembling it, and to establish a new governmental system capable of guaranteeing democracy as they understand it and want it, have provided striking confirmation of the correctness of the Transitional Program, which in 1938 outlined the logic of a rising proletarian revolution like the one in Portugal and noted the concomitant slogans and tasks facing the revolutionary Marxists.

By the same token, those Portuguese Trotskyists who have assimilated the lessons taught by Trotsky, above all in the Transitional Program, stand well prepared to tackle the key problem of resolving the crisis of leadership faced by the Portuguese working class and thereby assuring a victory of colossal importance to the workers on all continents.

1. Bourgeois Calculations in the April 25 Coup

The April 25, 1974, military coup that toppled the Caetano dictatorship was an outcome of the conclusion drawn by Portuguese finance capital that neither their colonial empire nor the working class in their own country could be dominated any longer primarily by repressive means.

The Portuguese imperialists had at first resisted turning to neocolonial means to save their empire. As rulers of the weakest of the imperialist powers both economically and politically, they sought to evade the cost of fostering and maintaining a neocolonial bourgeoisie. Moreover, their state apparatus appeared to have a tight grip on society. Thus, the Portuguese imperialists hoped to achieve by determination and ruthlessness what other imperialists with vastly greater resources chose not to attempt, or failed to achieve.

However, after more than a decade of savage war against the peoples in the colonies, the Portuguese imperialists found that the sword was incapable of cutting off the sources of the colonial revolution, which continued to mount. Even terror on the massive scale practiced in northern Angola was not sufficient to destroy the nationalist movements, in particular since they received support, and in some instances bases, from the surrounding Black African states.

Although the Portuguese imperialists managed for a time to contain the nationalist movements in the economically important colonies, this was insufficient to accomplish their objectives. They finally realized that they did not have the resources to sustain a large-scale military occupation of the colonies without under-

mining the bases of capitalist stability in Portugal itself. Nor could they get the necessary support from stronger imperialist powers to make up for their weakness.

Nonetheless, the sectors of the Portuguese ruling class who came to see the need for a change in policy faced grave difficulties in carrying it out. The regime had rested on corporatist repression for nearly half a century. Not only were substantial repressive forces such as the secret police and the riot police strongly intertwined with the regime but the economic interests of a swollen layer of backward petty capitalists and latifundists were bound up with the maintenance of this special repressive system. Furthermore, the Portuguese imperialists had waited too long to shift to neocolonialism; they faced well-organized mass nationalist movements deeply rooted in the populations of many colonies, including Angola, the key piece of the empire. These movements were already substantial. With their long tradition of struggle, they could not be co-opted cheaply. Nor could the colonial masses, after long years of massive struggles and enormous sacrifices and suffering, be easily demobilized by small concessions.

So, Portuguese imperialism, which has always had an extraordinarily weak base, engaged in perhaps the most daring gamble in 500 years of Lusitanian expansionism. It moved to reorganize its forms of political and social control by violent means, by a military uprising against an entrenched layer of the state and political apparatus. A major indication of the line of thinking of the ruling sector was their decision to allow Spínola's book *Portugal e o Futuro* to be published in February 1974. The book became a best seller and helped provide the general with a revolutionary image. Through the subsequent coup, Spínola moved to disarm and neutralize a section of the ruling class itself by purging a considerable number of previously sacrosanct authorities. This not only disabled the police forces for a time, it was a violent shock to the habits of obedience instilled in the masses by almost fifty years of dictatorship modeled on fascist Italy and Spain.

The Portuguese capitalists did not embark on such an adventure without taking into account certain favorable conditions. Although they had failed to stop the rising radicalization among the workers and the youth, a powerful, organized mass movement had not yet formed in Portugal. Likewise, although the imperialist army had failed to crush the nationalist movements in the colonies and had suffered some defeats as well as significant losses, it had not been broken or decisively defeated.

The most favorable condition from the bourgeoisie's point of view was the absence

of a mass revolutionary Marxist party in either Portugal or the colonies. The mass movement was dominated by dependable reformist elements. As it turned out, the assessment made by the Portuguese imperialist bourgeoisie of the reliability of the reformist workers parties proved to be accurate.

What Portugal's rulers underestimated was the power and extent of the mass upsurge that would be touched off both in Portugal and the colonies by the fall of Salazarism. They failed to gauge correctly the hopes this would inspire among the masses that they could finally gain their democratic right to think, to discuss, to make their own decisions, and to struggle to

2. The Armed Forces Movement—a Bourgeois Instrument

The instrument on which the imperialist bourgeoisie relied to remove the Caetano regime and to carry out the needed political reorganization was the Armed Forces Movement (AFM). The AFM began as a movement among professional officers who sought to defend their privileges as graduates of the military academies against the ordinary university graduates, large numbers of whom were given commissions as part of the expansion of the armed forces required to fight the colonial war.

The AFM, in essence, has functioned as the political arm of the military hierarchy. That is what it has always aspired to be, and what the present leadership intends it to be. Following the March 11, 1975, attempted coup, some of the cleverest military demagogues such as Otelio Saraiva de Carvalho have tried to picture things as if a political difference existed between the top military commanders who associated themselves with the April 25 overturn, Spínola in particular, and the "revolutionary movement" itself. This line was intended to explain away the obvious splits in the AFM represented by the attempted rightist coups on September 28, 1974, and March 11, 1975.

In any such conspiratorial movement there are bound to be various layers of officers and various degrees of commitment, with the lowest officers, who take the greatest risks, generally being the most radical in speech and the most determined in action. The AFM has thus drawn the support of many radicalized young officers as well as radicalized civilians, and has maintained its control over them. However, the AFM has always striven to make itself as representative of the military command as possible; and since the April 25 overturn it has continued to bring in officers on the basis of the positions they hold in the military hierarchy. In addition, representatives of the lower ranks of the armed forces

change their economic and social conditions and determine their own fate.

In the sweep of this mass radicalization, the bourgeoisie found it impossible to sufficiently reconsolidate its repressive apparatus, and was forced to permit far more widespread purges of rightist police and officials than it intended or than was compatible with the stability of bourgeois class rule. The pressure of the mass upsurge opened wider the cracks in the discipline of the armed forces resulting from growing unwillingness to continue the long and unsuccessful colonial war. As it deepened, this process threatened to shatter the armed forces as an instrument of the bourgeois state.

have been incorporated in the formal organs of the AFM to make these bodies better transmission belts for the directives of the military leadership and better barometers of the political processes at work in the armed forces, as well as to divert demands for real democracy in the armed forces. In accordance with their bonapartist strategy, the military tops also brought some left-wing elements into the AFM assemblies to counterbalance the right and increase their maneuvering room.

As a conspiratorial opposition movement under Caetano, the AFM attracted officers influenced by various political currents hostile to the Salazarist regime. In response to the logic and the pressures of the struggle against the old dictatorship, as well as the pressure of the masses following April 25, there was a tendency toward radicalization, in the lower echelons of the AFM in particular. This tendency was reinforced by the mass mobilizations in response to the attempted right-wing coups on September 28, 1974, and March 11, 1975.

In these cases, the most conservative elements in the armed forces feared that the democratic ferment and social struggles were getting out of hand and that the process of reform could not contain the masses but would inspire them to further struggle. At the same time, they were unwilling to accept the minimum demands of some nationalist movements in the colonies. If successful, this "restoration of order" would have meant a purge of important sections of the AFM now regarded as "unreliable" by the conservatives. In each instance, the masses mobilized to defend the military regime, which they identified with their new-found freedoms and the perspective of socialism. These coup attempts further compromised the already discredited Portuguese capitalist class and shifted the balance of forces in favor of the working masses. As a result,

the process of radicalization accelerated in the ranks of the armed forces and at the lower levels of the officer corps, and after each coup attempt the AFM was obliged to adopt correspondingly more "socialist" and "anti-imperialist" verbiage in order to divert the political process into the channels of the AFM.

However, the AFM has remained the essential political instrument of the Portuguese imperialist bourgeoisie. And its objective has continued to be to modernize and strengthen Portuguese capitalism—not to overturn it. It simply found itself obliged to rely heavily on demagoguery to persuade the Portuguese workers to help out capitalism in its hour of need. It is also using "socialist" phrasemongering to put capitalist needs in a better light as a first step toward restoring the dominance of bourgeois ideology and of bourgeois "law and order" and repression.

One example of the demagoguery of the AFM is its use of bourgeois nationalism. Since its successful April 25, 1974, coup, the ruling military group has carried on a campaign designed to restore the hold of Portuguese nationalism, which had been largely discredited through its use by Salazar. In order to accomplish this, it has posed as a national liberation movement borrowing the anti-imperialist themes of the rebel movements in the colonies. In the same way, it has tried to borrow the repressive features of the colonial bonapartist regimes and the Stalinist regimes, which, since they are identified to some extent with revolution and progressive struggles, are not so discredited as the repressive devices of the old regime.

Since the April 25, 1974, overturn, the AFM has served as the real government of capitalist Portugal and the empire, using the various provisional cabinets as a means of presenting a civilian façade and assuring the support of the mass reformist workers parties for its rule. During this time, it has presided over and maintained a capitalist imperialist system, consistently taking the side of the bourgeoisie against the workers in economic conflicts. It has made only such concessions to the mass movement as were inescapable if popular support were to be retained and its position held against both the more conservative bourgeois elements anxious to halt the reforms at any cost and the more combative elements in the workers movement threatening to push them out of control.

At every stage the AFM has striven to maintain as much control over the colonies as possible without endangering the conversion to neocolonialist methods. There have been differences over the amount of concessions that had to be given. An example is the reported dispute between Spínola and the present leaders of the AFM over withdrawal from Mozambique. The Portu-

guese imperialists have also been forced to make more concessions than they originally intended.

However, the essential continuity in the policy objectives of the imperialist bourgeoisie has been maintained by its present political agent, the AFM. This is shown, among other things, by the maintenance and reinforcement of the Portuguese military intervention in Angola and by the attempts of the AFM, including its supposed "radical" wing, to regain political support in Portugal for keeping troops in the economically and strategically more important colonies. The fact that the AFM has used "socialist" and "anti-imperialist" demagoguery in its attempt to persuade the Portuguese masses to accept continued military intervention in the colonies and continued sending of troops there is indicative both of its methods and its objectives.

From April 25, 1974, until August 1975, there have been five "provisional" governments in Portugal. The rapid turnover testifies to the deepening instability of the bases of bourgeois rule in face of the continuing democratic ferment, the growing social struggles, advance of the colonial revolution, and worsening economic situation. Throughout this process, the provisional governments have been paralleled by

military bodies that have functioned as the real governmental authority. The pact signed between the AFM and the main bourgeois and reformist parties in April 1975 in fact tried to formalize this situation by setting up a two-tier governmental structure in which all the decisive powers were to be exercised by the AFM bodies.

In political composition, the various provisional governments have all been openly popular frontist; and this actually was their main value to the bourgeoisie. The political tendencies and orientations represented in the military bodies have been more veiled, which again constitutes one of the main political advantages of these bodies to the bourgeoisie.

The steady shift since July 1974 toward more and more reliance on the military formations as the political leadership of the bourgeois state has had as its complement an accentuation of the bonapartist balancing role of the AFM. Parallel to this trend toward more open military rule, the AFM has escalated its socialistic-sounding demagoguery and in particular resorted to petty-bourgeois radical themes such as the need for "national liberation" in Portugal, "direct democracy," and various populist nostrums.

3. The Upsurge of the Masses

Because of the sudden collapse of the repressive regime and the extreme political and organizational weaknesses of both the capitalists and the workers, the fundamental classes in Portugal, the political and social situation has remained very fluid.

The old regime fell completely discredited. To a large extent, the bourgeoisie and bourgeois ideas shared in its disgrace. In vast ferment, the masses began to express themselves for the first time in forty-eight years, to examine forbidden ideas, to take hope in their ability to change their conditions. As the best known opposition group, the Communist party had the most prestige. But all the opposition groups, all the left parties and groups, were taken seriously by the masses. All tendencies and groups received substantial press coverage. There was an unprecedented openness to revolutionary ideas on the part of the masses and an attitude of giving equal consideration to the proposals of all tendencies on the left. The ferment of revolutionary ideas spread irresistibly, threatening to dissolve even the discipline of the armed forces, the last prop of capitalist order.

The workers in the factories and the poor masses in the neighborhoods organized spontaneously. Hated bosses and strike-breaking goons were purged. Unused housing was seized. The workers asserted the

right to hold meetings and organize assemblies in the plants. The factories became centers of political discussion and activity. Wage gains were made.

Democratic factory committees sprung up in most of the big plants. They were elected by general assemblies involving all the workers. From the craft-union fragmentation imposed by corporatism, the workers went in one leap toward democratically organized industrial unions and opened the perspective of soviet forms of organization.

The splits in the military command that developed as some sections of the bourgeoisie began to fear that the mass movement in Portugal and the colonies was getting out of hand opened the way for democratic organization in the armed forces, especially in the military police, the navy, and some regiments of the army. This development has posed the most immediate danger to bourgeois rule since the April 1974 overturn, provoking some bourgeois forces to turn to very radical-sounding demagoguery in an attempt to maintain political control of the process, and other sectors to strike out desperately to crush it before it got further out of hand.

Combined with a sharpening economic crisis and partial paralysis of the bourgeois repressive forces, the ferment in the working class led to a series of factory occupa-

tions, the imposition of elements of workers control, and to demands for nationalizations. The workers turned to nationalizations as a way of preventing layoffs and countering claims by the capitalist owners that they could not afford to meet demands for better wages and conditions. They imposed workers control to prevent factory closures and in some key cases, such as the banks, to prevent the capitalists from using their economic power to mount an attack on the workers movement.

In the instance of the banks, the government was obliged to give in to the workers' demand for nationalization partially to defend itself against sections of the bourgeoisie who were now opposed to the reform policy it represented. In other cases, the government resisted demands for nationalizing profitable enterprises. However, because of the economic crisis and the need to reorient the economy in line with the change represented by abandoning the Salazarist regime, the government itself initiated a series of nationalizations to bail out key capitalist interests and strengthen Portuguese capitalism. In the given political context, these nationalizations had contradictory effects: On the one hand, they spread illusions that control of the economy would actually be handed over to the workers; on the other, they encouraged the workers to press for nationalizations going beyond what was acceptable to the capitalist class. This contradiction was expressed most concretely on the political level by the demagoguery of the government and the Communist party, calling on the workers to work harder since they now "controlled" production. This kind of "workers control," tied to increasing production, had the effect of shoring up the capitalist profitability of plants in a period of political crisis when the capitalists could not themselves effectively manage their plants. Under these conditions, the capitalists could accept the loss of direct control over their property, even for a prolonged period.

As the radicalization deepened, landless peasants began to seize the land of latifundists, and agricultural workers began organizing unions and demanding equality with other workers.

The ranks of the armed forces became increasingly reluctant to stay in or embark for the colonies to carry out the Portuguese bourgeoisie's neocolonialist plans.

The fall of the Caetano regime gave great impetus to other social movements. The women's liberation movement, for example, quickly raised demands that went beyond what the military were prepared to grant. Despite the opposition of the new regime and the forces most closely allied with it, such as the Communist party, the small nucleus of the women's liberation movement aroused the interest of women in the

poor neighborhoods, factories, and peasant villages, indicating that it has the potential for rapid development as the revolutionary process deepens.

The movement among university and high-school students against authoritarianism in the schools and against restricted access to education assumed powerful momentum, along with actions by students from the colonies. High-school students became its most dynamic sector. They entered into struggle against the new military "saviors" themselves and won victories.

It was essentially the continuation and deepening of the broad social ferment that split the AFM and led the more conservative elements to make desperate attempts to carry out right-wing coups in order to halt these processes. Conversely, when democratic rights and other gains of the revolution appeared to be dangerously threatened the masses have mobilized on a huge scale. The political process in Portugal has centered on issues that became explosive because of the concern of the masses over their democratic right to freely consider all alternative points of view and to assert their will as the majority of the populace.

The fight to defend and extend democratic rights in the factory, in the barracks, in society as a whole, is indispensable to advancing toward the establishment of a workers and peasants government. This

fight for a workers and peasants government constitutes the decisive axis of struggle in Portugal today. With their deceptive schemas of "direct democracy" subordinated to a military regime, the demagogues seek to divert the working class and the peasantry from seeing this reality and organizing accordingly.

A major obstacle to mobilizing the masses to struggle for democratic rights, popular sovereignty, and a workers and peasants government is represented by the leaderships of the mass reformist workers parties and their satellites, since all of them favor subordinating the workers movement to the unelected military regime, the main defender of capitalist order in Portugal today. However, there is a strong sentiment among the working class as a whole, which these leaderships cannot ignore, for united-front action in defense of democratic rights, and social gains that have come under attack. Furthermore, they have already been obliged, in different ways, to defend certain democratic rights at certain times for their own specific interests as bureaucrats. The fight to defend the social and economic gains of the toilers, democratic rights, and popular sovereignty, in order to move toward a government of the oppressed and exploited, also brings out the contradictions of the reformist parties most sharply and poses the need for a working-class united front in the strongest way.

4. The Stalinists Support the Bourgeois Order

During the first phase of the new regime, the Communist party and its petty-bourgeois front, the Movimento Democrático Português (MDP—Portuguese Democratic Movement), played a crucial political role in upholding the military government. It was the only political force not compromised with the old regime that had an effective apparatus, and this machine became in effect the mass apparatus of the new regime. It was the only current in the working class that acted like a mass party despite its small size—it took up issues of concern to the masses. This helped it to move to the center of the stage with extraordinary speed, while other currents were trying to assess the situation or were preoccupied with sectarian considerations. It was the forces of the Communist party that dominated the giant May 1, 1974, demonstrations and rallies in the wake of the downfall of the Caetano government on April 25 and that turned them into demonstrations of support and adulation for the military. It was this apparatus that enabled General Spínola to build his bonapartist image and thus to move swiftly toward restoring a strong bourgeois authority,

which would have crushed the Communist party itself, among others.

The political influence of the Communist party hinges on maintaining its working-class base, and, in a situation where the bourgeoisie has been unable to restabilize its political dominance, the Stalinist leaders face great dangers as well as great opportunities for expanding their bureaucratic apparatus. Thus, in both the September 28, 1974, and March 11, 1975, coup attempts, they were obliged to accept mass mobilizations that, although politically and organizationally limited, had revolutionary aspects.

Nonetheless, the fundamental aim of the Communist party goes counter to the revolution. Its objective, as clearly shown in the period since April 25, 1974, has been to serve as a transmission belt in the workers movement for the bourgeois regime, as the mass organizer for the AFM. The Portuguese CP and its mentors in the Kremlin have also tried to use their influence with the MPLA in Angola to further the neocolonialist plans of the AFM. The Portuguese CP today, which knows it has the support of a minority of the workers, prefers a

military government with a populist façade to a parliamentary regime. The Stalinists believe that a government of this type offers better possibilities for carrying out the necessary minimal reforms while maintaining firm control over the masses, politically subordinating them to the bourgeoisie, and preventing them from "going too fast too far," as the Stalinists claim they did in Chile.

In view of the prerevolutionary situation in Portugal and the extreme weakness of the Portuguese bourgeoisie, such a solution recommends itself all the more to the Stalinists. A military regime, moreover, seems to offer greater guarantees to American imperialism that mass mobilizations will be kept within limits that will not endanger the status quo on a world scale. To the Stalinists it thus seems to offer a way of achieving their objectives without provoking intervention by Washington or endangering the détente.

As a result of the Communist party acting as the transmission belt and labor policeman of the military regime in Portugal, its popular support has lagged far behind the gains in bureaucratic influence it has achieved as a result of the strength of its machine and its privileged relationship with the AFM. Thus, the Portuguese Stalinists have become dependent on the current bourgeois forces remaining in power to preserve their posts in the provisional cabinet that serves as a façade for the military, as well as to preserve their positions in the labor movement. This situation has led them to take more and more openly antidemocratic positions and finally to join with the AFM in a drive to curtail freedom of the press and union democracy, and to suppress the left groups that do not subordinate themselves to the military.

Wall Street in particular has taken advantage of these attacks on democratic rights to make publicity gains at the expense of the Portuguese Stalinists and Moscow and to issue warnings about what will happen if the Stalinists go "too far." However, the seemingly aggressive moves of the Portuguese Stalinists have been publicly supported by the Kremlin, and the PCP's class-collaborationist line represents no departure from the policy of détente toward American imperialism.

Although the Stalinists' objective is to consolidate their position as the indispensable auxiliary of the military and thus to prevent any challenge to their position from political rivals, their course is objectively making them more and more captive to the bourgeois military regime. At the same time, by playing the role of an auxiliary repressive force for a regime that cannot solve the economic and social problems of the Portuguese masses and is determined to

make the workers pay the price of the deepening economic crisis, the Communist party is preparing the way for a resurgence of reactionary anti-Communism on a massive scale, not only among the petty-bourgeois strata but in large sections of the working class itself.

Acting on behalf of a bourgeois regime and against the development of the Portuguese revolution, the CP is helping to pave the way for restoration of one of the fundamental props of bourgeois rule—the fear among the masses that socialism means an end to their democratic rights and subjugation to a tyrannical machine.

The Communist party grew in the space of a year from a small nucleus to a mass

party and has not yet had time to thoroughly consolidate the flood of new recruits. Political differentiations are possible, but as yet no major currents have appeared in opposition to the Stalinist leadership.

The ranks have been rallied behind the leadership through training in a fanatical sectarian spirit. The promise of material advancement for large layers of recruits through the party machine and its alliance with the military rulers also helps to harden this sectarian attitude and to reinforce the position of the leadership. The Portuguese CP is thus thoroughly Stalinist, particularly distinguished among its sister parties in Europe only by its slavish adherence to the directives of Moscow.

5. The Left-Centrist Satellites of the Communist Party

Left-centrist groups have had a certain influence in Portugal, especially among the youth and the intellectuals but also among the military and the workers. The two parties of this type that participated in the April 25, 1975, elections, the MES (Movimento de Esquerda Socialista—Movement of the Socialist Left) and the FSP (Frente Socialista Popular—Socialist People's Front), won more than 2 percent of the vote between them, over half the vote of all the parties to the left of the mass reformist organizations.

Of these two groups the MES is the most serious. It had broken from the Stalinist-dominated popular front some time before the April 25, 1974, overturn and has tried to develop a theoretical alternative to Stalinism. The FSP is a crudely opportunistic formation. It began as a faction in the Socialist party that was disgruntled over the number of posts granted it in the leadership. The faction leaders decided in early 1975 to set up shop as peddlers of a more extreme version of the MES line. One of their selling points was radical Catholic connections. This group calls the SP a bourgeois party. The MES implies this but has not made it explicit. The FSP subordinates itself completely to the military, while the MES position is more ambiguous. The FSP signed the Pact-Program. The MES did not, but said it had nothing in principle against doing so. Both groups identify with the Latin American guerrillaist groups and attract a following at least partially through ultraleftist phrasemongering.

There are two groups that characterize themselves as armed organizations and that engaged in terroristic actions against the Caetano regime, the Partido Revolucionário do Proletariado-Brigadas Revolucionárias (PRP-BR—Revolutionary party of the Proletariat-Revolutionary Brigades) and the Liga de União e Acção Revolucionária

(LUAR—League for Revolutionary Unity and Action).

All of these left-centrist groups constitute new ultraleft editions of old anarchist-like patterns, although this is most pronounced on the part of the groups that have actually developed around guerrillaist actions and not simply around identification with foreign guerrillaist groups. There are various shades of difference. The MES tends to take as models the ultraleft critics of Lenin in the Third International who made a fetish out of the soviet form and who called for soviets under all conditions in an abstract and romanticized way instead of taking up the concrete political task of winning a majority of the workers through leading the workers to break from the bourgeois and reformist parties. This is simply a new form of anarchism masquerading in "Marxist" and "Leninist" clothing. The LUAR comes closest to repeating the formulas of the historic anarchist currents. But these are merely nuances. All of them have essentially the same orientation, and all of them echo the CP line of supporting a military dictatorship with a populist façade.

The MES was in a relatively strong position vis-à-vis the Communist party in the labor movement prior to the April 25, 1974, coup. However, its groups were built in the syndicalist tradition. What they call their "rank-and-file" orientation did not reveal its weaknesses so clearly under conditions of repression, when workers struggles were scattered and the initiatives of small groups of fighters had more impact. However, its ineffectiveness became glaring when the workers movement reached massive proportions and had to face the political problems posed by a bourgeois government using concessions and demagoguery rather than outright repression to contain workers struggles. As a result, the MES groups in the union

movement suffered severe setbacks.

In particular, because of the emphasis of this group on "rank and filism" and initiatives from below, general political questions, such as the attitude to be taken toward a bourgeois government supported by the mass reformist workers parties and how to project a working-class alternative to it, were obscured. The need to propose a working-class governmental alternative to the AFM was lost in the vague concept of the masses organizing themselves. Concretely, this resulted in the acute contradiction of MES activists participating in strikes that were denounced as "reactionary provocations" by the government while the MES itself gave political support to this same government. Ultimately this line boiled down to the simplistic formula that the AFM had to "fuse with the people's movement."

What this evolution demonstrates is the incapacity of the renovated anarchist-type notions to solve the real political problems facing the working-class movement, the problems of breaking the political hold of a demagogic bourgeois government and reformist mass parties. In this, the failure of the MES is reminiscent of the failure of the anarchists during the Spanish Civil War. The fact that this orientation is covered up with implicit and explicit references to "soviets" does not mean that these groups are moving toward Leninism. To the contrary, following their own petty-bourgeois centrist course, they have been tending to approximate the ultraleft misinterpretation of the experience of the Russian revolution first advanced by such figures as Anton Pannekoek.

As a result of its anarchist-type confusion, including the opportunism this confusion breeds, the MES has failed to see the democratic issues involved in the conflict between the Socialist party and the military government and has in effect adopted only a souped-up version of the CP's antidemocratic campaign. Despite its denunciation of the CP's "reformism" and "conciliationism," it has become an auxiliary of Portuguese Stalinism, and serves as an advance patrol in the Stalinists' campaign against the SP.

The most extreme expression of this anarchist-type confusion is to be found in the Partido Revolucionário do Proletariado-Brigadas Revolucionárias, which was built on a program of urban guerrilla warfare against the Caetano regime. This group has created a phantom organization of "soviets," the "Committees of Workers, Soldiers, and Sailors," and has called on the military security forces, the Copcon, to abolish the political parties and the Constituent Assembly and turn power over to this nonexistent "people's power." Rarely has ultraleft braggadocio been carried to such

aberrant conclusions. This ultraleft group has been used as a tool by a group of military officers seeking to abrogate politi-

cal democracy, such as it is in Portugal, and consolidate a thoroughgoing military dictatorship.

6. The Confusionist Role of the Maoists

Up to now, a sizable section of the youth and the workers looking for an alternative to the left of the Communist party has been attracted to various Maoist groups, which have tended to coalesce into the following four groups: the União Democrática do Povo (UDP); the Frente Eleitoral de Comunistas (Marxista-Leninista), or the FEC(ml); the Movimento Reorganizativo do Partido do Proletariado (MRPP); and the Partido Comunista Português (Marxista-Leninista), or the PCP(ml), which sought to run in the elections as the Aliança Operária Campone-sa.

The UDP was the dominant force in the factory council at the Lisnave shipyards in Lisbon from the fall of 1974 until the spring of 1975.

The FEC(ml) has been the organizer of the Grupos de Acção Antifascista (GAAF) in Oporto, which have specialized in attacks on meetings and headquarters of the right-wing bourgeois party, the Centro Democrático Social (CDS).

The PCP(ml) has played a leading role in the chemical workers union and is in very close alliance with the Socialist party.

The MRPP has functioned as a tight cult operating under different initials in its various fronts of work. In every area, this group follows the theatrical tactic of trying to raise the red flag the highest, shout the loudest, and assume the most provocative stances. It has achieved no broad influence but has assembled a dedicated following that is probably larger than that of any of the other Maoist groups.

These Maoist groups differ in many respects, the sharpest dividing line being between the PCP(ml), which acts more like a right-centrist ally of the SP, and the others, which are generally ultraleftist in their poses. However, they all have one salient trait in common—sectarianism, which is exemplified in their common slogan, "Neither fascism, nor social fascism—people's democracy." The Maoists have proved incapable of understanding the

real process of the development of political consciousness among the workers and have arbitrarily counterposed their own schemas to this process.

In the case of the UDP, this was expressed in an attempt to counterpose factory committees to the trade unions. By losing sight of the process of the organization of the working class as a whole, the UDP obstructed both the development of industrial unions and of genuine factory committees. This resulted in important sections of militant workers becoming isolated, in the factory committees becoming seriously weakened, and in the Maoists losing their positions.

In the case of the FEC(ml), it resulted in a small group conducting a private war against the CDS and the repressive forces of the bourgeois state.

In the case of the MRPP, its strident ultraleft posturing aroused the hostility of large sections of the workers and the toiling masses toward the groups to the left of the Communist and Socialist parties.

In the case of the PCP(ml), it resulted in reinforcing sectarian attitudes toward the Communist party among the ranks of the other mass workers party, the Socialist party, thus helping to impede the mass workers organizations from developing united-front actions.

Thus the political program and conduct of the Maoist groups have contributed nothing to developing a revolutionary alternative in Portugal. Without exception, these groups have induced confusion among the militant soldiers and sailors, youth and workers influenced by them, and have led them toward isolation from the class. Along with the anarcho-centrists, the Maoists bear a major responsibility for the grip retained by the class-collaborationist SP and CP leaderships over the radicalized youth and the working class and thus for the continuation and deepening of the crisis of revolutionary leadership in Portugal.

7. Social Democratic Rivalry for Favored Position With the AFM

The Socialist party has become the main rival of the Communist party for mass influence among the workers and radicalized petty bourgeoisie. The Social Democrats, like the Communist party leaders, have a reformist perspective, which is expressed in subordination to the ruling military group. The SP differs from the CP

in its methods of organization and political control. It is not a disciplined or homogeneous party. It seeks to control the working class by political and electoral means rather than by building a disciplined machine. Because of its relatively loose organization and its politically heterogeneous composition, it is much less suited than the

Communist party to serve as a transmission belt for the military regime.

The SP requires the forms of parliamentary democracy as a means of developing its influence, competing with the machine of the Communist party, and in fact communicating with its supporters, if not even its members. It is as a result of this need that the SP has come into conflict with the Communist party and the military junta. This conflict has been developing since about a month after the fall of Caetano, when the military regime began to move toward cracking down on the radical ferment. Leaders of the SP have repeatedly spoken out in opposition to certain kinds of repressive moves by the military regime and have defended victims of the repression belonging to the groupings standing to the left of the reformist parties. Another reason for this defense of the left groups attacked by the regime, which up till now have generally been Maoists, is to gain a certain left cover by association with non-Social Democratic left forces not allied with Moscow. Nonetheless, the result of this limited opposition by the Socialist party leadership has been to block more severe repression of revolutionary ideas and consolidation of a more stable bourgeois regime.

The Socialist party has more and more become the rallying ground for forces in the workers movement that refuse to bow to the Stalinists. Like the Communist party, the Socialist party expanded in one year from a small nucleus to a mass party. It is a Social Democratic party, that is, a reformist workers party that claims to represent socialism but whose perspectives are tied to the ability of its own monopoly capitalism to grant concessions to the workers. It does not strive to abolish capitalism and establish a socialist system; and it is not tied to a bureaucratic caste in any country where capitalism has been abolished.

However, the Portuguese Socialist party has developed in a way different from that of the Social Democratic parties in the other imperialist countries of Europe. It is essentially a new formation and is not yet based on a big trade-union bureaucracy.

The initial nucleus drew together a number of strands of the non-Stalinist left opposition to the Salazarist dictatorship, all of which were deeply antagonized by the sectarianism and dogmatism of the CP, led by Alvaro Cunhal. Some of these elements, most notably Mário Soares, sought the support of the Socialist parties in Western Europe and the "democratic" capitalist countries. Some of them, like Soares, came out of the old bourgeois liberal milieu. Others, again like Soares, served an apprenticeship in the Communist party. A section of the SP leadership comes from the liberal Stalinists who left the Communist party after 1968, most notably the leader of the SP's trade-union work, Marcelo Curto.

Another contribution to the initial nucleus was made by youth involved in terrorist actions against the old regime. Many radicalized Catholics were also attracted to the initial nucleus. The original group included young intellectuals and activists influenced by the international youth radicalization who were critical of reformism but without a well-defined or consistent political perspective. These elements, who sought a broad arena of activity, were repelled by the Stalinism of the Communist party and its satellites and the Maoists.

This heterogeneity has increased during the growth of the Socialist party into a mass organization. The ideological and organizational looseness of the SP made it a gathering place for workers who were radicalizing but who were not ready to commit themselves to the political and organizational conformity demanded by the CP. It attracted in particular workers and intellectuals who feared the totalitarian features of Stalinism, and militant layers of workers who were repelled by the CP's policing the labor movement on behalf of the military regime.

This heterogeneous combination included, as was to be expected, elements bearing reactionary anti-Communist and anti-Leninist prejudices. Moreover, in the conflict with a Communist party seeking to use totalitarian methods in support of military rule, strong currents in such a combination were bound to seek support from the European Socialist parties and the "democratic" capitalist governments.

However, the facts do not support the claim of the CP and its ultraleft satellites that the SP has become the rallying ground for reaction.

The reality is that the SP has become the gathering place of the broadest range of forces representing the majority of the

Portuguese workers and radicalized petty bourgeoisie. The working class is profoundly divided and weakened as a result of the policies of the CP and SP leaderships, and the conditions are being created for the restoration of an openly anti-working-class government in Portugal. Thus, the sectarian campaign the CP unleashed against the SP following the latter's electoral victory can at some stage prove suicidal for the Stalinists themselves. It in fact represents a deadly danger to the working class as a whole. In this campaign the CP is motivated by determination to defend the bureaucratic positions it has gained as a result of its role as mass organizer for the military junta as well as by Moscow's calculation that a regime like the AFM fits in best with its current diplomatic needs in the détente with Washington. This campaign of slander and demagogy against the Social Democracy as the main danger goes counter to the interests of the revolution and must be characterized as reactionary.

The development of anti-Communist and anti-Leninist sentiments among the Socialist party rank and file can best be fought by revolutionists showing in practice that they defend the democratic rights of the masses, and are battling to extend them to the barracks, the factories, unions, and any popular committees; that they are fighting to unite the working class and its political organizations around a program that genuinely responds to their needs and aspirations. Among other things, this involves exposing the demagogy of the Stalinists and combating their campaign of slander against the Socialist party. It also includes unflinching criticism of the SP leadership's links to the AFM and popular-frontist orientation, which is a fundamental obstacle to the establishment of a workers and peasants government.

8. The Road to Workers Power and the Role of the Constituent Assembly

The revolutionary process has not reached the point where clear forms of workers power have emerged. What has appeared is sporadic and scattered mass initiatives, forms of workers control, and embryonic factory committees. These developments can point the way toward dual power.

Progress along this road hinges on a correct political course. The fundamental task is to bring the workers to break from subordination to the Armed Forces Movement and to assert their right to put a workers and peasants government in power.

This fight at the present time centers on the sovereignty of the Constituent Assembly, in which the workers parties have a

substantial absolute majority and which is the only national body thus far elected by the populace. This is counterposed to the sovereignty of the unelected military hierarchy which constitutes the present government. Closely linked to this is the crucial struggle for democratic rights and democratic control in the armed forces. The various "direct democracy" schemas floated by the demagogues of the AFM are intended to divert the workers from insisting on the concrete expression of popular sovereignty through the Constituent Assembly; that is, by establishing a workers and peasants government. The AFM aims to keep the workers captives of the various popular-frontist provisional governments in which the CP and SP vie for portfolios. In

the same way, the alleged "democratization" of the AFM, and the setting up of "revolutionary councils" under AFM tutelage, are designed to divert the ranks of the army from demanding their democratic right to organize independently of the AFM and to engage in political activity.

The ultraleftist schemas of "revolutionary councils" projected in *opposition* to the Constituent Assembly play into the hands of the military demagogues. This line of the centrist anarchist-type groups of calling on a bourgeois regime to abolish the only existing nationally elected body with political representation of the working masses in the name of phantom "soviets" and in return for vague promises from demagogic military officers amounts to criminal confusionism if not outright betrayal of the working class.

The capitulation of the anarcho-centrists to bourgeois military "saviors" is also expressed in their demand that the regime use its troops to back groups in the colonies that they consider to be the most "progressive" of those vying for power. This demand is helping the imperialist regime to roll back the sentiment among the masses for bringing all the troops home from the colonies. It thus plays a reactionary role. It also promotes the AFM's policy of restoring the armed forces as an effective instrument of repression.

The factory councils that appeared in the period following the fall of the Caetano dictatorship were a response to the need for an economic organization representing all the workers in an enterprise, a special need created by the fragmentation of the economic organizations of the workers under the Salazarist regime. These bodies have generally remained within the trade-union framework. They have not functioned as soviets. They have not taken political initiatives; they have not assumed control over industrial concentrations; they have not served as arenas of general political debate or as organizing centers of united-front action by the working class; they have not drawn into struggle the most oppressed layers of the masses; they are not seen by the workers as a center of power parallel to or competing with the government. The existing neighborhood committees represent even less a nucleus of workers councils that could lead to workers power.

The most advanced revolutionary-democratic forms of organization that have yet appeared in Portugal are the assemblies and committees of soldiers and sailors that have sprung up in various units at certain times. However, these have not become standing committees on any substantial scale except in the navy, which is not the politically decisive branch of the armed forces.

Parallel with its mounting attack on

freedom of the press and on the Constituent Assembly in the name of "direct democracy" and the "revolutionary process," the AFM has become less and less regarded by the masses of workers and peasants as offering hope for a way out of their difficulties. This decline in the prestige of the military is most marked among the peasantry, since only a revolutionary agrarian policy can begin to solve the problems facing the poor peasants in Portugal. The technical level of agriculture needs to be raised, landlordism abolished in the South, and government-subsidized aid projects established for the poor peasants in the North.

In the South, the agricultural proletariat and poor peasants have been able to profit from the paralysis of the bourgeois repressive forces to seize land and greatly improve their living standard. As a result, they have become strong supporters of the new regime. However, this process can soon run up against severe limitations and even be transformed into its opposite under a bourgeois government. State aid is necessary to effectively reorganize the extensive form of agriculture practiced in this area. Unless the land occupations are integrated into an overall socialist policy for agriculture, the actions of this militant but small layer of rural workers can serve to frighten the far larger stratum of smallholders in the North who fear that a "Communist" government would take away their land and livestock as well as subject them to bureaucratic controls and high taxes.

The failure of the AFM government in the countryside provides an index of its conservative nature. On the one hand, the continuing backwardness of agriculture has meant a continual rise in food prices for the urban workers. On the other hand, the failure to offer any hope of improvement in the lot of the peasants has turned this stratum toward reactionary "saviors." The recent "independence" demonstrations in the Azores are a clear example of this.

The deceit in the AFM demagoguery about "direct democracy" is shown perhaps most clearly by the reactionary opposition of the military government to struggles for democratic rights in the high schools, an opposition reaffirmed in the June 21 policy statement of the Conselho da Revolução (Council of the Revolution). Massive struggles for democratic rights by high-school students have shown this section of the population to be one of the most militant and most highly politicized in the country, and one of the least influenced by the military and the reformists. The June 21 statement points to a new attack by the military on this mass movement, which is struggling for real direct democracy and not "participation" under the rod of military tutors.

Thus, there are six axes of the revolution-

ary process in Portugal at the present stage.

1. *The defense of the economic gains of the workers and other layers of the masses, and the fight for the economic aspirations awakened by the fall of the Salazarist regime.*

2. *The struggle for immediate withdrawal of all troops from the colonies.*

3. *The struggle for democratic rights of the ranks of the armed forces.*

4. *The struggle for democratic rights and democratic decision-making in every area of social life.*

5. *The struggle for effective workers organizations.*

The Portuguese workers are still at an early stage of organization. The embryonic factory committees and nuclei of industrial unions that have developed, although they show certain advanced features, are still not adequate on a national scale to effectively defend the elementary interests of the workers. In this situation, propaganda and agitation for industrial unions, a united democratic union structure, and the transformation of the embryonic factory committees into action committees that can mobilize and represent the workers and poor masses in the industrial centers combine closely with other revolutionary tasks and form an essential component of a concrete revolutionary answer to the concerns of the masses of workers.

The fight for workers control in the present conditions also fits in with these tasks, and the workers have already asserted control in many instances to protect their specific interests, in the face of government assaults, employer sabotage, and mounting unemployment and inflation. Workers control is necessary to obtain the economic information and organization necessary to defend jobs, to prevent the flight of capital, to fight inflation, and to administer a sliding scale of wages and hours. However, workers control cannot serve its purpose unless the workers make clear that they do not accept any responsibility for the functioning of the economy until they have real political power over it.

Because of the demagoguery of the military regime and the Communist party—demagoguery that has been reinforced by the anarchist predilections of the left-centrist groups—the danger is that a façade of "workers control" may be used by the government to induce the workers to accept austerity. If such a tactic is successful, it will result in profound demobilization and demoralization of the working class.

An example of how the government and the reformists have used the theme of "workers control" for demagogic purposes was provided by the closing of the newspaper *República*. In this test case, a brazen attack on freedom of the press and the right of expression of the largest party in the working class was justified by claiming

that a small group of Stalinist-influenced printing workers had the right to impose political censorship over a daily paper disliked by the government and the Communist party.

The greatest danger to the organization of the workers on the economic level is the attempt by the military regime and its Stalinist supporters to impose the tutelage of the bourgeois state over the unions. The so-called Trade Union Unity Law, imposing Intersindical as the only legal national federation, was precisely an attempt by the military junta and the Communist party to subordinate the unions to the bourgeois state, to convert the unions into a transmission belt for the policy of the bourgeois government in the working class.

6. The struggle for a workers and peasants government.

On the political level, the workers in their great majority look for leadership from three sources: the Socialist party, the Communist party, and Intersindical, the trade-union federation. The Socialist party has the largest following and is the most attractive at the moment to the majority of the working class. The Communist party and Intersindical are the strongest organizations of the working class and are looked to for leadership in action such as the resistance to the coup attempts in September 1974 and March 1975. At present no alternative to these mass organizations has credibility among large layers of workers. Nor can any alternative develop except as the masses learn in practice the limitations of the leadership offered by these organizations.

The only national politically representative body chosen by the workers and the masses in Portugal is the Constituent Assembly, in which the workers parties hold an absolute majority. The fight for a workers and peasants government cannot be waged without defending popular sovereignty and democracy, and concretely, without defending the Constituent Assembly against attempts by the Communist party, the military junta, and the SP leaders to undermine its authority and limit or destroy its sovereignty.

The struggle for a workers and peasants government focuses at present on the Constituent Assembly. The sharpest issues are defense of the Constituent Assembly, the demand that the Constituent Assembly represent the interests of the toiling masses who elected it, and repudiation by the workers parties of the Pact-Program, which codified their capitulation to the military junta. By signing this agreement with the military regime, the leaders of the mass workers parties betrayed their responsibility to represent the workers who support them.

In the Constituent Assembly, the Socialist party stands in the most contradictory

position, since it claims to represent the majority of workers as well as to have been mandated by the majority of the population. Moreover, the leaders of the Socialist party came into conflict with the military government ostensibly in defense of popular sovereignty and the democratic rights of the masses. But they continue to abide by the decrees of the military rulers. The Socialist party leaders are also less able to control their following and more dependent on their electoral popularity than their CP counterparts.

Incipient organs of workers power will arise out of united mass struggles of the working class, as they have in every previous revolutionary upsurge. In Portugal, the way cannot be cleared for such struggles without beginning by contesting the self-assumed right of the military government to rule. Acceptance of this pretension is not only the strongest force in maintaining subordination of the workers to a bourgeois leadership and the biggest impediment to their organization; it is also the main obstacle to the mass working-class organizations engaging in united-front actions.

Concretely, defending the sovereignty of the Constituent Assembly against the military government involves calling upon the Communist and Socialist parties, as the representatives of the overwhelming majority of the Portuguese workers and the majority of the Portuguese people, to establish a new government by exercising their majority in the Constituent Assembly

and appealing to the masses and the rank and file of the armed forces to mobilize in support of it. These are also the main political forces in Intersindical, which should remain independent of any government, even a workers and peasants government, as the direct defender of the economic interests of the workers.

Making this demand on the two mass parties of the working class is an essential part of the process of advancing a socialist governmental alternative to the military regime and exposing the incapacity of these parties to provide such an alternative.

As the disillusionment of the masses with the military regime deepens, and the economic crisis grows worse, the threat of a reactionary coup will become increasingly grave. At the same time, the AFM will lose its capacity and its desire to resist a rightist onslaught. Since its power is based specifically on the bourgeois army, it views arming the masses as a deadly threat. Furthermore, as the regime becomes more and more discredited, the masses will become increasingly reluctant to mobilize under its auspices, since this would continue to subordinate them to a regime over which they have no control, and which seems less and less inclined to respond to their needs and interests.

Thus, propaganda and agitation for mobilizing and arming the masses against the rightist hangmen can only be carried out successfully in combination with the struggle for a workers and peasants government.

9. Tasks of the Portuguese Trotskyists

Under the conditions of Salazarist repression, the Trotskyists were unable to carry out regular and thorough political discussion involving the entire organization. Likewise, they were unable to participate, except in a very limited way, in the life of the world Trotskyist movement. Among other things, this made it difficult to build a politically homogeneous organization on a national scale and to resolve tactical and incipient political differences without splits. Since April 1974, however, this tendency has been, to some extent at least, reversed.

Nonetheless, two separate Trotskyist groups still exist. The Liga Comunista Internacionalista (LCI—Internationalist Communist League) was recognized at the February 1974 world congress as a sympathizing group of the Fourth International. The existence of the other organization, the Grupo Marxista Revolucionário (Revolutionary Marxist Group), now the Partido Revolucionário dos Trabalhadores (Revolutionary Workers party), became known to

the Fourth International only in the summer of 1974. These two groupings, of a similar size, have concentrated their activity in different arenas and are now complementary in certain respects. Their unification on a principled basis would represent a qualitative advance for Portuguese Trotskyism.

Both Trotskyist groups consist primarily of young people recruited in the student milieu. The PRT has many high-school activists. The LCI has a larger proportion of older activists with experience in the universities and in political campaigns. Both groups have begun work in the factories. In this the LCI has more experience. But neither organization yet has a substantial foothold in the workers movement. Under these conditions, the Portuguese Trotskyists face the following tasks.

1. To engage in common discussion to develop a rounded program for the Portuguese revolution and for building a mass Trotskyist party in Portugal.

2. To integrate themselves into the political life of the Fourth International and participate in its discussions.

3. To regularize and expand their propaganda work, in particular by publishing an attractive regular paper and assuring the translation and publication of Trotsky's works.

4. To demonstrate the practical applicability of Trotskyist ideas and principles in the broad struggles against exploitation and oppression.

The common program of the Portuguese Trotskyists should include the following points:

1. Mobilizing a broad movement to demand immediate, unconditional withdrawal of all Portuguese troops from the colonies.

2. Defense of the right of all members of the armed forces to discuss all political ideas and to organize politically on an equal basis in the barracks and on military installations. Full democracy within the armed forces, including the right to elect officers and discuss all orders that have a political significance. Defense of the right of military personnel to participate fully in the political life of the country without any restrictions. Mobilizing a broad defense for any military personnel victimized for political reasons.

3. Presenting a plan for a radical agrarian reform suited to Portuguese conditions. Since the great majority of the one-third of the Portuguese population engaged in agriculture are smallholders, this requires a program of state support for individual peasants, as well as the promotion of state-assisted cooperatives and state farms in the area of extensive farming. For the area where the rural proletariat predominates, it requires also a program for the farm workers unions. The great unevenness in the conditions of smallholding peasants should also be taken into account.

4. Offering timely immediate economic demands and democratic and transitional slogans to meet the needs of oppressed layers of the population, such as women and youth in particular.

5. Rallying the broadest possible front for the defense and extension of democratic rights. The political rights of most of the workers organizations in Portugal have come under attack at various times since April 25, 1974, including the rights of each of the mass reformist parties. Yet the principle of solidarity of the entire workers movement against such attacks is far from established. Furthermore, even bourgeois and petty-bourgeois political forces and parties have contradictions on this question that can be exploited to serve the fundamental interests of the workers movement. For example, some elements in the bourgeois PPD protested against the police attack on pro-MPLA demonstrators in August 1974 more strongly than did the CP. While every major political party in Portugal claims to support democracy, only the revolutionists are capable of consistently defending and extending democratic rights.

6. Giving impetus to workers control to defend the interests of the workers against layoffs, the speedup, and attempts by the capitalists to use their economic power to sabotage the economy and block the advance of the proletariat toward taking power. Workers control is an extension of democratic rights to the factory and is necessary in the present stage to defend the democratic rights of the workers in the society as a whole against capitalist reaction. However, it can only play this role if it serves the interests of the working class as a whole and is subordinated to a general perspective of developing workers democracy. Both the attempts by the government and the Communist party to make the workers work harder and the attempts of relatively small ultraleft groups to override the opinions of the majority of workers with minority initiatives and demagogic cam-

paigns do not advance but retard the development of genuine workers control.

7. Winning the political independence of the working class from the AFM and any other bonapartist leaderships that may arise. This involves calling on the mass workers organizations to genuinely represent the interests of the workers and break from all forms of collaboration with the bourgeoisie, including the bourgeois military government in all its aspects, as a way of showing the workers in practice the limitations of their reformist leaderships. This includes calling on the mass workers parties to break the Pact-Program and establish a workers and peasants government.

8. Advancing the unity in action of the working class by pushing the demand for a united front of all organizations that claim to represent the workers in defense of the gains that have been made and against any offensive by bourgeois forces that threatens the proletariat as a whole. This includes the appropriate measures to arm the proletariat to defend its gains.

9. Advancing the independent organization of the working class so that the proletariat can meet the tasks of the class struggle in this period of crisis and win in a direct confrontation with the bourgeoisie. This involves pushing for broader and broader forms of workers organizations, industrial unions, a united and democratic trade-union structure, action committees and democratic factory committees that can unify and mobilize the broad masses of the workers in the industrial zones and draw in other exploited and oppressed layers, and finally regional and national congresses of workers organizations that can adopt general political policies and lead the working masses in taking decisive initiatives. The line of development is toward establishment of a workers and peasants government and the organization of soviets as the basis of a workers state. □

The Portuguese Revolution and the New Problems That Face the Fourth International

Statement by the Leninist Trotskyist Faction

The following statement was adopted unanimously by the Steering Committee of the Leninist Trotskyist Faction at a meeting held August 31, 1975.

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The Portuguese Revolution and the Fourth International

The political resolution submitted by the Leninist Trotskyist Faction to the Fourth Congress Since Reunification (Tenth World Congress) called special attention to the changing pattern of the world revolution. Once again, the leading role of the working class is coming to the fore, including in the imperialist centers, providing new opportunities for the Fourth International. The opening of the proletarian revolution in Portugal following the coup against the Salazarist regime in April 1974 has confirmed this trend and deepened it. A prerevolutionary situation of unusual duration has developed in Portugal. It is another indication that the socialist revolution is knocking on the door in Francoist Spain and that we can expect further upsurges of the working class in other countries of Europe in the period ahead.

All the major class forces and political tendencies on a world scale have a stake in the Portuguese events. For the imperialist bourgeoisies Portugal is a test of the relationship of class forces, of relations among themselves and a test of the policy of détente with Moscow. All the currents in the world workers movement, including Moscow, Peking, Havana, and the Social Democracy, on down to the smallest groups, as well as the revolutionary socialists of the world Trotskyist movement, are put to the test by the Portuguese revolution.

At the beginning of the upsurge, neither the Stalinists, the Social Democrats nor a hardened union bureaucracy held the kind of dominant position that they do, for example, in Britain, France or Italy. Even today, these forces have not had time to consolidate themselves to the extent they have in other Western European countries, and a correct course by a nucleus of revolutionary cadres could result in their rapid growth. In this respect it is important that two organized groups of Trotskyists exist in Portugal, who, while they are young and inexperienced, look to the Fourth International for aid and collaboration. Applying the method outlined in the Transitional Program in a timely and audacious way, these forces could quickly make significant progress toward the construction of a mass Leninist party in Portugal.

Another Test of the Line of the International Majority Tendency

The events in Portugal have provided a new test of the basic positions advanced in the now seven-year-old debate within the Fourth International, between the currents that have become the Leninist Trotskyist Faction (LTF) and the International Majority Tendency (IMT).

While the polemic on Portugal has barely begun, it is possible to draw an initial balance sheet on the public positions taken in the heat of the rapidly moving events of the past few months by sections and sympathizing groups whose leaderships support the IMT. It is this test of the class struggle, above all in a revolution, that most clearly reveals the meaning of the documents adopted by any tendency.

United Secretariat members who support the LTF held open the possibility that a common position on Portugal could be arrived at, which would have signified a lessening of the differences in the light of the new upsurge of the class struggle. However, at the May 1975 meeting of the United Secretariat it became clear that this was not possible.

Sharp political differences emerged publicly following the takeover of República from its Socialist party editors. Was Tun, Rouge, Red Weekly, La Gauche, and other papers reflecting the views of sections in which the majority of the leadership supports the IMT, portrayed this attack on the democratic rights of the largest workers party in Portugal as an example of the operation of "workers control."

During the upsurge following the March 11 coup attempt, the press reflecting the views of the IMT projected a so-called strategy of building dual power. In effect this was counterposed to a strategy of building a Leninist party by fighting around the key immediate, democratic and transitional demands flowing from the class struggle through which the incipient formations of workers committees could become real struggle organs of the class, uniting wider and wider sections of the oppressed and exploited. The strategy of building dual power was counterposed to defense of the Constituent Assembly against the MFA's attempts to curtail it with the aid of the SP and CP. The Constituent Assembly was seen as the main obstacle to building dual power.

The IMT leaders confused the present stage -- which remains one of winning the masses away from their Social Democratic and Stalinist misleaders and from these reformists' policy of class collaborationism with the bourgeois MFA -- with the stage of taking power. Propagandizing for soviets became a substitute for the struggle for independent working class political action as the only road to building the revolutionary party and the independent power of the class.

The IMT press ridiculed the defense of freedom of the press, under attack from the capitalist government and its Stalinist henchmen, as defense of "bourgeois democracy" against "workers democracy." Thus the IMT leaders took a position contrary to the long-standing Marxist principle concerning the relation between the fight to defend and extend democratic rights under capitalism, and mobilizing the masses to win a socialist revolution.

The democratic tasks of the revolution were downgraded. Leaders of the IMT on the United Secretariat adamantly refused to call for the unconditional removal of Portuguese troops from Angola. The importance of the land question and related problems of the small farmers were underestimated. The large mobilizations the SP leadership was forced to call in defense of their democratic rights were opposed by the IMT press.

Rouge not only opposed defending the Constituent Assembly against the attempts by the MFA and the Stalinists to scuttle it, it labelled as "parliamentary cretinism" the correct position of calling for an SP-CP government based on the majority that these two workers parties received in the vote for the Constituent Assembly. The call for a CP-SP government concretely posed the need for a workers and peasants government as against any form of coalitionism with the bourgeoisie -- either with bourgeois parties or with the bourgeois MFA -- in terms the masses of Socialist and Communist workers could understand. The call was designed to expose the class collaborationism of the SP and CP leaders.

The ultraleft course of the IMT resulted in deeply opportunist as well as sectarian and adventurist positions. The imperialist nature of the MFA-dominated government was obscured, as indicated by the IMT refusal to call for the unconditional withdrawal of Portuguese troops from Africa, and in the interview Alain Krivine held with MFA Admiral Rosa Coutinho. Sections of the IMT leadership obscured the bourgeois nature of the MFA, as for example the adulatory articles about Carvalho and other MFA officers that appeared in Was Tun. The common position held by Rouge, Inprecor, La Gauche, and Was Tun was that in any case the MFA was so weak that its class character was not a factor.

Then, when the MFA announced its "people's power"

plan, this was hailed in the IMT press as MFA backing for the rapid construction of soviets, organs of workers power. After this plan was announced, the IMT press grossly exaggerated the development of the MFA-sponsored "Peoples Assemblies." The main danger, IMT spokespeople explained, was not the MFA, but the suppression of the burgeoning soviets by world imperialism through an SP-PPD government based on the Constituent Assembly.

The IMT reflected the ultraleft positions of the left centrist groups in Portugal and elsewhere and the pressures of the milieus who support them in Europe.

The positions of the left centrist groups in turn echoed those of the Portuguese Stalinists. The IMT saw a "left turn" on the part of the Stalinists when they combined Third Period sectarianism and adventurism with deepening their popular-front line in relation to the bourgeois MFA, and launched their campaign against the SP and the Constituent Assembly.

Objectively, these positions led the IMT press into providing left cover for the popular-front regime and the MFA. During the crucial days in mid-July 1975, the IMT supported and took part in the July 16 demonstration demanding the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly and "MFA-People's power," and opposed the mobilizations of the Socialist party workers demanding the return of República. In doing so, the IMT, as the Trotskyist component of the ultraleft bloc, acted objectively as a left critic loyal to the MFA regime. IMT supporters acted as if they believed in a course of not only "minority action" but minority revolution led by the Portuguese "new mass vanguard" including a section of the MFA, and imposed on the majority of workers mistakenly following the SP leadership.

Origin of the Crisis in the Fourth International

The IMT positions on Portugal deepen the course that began with the turn the majority codified at the Third Congress Since Reunification (Ninth World Congress). The majority at that congress elevated guerrilla warfare from a tactic to a strategy for an entire continent for an extended period of time. This shifted the majority of the Fourth International from the Leninist strategy of party building to a disorienting ultraleft axis. Soon after the congress, sections whose leaderships supported this turn, began to show evidence of ultraleft positions on a number of questions.

The fight for democratic rights was denigrated. "Exemplary" actions, including "minority violence" by small groups were held up for emulation. An ultraleft view of the Social Democracy became current in Britain, France, Germany and Sweden. A narrow, workerist view of broad social struggles that raised democratic demands, such as the women's movement and struggles of oppressed nationalities,

led to sectarian errors. Strategy and tactics tended more and more to revolve around the concerns of the "far left," that is, the petty-bourgeois ultraleft, rather than the logic of the class struggle and the needs of the masses.

The turn of the Ninth World Congress represented an adaptation to the ultraleftism of many of the petty-bourgeois currents in the youth radicalization in Europe and to Guevarism in Latin America.

The technique of demonstrations, forms of organization, became more important than winning the majority of the working masses politically by applying the method of the Transitional Program. The party would be built basically outside the working class.

At the Ninth World Congress itself the political adaptation of the majority leaders was reflected in the suppression of the fact that the PRT (Combatiente) group, recognized as the Argentine section of the Fourth International, held positions completely alien to the program of Trotskyism.

The decisive test of the guerrilla warfare strategy came in Bolivia and Argentina. The minority of the IEC submitted a document to the December 1972 IEC meeting that drew the lessons of the failure of the turn of the Ninth World Congress, which, if adopted, would have rectified the error and put the Fourth International back on a correct political axis. The majority, however, failed to correct its course in spite of the test of experience. It was this failure by the majority that necessitated the formation of the Leninist Trotskyist Tendency.

Further, the majority submitted their European perspectives document to that IEC meeting. The IMT European document generalized and codified the turn of the Ninth World Congress as it was being applied to Europe, that is, it extended the basic political errors to Europe. The IMT European document projected orienting toward the concerns of the petty bourgeois ultraleft groupings, called the "new mass vanguard." The working class would be won by spectacular "initiatives in action" by such forces under Trotskyist leadership. The strategic line of march outlined by the Transitional Program to build a Leninist party and win the leadership of the majority of the toiling masses politically was lost sight of and its place was taken by a hollow, maximalist recital of the need for workers control and soviets. The "tactic" of building a mass Leninist party rapidly in the heat of coming revolutionary events was declared inappropriate. Instead the strategy of winning hegemony in the "new mass vanguard" in order to utilize it as an "adequate instrument" to "recompose" the workers movement was projected as the "tactic for the period."

At the Fourth Congress Since Reunification (Tenth World Congress) the line of the European document was general-

ized to a strategy for the world. In addition, the majority adopted a document on armed struggle that reaffirmed the political line on which the guerrilla turn of the Ninth World Congress rested and revised the Trotskyist program on the question of arming the proletariat, which they considered to be inadequate.

Before and after the Tenth World Congress, sectors of the IMT attempted to end the debate by driving toward a split in the Fourth International. Splits were organized in a number of countries. Faced with this situation, the Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency decided to convert itself to a faction to give battle to the splitters and to deepen the political debate.

Following the 1974 World Congress the IMT singled out the Argentine PST for special attack. Attempting to drive the PST out of the international, the majority leaders launched a tendentious public campaign against the Argentine sympathizing organization. The immediate causes of this attack were the failure of the majority's guerrilla warfare line in Latin America, the size and influence of the PST, the splitting and disintegration of any forces in Argentina that looked to the IMT, coupled with the inability of the IMT to correct its line, and the tenuousness of their 50.5 percent majority on the decisive Argentine balance sheet. Thus the IMT attempted to discredit the PST whose political course, based on the positions held in common in the international up until the Ninth World Congress, represented an alternative to the famous "turn."

In the course of the public debate on Argentine Trotskyism initiated by the IMT, the majority went further than ever before in elaborating an ultraleft revision of the Marxist view of the relation between bourgeois democracy and workers democracy, and of the relation between the fight for democratic rights and the socialist revolution.

This was soon to lead to a major political error by the IMT in Portugal.

Before the recent events in Portugal, the application of the turn of the Ninth World Congress to Europe had resulted in sectarian positions, as for example in relation to the Social Democracy, and to movements like women's liberation; ultraleft adventures such as the June 21, 1973, action in Paris; and opportunist adaptations such as the vacillating support the French section gave the Union of the Left. But it remained to be seen how and if the IMT comrades would apply this line under the conditions of revolutionary upsurge. The initial balance sheet of the IMT position as reflected in the class struggle in Portugal shows that the IMT has gone further along its ultraleft course, leading to serious sectarian, adventurist and opportunist errors.

The Crisis in the Fourth International Deepens

The differences that have emerged in the Fourth International over Portugal threaten the unity of the international. This is because the disagreements are over political questions, questions of what to do next, in a revolution. In the rapidly moving events, political positions were taken in the press of the sections and sympathizing groups of the international that would, if transferred to Portugal, have resulted in supporting different and sometimes conflicting street mobilizations. Such disagreements are different from theoretical or even programmatic ones, which can often be discussed at leisure. They are different from organizational conflicts, which, while they can be sharp, can also be consciously subordinated by a responsible leadership to the task of obtaining political clarity.

The differences over Portugal have inevitably taken a public character. Every political organization had to take positions on the issues as they appeared in the class struggle in Portugal. The press of every party in the world considering itself to be Trotskyist was compelled to state where it stood, which they did to the best of their abilities in light of their previous training and understanding. Thus the differences became expressed in public as alternative lines.

The tensions arising from the political differences over Portugal place special responsibility on leaders of both sides to organize the necessary debate on this question, avoiding secondary questions and polemical excesses, especially in the public debate.

The Portuguese Events and Building the Fourth International

New events of the magnitude of those in Portugal are bound to cut across old factional lines. Each member of the Fourth International must make up his or her mind on the new questions. All those in the world who consider themselves to be Trotskyists, including forces presently outside the Fourth International, are drawn into the debate. Such events accelerate developments towards regroupments that can help build the international.

The pressures on Healy's rump "International Committee" will be intensified by the impact of these events.

The process that began in May 1973 with the request of the Organizing Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International (OCRFI) to participate in the discussions within the Fourth International, is being accelerated by the Portuguese events. The OCRFI, having broken with Healy, having failed to build an alternative to the Fourth International, found itself attracted to the discussion occurring in the Fourth International. In contrast to Healy, who has intensified his irresponsible charges against the Fourth International and its leaders, the OCRFI appears to be rejecting any dead-end factional stance. It wants to discuss its differences with the United Secretariat, including its stand on

the Portuguese revolution.

The high political level of the debate in the Fourth International is a powerful attractive force. Our ability to carry out the current discussion on Portugal, even publicly in the pages of our press, with a full hearing for all points of view throughout the international, will provide an example for the entire workers movement and draw new forces to the Fourth International.

The Course of the Leninist Trotskyist Faction

1. The immediate goal of the LTF is to advance political clarity on the issues raised by the Portuguese revolution. To that end, the LTF adds the document, "Key Issues in the Portuguese Revolution," to the list of documents defining the programmatic basis of the LTF and submits it for international discussion. The Leninist Trotskyist Faction is confident that through a thorough discussion a majority of the cadres of the Fourth International will take a correct position on Portugal.

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

3. The LTF is opposed to any dead-end factional stance toward any of the forces that are moving in the direction of the Fourth International, including forces emerging from the breakup of the Healyite "International Committee." Instead, the United Secretariat should act objectively, taking steps to encourage these new forces to move closer toward the Fourth International.

4. The LTF proposes to subordinate the theoretical, programmatic and historical questions in dispute to the task of winning clarity on the political issues of the Portuguese revolution. All of these questions can continue to be discussed in a more leisurely fashion in the internal bulletin.

5. The LTF reaffirms its agreement with the position adopted by the last world congress that in those countries where two or more groups exist because of splits or other

reasons, the united moral authority of the Fourth International should be brought to bear for the earliest possible fusion of the groups on a principled basis.

6. The LTF reiterates, from the August 1973 statement of the Leninist Trotskyist Faction, that "faction discipline

does not transcend the discipline of sections or sympathizing organizations of the Fourth International," and that "members of the faction must conduct themselves in a completely loyal way in sections of the Fourth International or sympathizing organizations, maintaining their activities and financial obligations in an exemplary way."

August 31, 1975

The Issues in the Portuguese Revolution

by Barry Sheppard

Report adopted August 20, 1975, by the
Twenty-Seventh National Convention
of the Socialist Workers Party

The Portuguese revolution is at present the center of world politics. The issues raised by the class struggle in that country have put to the test every current claiming to be socialist and to represent the working class. Deep political differences have emerged as the different political tendencies in Portugal and internationally have had to take positions on the rapidly moving events in that country.

At our last convention, held in December 1973, the Socialist Workers party adopted the general line of the resolution, "The World Political Situation and the Immediate Tasks of the Fourth International." A change that had taken place in the basic pattern of world revolution was noted in that resolution. The struggles of workers in the urban centers were more and more coming to the fore. Connected with this was the intensification of the class struggles in the imperialist countries, the rise of workers struggles in Europe being especially important. The upsurge of the masses in Portugal is part of, and a deepening of, this process. Thus the political debates and test of political programs going on today in Portugal, while immediately and directly relevant to the course of the Portuguese revolution, have a wider meaning. The lessons of the Portuguese revolution, both positive and negative, are key to forging a genuinely revolutionary cadre that can effectively take its leadership responsibilities in the coming class battles in the other centers of capitalist power, as well as in Portugal.

So important are these developments, so great is the confusion among broad sectors of the left, and so weighty are the lessons of Portugal to building the Socialist Workers party and the Fourth International, that the Political Committee decided this report should not discuss the world situation as a whole, although there are many major developments, but will concentrate on the issues involved in the Portuguese revolution.

The Military Coup

We will begin with an overview of the events themselves.

The April 25, 1974, military coup that toppled the Caetano dictatorship, ending nearly 50 years of Salazarist rule, was the result of a conclusion reached by the imperialist ruling class of Portugal that it could no longer govern its colonial empire, or dominate its own working class, primarily through Salazarist repression.

After years of attempting to maintain direct rule over its African colonies, including waging a genocidal war against the African nationalist movements, the Portuguese imperialists came dead up against the fact that they did not have the resources to sustain a large-scale military

occupation of the colonies, without undermining the basis of capitalist stability in Portugal itself. While their military forces in Africa had not been decisively defeated, neither had they succeeded in crushing the colonial movements. Like other, and more powerful, imperialist powers before them, the Portuguese finance capitalists were forced to recognize that a change in policy was needed. They became convinced that in order to better safeguard their long-term imperialist interests in Africa, they would have to shift to more indirect neocolonial forms of imperialist domination, and this would require making important concessions to the nationalist movements.

At home, they sought to modernize the economy. The economic interests of a swollen layer of petty backward capitalists and large landowners were bound up with the maintenance of the special repressive system of the Salazarist dictatorship, a system modeled on the corporatist structures of the fascist regimes of Hitler and Mussolini. The regime had rested on this structure for nearly half a century. There was no authoritative bourgeois party. These factors were big obstacles to those sectors of the ruling class who desired a change in policy. Another formidable obstacle was the existence of substantial repressive forces of the corporatist dictatorship. Another difficulty was the fact that the Portuguese imperialists had waited too long to shift to neocolonialism—the nationalist movements in the African colonies were deeply rooted, and with their long tradition of struggle, could not be co-opted cheaply.

Moreover, the colonial masses, after long years of enormous sacrifices and suffering, could not be demobilized by small concessions.

Thus Portuguese imperialism embarked upon a daring gamble. It moved to reorganize its forms of political and social control by violent means, by a military uprising against a layer of the old and entrenched state and political apparatus. It moved to disarm and neutralize a section of the ruling class itself by purging a considerable number of previously sacrosanct authorities. This not only disabled the police forces for a time, it was a violent shock to the habits of obedience, instilled in the masses by almost a half century of dictatorship.

The imperialists utilized a section of their state apparatus, the imperialist army, to overthrow the structures of the old regime, begin the process of conversion to neocolonial methods of rule in Africa, while preserving their domination through the Army, which now rose in prestige among the masses who identified it with their aspirations for democracy, for decent living and working conditions, and for an end to the hated colonial wars.

The sectors of the Portuguese ruling class who launched this move took into account certain favorable conditions. Although there was a rising radicalization among the workers and youth, a powerful, organized mass movement had not yet formed in Portugal. The army, while suffering losses, was still intact. The most favorable condition was the absence of a mass revolutionary Marxist party. The mass movement was dominated by small but dependable reformist forces. As it turned out, the assessment made by the Portuguese imperialists of the reliability of the reformist workers parties proved to be accurate. What the rulers miscalculated was the power and extent of mass upsurge that was to be touched off by the fall of Salazarism, which inspired hopes among the masses that they could finally gain their democratic rights to think, to discuss, to make their own decisions, and to struggle to change their economic and social conditions.

The Upsurge of the Masses

The sudden collapse of the old regime awakened the masses. It fell completely discredited. To a large extent, the capitalist class that ruled so long through this regime, and capitalist ideas, shared in its disgrace. In a vast ferment the masses began to express themselves for the first time in forty-eight years.

The workers in the factories and the poor masses in the neighborhoods organized spontaneously. Hated bosses and strikebreaking goons were purged. The masses participated in the dismantling of the PIDE, the hated secret police. Unused housing was seized. The workers asserted the right to hold meetings and organize assemblies in the plants. Democratic workers committees, elected by general assemblies of the workers, sprang up in most of the big plants. These committees helped overcome the craft-union fragmentation of the union structure imposed by the old corporatist setup.

As the radicalization deepened, landless peasants in the South began to seize the land of the latifundists, and agricultural workers began organizing unions and demanding equality with other workers. Every issue of the international radicalization suddenly emerged with a magnified impact, including the struggles of women, and high school and university students.

The workers began to utilize their new rights to strike to better their conditions. Through the workers committees, they began to encroach upon the prerogatives of capital and impose elements of workers control, especially in those industries that were nationalized. When democratic rights were threatened by the coup attempts of September 28, 1974 and March 11 of this year, the masses responded with mobilizations on a huge scale.

The bank workers, for example, right after the failure of the March 11 coup, exposed the way the big financial institutions had been financing the rightists, and mobilized to force the government to nationalize the banks. Thus they dealt Portuguese capitalism one of the hardest blows to its holdings that it has suffered in the process opened by the coup of April 25, 1974.

After the decades of dictatorial rule, the masses of Portugal have made it clear, through their actions, that they want complete democracy. They want to sweep away the vestiges of the old regime. They want the opposite of the complete totalitarianism they suffered—complete

democracy. They view democracy in a quite practical way, as an assurance of their right to struggle for a better standard of living and to form a society offering increasing opportunities and abundance. And they swiftly came to the conclusion that the correct name for what they wanted was *socialism*. They considered socialism to represent the opposite of totalitarianism. This was after decades of intensive anticommunist propaganda dinned into them by every available means by Salazarism. This fact alone refutes the arrogant statements of the MFA generals and their ultraleftist hangers-on that the masses of Portugal are too stupid and backward to know their own interests, but need the guidance of the generals to lead them.

By the tens of thousands, the masses began joining the unions and the Communist and Socialist parties. As the best known opposition group, the Communist party had initially the most prestige. But all the opposition groups, all the left parties and groups, no matter how small, were taken seriously by the masses and their ideas given a hearing. Anticommunism was discredited. Books on politics became best sellers. The ferment of revolutionary ideas spread, threatening to dissolve even the discipline of the armed forces, at that point the last prop of the capitalist order.

Constituent Assembly Elections

In the election for the Constituent Assembly in April of this year, every party, including the bourgeois parties, claimed to be for socialism. If they didn't they had no chance of getting a hearing at all. And the workers parties, the Socialist and Communist parties, and some smaller parties, received a majority of the votes. The Portuguese people voted in their majority for socialism and for the workers parties. This fact is continually obscured by the capitalist press. The *New York Times* scarcely prints an article on Portugal without including the paragraph that if you take the vote for the bourgeois PPD together with the SP vote, these "moderates" had a majority. And thus they imply that the Portuguese masses rejected a socialist and workers government by their votes for the Constituent Assembly. The reality is just the opposite. The SP's election campaign tried to go to the left of the Communist party's in some respects as it utilized themes of workers control, etc. While neither the CP nor the SP had or has any intention of utilizing their majority to establish a workers and peasants government, to mobilize the masses and begin the construction of socialism, that was the mandate they were given by the majority of the Portuguese people and the overwhelming majority of the working class.

This tremendous democratic thrust, leading to socialist conclusions, represented a big danger to the continuation of rule by the capitalist class. Containing, eventually wearing down, and demoralizing the masses, became the necessary policy of the ruling class. The instrument for carrying out this policy is the MFA, the Armed Forces Movement, with the support of the leaderships of the Communist and Socialist parties. The MFA especially counted on the Communist party to be their cops in the mass movement.

The Nature of the MFA

The Armed Forces Movement was the instrument the

imperialist bourgeoisie relied on to remove the Caetano regime and carry out the needed political reorganization. It was formed out of the officer military hierarchy of the imperialist army. It began as a movement among professional officers seeking to defend the status of graduates of the military academies against the influx of university graduates who were given commissions as part of the expansion of the armed forces required to fight the colonial wars.

The MFA is the political arm of the military hierarchy. In any such conspiratorial movement, there are various layers of officers and various degrees of commitment, with the lowest officers, who take the greatest risks, generally being the most radical in speech and the most determined in action. It attracted officers influenced by various political currents hostile to the Salazarist regime. In response to the logic and pressures of the struggle against the old dictatorship, as well as the pressure of the masses following the April 25 overthrow, there was a radicalization in the MFA, particularly in the lower echelons. This was reinforced by the struggle against the attempted right-wing coups in September and March.

In these cases, conservative elements in the armed forces, symbolized by Spínola, fearing that the democratic ferment was getting out of hand and that the process of reform was going too far, tried to force a retreat by violent means. If successful, this "restoration of order" would have meant a purge of important sections of the MFA regarded as unreliable by the conservatives. There was a split in the MFA. The masses mobilized to defend the military regime against Spínola in both cases, identifying the regime with their new-found democratic rights and the perspective of socialism. These coup attempts further compromised the already discredited capitalist class and shifted the balance of class forces in favor of the working masses. As a result, the process of radicalization accelerated at the lower levels of armed forces and the leading officers in the MFA found it necessary to adopt more "socialist" and "anti-imperialist" rhetoric, demagogically appealing to the masses.

But none of this means that the character of the MFA as a bourgeois political instrument has essentially changed. In the situation of the mass upsurge in Portugal, the army in fact was the only bourgeois instrument available that was credible to the masses. The objective of the MFA has continued to be to modernize and strengthen Portuguese capitalism—not to overturn it. It has simply found itself obliged to rely heavily on demagogy to persuade the Portuguese workers to help out capitalism in its hour of need. It is using socialist phrasemongering to put capitalist needs in a better light as a first step toward restoring the dominance of bourgeois ideology and of bourgeois law and order and repression.

What has enabled the MFA to maintain this course has been the policy of popular frontism, the policy of class collaborationism through coalitionism with the MFA, practiced by both the Communist and Socialist parties. This popular front policy represents the biggest immediate obstacle to the progress of the Portuguese revolution.

Since the April 25 coup, the MFA has been the real capitalist government of Portugal and its empire, using the various provisional cabinets as a means of associating the leaders of the mass reformist workers parties with its rule. During this time it has presided over and maintained a capitalist, imperialist system. It has consistently taken

the side of the bourgeoisie against the workers in economic conflicts. Its basic economic program is to make the working masses bear the brunt of the inflation and unemployment plaguing Portugal, as one of the weaker imperialist powers in the midst of the international capitalist economic crisis. The MFA calls on the workers to sacrifice for the benefit of capital, in the name of the "battle for production." This is the same program for dealing with the effects of the international economic crisis that is proposed by the Democrats and Republicans in this country, by the Wilson government in Britain, by every capitalist power big and little. The only difference is that the MFA uses socialist demagogy to try to get the workers to swallow this line.

A False Analogy

Comrades who have been to Portugal say that they saw a curious sight. Some ultraleft group had put up a series of portraits of its heroes—Marx, Lenin, Stalin, Mao, Fidel, Che and General Carvalho! This reflects one of the myths of the ultraleft, the myth—or perhaps more accurately—the hope, the hope that out of the MFA will come the equivalent of the Cuban July 26 movement that will lead the way to a workers revolution in Portugal.

But this analogy breaks down on all key levels. The MFA originated out of the bourgeois officer caste of an imperialist army. The July 26 movement was a movement of the radicalized petty bourgeoisie in a colonized country. On taking power, the July 26 movement, much to the shock of the Cuban bourgeoisie and the imperialists, actually carried out its radical democratic program, especially, thoroughgoing land reform. This land reform cut deep into the interests of the Cuban bourgeoisie and the holdings of the imperialists, and led to the opposition of both to the new government. In imperialist-exploited Cuba, heavily dependent on the single crop of sugar, the radical agrarian reform transformed the country economically.

Nothing comparable in its scope has developed in Portugal after over a year of MFA rule. The MFA has made only such concessions to the mass movement as were inescapable, if popular support were to be retained and its positions held against both the more conservative bourgeois elements and the more combative sections of the working class. Those nationalizations that have been carried out—and far less have been carried than have been talked about—have not cut into the essential power of the Portuguese imperialists, but rather are part of the process of modernization and political readjustment, although some capitalists have been hurt.

When the Cuban bourgeoisie threatened to block the land reform, the team around Castro mobilized the masses and armed them. The military rulers of Portugal have failed to do this even in the face of coup attempts against their own regime. It responded with vigorous countermeasures, while the MFA pledges fidelity to NATO. When the Cuban workers began mobilizing against their bosses, the Castro regime, after some hesitation took the side of the workers. Unlike the MFA, which seeks to put the burden of capitalist-caused inflation and unemployment on the workers, and which calls upon the workers to sacrifice for the bosses in the face of economic sabotage by the capitalists, the Castro regime moved to ever more radical

measures in face of bourgeois opposition, instituting economic planning, and establishing a monopoly of foreign trade. This process culminated in establishment of a workers state.

The contrasts go on and on. One big contrast was that the Cuban regime was popular, had the support of wider and wider sections of the toiling masses, as it carried out campaigns in their interests that resulted in improvements in their lives, not only through the steps mentioned already, but also through the literacy campaign, reduction of rent, bringing elementary health service to the people, etc., while the MFA has been growing increasingly unpopular as it sets itself up against the basic aspirations and needs of the masses.

The analogy with Cuba is false from start to finish. What is basically wrong with it is that the Castro-Guevara team was revolutionary, as it proved in practice, in spite of its weaknesses, while the MFA utilizes revolutionary rhetoric to camouflage and further capitalist objectives, as it has proved in practice.

A National Liberation Movement?

One example of the demagogy of the MFA is its utilization of bourgeois nationalism. Since the April 25 coup, the ruling military group has carried on a campaign designed to restore the hold of Portuguese nationalism, which had largely been discredited. In order to accomplish this, it has posed as a national liberation movement, borrowing the anti-imperialist themes of the rebel movements in the colonies. This has taken in not only the Portuguese Socialist and Communist parties, who both support this so-called national liberation movement, but also the ultraleft groups.

In reality Portugal is an imperialist country, dominated by Portuguese finance capital. It is one of the oldest of imperialisms. It directly ruled Angola, for example, for 500 years. The nationalism of imperialist nations like Portugal—no matter how it is cloaked in anti-imperialist rhetoric—is proimperialist through and through and reactionary through and through.

This national liberation demagogy of the MFA serves two functions. Most immediately, it has served to cover up the imperialist aims of Portuguese finance capital in Africa. With the support of the Portuguese Socialist and Communist parties, this demagogy has aided the MFA to maintain as much control as possible over the colonies and given the MFA valuable time to carry out the conversion to neocolonialist methods of rule. To accomplish this, the Portuguese imperialists want to gradually withdraw direct control from its economically most important colony, Angola, and maintain an imperialist economic foothold there.

Not only do the Socialist and Communist parties of Portugal and Europe support the continued presence of Portuguese imperialist troops in Angola, but the ultraleft groups, have by and large gone along with this in essence. The “socialist” and “anti-imperialist” MFA can only have the good of the Angolans at heart, you see. Sections of the European Trotskyist movement have gone along with this ploy too, I am sorry to report.

There is the spectacle of Alain Krivine, a leader of the Fourth International and of the French Revolutionary

Communist League, printing an interview without critical comment, with Admiral Rosa Coutinho of the MFA in the League newspaper *Rouge*. Many things can be said about this disgraceful interview. I will discuss only one aspect. Comrade Alain Krivine asks the good admiral, “Can the MFA remain neutral toward what is happening in its former colonies?” The question itself is a travesty of revolutionary principles. Krivine should have told the admiral that he should get the hell out of his “former colonies.” The admiral sympathizes with the question and explains to Krivine that the MFA is intervening as much as it can in the difficult situation. He says: “It is difficult to intervene, especially in Angola. But it is true that we need to exert international pressure on Zaire so that Angola can really be decolonized. We don’t want to have delivered it from white fascism only to see it fall into the hands of black fascism.”

Colonialism has been carried out under many guises, from saving the heathens for Christianity to educating them in the civilized ways of the West. Now we have the new socialist white man’s burden to protect the poor Angolans from black fascism.

This attitude was also reflected in the refusal of the majority of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International to call for the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Portugal from Angola.

The nationalist demagogy of the MFA has helped to carry out its neocolonialist policy. Its longer range purpose is to bolster Portuguese nationalism, a central ideological support to imperialist rule.

Another Demagogic Campaign

After the April 25 coup, the MFA promised that there would be elections to a Constituent Assembly. The promise of democracy was one of the reasons why the masses gave the MFA their support. But from the beginning, the MFA saw the Constituent Assembly as a threat to its rule. The bourgeoisie, lacking an authoritative party to openly defend its interests, preferred to rule through the military. The MFA delayed the elections. It got the approval from the political parties, including the main workers parties, that the role of the Constituent Assembly would be circumscribed, limited to writing a constitution, while real power would remain in the hands of the MFA. All the parties running in the election agreed to this formula beforehand, with the exception, to their credit, of some Maoist and left centrist groups and the Trotskyists of the Internationalist Communist League, the LCI. The results gave a majority to the two workers parties, the Socialists and the Communists, with the biggest vote going to the SP.

Right after the elections, the MFA, utilizing the Communist party, sought to further restrict the Constituent Assembly, to divide the working class, and to tighten up its rule. To this end it launched another demagogic campaign, counterposing the Constituent Assembly to what it called “direct democracy.” More on this ploy will be said later. The MFA moved to place itself even more above the political parties and launched a campaign against the democratic rights of the workers.

The role of the MFA as a bonapartist-type formation, which it was from the beginning, has become clearer. Trotsky explained that in situations such as have existed in Portugal after the April 25 coup, where the political

organizations of the bourgeoisie are weak, and so are those of the proletariat, with neither able to offer a road forward, the conditions are created for a government that is seemingly neutral, "patriotic," and above it all, not involved in the partisan strife. Such a government balances between the class forces, making concessions to both sides and cracking down at times on both one and the other while defending the property interests of the ruling class. This is what gives a regime of this sort its character of seeming to stand above the contending classes and acting as an arbiter between them. Such a bonapartist-type government is the MFA.

A bonapartist-type regime, however, is only seemingly above the conflict and itself becomes rent and divided by it, as we see today in Portugal. Thus it has the tendency to delegate more and more authority in fewer and fewer hands, as it feels the need for an arbiter over itself. We have seen this process in Portugal too. The end result of this process is the man on the white horse, the supreme arbiter and personal dictator who settles all disputes.

Such a government can last as long as, and until, one or the other of the basic class forces, the bourgeoisie or the proletariat, gathers enough strength and leadership to come out and rule in its own name. While a bonapartist government will utilize whatever demagoguery it finds necessary, including socialist demagoguery as is the case in Portugal today, and while it exacts a high toll from the bourgeoisie for its services and does not hesitate to run counter to the interests of certain sectors, including important ones, of the capitalist class, it nevertheless preserves bourgeois rule through the difficult period. That is its designated function. Trotsky compared the bonapartist regime born of acute social crises to an incubus fastened on the back of the bourgeoisie. It rubs its neck raw, demands tribute and privileges, but is a necessary evil for the time being.

The Stalinists

The role the MFA has been able to play would not have been possible without the outright support from the Stalinist leadership of the Portuguese Communist party. During the first phase of the new regime the CP played a crucial role in upholding the military government. Though a small party, on the order of 5,000 members, it was the only force not compromised with the old regime that had an effective apparatus. This apparatus became the mass apparatus of the new regime. The CP was the only current in the working class that acted like a mass party, even though it was small, taking up issues of concern to the masses. This helped it to move to the center of the stage with extraordinary speed, while other currents were trying to assess the situation, remained underground, or were concerned with sectarian preoccupations. The CP dominated the May 1 demonstrations after the coup and turned them into demonstrations of adulation for the military. It was this apparatus that enabled General Spínola to build up his populist image.

But the political influence of the Stalinists hinges on their ability to maintain at least a minimal working-class base and apparatus. Thus, both in the case of the September 28 and March 11 coup attempts, they were obliged to go along with mass initiatives and give the go-

ahead for mass mobilizations, which, while politically and organizationally limited, had revolutionary aspects.

Détente

Nonetheless, the fundamental aim of the Stalinists goes counter to the dynamic of the revolution. Since April 25, 1974, they have served as the labor lieutenants of the MFA in the full sense, as henchmen for the MFA in the mass movement. In return the MFA guaranteed their positions in the labor movement. In view of the mass upsurge in Portugal and the weakness of the Portuguese bourgeoisie, the CP prefers a military government with a populist facade, with which they have a privileged relation, to a parliamentary regime. Not only does the MFA regime help guarantee the CP's positions in the trade unions and elsewhere, a military regime under the present circumstances offers greater guarantees to American imperialism that mass mobilizations will be kept within limits that will not endanger the status quo on a world scale.

To the Stalinists, it seems to offer a way of carrying out necessary minimal reforms while maintaining firm control over the masses and preventing them from going too fast or too far, provoking intervention by Washington and endangering the détente, the basic line of Stalinist world policy. The Kremlin's goal is not a socialist Portugal but a stabilized Portugal in the bigger game of superpower détente.

The CP's role as labor policeman for the capitalist regime was illustrated early, in the postal workers strike last summer, when the Stalinists mobilized demonstrations to break the strike, denouncing the workers as fascists. They have opposed strikes, supported the MFA's austerity program, and helped the MFA put over the so-called "battle of production" as in the interests of the working people and socialism. They have utilized their influence in the workers committees to pervert workers control from workers encroaching upon the prerogatives of capital in the interests of the workers, to workers imposing discipline over themselves in the interests of the battle of production, that is, in the profit-preserving interests of the capitalist class.

The CP supported the so-called Trade Union Unity Law, under which there could be only a single labor federation, Intersindical, composed of the craft unions. This law froze CP domination in the federation against attempts by the Socialist party to gain influence in the union apparatus, perhaps by building a new federation, and is an obstacle to building industrial unions. The CP has called upon the capitalist government to intervene in union elections to preserve their positions. The CP utilized the Intersindical to push back the workers commissions. Thus the CP has supported the capitalist government in intervening in the unions and keeping them under a leadership that supports the MFA.

The CP has been used by the MFA as its cat's-paw in restricting the democratic rights of the workers in other ways. The results of the elections to the Constituent Assembly showed that the CP's role as labor policeman for the MFA undercut its popular support, which has lagged far behind the bureaucratic influence it has achieved from its relation with the MFA. The response of the CP to their low vote relative to the Socialist party was to downgrade the elections as "bourgeois parliamentarism" and to try to

discredit the Constituent Assembly. But this was a direct reflection of the policy of the MFA. As its popular support has dropped, the CP has moved even closer to the MFA, desperately seeking its protection. Thus the Stalinists have become dependent upon the current bourgeois regime remaining in power in order to save their positions in the labor movement.

Immediately after the elections the CP launched an attack on the Socialist party, attempting to prevent it from participating in the May Day demonstrations. Then came the *República* affair, beginning May 20, in which the CP spearheaded the drive to deprive the SP of a daily paper that reflected its views. The CP has more and more taken openly antidemocratic positions, joining with the MFA—actually, serving as its henchmen—in dividing the working class, denouncing democratic rights as in the interests of the bourgeoisie, discrediting the Constituent Assembly, and denouncing the Socialist party, the largest party of the working class, as the main danger.

By acting as the auxiliary repressive force for a regime that cannot solve the economic and social problems of the Portuguese masses, and by their undemocratic acts, the Stalinists helped to pave the way for the resurgence of reactionary anti-Communism on a massive scale, not only among the petty bourgeoisie but in large sections of the working class itself. This has already begun to happen. They have succeeded in arousing one of the fundamental props of bourgeois rule—the fear among the masses that socialism means an end to their democratic rights and subjugation to a tyrannical machine. The CP itself—along with the mass of workers—will bear the brunt of the blows of reaction. The CP course is suicidal, but this would not be the first time that Stalinism has followed its class-collaborationist line to the point of suicide.

The CP course has given the capitalists internationally a handle to discredit socialism. The capitalist press in this country as elsewhere has whipped up a big campaign, posing as the champions of democracy in Portugal against the so-called “left wing dictatorship.” This campaign is designed not only to discredit socialism, revolution, the idea of soviets and real direct democracy by equating them with the CP and the MFA. It is also designed to lay the basis in public opinion for intervention, covert at present, and overt if necessary, by the other imperialist powers on behalf of Portuguese capitalism, if the situation gets out of hand from their point of view.

The Social Democrats

The Socialist party has become the main rival of the Communist party for mass influence among the workers and radicalized petty bourgeoisie. Like the Communist party, the Socialist party expanded in one year from a small nucleus to a mass party. Like other social democratic formations, it is a reformist workers party that claims to represent socialism, but whose perspectives are tied to the ability of monopoly capitalism to grant concessions to the workers. It does not strive to put the workers in power, abolish capitalism, and establish a socialist system.

The Socialist party, like the CP, joined the coalition governments after the April 25 coup, and, like the CP, subordinated itself to the MFA. Like the CP, it has not to this day called for a break with the MFA. Its policy and perspective, like the CP's, is class collaboration.

The SP differs from the CP in its methods of organization and political control. It is not a disciplined or homogeneous party. It seeks to control the working class by political and electoral means rather than by building a disciplined machine. Because of its relatively loose organization and political heterogeneity, it is much less suited than the CP to serve as a transmission belt for the military regime. Further, the SP requires some forms of parliamentary democracy as a means of developing its influence. As a result, it has come into conflict to some extent with the bonapartist plans of the military and its CP supporters. This conflict has been developing since about a month after the fall of the old dictatorship, when the MFA began moving to crack down on the radical ferment. Leaders of the SP have spoken out in opposition to some of the moves of the military regime, and have defended victims of the repression belonging to groups standing to the left of the reformist parties. After the elections to the Constituent Assembly, the military regime stepped up its attacks on the rights of the Socialist party, thereby striking at the democratic rights of the workers in general. It has been forced to call mass mobilizations in defense of its rights, and this has reinforced its identification with democracy in the eyes of the masses.

The Socialist party has more and more become the rallying ground for forces in the workers movement that refuse to bow to the Stalinists. As it has grown into a mass movement, it has become more heterogeneous. In addition to attracting workers and intellectuals who feared the totalitarian features of Stalinism, and militant layers of workers who were repelled by the CP's policing the labor movement on behalf of the capitalist government, this heterogeneous combination included elements affected by reactionary anti-Communism and anti-Leninist prejudices. Moreover, in the conflict with a Communist party seeking to use totalitarian methods in support of military rule, strong currents in such a combination were bound to seek support from the European Social Democratic parties and even the “democratic” capitalist governments.

However, the facts do not support the claim of the CP and its ultraleft satellites that the SP has become the rallying ground for reaction. The reality is that the SP has become the gathering place of a broad range of forces, representing the majority of Portuguese workers and radicalized petty bourgeoisie.

The campaign the CP has launched against the Socialist party goes counter to the interests of the working people. It divides the working class in face of the MFA's attacks on the workers' democratic rights and in face of the mounting rightist terror.

The Ultralefts

Neither the Stalinist leadership of the Communist party, nor the social democratic leadership of the Socialist party, offer a way forward for the working masses. Both in their own way seek to subordinate the masses to the military regime, the CP as the ever more tightly chained captive of the MFA and its henchman in the mass movement, and the SP as a democratic critic of the MFA, beseeching the MFA to rely on the SP and its methods rather than the CP apparatus.

To the left of these two major forces in the workers movement stand a number of left-centrist groups. The political positions of these groups are ultraleft. Following the logic of these positions, in recent months they have become strident supporters of the military regime, echoing the CP line on the major questions, although from their own point of view.

Some of these groups had characterized themselves as armed organizations and engaged in guerrilla war against the Salazarist dictatorship. Another group, the Socialist Peoples Front, split from the SP and calls the SP a bourgeois party. Another, the Movement of the Socialist Left, whose initials in Portuguese are MES, tends to identify with the ultraleft critics of Lenin in the early years of the Third International, who made a fetish out of the soviet form and called for soviets under all conditions in an abstract and romanticized way, instead of taking up the concrete political task of winning a majority of the workers through leading the workers to break from the bourgeois and reformist parties.

All of these groups, however, have an essentially anarchist orientation. They emphasize "rank and file" organizing and initiatives from below, while downplaying the importance of general political questions, such as what attitude to take toward a bourgeois government supported by the mass reformist workers parties, and how to project a working-class alternative to it. The need to propose a working-class governmental alternative to the MFA is lost in the concept of the masses organizing themselves. Their demands tended in the direction of demanding that the MFA fuse with the people's movement.

It is this position—of seeing "grass roots organizing" as the central question, while regarding such questions as the class nature of the MFA, and the big political issues facing the working class and the popular masses, as basically second-rate questions—that has led these groups to be suckered by the MFA into supporting its anti-working-class actions. A change took place in the attitude of these groups after the elections to the Constituent Assembly, when the MFA demagogically began to counterpose talk of a "direct democracy" to the "bourgeois democracy" of the Constituent Assembly. These groups began to believe that a section of the MFA was coming over to their positions. The first test was the *República* affair.

Freedom of the Press

República was one of the daily papers in Lisbon that reflected the views of the SP. Most of the others are strongly influenced by the Communist party. As such, *República* printed criticism of the government from time to time. The MFA was interested in cracking down on this more independent voice, but utilized the CP, supported by the ultralefts, to do its dirty work. The workers commission and the CP-led union in the *República* printing plant led a revolt, charging that the paper's criticisms of the MFA had reduced its circulation, and this endangered their jobs. The MFA, initially taking the stance that it was above it all, closed down the paper, and then supposedly turned it over to the workers, with the addition of an MFA-appointed administrator.

This was a clear violation of the freedom of the press in general, and of the Socialist party's rights to that freedom in particular. But to the ultralefts, freedom of the press is

just a "bourgeois" notion, of no major interest to the working class. They all joined in behind the Stalinist chorus that what had happened was merely a labor dispute, with the *República* workers exercising real "workers" freedom of the press and "workers control." Under these revolutionary-sounding phrases, then, the ultraleftists supported the attack on the democratic rights of the largest working-class party by a bourgeois military regime, and they think that the workers gained something thereby.

Real workers control over production under capitalism has nothing to do with groups of printing workers suppressing the views of parties, including bourgeois parties, that they don't agree with. Workers control over the conditions of work and production—and you can bet that that kind of workers control has been perverted, especially given the role of the CP and the MFA administrator, into the battle for production at *República*—in the factories, printing plants, etc., has nothing whatever to do with censorship. To suppress the voice of the largest workers party, does not increase workers democracy, the real, palpable rights the workers enjoy. It does just the opposite. This is not workers democracy, it is bourgeois repression which utilizes the slogan of workers control to sucker the gullible.

European Trotskyist Press

Unfortunately, in that latter category we must include the majority of the leaderships of the European Trotskyist movement. Writing in *Rouge*, the newspaper of the French Revolutionary Communist League, LCR leader Daniel Bensaid says that revolutionists must reject the campaign being waged by the Socialist party in defense of *República* and freedom of the press. "What is this freedom of the press?" he asks. "Freedom of expression? Not exactly. In the first place, it is freedom for the owners to maintain their hold over the means of information and communication. That is why the struggle of the *República* workers could coincide with the general interests of the Portuguese workers." He then goes on to outline how all tendencies in the workers movement would be guaranteed freedom of the press under socialism—a convenient dodge since there is no socialism or a workers state in Portugal, and the freedom of the press is being attacked there now, by the capitalist government.

Ernest Mandel, a leader of the Fourth International, wrote an article printed in *Intercontinental Press*. He defended freedom of the press in principle, but not in the *República* case. He saw the clash as a case of "workers control," and made the assertion that the Socialist party was utilizing the case to launch a campaign against workers control, and said that this campaign was "obviously the main threat to further progress of the Portuguese revolution." Appraising the situation from this point of view, he assumed that the bourgeoisie was behind the Socialist party on this issue and asserted: "But the outcome of the whole intrigue never was in doubt. The whole logic of the *bourgeois class pressure, both nationally and internationally, plays today in favor of the Socialist Party recuperating its newspaper*. The bourgeois leadership of the MFA cannot but go along with that pressure. The losers will be the workers of the *República* printing plant."

The German Trotskyist newspaper, *Was Tun*, was even worse. After first going through the claptrap about this just being a labor dispute, they state: "In the opinion of the workers, the editors were pushing into the front of the paper attacks on other workers parties, especially the PCP, attacks most often coming from Maoists. They reacted like thousands of other workers in Portugal today when they occupy factories, to oppose threatened unemployment or to proceed against organs of mass media that resort to manipulation, and spread false reports, and are financed from obscure (often foreign) sources." Here we have the spectacle of followers of Leon Trotsky, not only supporting bourgeois suppression of the freedom of the press, but doing so on the grounds that the SP paper printed attacks on "other workers parties, especially the PCP" and supporting the notion that censorship is justified to stop "false reports"—and doing all this in the name of workers control.

Just as bad was the British Trotskyist paper, *Red Weekly*. In its July 24 issue, it reprinted extracts of a speech by an official of the Portuguese Textile Union in such a way as to give it political support. Under the title, "Workers Control, Springboard to Power," the Textile Union official said: "the struggle of the workers of the newspaper *Republica* is a clear example" of workers gains won through struggle. "The fact that a party which has clearly not been defending the interests of the workers wanted to control the paper to express exclusively its own positions shows the importance of the struggle in this field." Horrors! A party which in the opinion of the union official does not express the interests of the workers wants to express its views—how undemocratic, how against workers control!

On the same page, there is an article by the editors. It says, "On 10 July the Lisbon newspaper *Republica* appeared on the streets of Lisbon once again—but this time under workers control. Shut down since 19 May because of a bitter row between the newspapers' workers and its editors—the latter being backed by the journalistic staff, a majority of whom were members of the Socialist party—*Republica* became the first rallying point for the reactionary campaign launched by Socialist Party general secretary Mario Soares. But the workers were determined to make *Republica* into a truly independent paper in the service of the working class, rather than the undercover organ of the Socialist Party that it had become." Notice—no word about the role of the bourgeois government. Everything is distorted, the situation is pictured as merely a struggle for workers control.

What would the editors of *Red Weekly* say, if the workers in the printshop where *Red Weekly* is printed, under the slogan of workers control, charged that the *Red Weekly* attacked other workers parties, especially the British Communist party, spread "false reports" that the Wilson government was a capitalist government, and was thereby aiding capitalism, and therefore suppressed *Red Weekly*?

The Trotskyist Position

The position of genuine Trotskyism is expressed in the article written by Leon Trotsky in 1938 opposing the Stalinist call for the capitalist government in Mexico to ban a reactionary paper. This was printed in the

International Socialist Review and *Intercontinental Press*. Not only is genuine Marxism, Trotskyism, opposed to any capitalist government like the MFA suppressing the rights of a workers party, as happened in the *Republica* case; it is opposed to any capitalist government suppressing anyone's rights, including those of the reactionaries.

Trotsky explains why: "Both theory and historical experience testify that any restriction of democracy in bourgeois society is, in the final analysis, invariably directed against the proletariat, just as any taxes that are imposed also fall on the shoulders of the working class. Bourgeois democracy is of use to the proletariat only insofar as it opens up the way for the development of the class struggle. Consequently, any working-class 'leader' who arms the bourgeois state with special means for controlling public opinion in general and the press in particular is, precisely, a traitor. In the last analysis, the sharpening of the class struggle will impel the bourgeoisie of every stripe to reach an agreement among themselves; they will then pass special laws, all sorts of restrictive measures, and all kinds of 'democratic' censorship against the working class. Anyone who has not yet understood this should get out of the ranks of the working class."

Trotsky goes on to explain that under a workers regime, this principle would still apply. Suppression of the capitalist press would only be undertaken if it assumes an attitude of open rebellion against the workers state. "The real tasks of the workers state," Trotsky says, "lie not in clamping a police gag on public opinion but rather in freeing it from the yoke of capital. This can be done only by placing the means of production, including the production of public information, in the hands of society as a whole. Once this fundamental socialist step has been taken, all currents that have not taken up arms against the dictatorship of the proletariat must be given the opportunity to express themselves freely. It is the duty of the workers state to make available to them all, in proportion to their numbers, the technical means they may require, such as presses, paper, and transport. One of the main causes of the degeneration of the state apparatus [Trotsky is here talking about the Soviet Union] is the Stalinist bureaucracy's monopolization of the press, which threatens to reduce all the gains of the October revolution to utter ruin."

Concerning *Republica*, the lie is given to the "workers control" explanation by the very fact that the vast majority of the Portuguese proletariat does not believe this fairy tale but sees the suppression of *Republica* for what it plainly is: suppression of the democratic rights of the Socialist party that thereby opens the road to further attacks on the democratic rights of the workers. Already the MFA is discussing a plan to impose censorship by the military on all the press.

Finally, we note that the new *Republica*, predictably, is one of the most disgusting bootlickers of the MFA. So much for *Red Weekly*'s "truly independent paper in the service of the working class."

Bourgeois Democracy and Workers Democracy

If the ultralefts went berserk in objective support to the CP-MFA operation against *Republica*, they went into paroxysms of adulatory frenzy when the MFA announced its plan for so-called direct democracy as part of its campaign to scuttle the Constituent Assembly.

This campaign fit right into the preconceptions of the ultralefts. They have learned that workers democracy, a workers regime based upon the direct democracy of broad workers councils or soviets, is superior to bourgeois democracy. Bourgeois democracy, no matter how democratic it seems, always conceals a real dictatorship of the capitalist class, which utilizes the forms of democracy to ensure its rule through the political parties that it controls. So far so good. But here their wisdom ends. They believe that the way to get a regime of workers democracy is to denounce bourgeois democracy. They often slip into the posture of cheering for every defeat of bourgeois democracy as if it were a gain for workers democracy in and of itself. They slip into the position of failing to see that between a bourgeois democratic regime and a soviet regime of workers democracy there is a necessary step—a revolutionary conquest of power that dismantles the capitalist state and replaces it with a new state, a workers state, and that this essential step cannot be carried out by a capitalist government or by a section of the capitalist state itself, no matter how radical its spokesmen talk. Thus when the MFA denounced the Constituent Assembly, this struck a sympathetic chord in the ultralefts.

Marxists do not look at the question this way. The Marxist critique of bourgeois democracy does not end with its form, that of the parliamentary republic versus the direct democracy of workers soviets. Marxists say that bourgeois democracy is not democratic enough, they criticise the regime of bourgeois democracy because it is always restricting democratic rights. They campaign and have campaigned over the decades to extend democratic rights under capitalism, and to defend whatever democracy exists under capitalism, whenever it is threatened. Until the rise of Stalinism, socialism was deeply identified with the struggle for democratic rights. The ultralefts unconsciously (or even consciously if they are influenced by Maoism or other forms of Stalinism) echo the Stalinist view that workers revolution and the suppression of democracy go hand in hand.

For Marxists, the fight for democratic rights is not counterposed to the fight for workers democracy, but is a central ingredient of the political struggle that is necessary to mobilize the masses to make their revolution. The fight for soviets in Portugal today, for example, cannot be waged in counterposition to the Constituent Assembly. In a letter to the Spanish comrades in 1931, who faced a situation similar to the one that exists in Portugal today, Trotsky discussed the relation of soviets to a constituent assembly, called in this case the constituent Cortes. Trotsky wrote: "But if the Cortes is to be boycotted, then in the name of what? in the name of the soviets? In my opinion, it would be wrong to pose the question that way. The masses of the city and countryside can be united at the present time only under democratic slogans. These include the election of a constituent Cortes on the basis of universal, equal, direct and secret suffrage. I do not think that in the present situation you can avoid this slogan. Soviets are as yet nonexistent. The Spanish workers—not to speak of the peasants—do not know what soviets are; at any rate, not from their own experiences . . . To counterpose the slogan of soviets, under these circumstances, to the slogan of the Cortes, would be incorrect. On the other hand, it will obviously be possible to build soviets in the near future only by mobilizing the masses on the basis of

democratic slogans. This means: to prevent the monarchy from convening a false, deceptive, conservative Cortes; to assure the convocation of a democratic constituent Cortes; and so that this Cortes can give the land to the peasants, and do many other things, workers, soldiers and peasants soviets must be created to fortify the positions of the toiling masses."

Soviets and the Constituent Assembly

The sole democratic registration of the opinions of the masses, apart from the mass mobilizations, occurred in the elections to the Constituent Assembly. Over 90 percent of the electorate voted. They voted in their majority for parties of the working class that claimed to stand for socialism. Revolutionists cannot fight for soviets by denouncing in abstract terms the only national body elected by the people of Portugal without appearing to the workers, peasants and all the toiling masses to be in fact denouncing their democratic rights and trying to prevent them from exercising them.

The masses have interpreted the campaign of the MFA, the CP, and the ultralefts against the Constituent Assembly as just such an attack on their democratic rights. The majority of workers who support the Socialist party can only interpret this campaign as directed especially against *their* democratic rights, since they received the highest vote.

The "Peoples Assemblies" Plan

The MFA countered the Constituent Assembly in two ways: one, by stepping up its attacks on democratic rights in general and especially on those of the SP, and further centralizing its rule; and two, by putting forward a scheme for so-called direct democracy. Peoples' Assemblies were to be created. These would, supposedly, gradually federate into regional and then a National Peoples' Assembly, although that would take a good deal of time and was explicitly postponed into the indefinite future.

The catch? These were not to be arenas where the various workers parties would debate their programs, as they did in the original Russian soviets. They would be "nonpolitical," and, more importantly, would be under the control of the MFA. The ultralefts went bananas. Some of them hailed this as the realization of a fusion of peoples power with the MFA.

Again, we saw the leaderships of most of the European Trotskyists being swept along in the enthusiasm of the ultralefts for the MFA project. Even before the MFA announced its plan, just on the basis of reports that such a thing was being considered, the German Trotskyist paper *Was Tun* wrote: "What a rapid development of consciousness on the part of these officers, who not long ago were leading a colonial war on the orders of the most reactionary dictatorship in Europe. On April 25, 1974, they wanted to establish a bourgeois democracy, and now they are seriously discussing the introduction of the dictatorship of the proletariat and a regime of soviets! Only a year ago the MFA officers made Spínola president, and issued reactionary press and strike laws. The very same Copcon Commander, Oteló Saraiva de Carvalho, who sent his units against striking workers, today wants to arm the workers. Now one has to understand that the MFA has

adapted itself to the process of radicalization of the masses, developed along with it and transformed itself.”

Later in the same article, they said there is a split between bourgeois democrats in the MFA on the one hand, and, “On the other side are officers like Rosa Coutinho and Saraiva Carvalho, confused but uncorrupted left radicals, who—and this is certainly the most important thing in their political development—have understood with astonishing clarity an essential aspect of the socialist revolution and workers power, even though they do not see the need for a revolutionary workers party and a revolutionary program. That is, they have understood the need for the self-guided mobilization of the workers, the independent action of the masses, without bureaucratic reins.” What fawning over generals and admirals!

Illusions in the MFA Plan

The British *Red Weekly* newspaper of July 17 has this to say: “The Socialists pulled out of the Government last Thursday—ostensibly because of the refusal of the government to keep a promise, made several weeks ago, to take the newspaper *Republica* out of the hands of its workers and give it back to its Socialist Party editors. But what was really getting up Mario Soares’ nose was the recent decision of the Armed Forces Movement to set up ‘popular assemblies’ based on elected factory and residents’ committees, coordinated eventually at the national level through a National Popular Assembly. This would clearly challenge the authority of the Constituent Assembly elected earlier this year, which the SP and the Portuguese Democrats control, and which they hoped to use to back-up their pro-imperialist policies.” The article went on to find the MFA plan “contradictory,” with some good features and some bad.

In the July 25 issue of *Rouge* we read: “Inside the MFA itself the differences are deepening. The right wing, which for the time being has taken refuge in support of the policies of the SP, is striving to bring to heel the progressive elements of the MFA who are being swept along by the torrent of revolution and who are looking confusedly for a new base of power in grass-roots committees. The key to the present situation lies in the rise of these committees. As emerging organs of dual power, they are bringing into being the highest unity of the working class, the workers united front.” By organs of dual power, the author refers to organs of workers power, rising up side by side with the capitalist power, to create a situation of dual, or two parallel powers. Thus he equates the MFA’s project with the rise of workers power.

In the July 18 issue of *Rouge*, Charles Michaloux concludes that workers power is arising in Portugal. Under the heading, “Birth of a Power,” he concludes: “in Portugal, the governmental power is vacillating, while the power of the rank and file is taking shape. It already has a name: Peoples Assemblies, which will elect a National Assembly of the workers and soldiers. The National Assembly will create a Workers and Peasants Government, . . .”

In the July 25 issue of the same paper, an unsigned article ends with the assertion that “Today the Popular Assemblies are multiplying, following the decision of the Assembly of the MFA. The next stage could be the calling

of a National Popular Assembly, a decisive step toward the creation of a workers state in Portugal.”

In the article already referred to by Charles Michaloux, he also saw the peoples assemblies burgeoning. “On Saturday and Sunday,” he excitedly reports, “Peoples Assemblies were held in almost all the neighborhoods, districts and urban centers.

“The coordinating committee of all the Lisbon committees issued a call for a demonstration tonight, with the open support of the assembly of the soldiers in the RALis (the former RAL 1).”

A theatrical Putsch

That was on July 16. That night the demonstration was held. Far from being the mass mobilization to be expected from Michaloux’s excited remarks, which it would have been if it really represented the call of the Lisbon coordinating body of real soviets that really did encompass the masses (or even of embryonic soviets with mass influence), the gathering brought out only about six or seven thousand composed mostly of the petty-bourgeois radicals of the ultraleft groups, each there under the banner of its own little fake soviet.

Michaloux was later to report that the slogans of the demonstration were “Against reaction, against capital; proletarian unity”, “Workers and peasants, soldiers and sailors, united we will win”, “Workers control, peoples power.” But these vague slogans did not politically characterize this demonstration. The official slogans included: “Unity of the Workers with the Progressive Wing of the MFA”, “Dissolution of the Constituent Assembly. For a Revolutionary Government.” The demonstration marched on the building where the Constituent Assembly was meeting and there the chants that predominated were “Dissolve the Constituent Assembly Now” and “MFA—Peoples Power.”

This demonstration had its comical side—the spectacle of a handful of ultralefts, claiming to represent nonexistent soviets, shaking their fists at the Constituent Assembly, in a kind of theatrical putsh. But politically, this demonstration helped back up the line of the CP and the MFA that identifies soviet power with subordination to the MFA and identifies the road to workers democracy with a struggle to overturn the Constituent Assembly now.

There are two Trotskyist organizations in Portugal, one is the LCI and the other is the Revolutionary Workers party, the PRT. Unfortunately, both were taken in by the MFA, especially after the *Reública* affair and the fake “Peoples’ Assembly” plan was announced. Their positions can be ascertained in the new information bulletin which is available here. Both of these organizations, while criticizing the slogan of calling for the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly, participated in the July 16 demonstration. Also participating, according to a Lisbon daily dominated by the Portuguese Communist party—and while the CP did not participate, it gave the demonstration editorial support—was a large tourist contingent from what they called the French Trotskyist organization of Alain Krivine.

Dual Power

Rouge, *Was Tun*, *Red Weekly* all speak as if soviets were burgeoning in Portugal. Even if we leave aside the

incorrectness of seeing these committees being set up by the MFA as "soviets," they have hardly gotten off the ground. They exist only in a few areas, nearly all in and around Lisbon. The most enthusiastic reports give their number in Lisbon as 12, with more sober reporters claiming 3 or maybe 4. These committees do not mobilize the masses, they do not fight for their interests and they are forbidden to be arenas where the workers parties debate their programs.

Neighborhood committees do exist, mainly tenants committees, often dominated by one or another of the ultraleft groups.

The organizations that all tendencies support to one degree or another are the workers commissions. These bodies have remained within the general trade-union framework and have not functioned as soviets. They have not led the masses politically, they have not assumed control over factories or industrial concentrations, they have not drawn into the struggle the most oppressed layers of the masses, they are not seen by the workers as a center of power parallel to or competing with the government. They have been weakened by CP policy since they were first formed following the April 1974 coup.

At the most, it could be said that the germs of workers councils are present. They do not yet exist as a force. Thus there is no situation of dual power in Portugal at the present time.

This makes the position of *Rouge*, *Was Tun* and the *Red Weekly* even worse. They counterpose to the Constituent Assembly the power of nonexistent soviets. This line ends up by lending support to the real power exercised by the MFA.

Rouge, *Red Weekly* and *Was Tun* not only exaggerate the situation in regard to the development of soviets. They have failed to see that the very campaign against democratic rights they were supporting in the name of workers control and soviets was having the effect of dividing the working class, beginning to demoralize it, and emboldening the right wing. The extreme right has begun to raise its head. The northern part of the country has swung sharply to the right and attacks upon and burnings of CP headquarters are multiplying.

The ultralefts do not know what time of day it is. They think the struggle for power, for workers power, is on the order of the day. No, the task remains the struggle for the masses, the struggle to win the masses away from their misleaderships, from the reformists of the Socialist and Communist parties, and from the right wing forces where this threat has developed. This struggle to win the masses is part and parcel of the struggle to build the revolutionary party, our central strategic task.

Suppose soviets did exist? Would that mean that we should necessarily call for the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly or see it as the main danger?

In a letter to the Chinese comrades in 1930 Trotsky raised with them the question of calling for a constituent or a national assembly. He spoke of the possibility of a restricted National Assembly being called. "Would we communists enter such a restricted and manipulated National Assembly?" Trotsky asks. "If we are not strong enough to replace it, that is, take power, we certainly would enter it. Such a stage would not at all weaken us. On the contrary, it would help us to gather together and develop the forces of the proletarian vanguard. Inside this

spurious assembly, and particularly outside it, we would carry on agitation for a new and more democratic assembly. If there were a revolutionary mass movement we would simultaneously build soviets. It is very possible that in such a case the petty bourgeois parties would convene a relatively more democratic National Assembly, as a dam against the soviets. Would we participate in this kind of assembly? Of course we would participate; again, only if we were not strong enough to replace the assembly with a higher form of government, that is, the soviets. Such a possibility reveals itself only at the apex of revolutionary ascent. But at the present time we are far from there.

"Even if there were soviets in China—which is not the case—this in itself would not be a reason to abandon the slogan of a National Assembly. The majority in the soviets might be—and in the beginning would certainly be—in the hands of the conciliatory and centrist parties and organizations. We would be interested in exposing them in the open forum of the National Assembly. In this way, the majority would be won over to our side more quickly and more certainly. When we succeeded in winning a majority, we would counterpose the program of the majority of the country around the banner of the soviets, and this would enable us, in deed and not on paper, to replace the National Assembly, this parliamentary-democratic institution, with soviets, the organ of revolutionary class dictatorship."

The writer in *Rouge* quoted before said that the "emerging organs of dual power" he sees developing "are bringing into being the highest unity of the working class, the workers united front." It is true that real soviets do represent the highest form of the united front, its broadest and deepest form. One of the characteristics of soviets is that they embrace ever wider sections of the working masses.

The specific issue at hand in this critical debate is not whether one is for or against soviets. Revolutionists in principle champion this form of organization. It is how can they be achieved in real life, and not just on paper, as Trotsky says. This brings us to the real situation in Portugal, the real class struggle and its real issues, for it is only out of the experience of the masses themselves that soviets, as expressions of the workers struggles, can be built. They can be proposed but cannot be imposed on the workers.

Does the MFA Exist?

Writing in the July 31 issue of *Inprecor*, Charles Michaloux dismisses the omnipotence of the MFA. It can no longer adequately play the role of a functioning repressive apparatus, he says, having lost the confidence of both the capitalists and the workers. "Under these conditions," he writes, "the bourgeoisie has opted in an initial phase for the reconstruction of the bourgeois order through parliamentary legal channels, as was done in Germany in December 1918-January 1919 and in republican Spain during the period August 1936-April 1937. Such is the sense of the offensive of Mario Soares, who puts the Constituent Assembly in counterposition not to a nonexistent 'military dictatorship,' but instead (and explicitly) to 'anarchy' and the 'absence of governmental authority,'

which would lead to 'communist dictatorship,' if it continued. The whole Portuguese and international bourgeoisie is supporting this maneuver."

Thus he dismisses as irrelevant and impotent the real capitalist government of the MFA, claims its military dictatorship doesn't exist, and sees as the main danger the Constituent Assembly and the Socialist party, which is backed by the whole bourgeoisie. How neatly this thesis dovetails with the present course of the real, palpable capitalist military regime of the MFA.

Let's accept this argument at face value for the moment and follow out its logic. The whole capitalist class, with the backing of the capitalists internationally, has no more confidence in the MFA. Neither does the proletariat. But the proletariat cannot impose its own solution at this time. The bourgeoisie wants to rule through the Constituent Assembly, but again cannot force this solution. The conditions are thereby created for bonapartism. But where is the bonapartist force on the scene to come from?

To return to the real situation. It is true that a section of the MFA is discredited, being too identified with the antidemocratic policies of the CP which were carried out in behalf of the MFA. A shift could be in the offing in the structure of the MFA

The main danger today in Portugal does not come either from the Constituent Assembly or the Socialist party. It comes from the undemocratic actions of the MFA and CP, and even more from the extreme right, which doesn't intend to rule through the SP and the Constituent Assembly. To say that the main danger comes from the Socialist party is a latter-day echo of the ultraleft line taken by the Stalinists during their so-called "Third Period" in the early 1930s, when they labeled the Social Democracy "social fascism." The Portuguese CP has indeed resurrected this formula as part of its campaign against the SP. This false line cuts across building a real united front of workers organizations against reaction.

Building a United Front

No, revolutionists must take the opposite course. The united front that *Rouge* talks about will never be created by proclaiming artificial soviets, and then, since soviets are the highest expression of the united front, expect them to automatically become in fact a united front. The Socialist party workers—and the influence of the Socialist party is growing in the working class—are staying away from the fake MFA soviets, for they see them as part and parcel of the campaign against the SP. This is turning many workers against the idea of direct democracy.

To build a genuine united front we have to begin with the united front in practice, in real struggle. We must begin with defense of the Socialist party's democratic rights. That means fighting with workers of the Socialist party against the seizure of their newspaper, for one thing. These workers will never be won over unless they are assured that revolutionists support their rights against the capitalist government's attempt to take them away. That this is possible was indicated by the fact that the special paper the *República* staff put out reprinted Trotsky's article on freedom of the press and distributed it to tens of thousands of workers.

This is the only way to go about building a united front against the right-wing mobilizations that are being

mounted today against the CP's democratic rights.

A united front will be built in practice, not in a campaign against democratic rights, but on the contrary, in defense of all of them for everyone. This would lead to conflicts with the MFA.

A united front must be launched in favor of the Constituent Assembly, not against it. Soviets will never be built counterposed to the will of the majority of the workers. They must learn through their own experience to prefer the soviet form to representation through bourgeois parliamentarism. That means they will have to see the soviets as champions of their democratic rights and not as obstacles to achieving them. United front struggles demanding that the Constituent Assembly not be bound beforehand to rubber-stamp MFA rule, that the Constituent Assembly be sovereign, and have the right to establish a government would not only expose the reformism of the SP and the CP and their class collaborationism. Committees formed around the fight for such aims—and make no mistake, this would entail a fight with the bourgeois MFA—would become the basis for soviets, as Trotsky said.

Rouge has labeled this position as "electoral cretinism." What electoral or parliamentary cretinism as a term means in the Marxist movement is the position that socialism can be brought about simply through elections or parliament, without relying primarily on the mobilization, organization and direct action of the masses. But this has never meant ignoring or bypassing the existing stage of consciousness of the masses by ignoring a parliament, let alone a constituent assembly in a pre-revolutionary situation elected with 90 percent participation of the voters and in which the workers parties have won a majority. To act in this way is antiparliamentary cretinism. This attitude is just as bad because it condemns its practitioners to the role of sideline commentators at best, inapportioning for soviets in the abstract, and serving as inadvertent accomplices in the the capitalist government's antidemocratic moves at worst. Lenin called this "infantile leftism" and condemned it as a curse.

A united front should be built in urgent defense of the economic needs of the masses. If this is not done, no amount of rhetoric about socialism and soviets will win the masses to actually struggle for socialism. In this struggle, immediate demands are on the order of the day to combat the huge unemployment and the effects of the skyrocketing inflation. The MFA and CP are succeeding in indentifying socialism with the economic catastrophe. This can be overcome by the revolutionists fighting for the interests of the working people.

A program for the rural areas is needed. Fighting for these demands will likewise mean coming into conflict with the MFA, as will fighting for demands that the Portuguese imperialists get out of Angola and all its other colonies.

Without trying to set forth a full revolutionary program for Portugal, which has to be done on the initiative of revolutionists on the scene, this program must include the defense and extension of democratic rights. The masses of Portugal have demonstrated time and again their desire for complete democracy. They want the opposite of the totalitarianism they have had for fifty years. To achieve this, they began organizing on their own. And they turned for leadership to the parties that claimed to represent socialism.

For a Workers and Peasants Government

Toward that end, against the bourgeois MFA government, we have to fight for a workers and peasants government to install a socialist democracy. Since the masses have given their support to the mass reformist and workers parties, actions in defense of the Constituent Assembly would necessarily be accompanied by the demand that these parties break their pact with the MFA and utilize their majority in the Constituent Assembly to form a workers and peasants government. Of course, such a demand was more timely right after the elections to the Constituent Assembly, and may become moot if the MFA succeeds in liquidating the Constituent Assembly with the help of the CP, its ultraleft satellites, and the SP.

Such a campaign for democratic rights would have meant supporting the mass mobilizations the SP was forced to call in defense of its rights, not attacking them as the main danger. If we in the SWP would have participated in those demonstrations, we would have joined with those fishermen going to the big rally in Oporto, who put up a poster addressed to the CP and the ultralefts as well as the MFA, who tried to erect barricades to prevent the rally: "Attention barricaders," the poster said, "the Matosinhos fishermen are coming through at 4:30 heading for Antas stadium." And that's where we would be—coming through! We would have opposed the July 16 demonstration calling for the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly and for MFA-peoples power.

In doing this, revolutionists would have differentiated themselves politically from the the SP leaders, who feared these mobilizations, and who tried to tone down criticism of the MFA. And we would have gotten a hearing for our views.

The Revolutionary Party

You cannot achieve socialism against the real way in which the masses have mobilized, and against their concerns and interests, even if you are adapting to what you think are the concerns of the so-called far left. It is the job of revolutionists to link up with the struggles of the masses, propel them forward, help them break from subordination to all capitalist forces, including the most demagogic, and in this way break from their class-collaborationist leaders.

This brings us to the most important of all problems. That is the question of leadership. The *Was Tun* article quoted earlier raises the theoretical possibility that the MFA-sponsored committees just possibly might be utilized by the MFA for its own bonapartist ends. But, they say, "the concept of 'workers and soldiers councils' does not permit a Bonapartist-capitalist solution. It has its own dynamic, which is explicitly anticapitalist and anti-bureaucratic."

This is not true. Even if there were soviets on a large scale in Portugal today, they would be dominated by the reformist parties. That was the case in Russia, from February until September 1917. At one point Lenin considered the soviets to have been rotted because of their reformist leadership. He turned out to be wrong, but only because the Bolsheviks were able to win a majority in them for a revolutionary course. And, by the way, an element in that struggle of the Bolsheviks to win that majority was the fight for the convening of the Constituent Assembly, which the bourgeois parties and reformists refused to do. There was no abstract counterposition of the soviets to the Constituent Assembly by the Bolsheviks. One of the reasons Bolsheviks gave for the Soviets to take power was to convene the Constituent Assembly that the compromisers feared.

Fighting for democratic rights, for the immediate interests of the masses and for a workers and farmers government is necessary, not only to achieve soviets but to build the revolutionary party, the leadership that is necessary to cut through all the demagogy and the reformist schemes. Even today, a small nucleus with a correct orientation could grow rapidly in Portugal—if not fast enough to lead the present upsurge to victory, they could form a party steeled in political battle that could lead the next one, for it will not be easy to crush the Portuguese workers.

The Portuguese masses have given us a mighty demonstration of their power, in spite of all the misleadership they suffer from. After fifty years of Salazarist rule, they swiftly came to socialist conclusions and showed a readiness to fight for their rights. It is that power we identify with and aspire to develop to the limit.

Their concerns are our concerns. We base ourselves on the needs and momentum of their struggles, and not on the dogmas of the ultraleftist groups. And we have unshakable conviction that it will be the power of the workers in the end that will triumph.

The Portuguese Revolution and Building the Fourth International

by Jack Barnes

Report and Summary adopted August 21, 1975
by the Twenty-Seventh National Convention
of the Socialist Workers Party

The importance of the discussion on Portugal and the stakes that are involved are clear to all of us. This discussion is occurring not only in the Fourth International but amongst all forces that consider themselves Trotskyist. Every current is being tested by the living forces of revolution and counterrevolution. It constitutes an acid test for every group, every program. The pace of events in Portugal forces this process of testing to take place on a weekly or even a daily basis.

Now is not the time for factional point-scoring. To a serious international revolutionary movement what's involved when events of the scope of the Portuguese revolution occurs is a chance not only for political clarification but a major strengthening of the forces of the revolutionary international by regrouping with currents whose views converge with ours.

Simultaneous with the discussion on Portugal, we see the beginning of the process of drawing a balance sheet on a long debate—one that began within the Fourth International more than seven years ago just prior to the 1969 world congress. The issues in that debate have been clarified step by step—on the ultraleft character of the turn taken by the majority of the delegates at that congress; on the programmatic and geographical extensions of the turn; and on the results of that turn in the test of revolution and counterrevolution.

This debate includes the relationship of the European resolution adopted by the International Majority Tendency (IMT) to the turn of the Ninth World Congress and the Armed Struggle resolution of the Tenth World Congress, and the real character of the most controversial components of that resolution: "the concerns of the new mass vanguard" concept, initiatives in action and minority violence, how to fight for workers control of industry, etc. The relationship between democracy and proletarian revolution was also raised in the discussion on Europe and has been at the heart of the most recent stage of the Argentine debate. And finally, the most crucial issue—the correct application of the method of the Transitional Program in order to construct mass revolutionary workers parties capable of leading the masses to power.

Our aim in this debate, our central aim so far as the leadership of the Socialist Workers party is concerned, is political clarity. In our opinion all else should be subordinated to achieving this aim.

Prerevolutionary Portugal and our responsibilities

The Portuguese events present the first prerevolutionary situation in Europe since the 1968-69 upsurges in France and Italy. But unlike 1968-69, they broke out without a

massive Socialist party, a massive Communist party or a massive entrenched union bureaucracy blocking the way. Even a small cadre of trained Bolsheviks who are politically prepared beforehand and capable of moving with the pace of events can make decisive gains in such a situation. And this favorable situation is not yet over; there is still a historic opportunity for the comrades in Portugal.

That is the urgent aspect underlying the need to strive for clarity. There are in Portugal several hundred comrades, young militants who consider themselves Trotskyist revolutionists, belonging to two organizations, the Liga Comunista Internacionalista (LCI) and the Partido Revolucionário dos Trabalhadores (PRT). The acid test for any leadership of the Fourth International, is how it helps its cadres politically, how well its line and its methods of functioning prepare the cadres in their countries to carry out their tasks when a revolutionary situation occurs.

We're convinced that the political judgments and thinking of the comrades in Portugal are not frozen, and we have no doubt that they are striving with all their might and main to find the correct line, the correct path given the enormous responsibilities and opportunities before them.

For us, this discussion is no less a preparation for the future. Prepare to be prepared. We're convinced we're at the end of the long detour in the pattern of the world revolution; we're convinced that more explosions are coming and that the lessons of the revolutionary class struggle and of revolution and counterrevolution in Portugal are going to be relevant for every single country including the United States of America.

The test of a line

What about the development of the differences in the Fourth International?

First, I would like to eliminate the fake elements in the debate; Which class side are you on? For socialism, or for bourgeois democracy and Social Democracy, including the murder of Rosa Luxemburg? For soviets, or for reforming the bourgeois state into a workers state? Any fake posing of the real issues along these lines only gets in the way of clarity.

We have to assume a Trotskyist framework for this discussion. We must assume that the participants start from the same programmatic basis and belong to the same tradition. Even if this assumption is not true on all points and with all individuals, it's the only possible framework for our point of departure.

A lot of time was wasted in the debate on Latin America,

and I think we lost cadres because of it, because of the fake debate posed by the majority: for or against armed struggle, for or against civil war, for or against insurrection. There was one and only one real point of debate: Did the turn toward guerrilla war taken by the 1969 world congress help or hinder the development of a political line that could lead a nucleus of cadres to the construction of a revolutionary party, to equip themselves politically, to accumulate and temper their forces so they would be ready when the revolutionary openings occur?

In the founding program of our movement, the Transitional Program, Trotsky emphasized: "The building of national revolutionary parties as sections of the Fourth International is the central task of the transitional epoch." (*The Transitional Program for Socialist Revolution*, Pathfinder Press, p. 78)

No matter what is done, no matter what is said by the leaders of the world Trotskyist movement, there is only one final criterion of the worth of their work: does it aid in building national revolutionary parties that can meet their responsibilities? Or does it hinder them?

Not even the rise of soviets changes this criterion. The stakes simply become higher. There is a new arena of political conflict. But for us the question remains the same: how can we grow, how can we present our politics in such a way that we and not the Mensheviks win the majority? Because even if there are soviets, if the Mensheviks have the majority they'll appoint a Noske as the head of a capitalist government.

In this debate it's essential that we look not only at what the leadership of the majority of the Fourth International is saying, but at what they are doing. Your line is not what your attorneys put on paper, but what you do under the pressures of the class struggle. That's why it's proper to look at what's being said in the press of the Fourth International around the world as a guide to what the line is in practice. Your line really comes out, when the cadres, including the editors, have to implement it under pressure. They carry it out as they understand it.

What we say today in the *Militant*, what the German comrades say in *Was Tun*, what the French leadership says in *Rouge*, what the British comrades say in *Red Weekly*, is not only a test of their line as applied to Portugal. It's a preview of how each of us will act under the impact of comparable events in the United States, Germany, France, or Britain.

República: a turning point

Where are we in regard to the Portugal debate in the Fourth International? A major turning point came three months ago at the end of May. That was around the *República* affair. Two different political lines led us to take opposing sides on issues of decisive importance to the class struggle. We were on different sides in the counterposed mobilizations of tens of thousands.

Two different political orientations, two different concepts of the application of the Transitional Program, two different concepts of building a party came out week after week, in the press of the sections and sympathizing groups of the Fourth International. And if all of us had been in Portugal we would have been fighting against each other, at least in the sense of demonstrations and counterdemon-

strations. And demonstrations and counterdemonstrations in revolutionary events sometimes lead to pushing and shoving. As Jim Cannon was fond of saying, somebody brings along a shillelagh 'cause they're a little lame, and all kinds of things can begin happening.

I say this not to counter the opinion expressed by Comrade Alan Jones under the previous agenda point, that we consider each other revolutionists and that this is a debate among revolutionists. I'm obviously in agreement with Alan about that. What I want to stress is the importance of the political differences. You can have smoldering but obscure differences for years, even decades, and then the class struggle violently erupts, and you find out what those differences really are. We are finding that out in Portugal.

In our opinion, the way the comrades of the IMT leadership reacted around the *República* affair had two basic flaws. They acted as if the revolution could be made: (1) without a majority of the workers; and (2) in opposition to the fight by the proletariat to defend and extend democratic rights. That's the long and short of what IMT leaders told the cadres that look to them for leadership. This was reflected in every issue in the press where their line was followed.

Even more revealing than some of the articles were the graphics. That's a fact in politics. Sometimes you can tell a lot more from one Ivan cartoon than you can from reading a whole article in the *Militant*. The prominent pictures in *Red Weekly* and *Rouge* of the workers gobbling up the wonderful new revolutionary workers paper that replaced *República* told you how far and how fast a revolutionary party can go off the beam once it makes a mistake on a question like this.

To us, and I repeat what Barry said yesterday, the *República* affair was not a minor incident or a secondary matter. It was a decisive test that marked a turning point in the debate within the Fourth International.

It raised a large number of other issues. One was the character of the Armed Forces Movement, the MFA. How you *act* and react to it reflects what you think it really is. Comrades in the IMT acted as if they thought the Portuguese government were not a bourgeois government; as if the MFA were not a bourgeois instrument arising from the officer corps of an imperialist army and using petty-bourgeois socialist demagoguery; as if the MFA were not a bonapartist-type instrument holding Portuguese capitalism together in a profound social crisis. The MFA has one job: to prevent the mass movement from breaking with the government and taking an independent road, to divide the working class in order to maintain capitalist rule. It's the opposite of a workers and peasants government. It's the opposite of a social movement that can promote a revolutionary wave and drive the class struggle forward. It is the opposite of an inadequate but revolutionary instrument. Rather it's a shaky counterrevolutionary instrument.

The two reformist parties

Differences on the CP and the SP also came to the fore. We agree on a number of points about the CP and the SP. They're both reformist parties. They're both class-collaborationist parties. They vie for favor and posts from the MFA. They both uphold the pact-program. They both

seek to derail the revolution. They're both totally unreformable as parties and they're both transmission belts for counterrevolutionary pressures from outside of Portugal. Fine. But that's just the beginning, not the end, of wisdom.

There's been a difference, too, between the CP and SP, a difference concretely reflected in what developed in Portugal. The CP played a special role in the rise and consolidation—to the degree that it has been consolidated—of this bonapartist-like government. Through the trade unions, the CP was the main instrumentality for slowing down and sitting on the workers' upsurge. They blocked the workers striving toward genuine factory commissions and toward industrial unionism. The CP was used to break strikes and to support the antistrike laws. They were used to prevent, as much as possible, free elections from being held in the unions. They were the battering ram used to begin attacking the most elementary democratic rights. They are the agents of the MFA who have tried every possible maneuver to prevent the Constituent Assembly from becoming an arena of confrontation between the currents in the Portuguese revolution.

What happened around *República* was quite simple. It's not that the SP changed its reformist nature or broke with the MFA. It's that the SP decided to fight back in a new way against the CP's privileged role as chief MFA collaborator and in doing so were obliged to mobilize tens of thousands of workers in defense of the SP's democratic rights. The reactionary, bureaucratic offensive of the CP and the MFA had led to the point where the workers in growing numbers began dissociating democracy and communism in their own thinking. This was a reversal of a victory that had been won in the months after the overthrow of Caetano when the workers began to see democracy and socialism as synonymous.

The "far-left" in Portugal had basically the same position on *República* as expressed by the IMT comrades—a little balder perhaps, but basically the same. This is the way they sized things up (and this view was also echoed in the Trotskyist press in Europe). Following the April 25, 1975 elections the CP looked at the small size of their vote and decided to make a sharp turn to the left. It began approaching the "far-left" for support. And in response, the SP became the spearhead of bourgeois counterrevolution.

We say no. We say just the opposite occurred. What happened after the elections is that the CP took one look at its vote, a look at the relative size of the currents in the workers movement, the strength of the SP, and made a fundamentally opposite decision. They made the decision that, to maintain their privileged position, not only was it more and more essential for them to belly up to the MFA, but they also had to strive to curtail democratic rights. They had to restrict the arenas in which the tendencies in the working class itself could freely vie for leadership. Far from a left turn, if anything it was a right turn cloaked in third-period-type leftist demagoguery; an adventure, given the real relationship of forces.

The SP itself didn't make much of a turn. Its leadership is not capable of making much of a turn. They wanted to displace the CP as the dominant "labor" wing of the MFA-dominated government, of course. But they didn't have to make a turn. They knew the CP would hand them an opening. But then they were forced to defend themselves against the CP and the MFA in a way that is not normal

for Social Democracy. And this turn of the CP, with the MFA as a whole complicit, accelerated the process of breeding reaction, encouraging the rise and attacks of the right-wing mobs.

The blunders of the ultralefts

In all this the ultralefts in Portugal made at least four major blunders, and in so doing acted as cat's-paws for the CP whether or not they knew it.

- One, they didn't see the link between the struggle for defense of democratic rights and the establishment of workers democracy, which requires a little thing called the socialist revolution.

- Two, they didn't see the connection between struggles to defend democratic rights and the immediate economic and social struggles by the workers, which is a political line derived from the method of the *Transitional Program*.

- Three, they didn't see the connection between the defense of democratic rights and the fight for united-front action of the workers, which includes the need for a correct governmental slogan and a correct stance in relation to the bourgeois government.

- And, fourth, they didn't see the connection between the defense of democratic rights and establishing a soviet government, first by building real soviets, and then, after they arise, in fighting to win a Bolshevik majority within them. Because without a Bolshevik majority in these mass organs there will be no soviet government.

The IMT comrades on the whole, carrying out their line of orienting around the concerns of the "new mass vanguard," drifted in the same direction as the ultralefts, and tended to make the same errors. Their erroneous line is shown in the sharpest way in the events of a few days in July. July 15, 16, 17, 18, 19 was the week SP workers went into the streets by the tens of thousands, first in Oporto, then in Lisbon where for the first time in a workers demonstration in Portugal the slogan, "The people are not with the MFA, the people are no longer with the MFA" was heard—to the great consternation of the Socialist party leaders.

July 16 was the day that the ultralefts—with our Portuguese comrades participating despite hesitation and disagreement over what became the central slogans—took to the streets, four, five, six thousand strong (we won't quibble over the size.) There were two central slogans: (1) The identification of the Armed Forces Movement with soviet power—"MFA, People's Power"; and (2) the demand that the bourgeois government dissolve the Constituent Assembly. These slogans amounted to placing political confidence in the MFA, and the demonstration was objectively a provocation at a very tense moment of the class struggle.

That was what Gerry Foley, I believe quite perspicaciously, called, "one of the most tragically aberrant demonstrations in the history of modern revolutions." (*Intercontinental Press*, Vol. 13, No. 29, p. 1063)

There's no question, as Alan stressed, that a proletarian revolution is going on in Portugal, and in my judgment it has been going on since soon after the 1974 military coup. It could only be a proletarian revolution when the oppressed masses came forward in an imperialist country after almost half a century of totalitarian repression. But

this fact doesn't change anything in relationship to the political line on defense of and extension of democratic rights. The question only becomes more acute and important.

The July 16 demonstration expressed not only confidence in the MFA but political support for the bourgeois government. I'm sure some comrades don't look at it this way. Maybe they agreed with another theme, developed in *Rouge* for a while, that there is no government in command in Portugal. The MFA is so weak that it is not really a government, it's almost not there, like a ghost government. But that's not the case. There's never been a government or state so ghostly that a correct understanding of its class character is not essential to working out a correct political line.

Two nights later, three nights later, July 18 and 19 in Oporto and Lisbon, masses of SP workers took to the streets by the tens of thousands. The different analyses of and reactions to these demonstrations indicate the scope of the differences in the Fourth International.

The line of the press of the majority of the European sections indicates that their followers would have manned the barricades set up to block the SP demonstrations—and the comrades of the LCI *did* man those barricades in Lisbon. They might have tried to make the conetration appear more democratic; they might have argued and said you shouldn't stop workers, only counterrevolutionaries. But the LCI comrades were present on the barricades in Lisbon.

I just saw the public leaflet recently passed out by the Revolutionary Marxist Group in Canada. [See IIB, No. 3 in 1975]. Do you know what the slogan on that leaflet is? The slogan is "Vigilance!"—referring to the Portuguese SP demonstrations in support of its rights. The slogan of vigilance is a good one for the workers movement. It also happens to be the slogan of the cops. The question is, vigilance against whom, by whom, for what? And the vigilance on July 18-19 was the vigilance of the Stalinists, the bourgeois government and their ultraleft hangers-on against workers democracy as well as bourgeois democracy.

Initial results of IMT line

What has been the net result of course?

1. The international majority thus far, as reflected in the press of the sections they lead, has confused taking power with winning the masses, that is with building a party *capable* of taking power. These stages can be telescoped in the heat of revolutionary events, but they can't be ignored or jumped over.

No revolutionary party will take power, not only until it has won the vanguard but until it has won the support (or as Lenin said at least the very benevolent neutrality that guarantees they well support no one else) of the *majority* of the working masses. If a party confuses winning the masses with taking power it will simply block its own way, cut itself off from this majority, and become one of the obstacles to winning the working class.

In fact, winning the masses also remains the task during the period of dual power, which does not yet exist in Portugal. During a period of dual power, while your strategic goal—as always—is the transfer of power, one small thing comes first: the conquest of a majority.

2. In his report yesterday, Barry read the quote from

Comrade Michaloux in which he claims that workers power is taking shape in Portugal. Not only that, but Comrade Michaloux adds it already has a name. That name is the National Assembly of the MFA-sponsored "People's Assemblies."

We say no. That's not the name of workers power in Portugal. The name of workers power in Portugal is not yet known. What's happened is that propagandism for soviets has been substituted by the IMT for the political fight based on the logic of the living class struggle, for independent political action, for defense and extension of democratic rights, for the immediate economic needs of the workers and peasants, around which united front actions, action committees, factory councils and soviets could arise.

Such organizational forms cannot be separated from struggles for the most immediate needs of the working masses. This includes defense of democratic rights against the government and every one of its henchmen in the labor movement that tries to restrict and strangle the rights of the majority of workers. The mass of workers will not give any party a hearing that doesn't fight to defend democratic rights, whether CP, SP, or other. No worker in his or her right mind would.

Certain ultralefts might. Such elements figure that, if you can't have the dictatorship of the proletariat, at least you can first have the dictatorship and get to the power of the proletariat later. But workers in every country on the face of this earth are smarter than that, comrades.

Democratic rights and proletarian revolution

3. The third thing that's happened is that the IMT downgrades the democratic tasks of the proletarian revolution. Their admonition seems to be: "Forget about the democratic tasks of the proletarian revolution, there ain't any more of them on the agenda." This has resulted in a series of other dangerous political mistakes.

Alan told us that the demand in all the press of the sections in Europe is the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of the Portuguese troops from Angola. Maybe that's the demand now, and, if so, that's a big step forward. Better late than never. But that hasn't been the demand in the press that reflects the views of the IMT.

The IMT comrades were convinced, as Alan knows full well since he took part in the discussions, that it was wrong to advance that demand without coupling it with the demand that the Portuguese army train, turn over arms to, and help the MPLA-based groups or the MPLA-dominated organizations. For this reason our press that reflects the views of the IMT was weak and behindhand in campaigning for exactly what that banner behind me says! "Portugal Out of Angola."

There's only one possible explanation for this. It reflects softness in the defense of democratic rights.

The second failure of the IMT to grasp the relation between defending democratic rights and promoting the proletarian revolution has become obvious in relation to the Constituent Assembly.

I cannot see the realism of counterposing, to a nonexistent SP-PPD government based on the Constituent Assembly, the conquest of power by nonexistent soviets, as the IMT tends to do. These comrades fail to grasp the significance of the fact that the existing bourgeois

government and the "compromisers" all feared the convocation of the Constituent Assembly unless it were limited beforehand. They do not see how revolutionists can utilize the demand, in the name of the working class of Portugal, that the workers parties use their majority, break from the government and the pact-program, and form a workers and peasants government, and we'll support them in doing that.

Will the CP and SP leaders do this? The answer is no. Comrade Jones knows that, I know that, 1,600 people gathered here at this convention know that, but you know who doesn't know that? The majority of the Portuguese workers.

Therein lies a small problem. Our comrades of the LCI ran in the national elections last spring. The comrades of the PRT supported them. Comrades have read the reports in the *Militant* and *Intercontinental Press*. This showed, if anyone had any doubts, the comrades' willingness and desire to take advantage of openings and opportunities in Portugal. But they had one problem, which is the same as we have when we run in elections: they didn't win. They got only 0.19 percent of the vote.

The Trotskyists have not yet convinced the majority of workers that it's better to support our party than the parties they're currently backing. They support these other parties, the SP and CP, not because they favor counter-revolution but because they want socialism. So you must find ways to challenge the parties the workers look to as their representatives on every level of action, from the most immediate defense of a strike or occupation of a building, to the protection of the democratic rights of the mass of the people and to demanding they go ahead and do what they were elected to do: form a workers and peasants government and begin the construction of socialism.

That's what *we* would do if we had won over the majority in a Constituent Assembly. In the process of struggle around these demands and issues, the workers would very rapidly discover the need to close ranks, to unite, to build mass committees and a mass movement in the factories, barracks, schools and neighborhoods supporting these struggles. They'd discover that these mass committees were much more efficacious than the Constituent Assembly, more authoritative, more correct in making decisions. They'd draw the appropriate conclusions. And we would help them do the appropriate thing at the appropriate time.

But that's not the current problem. The problem is, not that we believe in Portuguese Stalinism or Portuguese Social Democracy or the bourgeois parliamentary body called the Constituent Assembly. The problem is to present on every level, including the governmental level, the perspective of a united front of the workers in defense of their class interests against what their leaders are doing today: supporting the MFA. The incapacity to see the centrality and urgency of that problem seems to me the epitome of ultraleft cretinism. Failure to understand this leads to political impotence. In face of the need to raise a governmental slogan, ultralefts dissolve the question of power into the abstract call "for a workers government," or make an absurd call for a government based on nonexistent soviets. It shows that the ultralefts have no possibility of winning over the majority of workers.

The left cover for popular frontism

In this entire process we noted a tremendously important fact about the ultralefts. (I think its correct to characterize them that way. You could call them neo-anarchists, anarcho-sovietists, anarcho-councilists, and go on to explain the differences between them since there's a whole spectrum of these organizations. But one generic term for all of them is quite useful: they're infantile leftists.) These people, who in their majority want to struggle for a socialist Portugal, have found themselves in practice acting as the left cover of the popular frontists and the loyal left critics of a bourgeois regime. That's where ultraleftism and adventurism can end up.

In one of the articles that Barry quoted, Comrade Michaloux says something else which was stunning at the time and is ever more stunning now. He said the workers in Portugal as a whole see the Guide Document of the MFA as the general expression of their aspirations and thus an encouragement for achieving them. Is that the way, for instance, the SP workers see the Guide Document of the MFA?

The ultralefts end up not only supporting the MFA, they end up one way or another looking to the CP, confusing the Stalinists' third-period leftism with a genuine left turn. Identifying with a "hard" CP, they fall into the trap of pushing for the same goal as the Stalinists: government for, not government by, the workers. They find themselves willy-nilly being attracted toward the schemes of the CP even as they're denouncing it. In so doing, the ultralefts, to the degree they're large enough to be a factor, play, like the CP does, into the hands of the fascist right, demoralizing the workers, breaking the connection between the struggle for socialism and for democracy, dividing the working class, and minimizing the conditions for a united struggle by the workers to achieve their own class goals. They completely miss the fundamental need for united-front action in a situation like this where the revolutionists have far from conquered the majority of the Portuguese workers.

Finally, the predilection for minority actions, for minority initiatives in action, for minority violence, that has been shared by this whole generation of ultralefts on an international scale for an extended period, leads more and more to one or another form of what was implied by the demonstration on July 16: the concept of a putsch (which is the last thing they originally intended), as opposed to mobilizing the toiling masses in their millions to take power in their own hands. And the payoff is a costly one.

The debate in the Fourth International

In one way it's too bad the discussion on Portugal has to be connected to the larger debate in the international, because comrades would like to debate out to the end the Portuguese question in and of itself. The Portuguese question itself is complicated, very important and we're just beginning to get into it. But there's no way we can avoid simultaneously looking at the current line of the Fourth International on Portugal and the seven-year-old discussion. The connection between the two seems obvious to us. And I think that, instead of seeing this round as "that same old debate," comrades the world over will

rather see the previous debate in new terms.

First, the turn of the 1969 world congress was an ultraleft turn. It took the form of adaptation to guerrilla warfare. It led to adventurism, to adaptation to ultraleftism and precipitated various instances of opportunism along the way. What began as a misreading of the pattern of world revolution and the realities of the Chinese and Cuban events, became an ultraleft bias, an ultraleft axis in the general politics of the majority. This turn was a reflection of the petty-bourgeois radicalism which surrounds our cadres.

Second, the real thrust of the European document is now crystal clear. At the time it was drafted in 1972 no one could say for sure how it would actually be applied in a revolutionary situation. That test was to come. Well, it's here, the line has been applied in Portugal. Not by all the comrades in Portugal. That's another question. But it has been applied by the leadership of the Fourth International majority in the press of the sections they lead. And this gives us a preview of what's likely to happen in Spain, or France or Britain or Germany under similar circumstances.

The adaptation to the "new mass vanguard" under the guise of winning, or transforming, it into an adequate instrument and thereby outflanking the reformists, has resulted in the substitution of minority action for the method of the Transitional Program based on the need to win the majority of toilers. It has led, not to outflanking the traditional workers parties and "recomposing" the workers into a new Marxist vanguard, but to the disorientation of the vanguard. Instead of outflanking, they ended up tailing after the CP and even to some extent the bourgeois government.

Comrades should take time to reread our original criticism of the European document [IIDB, Vol. X, No. 3, March 1973]. It begins by summarizing the salient errors of the document and then takes up the entire concept of the "new mass vanguard," where it will lead, what will happen when we base ourselves on the "concerns," or as Alan says, the "rhythm," of the new mass vanguard instead of the concerns of the masses. We predicted in our criticism that there would be a tendency toward projecting maximalist demands and so-called militant actions that presumably reflect the level of consciousness of the vanguard but would be in reality adaptations to this "vanguard's" political backwardness and aberrations.

In this critique we drew a balance sheet on the defense of the Irish revolution and Vietnam. We examined the so-called tactic of winning over the vanguard, regrouping it as a "serious striking force." We noted the substitution of calls for workers control and workers power in the abstract for a clear perspective of building a powerful class-struggle left wing in the labor movement and its organizations. We warned about the document's failure to take up the role of democratic rights and demands and their importance in the coming revolutionary upsurges. We ended up with the "dialectics of minority violence" and what it could lead to. If you think it's an outdated debate, comrades should just take an hour and reread that critique.

Argentina and institutionalization revisited

The meaning of the most recent Argentine debate is now also clearer. [see IIDB, Vol. 12, No. 4]. The IMT line is not

being tested anew in Argentina only because of the disintegration of the forces that supported the majority in Argentina. All they can do is support or criticize, agree or disagree, with the PST. But the debate that developed around Argentina during the last year was over the question, (as Joe Hansen put it in the title to his news analysis in IP): "Is Democracy Worth Fighting For?" Is it relevant to proletarian revolutionists? No matter how it's befogged, that's what the debate is about. And this same debate has now come to Portugal.

Peter Camejo reminded me of an analogy with the Bolivian experience. The Bolivian comrades, under the influence of the turn of the 1969 world congress, basically counterposed the nonexistent People's Revolutionary Army—remember that?—to the Popular Assembly and then, when the coup finally came, they joined the nonexistent revolutionary front, called the FRA, with a popular-front program, and made a self-criticism of themselves for even fooling around with the Popular Assembly. We see the same general pattern in Portugal.

The differences in the Argentine debate were discussed in a document that was submitted too late to the preconvention discussion to get into the bulletin. But I'm sure the incoming Political Committee will decide to make it available to the comrades. [See IIDB, Vol. 12, No. 5]. This document came from supporters of the IMT in the SWP. In this document, entitled "Program and the PST's 'Specific, Limited Agreements,'" comrades Bob and Berta Langston clearly explain their view of the relation between proletarian revolution and the institutionalization (that horrible word from Argentina!) of democratic rights. They say, "By Trotsky's method, the question of institutionalization would be dealt with in general this way.

"Institutionalization?"—But by this abstraction the Argentine bourgeoisie and its imperialist senior partners understand the defense of their profits and plunder by buying the acquiescence of the Argentine workers in their superexploitation through offering them the right to elect the agent of their superexploitation. We stand ready to defend the institutionalization of democratic rights, if we first bind our capitalists hand and foot so they cannot any longer use the democratic rights to exploit us; if the workers and the farmers of our country become its real masters; if the wealth of the country be transferred from the hands of a tiny minority to the hands of the people; if the army becomes a weapon in the hands of the exploited for the defense of the new workers' and farmers' institutions instead of a weapon of the exploiters."

That leaves us in pretty bad shape until the dictatorship of the proletariat, because it is only then that we stand ready to defend the institutionalization of democratic rights against reactionary assault. In fact, that ultimistic line would leave us unable to convince a single American worker that this is a party or a revolution they want to fight for.

The crisis of the Fourth International

It's clear that the differences that have appeared on Portugal constitute a grave danger to the unity of the Fourth International. This is for an objective reason, not a subjective one. That is, there are sharp differences over the political positions that must be presented by all sections and sympathizing groups on a weekly and even daily

basis. That leads to direct political conflict. The *República* affair is one example. These are not theoretical or historical questions, which can always be discussed in a more leisurely way, including even the most important theoretical questions.

Comrades will remember that Trotsky insisted that the Shachtmanites could stay in the Socialist Workers party and the Fourth International, even if they didn't agree that the Soviet Union was a workers state. That question could be discussed at leisure in the discussion bulletin. He was confident it was a fight we would win. The head-on clash came on whether or not you agreed on the political line of defense of the Soviet Union in the event of an imperialist attack and conducted yourselves accordingly.

What we face in Portugal is not differences over theoretical or historical questions, although the debate will lead to and include such issues. What we face, and what makes the situation sharp, is the need to take positions weekly, daily—even hourly in Portugal—on burning political questions which are going to decide the success or failure of a socialist revolution.

These are not organizational conflicts, which can always be subordinated among responsible leaders in order to seek political clarity.

The differences are not over the broad objective analysis of the world relationship of forces. We agree on the end of the long detour in the pattern of world revolution; on the fact that there will be further workers upsurges in the other imperialist countries, especially in Europe; we have a common world economic resolution; we have basic agreement on many programmatic points that every single one of us subscribe to.

What we face are acute political differences, which are directly tied to success or failure in the preparation of cadres and in party-building.

Of course, there's an additional factor involved here, which the comrades have become aware of in the last couple of months. That's the public character of the differences.

Every group in the world Trotskyist movement has had to speak out clearly and take positions in its public press. And so what's happened is not simply an internal debate, which we will certainly have, and which we'll make as extensive and democratic as possible, but a public debate that has already begun, and will inevitably continue. Each section and sympathizing organization must take a position every week in its paper. No one has the right to remain silent on the political questions in Portugal. No one has the right not to take a position, if you pretend to be offering revolutionary leadership. For that reason the discussion is bound to continue to have a public side.

In this process of debate, it is our opinion that every possible compromise on the organizational plane should be made to seek one thing: political clarity.

Because of the importance of the Portuguese events, the debate ranges beyond the Fourth International. Everyone who claims to be a socialist has to take a position. Moscow has to take a position, they have to answer Kissinger, they have to defend the Portuguese CP, they have to express their line. Peking has to take a position; Havana has to take a position.

Everyone who claims to be Trotskyist or have a Trotskyist lineage has to take a position—Marcy, Healy, Lambert, the Spartacists, even smaller groups whose

names I can never remember. If they consider themselves Trotskyists in any respect, they must take positions at least as often as their newspapers come out.

This poses an additional challenge to us, an additional political obligation. We must not let any routinism, sectarianism or dead-end factionalism stand in the way of simultaneously, along with the clarification within the international, turning to those forces that show any motion toward Trotskyist positions on the Portugal events. We must explore any motion of this kind to see whether or not we can strengthen the forces of the Fourth International.

The meaning of OCRFI's overtures

I have to say a few words about one of the currents involved in this process, that's the Organizing Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International (OCRFI).

Most of you are aware that this international current is led primarily by comrades who were formerly members of the Fourth International, and who at the time of the 1963 reunification broke with us and decided not to come along with the reunification. Instead they joined Healy in the rump "International Committee of the Fourth International."

In 1971, they split with Healy. As you might guess, if you read Healy's press, the split was over a vote on dialectics at a youth conference in Essen, Germany. That's Healy's specialty. You vote on philosophy instead of on political line, and then watch out or you'll get thrown down the steps.

This split in the "International Committee," which was at least in part a reflection of the accelerating pace of the world class struggle and the developing debate within the Fourth International on important political questions, attracted the comrades of the OCRFI toward the Fourth International. The fact is that the Fourth International, regardless of its small size and its relative weaknesses as an international organization, is rooted in the class struggle, is building parties, and at the same time debating the life and death questions of the world revolution. This has a powerful attractive force. Within their own ranks, as they frankly say, the OCRFI has some of the same divisions and some of the same debates going on.

They contacted the United Secretariat in May 1973. But the letter they sent at the time, as the United Secretariat read it, seemed to indicate a desire not to further the process of building the Fourth International but to split the Fourth International. So the United Secretariat replied saying it rejected the proposal that they take part in the 1974 world congress. It gave the reasons for rejecting their request.

But the United Secretariat added a very important last paragraph to that letter, which said, if you're willing to accept the rules of the Fourth International and if you're willing to eliminate slanderous attacks on the Fourth International and its leaders from your public press which will reflect a different stance toward the International, this whole question could be reconsidered.

On the eve of the last world congress the OCRFI wrote another letter to the United Secretariat in which they agreed to these conditions. The United Secretariat Parity Commission that existed prior to the 1974 world congress

unanimously agreed to respond in a positive way. It was too late to invite them to participate in the world congress, but we agreed to indicate the United Secretariat was open to entering into discussion. During the press of preparations for the world congress, this letter was never sent. But it had been decided upon.

In the late summer of 1974 the comrades of the OCRFI renewed contact once again. This time one of their leaders in North America on publishing business came to the SWP. Since they had not received any response to their last letter to the United Secretariat and since they did not know that one had been agreed on, they assumed that the leadership of the Fourth International had deliberately decided not to respond.

We reported this new overture to the United Secretariat and it was unanimously agreed to meet with the comrades of the OCRFI and discuss the matter.

Thus, last October 15, a delegation from the United Secretariat including French comrades, American comrades, and a Canadian comrade, met with a delegation from the OCRFI. Prior to this meeting, the United Secretariat had agreed that, if the discussions went satisfactorily, it would agree to an exchange of internal bulletins, to an exchange of information about publishing Trotsky in various Eastern European languages, and to explore the possibilities of any common work in the defense of political prisoners, especially in countries like Argentina where all of our comrades are under such brutal repression. These proposals were agreed to by the OCRFI in the meeting and the process of exchanging internal bulletins was begun.

The tone of the debate

However, as these initial exchanges were taking place a complication arose. It was our opinion and that of the United Secretariat, that in their public press, the comrades of the OCRFI continued to occasionally refer to the Fourth International and its leaders in a manner that was not conducive to a comradely debate. Maybe polemics in France are rougher than polemics in the United States. But they still used terminology that you don't apply to people you want to discuss politics with in a fraternal manner. So the French comrades of the LCR urged us to make a public statement about this, to try to alter this tone, as well as to counter any factional fishing by opponents.

We didn't think it was wise to make the statement public but we agreed to defer to their judgment. Comrades read it in *Intercontinental Press* (Vol. 13, No. 1, January 13, 1975). In it we stressed our estimate that the OCRFI comrades were sincere in seeking an international framework for their work, and seeking political clarification.

After some consideration, the OCI, the French section of the OCRFI, responded, agreeing to change the tone of their polemics, so the language, while very clear politically and very forthright, would be comradely. And they've lived up to that agreement in the entire debate on Portugal between the OCI and the LCR. I think there's been one slip. In one article the comrades of the LCR accused the OCI of "freemasonry." Apparently that's a big insult in France. The comrades of the OCRFI objected to this. It's not the kind of language we use in the *Militant* or the *Red Weekly*. But except for that one slip, the debate is taking place on a strictly political plane. The comrades now have access to

some of the debate which is translated in the Internal Information Bulletin, "Selected Articles on Portugal from the International Press."

Our views on this whole process of discussion with the OCRFI must be understood very clearly, because they go to the heart of our concept of building the Fourth International.

We consider ourselves duty bound to meet halfway, to probe, to discuss with, any forces that come in our direction or say they're coming in our direction on any significant political question. We reject, as we rejected at the time of the preparation of the 1963 reunification, beginning the discussion by dealing with the theoretical differences or with historical differences which could be great. To us, the greatest curse in the Fourth International from about 1957 to 1963 was the dead-end factionalism and sectarianism of Gerry Healy in the International Committee and Michel Pablo in the International Secretariat, which through such tactics prevented the reunification of the Fourth International for six years.

Suspicious, deep antagonisms, and even bitterness, especially in countries where there are large contending forces, are inevitable. But we cannot proceed from suspicions. If we had begun with them in the 1950s, the Fourth International would not have been reunified and new forces would not have been attracted and tested. There may be a maneuver involved and there are always mixed motives—over the years we have gone through different experiences—while considerable differences clearly exist on a number of questions. But we must act objectively to make the most of such situations.

Trotsky's and Cannon's advice

Our concept of constructing the international, we think, is the same as Trotsky's. When we were fighting Healy's sabotage of reunification efforts and Pablo's stalling maneuvers, Jim Cannon wrote the national office a number of letters and some of the things he said are important for today. [See *Education for Socialists, Towards a History of the Fourth International, Part VII, The Struggle for Reunification, Vol. 2*].

He reminded us that Trotsky never envisaged the Fourth International as a monolithic, purely Trotskyist organization, but as a broad revolutionary movement in which orthodox Trotskyists might possibly, under certain conditions and for certain periods, even be in a minority. Trotsky said this explicitly in letters to us prior to the Founding Congress in 1938 in order to educate us. At that time Trotsky made a series of proposals and Jim lists what they were.

Jim points out that, if you are going to be a politician who wants to build the movement—and not a dead-end factionalist who can never build it and who will unconsciously become a hopeless sectarian—then the aim of discussing with other forces with whom you're possibly converging is not to produce new splits and splinters until there's nothing left but a sterile little church of self-satisfied scholastics. To be sure, the discussion of obvious disagreements will, in its first stage, draw clear lines of differentiation. But the aim is not to freeze old splits and manufacture new ones. Rather the object is to get all points of view on the table for consideration and

discussion, with the expectation that some if not all of the participants in the discussion will change and learn from the arguments and the unfolding events and the two sides can even come closer together in a broader unification. Any other course is disastrous factionalism and sectarianism.

Jim's advice was pretty good. But, as he said, he was simply repeating what has always been our course, and what we learned from the Old Man.

We know we have differences with the comrades of the OCRFI. But we know something else. They themselves have gone through a series of experiences in the last decade, with pressures and divisions as they have had to grapple with the same questions that have faced the Fourth International. We know that within their ranks are several thousand people of the same generation as those of us who fill this room. These young comrades couldn't give less of a damn about some 20-year-old feud between Pierre Frank and Pierre Lambert, or between Joe Hansen and Michel Pablo or anyone else. Like most of you they weren't around in 1963 to see who was for or against unification. They're grappling with the same problems of the world revolutionary process today that we're grappling with here.

We believe—they may differ with us on this—that the forces around the OCRFI are attracted to us because of our strength. They're attracted to the Fourth International because, in spite of the differences, the reunification has been a success. There is a world organization of initial cadres which all of us are striving to strengthen at the same time as we have the sharpest political debate when necessary.

There's another thing. A new test is on the agenda: Portugal. As long as the mode of the debate remains comradely we are obligated to discuss. Healy's method is the opposite. He specializes in discussing each week which one of us are agents or something or other. Currently he considers Joe Hansen extremely dubious. That precludes serious discussion, unfortunately.

A revolution's going on in Portugal, and the comrades of the OCRFI and other comrades who consider themselves Trotskyist are being tested in that revolution along with everyone else. This must be part of the broad world discussion. We have several differences on Portugal with the OCRFI that we're already aware of. Some of them are referred to in Dick Fidler's article in *IP* ["LCR Analyzes 'República' Affair and Replies to OCI," Vol. 13, No. 30, August 4, 1975]—their concept of the united front, the demand for a Soares government, the stance toward the SP. But on the *República* incident, on the meaning of the Trade Union Unity Law, on the character of the MFA, on the role of the Stalinist party, on the Constituent Assembly and the need to call for a workers and peasants government—their positions have tended in our opinion to be Trotskyist. That's how we read their press and that's at least worth discussion.

Strengthening the international

This process with the OCRFI is symbolic of a larger development. We're convinced that three processes will occur simultaneously.

1. New forces, revolutionary forces, formerly ultraleft forces that are learning from their mistakes, will be attracted toward the international around the tests in

Portugal just as they were around the tests in China, Spain, Cuba and other big revolutionary events of the past.

2. The overtures by the OCRFI for discussions and exploration of possible areas of collaboration bring toward us several thousand cadres who consider themselves Trotskyists. They tell us to set the ground rules, to determine which questions are to be debated, to decide what discussion will be internal and what external. And they will, I believe, accept and live up to this framework.

3. We are convinced that the remnants of Healy's International Committee are splitting further. In Australia, in Germany, in Greece and Latin America Healy's attempt to bypass the Fourth International by setting up a church is heading toward its logical end.

We cannot let the debate in the Fourth International, which is crucial for its own political clarity, stand in the way of moving in a united and clear political manner to meet the opportunity and historic responsibility which these openings present to the international.

We do not know how these discussions with the OCRFI will turn out. We do not know whether discussion of political differences will lead toward convergence with the Fourth International or toward clearer differentiation and divergence. But we must approach it in the way Jim Cannon said and Trotsky taught us. This is a new test of the reunifying capacities of the Fourth International leadership and its initiatives in building the Fourth International.

Many comrades have asked why there is no official delegation from the Political Bureau of the French LCR present at our convention. The explanation is that they decided not to come because we invited the comrades of the OCRFI to observe the open sessions of our convention. To us, the invitation was simply a continuation of what the United Secretariat had agreed to when we decided to meet with them and exchange internal bulletins. We saw no reason not to extend such an invitation to the leaders of an organization who have read all the internal debates and followed everything in the bulletin. They simply hear what we have to say instead of reading it a month later. Of course, with the proviso that the closed sessions will be closed to them as to other observers, and open only to the convention delegates and the IEC members of the Fourth International here as observers.

A comrade from France and one from Canada came to observe for the OCRFI. The French section decided not to send anyone because of this.

It's unfortunate. Our discussion here would have been much richer if Comrade Michaloux had been present, for example, to participate in the Portugal debate. We regret the incident. We consider it a passing thing, and we're sure the French comrades in their majority will, after reflection on our letter of explanation, alter their stance on this.

In order to clear the air on this question, after the convention we will publish internally the entire correspondence with and about the Organizing Committee so that the comrades can read it all for themselves. [See Appendix to this report].

The role of Intercontinental Press

I want to take the rest of my time to say a few words about *Intercontinental Press*.

Intercontinental Press is one of the key conquests of the

reunification of the Fourth International a little over a decade ago. In fact, it's the standing institutionalization—if I may use the term—of the reunified Fourth International. It's one of the tests and proofs of the correctness and fruitfulness of the decision by the majority of comrades in the International Committee and the International Secretariat to drive ahead to achieve the reunification.

IP's origins are very interesting. It began, not with *World Outlook*, but with a little hectographed organ called *The Internationalist*. Its editor was Joe Hansen. Its chief hectographer was Reba Hansen.

The first issue Joe edited was dated February 1963, *half a year before the reunification of the Fourth International*, and it says it is the voice of the International Secretariat of the Fourth International.

What happened was this. As we got close to the reunification, the IS comrades asked Joe if he would take over the editorship of their organ, *The Internationalist*. He agreed, and with our blessing, jumped the gun on the reunification by six or seven months. This was—all thirteen issues of it—the forerunner of *World Outlook*, which later changed its name to *Intercontinental Press*.

The purpose of *IP* was quite simple: to present the views of the world Trotskyist movement on current events through a weekly voice. It was also an international news service and an organizer and a propagandist for Trotskyism. And most importantly, its value came from providing accurate, reliable factual information, limited only by the resources and network of correspondents and translators who could be assembled.

Trotsky repeatedly explained how crucial it was for accurate information to be available to the ranks. In documents about the Spanish opposition, for example, Trotsky emphasized the point over and over: "The level of a revolutionary organization rises all the faster, the more it is brought into the discussion on *all* questions, the less the leaders try to think, act, and behave as guardians for the organization. The first condition for party democracy consists of providing all-sided *information*. . . ." [*The Spanish Revolution, 1931-39*, p. 190.] Or again: "All important international documents on the questions in dispute must be translated into Spanish and brought to the knowledge of all the members. . . ." [p. 193]

This was one of Trotsky's constant themes. He was convinced that no other method could forge a self-thinking, self-acting cadre that could do the job, and not simply turn helplessly to intellectual "guardians" to send advice.

There's a tremendous history incorporated in the almost thirteen years of *IP*. It has contained the facts, documents, accurate presentation of conflicting positions that are available nowhere else, without which every single member would not be able to make decisions they have to make to be responsible for the direction of world Trotskyism. News articles, documents, debates, along with seemingly obscure items available nowhere else in the world. The documents of the guerrillaists in Latin America, for example.

Comrade Mario Roberto Santucho, the leader of the Argentine PRT-ERP, was always appreciative of the fact that *Intercontinental Press* translated and published his real views and the documents of his movement. That's a real compliment he paid to *IP*.

IP gives you the facts—about Ireland, about Angola. It serializes important works like Pierre Frank's history of

the Fourth International. *IP* prints documents and views not only of our allies but of our opponents, so we are equipped to debate, so we can intervene in new developments, so the Trotskyist movement can be at the center of revolutionary political discussion on a world scale.

The comrades may not realize it, but *Intercontinental Press* has carried hundreds of pages of translations from *Rouge*, the paper of the biggest European Trotskyist organization. Were it not for *IP*, most of us who don't read French would have no way of knowing what the views of the French comrades are, how they present them—not secondhand, but in their own words. The goal is to make our cadres confident and knowledgeable about the facts so they are prepared to make informed decisions.

One thing Jim Cannon always warned us against was parties of "revolutionary" hand-raisers, or what he called the jumping-jack parties of the Stalinized Comintern. Some leader makes a "billiant" proposal and their hands come up like a jumping jack. An informed and educated cadre is the only guarantee of adhering to a revolutionary line.

IP is also central to another aspect of internationalism. That's collaboration. *Intercontinental Press* is a method of collaborating with Trotskyist editors and writers from sections and sympathizing groups all over the world. Directly and indirectly through signed articles it's also a vehicle to draw individuals outside the Fourth International closer to us.

IP is living proof that the international is not afraid to present fully and forthrightly the views of other people and then respond to them.

Finally, we should note that *World Outlook/Intercontinental Press* had a special mission ratified by the reunification congress. In the last copy of *The Internationalist* that announced its planned change of name to *World Outlook*, there's a report on the reunification of the Fourth International. The article ended with this paragraph, a position that had been unanimously decided on by the reunification congress. It said, "The unification brought together the main forces of the world Trotskyist movement. Holdouts include an ultraleft current in Latin America formerly adhering to the IEC [that was Posadas] and the British and French sections of the IC. Although invited to send observers, they declined. The congress, however, unanimously reaffirmed its appeal for the unification of all Trotskyist forces." One of *IP*'s functions was to help advance this perspective and decision of the reunification congress.

Where do we stand today?

From our point of view, the discussion on Portugal, at least an initial balance sheet of it, confirms our assessment of the nature and trend of the ultraleft turn of the 1969 world congress and its ramifications. It confirms our critique of the IMT's European resolution, which is now being tested in practice in a prerevolutionary situation. And it confirms our view of the errors the comrades of the majority make on the relation between the struggle for democracy and the proletarian revolution.

Their line if carried out to the end leads away from the transitional method and toward abandoning the Leninist strategy of party building.

Our goals are very simple. First, we want political clarity, and we're willing to subordinate and compromise any organizational questions short of violating the integrity of our parties to facilitate this political clarity.

Second, we're convinced that when the facts and issues become clearer and unmistakable, the majority of the cadres of the Fourth International will arrive at a substantial degree of homogeneity on Portugal.

Third, it is our obligation as Trotskyists to hold out our hand to those who move toward us in this period and to combine the debate within the international with building the international, drawing in new forces.

Fourth, this means that we must handle the public debate in such a way as to facilitate these objectives, and we must do everything in our power to assure an open political discussion inside the international movement and not one that takes place inside of factions, inside of tendencies, inside of cliques.

We said earlier that Portugal was so important because the lessons of the Portuguese revolution apply internationally. We're always thinking in the back of our minds, what lessons from there can we use here? Thus we are especially interested in this discussion.

We're determined to collaborate with all comrades in the

world movement who agree with us on this basic course. We look forward to collaboration with the comrades here for the first time from places like Colombia, Costa Rica, Martinique, Portugal, and Puerto Rico. To us, the criterion of cooperation is not the size of the organization, its experience or lack thereof, or agreement with us on disputed questions—they don't have to be previous pals or buddies, or want to become such. All we ask is revolutionary integrity and goodwill and the desire to strengthen the world Trotskyist movement. That's the starting point for collaboration.

Without this international collaboration we wouldn't be true to our program. But that's not all. There is no party that needs international collaboration and understanding of the lessons of the international class struggle more than does the SWP. We need this to help equip ourselves for the massive tasks we are determined to accomplish.

For that reason it would be good to reaffirm what we decided upon at our last convention, that is, to instruct the incoming National Committee to use all the forces and resources at its command to struggle for a democratic, a Trotskyist and a growing Fourth International, and hold out our hand to every single revolutionist who wants to join us in this effort.

Summary

Portugal has been very thoroughly discussed, and there will be much more discussion in the coming months. I will take up just two points.

Democratic rights and institutions of bourgeois democracy

First, Alan says that it is correct to defend bourgeois democratic rights—at least against attempts to suppress or restrict them. But it's wrong in principle ever to defend bourgeois democratic institutions against reactionary attempts to curtail or eliminate them. Well, if by the latter he means things like the cops—okay. But of course those are not the bourgeois or the democratic institutions that reaction selects as targets.

The problem is that there are no bourgeois democratic rights that are not more or less institutionalized. They don't float around out there somewhere in the void. They're not a Hegelian essence. They're codified in laws and constitutions, like the Bill of Rights.

For instance, we with millions of other Americans are fighting to amend the *bourgeois* constitution of the United States of America to include the Equal Rights Amendment for women. We're trying to "institutionalize" such equal rights. Our party, a revolutionary proletarian party, fights to institutionalize the ERA and will strive to implement it if it becomes the law of the land. We may even call for the use of federal troops to implement it, as we've done in the fight for desegregation of schools. That's not for us a question of principle. The tactical proposal depends on the specific situation—it may be correct to demand that the government use arms to enforce equal rights for women as for Blacks under certain circumstances.

The Bill of Rights is part of the first bourgeois constitution in world history. And we know—from way before Marx, from Hegel, Rousseau, and other thinkers—that bourgeois "equality" is based on all kinds of inequality, in spite of whatever equal rights it guarantees on paper. Our people have many formal rights but they don't own or control capital. We've said that we are going to put the progressive provisions of the Bill of Rights in the constitution of the workers republic and expand it to the fullest. We tell that to the American workers and we don't mean it, there will probably never be a victorious proletarian revolution in this country.

So democratic rights do not just float around in some pure form. The relation between bourgeois democracy and workers democracy is a little more dialectical than that. Between the two is struggle. Mass struggle, class struggle, using our methods and our goals, to among other things defend and extend the democratic rights which the bourgeoisie more and more restricts and represses.

The logic of Alan's position—people, to be sure, can pull back from the logical conclusion of their positions and rethink them—is the paragraph I read from the document written by the IMT comrades in the SWP. They say we can't fight for the institutionalization of the Equal Rights Amendment until we tie the exploiters hand and foot. That's sure an inspiring perspective, isn't it? That's ultraleftism carried to a preposterous extreme.

I would like to point out something else. We can also *defend* a bourgeois parliament. We don't ever *support* one politically and we never support a bourgeois party. But under certain extreme circumstances, with our own

methods and for our own class reasons—against a fascist or military coup, for instance—we can defend certain bourgeois institutions. *How* you do that is most important. You can do it opportunistically, and that's suicidal. But sometimes in the course of the class struggle you may have to defend parliamentary institutions against their overthrow by rightist forces.

You couldn't do so while scurrying away from the fight and hiding behind the kind of abstentionist formulas in the document of Bob and Berta Langston.

The constituent assembly

Concerning the question of the constituent assembly in Portugal. What is at issue cannot be reduced to "for or against its immediate dissolution." And we do not say that all the IMT comrades call for its immediate dissolution, as some others do. But this does not exhaust the problem.

The Constituent Assembly as presently constituted is a shackled animal. Don't forget what the MFA and the reformist parties let come into being. Tied hand and foot through the pact-program to the MFA, the Constituent Assembly is a fake. It's a fake because the ruling class still fears what would happen in a more untrammelled Constituent Assembly. They still prefer ruling through the army, with the façade of democracy in a hamstrung Constituent Assembly, where people meet once in a while to talk about a constitution. Don't forget the agreed-upon rules. You are not supposed to talk about anything but the constitution, and the constitution must approve MFA rule.

Alan said that maybe tomorrow the bourgeoisie will use a parliament, maybe called the Constituent Assembly, to rule through, and it will repress the working people. All bourgeois parliaments do.

Maybe this *will* happen if the situation becomes sufficiently stabilized from the bourgeoisie's point of view. But that's tomorrow—not today. And there's good reason why they want to keep the Constituent Assembly tied down today, why they fear it, why the Stalinist leaders fear it, and why the Social Democratic leaders fear it. And why we alone don't fear it.

We've been accused of revisionism on this question. So I'm going to read two quotations from our teachers.

"In Lenin's view both the Constituent Assembly and the soviets are organs of one and the same class, or of an alliance of the nonpropertied classes (the proletariat and the rural poor). The question of combining the Constituent Assembly with the soviets had a technical, organizational significance for Lenin. For his opponents, the soviets represented one class (the proletariat and the poor peasants) and the Constituent Assembly remained the organ of the propertied classes." [*Challenge of the Left Opposition (1923-25)*, p. 285-86.]

"Every direct or indirect attempt to consider the question of the Constituent Assembly from a formal, legal point of view, within the framework of ordinary bourgeois democracy and disregarding the class struggle and the civil war, would be a betrayal of the proletariat's cause, and the adoption of the bourgeois standpoint." [Ibid, p. 288].

The first quote is from Trotsky about Lenin, and then I quoted from Lenin after they took power.

Of course there's an unstated assumption behind these quotes. Lenin always approached the question from the

point of view of driving toward the establishment and consolidation of the power of the workers. That precluded maneuvering with the bourgeoisie to somehow incorporate soviets as an amendment to a bourgeois constitution. From a strategic point of view, that's the way Lenin and Trotsky approached the problem.

The Bolsheviks also made a prediction during 1917. We're the only ones who will call the Constituent Assembly into being, they said. Because the others fear it. The Mensheviks fear it, and the Social Revolutionaries fear it too, even though these parties will have a majority in it when it meets because they fear the demands and expectations of the workers and peasants behind them.

Lenin never had any illusion that he could reform a bourgeois parliament and take power. But things are more complicated than ultralefts imagine, and political problems can't be solved with overly simple formulas. There's no substitute for a revolutionary strategy based on independent class politics.

I want to recommend comrade Fred Feldman's class, which is to be held as part of the educational series after the convention. One thing I didn't touch on at all that some comrades raised in the discussion, is the spectrum of theoretical and programmatic points in dispute within the world movement—the Chinese question, the question of the state, the question of the workers and farmers government, the nature of Stalinism, the social character of the Stalinist caste. All these questions are also being discussed simultaneously with the political questions. Fred's classes will, I think, give a pretty accurate picture of the party's point of view on these questions. [To be printed in an early 1976 *Education for Socialists* bulletin].

The PRT-Combatiente and how it was treated

Now to the organizational question. I hope I don't seem to be soft on ultraleftism, but I do not agree with Comrade Jones that the Argentine PRT-Combatiente should have been expelled at the Tenth World Congress. I think he missed the point.

What we objected to in the relations between the majority leadership and the Argentine comrades was, number one, the splitting of the Argentine section. We believe the functioning of the international majority leadership in Argentina and their stance toward the elected leadership of the section certainly did not tend to halt the original 1968 split. And that's putting the best light on it.

Second, we think it was a big blunder, once the PRT-Combatiente comrades were part of the world movement, part of the Fourth International, to maneuver with them. To us the crime was the decision—made by some secret faction in the leadership since it was never discussed in any elected body of the Fourth International—not to polemicize with the PRT-Combatiente on their political positions, which were taking them hell-bent away from Trotskyism. That decision was not only an error but we paid dearly for it. We unnecessarily lost cadres and human lives because of that mistaken decision.

We were not for driving the PRT-Combatiente out of the Fourth International. We wanted to fight them *politically*, to try to save every one of those comrades for the world Trotskyist movement.

We came to admire a lot of the individuals in the PRT-Combatiente whom we met and argued with. In fact, we who were the most vigorous political opponents of the PRT-Combatiente's line were the ones who kept fighting to get their material published so that their real views could be known by the rank and file of the world movement. The majority leaders kept trying to suppress their views, which they found embarrassing.

I also thought it would not even have been correct to expel the PRT at the Tenth World Congress if they hadn't already quit. I would have been against it. It certainly would have been correct to have called a cease-fire in the war against the great devil Moreno then and there and to have recognized the PST, the largest workers party supporting the Fourth International, as the fraternal section in Argentina, even though reactionary legislation prevents their affiliation in the same way similar legislation does ours. And we would have had to solicit the opinion and advice of the PST on whether or not it was correct to maintain a sympathizing group status for the PRT-Combatiente or other groupings. I think the comrades of the PST would have made an objective decision and done what was best.

So we have disagreed with how the majority related to the Argentine comrades all along the line. We were against the role of the majority in the split that created what became the PRT-Combatiente. We think it was wrong not to bring out and debate their positions at the Ninth World Congress and after. It was wrong when their real views, the views contained in their pamphlet, *The Only Road to Workers Power and Socialism*, [IIB No. 4 1972] were hidden from the ranks of the international. When their views did become known among the ranks, we disagreed with the decision not to polemicize with them. We deeply resented the loss of those comrades, which was unnecessary. We were opposed to driving them out or maneuvering with them. We were for treating them like comrades, like political equals whose ideas you take seriously and deal with honestly and objectively. To this day I still have more respect for Comrade Santucho than for those who tried to maneuver with him, split his party behind his back, and suppress his political views.

The world Trotskyist movement

Comrade Alan read too much into my utilization of the term "world Trotskyist movement." It's much more innocent than his suspicions lead him to think. I got it from two places. The central programmatic document adopted at the reunification congress of the Fourth International is entitled, "For Early Reunification of the World Trotskyist Movement." That was the title the world congress gave it. OK?

The second place I got it from is the official communiqué issued by the Reunification Congress of the Fourth International, published in the first issue of *World Outlook*, which I read.

When the leadership of the Fourth International was less factional and more objective, back in 1963, we recognized that there were other Trotskyists than ourselves. We wanted to bring them inside the Fourth International. And we think the Trotskyist program requires the building of an organized Fourth International

with rules and regulations and norms of functioning. Without an organized international the program would degenerate. So that's where the phrase "world Trotskyist movement" comes from. It's a good term.

We of the Fourth International think we are right. We are convinced we are right. But we must face a reality. Forces, numbering in the thousands, who are outside our ranks, cite Trotskyism, the Transitional Program, Leninism-Trotskyism as they understand it, as their frame of reference. We explain who they are. We polemicize with them. Some of them we pay little attention to as sects.

But some of them, because of their adherence to Trotskyism as they understand it are affected by big political events, reflect the legacy of the Transitional Program and the documents of the Fourth International, and move in our direction. Maybe their trajectory will carry them beyond our orbit. Maybe they are going to swerve off. Maybe some of them are going to maneuver with us. But those are the facts of life, and they're going to be the facts of life for some time.

The reunification congress of the Fourth International appealed for bringing together all Trotskyist forces. We stand on that decision, which has been the position of the responsible leaders of the Fourth International for more than a decade. We have nothing to fear. For God's sake, what are we afraid of? Why can't we discuss with groups like the OCI?

We should also be very careful of the way we use the term, "the leaders of the Fourth International." We have a very clear concept of the leadership of the Fourth International. That is, it's the leadership of the groups and sections of the Fourth International, trained and tested and advanced by their memberships. A number of them are on the bureau, secretariat, and the IEC, but those bodies are not the total leadership of the Fourth International. Such a conception was never Trotsky's view. It was never Jim Cannon's view. And to my knowledge until recently it's never been the view of most of the older leaders of the IMT.

We are ready to make any organizational compromises, short of violating the integrity of our movement. But we will not and cannot submit to blackmail. When we first found out that the comrades of the LCR were considering not coming to our convention because of the invitation to the OCRFI to observe the open sessions here, some individual leaders of the IMT urged us to retract the invitation to the OCRFI even though they privately agreed with us that the LCR might be mistaken in its stance toward the OCRFI.

Ed Shaw explained to these comrades the protection racket in United States. He's had experience with it, as a victim. If you give them \$5 the first week, the next week the price is \$10. Give them \$10, the next week the price is \$15. If you don't come up with \$50 the next week they take some action that demonstrates you really need their protection. There's no end to the squeeze.

The invitation to the OCRFI was within the framework of the decisions of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International. We did not make a final decision on the request of the French comrades that we cancel the invitation to the OCRFI until after they took their opinions to the United Secretariat, argued for them there, and the United Secretariat decided to make no recommendation concerning the matter. When you read the correspondence, which we will print as an appendix to this

report, and note the sequence of dates, you'll see that's true.

Conditions for discussion with the OCRFI

Now Comrade Jones says that we need two things from the comrades of the OCRFI. One, they have to quit calling people in the Fourth International things like cops, agents, swine, renegades, and similar names. And two, if they are going to take part in preparations for the next world congress they have to agree beforehand that they will abide by democratic centralism. We agree with these stipulations. But in our opinion, what we don't do is ask anyone for mea culpas or self-criticisms before this process of discussion begins. You should think carefully of the precedents you are setting before making demands like that. No mea culpas, no Maoist-type self-criticisms or self-flagellations. What was said in the past belongs to the past and should not be used as an obstacle to a better future relationship.

We do insist that the kind of public polemic Alan complains of should cease. But that's exactly what we all unanimously agreed to in the United Secretariat. This was the request we made to the comrades of the OCRFI. The SWP went so far as to make the request public. They responded, saying "epithets are not essential, and for our part we are prepared to make all the accommodations in form, if they will permit a discussion to take place." That was their answer to the United Secretariat.

And since the receipt of that letter—I think it was in April—their press has ceased objectionable polemics. I told you the only thing that seemed objectionable to me was when the LCR accused them of "free-masonry." Other than that, there has been a hard political polemic between the LCR and OCI, without tendentious characterizations involved. That's exactly what Healy won't do, the most minimal thing—stop his scurrilous charges and stick to debating politics with the Fourth International.

The second condition stated by Comrade Jones was also agreed to in the OCRFI letter of October 10, 1973, the one we agreed to reply favorably to before the world congress. This was exactly the change from their first letter which enabled us to move forward and agree to initiate discussions.

They said, in writing more than a year and a half ago, "We are prepared to abide by democratic centralism."

So they have already agreed to the United Secretariat's two conditions, Alan. They have agreed to cease using epithets that were objectionable in a public political debate between tendencies seeking a principled resolution of differences. (By the way, they have indicated they're open to discussing the character of the public polemics—they're open to putting all the polemics except those about the day-to-day tasks in France or other countries where there are two organizations, inside a common bulletin, or two bulletins.) That's what they say in writing. They may be fibbing, but it should be easy to find out. All you have to do is read their press.

Second, they have told us that they are prepared to abide by the decisions of a world congress and accept democratic centralism.

Third, they accept the fact that we have a majority and

that we should set the rules, the form, the agenda, the pace, of the discussion.

An incapacity to respond to that initiative, a refusal to discuss politically under those conditions, could only be described as dead-end factionalism and sectarianism. That's the exact opposite of the course taken prior to the 1963 reunification. It's a self-imposed course that would cut us off on every side from taking advantage of processes unfolding in the world today.

Against permanent factions

Finally on the Portugal debate. We agreed that it cuts across the faction lines. You won't have to wonder for long whether Comrade Moreno agrees with Comrade Sheppard. They are both going to be present at a meeting of the LTF Steering Committee in the relatively near future out of which will come a resolution, and we will see if there are one or two or three resolutions. If there's one they'll be in the same faction. If they support different resolutions they won't be.

I personally feel that we have political agreement on Portugal. But we'll find out. I'll tell you one thing. Both Comrade Sheppard and Comrade Moreno have one obligation at that meeting. And that is to vote their conscience. We never vote for things we don't believe in. That is a breach of Bolshevism.

We are concerned with doing everything we can to get rid of any tendency toward permanent factionalism. The debate should be in the open, before the entire international. Not inside two factions. The debate has to be genuine. We have to say what we think, not cover up differences.

It has been the opinion of the Socialist Workers party leadership for some time that the two factions in the Fourth International should dissolve. You can't dissolve the tendencies, the ideological currents, because there are genuine political differences. But the only reason the Leninist Trotskyist Tendency transformed itself into an organized, structured faction was because the organizational norms of the Fourth International were subverted by the actions of some of the majority leaders. The supporters of the Leninist Trotskyist Tendency gave concrete reasons for forming a faction. If the democratic guarantees and norms of the international were reestablished, both sides, in our opinion should dissolve the factions in favor of ideological tendencies, and conduct the most open, free debate in that framework. That was our proposal, as you know, before the last IEC, and it remains our proposal. That is what we are in favor of—for both factions to dissolve.

I think we made a lot of progress, achieved some clarity, had some good exchanges in this discussion. I know that, for the American comrades, having other comrades from around the world come and join and take part in our convention, is very much appreciated and useful for us. We thank them all for coming. We thank Alan for speaking and speaking frankly and clearly to open this debate. And we especially salute the Portuguese comrades and offer them our complete solidarity in the enormous tasks that face them.

Appendix:

Documents and correspondence concerning the Organizing Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International and their request for discussion with the United Secretariat

1. May 28, 1973, letter to the United Secretariat of the Fourth International from the International Bureau of the Organizing Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International (OCRFI).
2. July 16, 1973, letter to the OCRFI from the United Secretariat of the Fourth International (USFI).
3. October 10, 1973, letter to the USFI from the International Bureau of the OCRFI.
4. October 24, 1974, report by Joseph Hansen on United Secretariat meeting with OCI.
5. November 6, 1974, letter to OCRFI from Mary-Alice Waters.
6. November 22, 1974, article from *Workers Vanguard*, "SWP-OCI Discussions: WV Exclusive."
7. October 20, 1974 report to the International Bureau of the OCRFI by François (reprinted from *Intercontinental Press*, January 13, 1974).
8. Undated circular from the Political Bureau of the FCR to all members.
9. November 29, 1974, letter to Ernest Mandel from Joe Hansen.
10. December 9, 1974, letter to Joseph Hansen from Ernest Mandel.
11. December 22, 1974, letter to Ernest Mandel from Joseph Hansen.
12. December 22, 1974, letter to Pierre Lambert from Joseph Hansen.
13. January 3, 1975, letter to the United Secretariat Bureau from Mary-Alice Waters.
14. January 2, 1975, letter to Charles Michaloux from Jack Barnes.
15. January 2, 1975, letter to the United Secretariat from Jack Barnes.
16. January 2, 1975, statement by the Political Bureau of the Socialist Workers party (reprinted from *Intercontinental Press*, January 13, 1975).
17. January 2, 1975, letter to Joseph Hansen from François.
18. January 14, 1975, letter to the OCI from Joseph Hansen.
19. December 31, 1974, letter to the United Secretariat from the International Bureau of the OCRFI.
20. Undated letter to Joseph Hansen from Pierre Lambert for the OCI Political Bureau (received May 1975).
21. June 5, 1975, letter to Pierre Lambert from Joseph Hansen.
22. June 29, 1975, letter to the Executive Committee of SWP from Alain Krivine for the LCR Political Bureau.
23. June 29, 1975 letter to the Executive Committee of the SWP from the Central Committee of the LCR.
24. July 28, 1975, letter to the Central Committee of the LCR from Mary-Alice Waters for the Political Committee of the SWP.

Appendix:

Documents and correspondence concerning the Organizing Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International and their request for discussion with the United Secretariat

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1. May 28, 1973, letter to the United Secretariat of the Fourth International from the International Bureau of the Organizing Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International (OCRFI).

To the United Secretariat of the Fourth International
May 28, 1973

Comrades,

The International Bureau of the Organizing Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International, meeting in Paris April 20-23, made an examination of where the organizations that claim to represent the Fourth International stand today internationally.

As you know, the picture is marked by differences on a whole series of questions. But the situation turns around a central question that remains unsolved in every country -- how to build leading revolutionary parties through applying the principles of the Transitional Program. Anyone can see that the differences over this question cut through the various regroupment formations that claim to represent the Fourth International.

In particular, the International Bureau discussed the documents submitted for the Tenth World Congress of your international organization.

It noted, with respect to the "two lines" on the place of "guerrillism" in building revolutionary parties of the Fourth International in Latin America, that the differences "have extended beyond that continent" . . . to distinct though allied questions. . . bearing essentially on the way to build mass revolutionary parties in the situation in which the Fourth International finds itself today."

For the purposes of analyzing the world situation and the problems raised by the struggle for the Fourth International in the conditions that arise today from the position of the organizations claiming to represent the Fourth International, the International Bureau declares that the organizations regrouped in the Organizing Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International are prepared to participate in the Tenth World Congress of your international organization.

This proposal is motivated by a whole series of considerations, the main ones of which are as follows:

1) The particularly favorable objective conditions for building strong sections of the Fourth International are not sufficient in and of themselves to resolve the central question of how to create a revolutionary leadership of the proletariat. To give only one example, the general strike of May-June 1968 did not lessen the differences among the organizations claiming to represent Trotskyism in France. Quite to the contrary, these differences deepened along the same lines as the problems raised in the preparation for your Tenth Congress. Let us add that this development is by no means limited to France.

2) We propose participating in your congress because in our opinion for the first time since 1952-53, the current discussion embraces all the main questions of principle, strategy, and tactics and thus makes it possible to resume on new bases and with a considerably richer international experience the debate that led to the split in the Fourth International proclaimed in [omission in text]. The Fourth International has been driven into an impasse by Pabloism. The perception of this impasse, the experience of this impasse, is ineluctably opening the way for discussion and analysis of all the questions underlying the differences that have spread beyond the confines of the organizations claiming to represent the Fourth International. This development attests to the need for making a new survey of the panorama of the international workers movement, for taking account of the changes that have occurred and for making a correct assessment of the new groupings, and in this framework proceeding to an examination of the differences that arose in the Fourth International in 1950-1953 and which have since considerably broadened.

3) A long experience, which extends over almost a quarter of a century for some of us, attests to the fact that there can be no question of going back on our positions or coming around to a method, Pabloism, which we still consider alien to Marxism. While we are willing to learn through

the experience of discussing together, we are clearly not abandoning our ideas in the slightest.

We will fight for our ideas and our positions on the basis of respect for workers democracy, staying within the context of the agenda established by your leading bodies themselves.

4) In proposing to participate in your Tenth World Congress, we declare ourselves ready to discuss, at your convenience, all questions, including those raised by the activity and positions of the organizations adhering to the Organizing Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International.

5) We consider that in the present conjuncture it is pos-

sible to develop a clear discussion on the differences that exist and in a different sort of context than the one in which the 1952-53 split occurred and hardened.

Therefore, the International Bureau proposes that it be allowed to participate in your Tenth World Congress with the status of observer.

Signed: The International Bureau of the Organizing Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International.

P.S. We declare our readiness to meet with a delegation to discuss the manner in which we will participate and, of course, to take care of the material costs of our participation.

2. July 16, 1973, letter to the OCRFI from the United Secretariat of the Fourth International (USFI).

July 16, 1973

To the "Organizing Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International"

Comrades,

The United Secretariat of the Fourth International examined the request you made to participate in the next World Congress of the Fourth International.

To begin with, we note that that step on your part contrasts markedly with the numerous slanderous attacks you have publicly hurled against our movement and its members: our comrades of the Ligue Communiste put up "crypto-Stalinist candidates propelled by the bourgeoisie," Comrade Gonzales Moscoso was "suspected" of "working on behalf of the Bolivian government," the comrades of the SWP were "valets of the class enemy. . . whose actions placed them outside the camp of Trotskyism and of the working class." Your step also contrasts with the fact that, at the time of your split with Healy, you reproached him for having made contact with us.

In your letter, where it is no longer a question of such slanders, you perceive on the contrary that "anyone can see that the differences over this central question cut through the various regroupment formations that claim to represent the Fourth International." Stated another way, you seem to forget the slanders you hurled behind the scenes in order to place yourself on the plane of political differences which could be

normally debated. This would constitute an altogether laudable step forward on your part if, at the same time, you publicly disavowed the slanderous attacks you repeatedly spread against the Trotskyist organizations you were politically separated from. As for us, we cannot accept the ways of the bourgeois politicians who insult each other in the halls of Parliament and then get together in the pub.

For our part, we have always carried out the political debate with all tendencies in the workers movement with an eye towards clarifying the differences and, with those who claimed to be adherents of Trotskyism, seeing if there was a possibility of reinforcing the Fourth International. It follows from the terms of your letter that this is not your objective:

"We propose participating in your congress because in our opinion for the first time since 1952-53, the current discussion embraces all the main questions of principle, strategy, and tactics and thus makes it possible to resume on new bases and with a considerably richer international experience the debate that led to the split in the Fourth International proclaimed in 1938, reconstituted in 1943-46."

You thus think that the conditions are propitious for causing a larger and deeper split in the Fourth International. This splittist objective is again clearly acknowledged in the resolution you adopted at the very same session where you decided to make the request to participate in the next World Congress of the Fourth International:

"We must base our perspective of work on the opening of

discussion with the best elements who are conscious of the betrayal of Stalinism, Social Democracy, petty-bourgeois nationalism, and Pabloism [under this heading you mean our movement] . . . Our tactic, flexible vis-a-vis all currents that declare for the International, seeks to separate out the groups orienting themselves, or susceptible to orienting themselves, towards the program of the Fourth International. . . ." (la Vérité, pp. 148-9, April 1973.)

We have a totally different conception from yours. You search for platforms from which to consolidate and enlarge splits. You want to hold "open conferences" which, apparently, brought you some disappointments (split with the SLL, split with Varga) instead of producing a split within the others. We are preparing our Congress through democratically conducted debates, with the desire to end up in the strengthening of our organization and in a common orientation for the whole

Fourth International. The debate which you want to conduct you are entitled to carry on through your press; we will respond there in the manner we judge most appropriate for us. But there is no question of according you the platform of the World Congress to aid your splittist undertaking.

We are ready to reexamine this decision if you alter your splittist objectives, if you publicly agree to recognize and implement the decisions of the World Congress, as outlined in the current statutes of the International, and if your activity conforms to such a change in orientation.

Internationalist communist greetings,

for the United Secretariat of the
Fourth International

E. Germain

3. October 10, 1973, letter to the USFI from the International Bureau of the OCRFI.

To the "United Secretariat of the Fourth International"

October 10, 1973

Comrades,

The organizations, groups and individual members adhering to the Organizing Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International have noted the response to our request for participation in your Tenth World Congress, signed by Comrade Germain on behalf of the United Secretariat.

The Organizing Committee has instructed its International Bureau to communicate to you our regret at the decision you have taken in rejecting our proposal.

Without trying to reply to all the points in your letter, some of which should be corrected if they are to strictly correspond with reality, we have no intention of denying the sharp character of the factional struggle initiated in 1950 inside the International.

In this respect, it is obviously impossible to deny that the first and most important of the actions which explains the violence of the polemics was the expulsion of the majority of the P.C.I. from the International [Parti Communiste Internationaliste -- Internationalist Communist Party, French section of the Fourth International at that time], from which the O.C.I. [Organisation Communiste Internationaliste -- Internationalist Communist Organization] emerged. This

was because, among other things, the PCI majority defended the Ten Theses presented in the international discussion by Comrade Germain.

Is it also necessary to recall that, while the majority of the P.C.I. formally pledged at the time to apply the line of the majority of the International, which we characterized as "Pabloist," the split stemmed from the refusal of the I.E.C. [International Executive Committee] to guarantee the right of those who disagreed to constitute an international tendency. The majority of the P.C.I. rejected such practices which have the effect of stifling discussion, in flagrant violation of the historic struggle of Trotskyism for respect of the principles of workers' democracy.

Today as yesterday, we continue to believe that no matter how far back the discussion concerning the principles of the Fourth International may go, it is absolutely necessary to uphold the methods of workers' democracy.

Because we consider these methods still to be correct, we cannot subscribe to the paragraph in your letter in which you write: "For our part we have always carried out the political debate with all tendencies in the workers movement with an eye towards clarifying the differences and, with those who claimed to be adherents of Trotskyism, seeing if there was a possibility of reinforcing the Fourth International."

That was not the case in 1950-53, and that is why it would be improper to consider certain characterizations as a

unilateral practice, for we can readily list numerous insinuations and statements you hurled against us which could easily be labelled "slanderous."

In addition, we think it necessary to correct your charge that our proposal is motivated by the desire to provoke a split in your ranks. Are we responsible for the splits in Canada, Argentina and Spain? Without counting the older splits in France, Germany, Latin America and elsewhere, and the fact that since 1968 the majority of the young members of the Italian section of the United Secretariat have gone over to open anti-Trotskyism in the course of a series of splits.

Our proposal to participate in the Tenth Congress called by the United Secretariat is aimed at advancing toward the solution of the problems at issue by opening wide the international discussion.

In this connection we would like to give precise details to correct this passage in your letter: "Your step also contrasts with the fact that, at the time of your split with Healy, you reproached him for having made contact with us."

Your information is certainly very inadequate. The proposal that G. Healy contact the United Secretariat was made by the French delegation of the O.C.I. during a meeting of the International Committee. What the French delegation rejected was Healy's method. As is his habit, he sought to sidestep a discussion on questions of principle, by substituting matters of procedure having more to do with diplomacy and maneuver. He sought to avoid openly stating the aims and objectives which the I.C. [International Committee] had expressly mandated him to do. No Marxist can approve that method.

We continue to believe that the paralysis of the International -- shown, for example, by the absence of an effective intervention of the Fourth International in the critical period that the Chilean working class has been going through -- has left an open field for class-collaborationist Popular Front policies. Clearly this situation is rooted in the problems raised by the present discussion which, we repeat, "embraces all the main questions of principle, strategy and tactics" posed before the supporters of the Fourth International.

The aim of our proposal was and remains to assure the theoretical clarification of problems, in order to rise above the sectarian, opportunist and ultraleft-adventurist deviations, which reflect the pressure of hostile class forces, the Stalinist bureaucracy and reformism on the organizations claiming to adhere to the Fourth International.

In view of your refusal, we advance a new proposal:

-- The International Bureau of the Organizing Committee, in its October session, placed on the agenda a discussion on the role of the national bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie in the oppressed countries in connection with the Anti-Imperialist United Front, as part of the balance-sheet of the struggle for the Fourth International in Latin America. Several documents will be submitted to the discussion. We propose that the documents accepted at the end of the meeting of our Bureau be made available to you and that they be considered as a contribution to the discussion at the Tenth Congress.

-- The International Bureau is going to publish the draft report on building Revolutionary Parties in Western Europe that you are submitting to your Tenth Congress. The O.C.I. is preparing a document on this question.

We propose accordingly that these documents be circulated in the ranks of the organizations affiliated to the United Secretariat, as contributions to the Tenth Congress. Similarly we pledge to make available to the membership of the organizations affiliated to the Organizing Committee all documents and contributions that in your opinion should be brought to the attention of our members.

In conclusion we would like to add: it goes without saying that, out of respect for the principles of the Transitional Program of the Fourth International and workers democracy, and on the basis of a broad and complete international discussion which alone can create the grounds for defining clear political positions and accomplishing practical tasks in the reconstructed Fourth International, we are prepared to abide by democratic centralism.

With Trotskyist greetings,

The International Bureau of the
Organizing Committee for the Recon-
struction of the Fourth International

P.S. With respect to the Varga affair, we think that the sharpness of the factional struggle should not provide pretexts behind which an agent provocateur can pursue his work. We have published documents and carried out a thorough investigation, some elements of which cannot be made public for reasons of security. We are prepared to furnish the United Secretariat and all workers organizations with the documents in our possession. What is involved is the defense of the workers movement against Stalinist provocation. The struggle against Stalinism and its provocations, begun under Trotsky's leadership in 1923, should serve as a lesson for everyone.

4. October 24, 1974, report by Joseph Hansen on United Secretariat meeting with OCI.

On October 15, a delegation consisting of representatives of the LSA/LSO and the Front Communiste Révolutionaire, and observers of the SWP met with a delegation from the Organisation Communiste Internationaliste.

The OCI had approached the SWP several weeks previously with a request for a meeting. The SWP responded by referring the matter to the United Secretariat. After discussing the possible ramifications, the United Secretariat decided it was advisable to hold the meeting.

At the meeting of the two delegations, Pierre Lambert, speaking for the OCI, explained that they were acquainted with the internal discussion that has developed in the sections and sympathizing organizations adhering to the United Secretariat of the Fourth International and would like to participate in it. They had decided to ask the United Secretariat for this more than a year and a half ago but had been rebuffed. They tried again about a year ago but had not received a reply to their letter.

Lambert went into the history of the OCI at some length, dwelling especially on the 1951-52 period when they were victims of an organizational intervention by the International Secretariat that violated the principles of democratic centralism. He also dwelt on the reasons for the OCI's refusal to participate in the 1963 reunification.

The situation has now changed, he said. The discussion they had insisted upon as a necessary prerequisite to the 1963 reunification was finally being conducted.

Lambert stated that they would abide by the discipline of the United Secretariat in handling contributions to the discussion.

The United Secretariat delegation responded by apologizing for the slip-up that had occurred in not answering the letter of the OCI, which had actually been discussed in the United Secretariat. An answer had been proposed in the sense that for the time being -- on the eve of a world congress -- it was not possible to bring the OCI into the internal discussion but at a later time an approach by the OCI could be considered.

As for the current proposal, it would have to be taken up by the United Secretariat and the delegation would report back to that body.

The first requisite would, of course, have to be an exploration of the areas of agreement and disagreement. The

differences and their depth would have to be carefully examined.

Meanwhile it would be useful in determining these questions if internal bulletins could be exchanged.

Also consideration should be given to the possibility of establishing fraternal collaboration in certain areas such as exchange of information or engagement in propaganda work in Eastern Europe. Possibly fields in the class struggle could be found where joint efforts would be mutually profitable.

The OCI agreed on these proposals. They also stated that in exchanging internal bulletins they would not publish material as they had in the past (from bulletins obtained through their own resources) but would abide by whatever rules the United Secretariat decided on.

During the conversation, the OCI indicated the size of their forces in countries other than France, where they are the strongest. They made no boasts. Their report jibed with our own estimates.

The OCI also explained the principled nature of their split from the groupings headed by Healy. In one respect, they said, the split was unfortunate as the former SLL (now the WRP) has many worker militants in its ranks who have not yet had a close experience with Healy's methods and who might be lost to Trotskyism altogether when they do gain that experience without knowing that there are alternatives to Healyism.

* * *

What is behind this initiative taken by the OCI? It could be a mere attempt to fish in troubled waters in hope of making some quick gains in the way of recruits. Another possibility is that they are looking for ways to throw weight toward one side or the other in the current dispute in the international with the aim of giving impetus to whatever movement there may be toward a split.

It is more likely, however, that the OCI has taken a longer range view. Since their split with Healy, they have undoubtedly felt quite isolated on an international scale. The disillusionment over Healy's policies may have led them to take another look at the United Secretariat and its associated forces. An additional element was that the split with Healy coincided with a deepening discussion in the Fourth International that was attractive in itself because of the seriousness of the issues. The depth of the differences and the

formation of tendencies and factions may also have been seen by the OCI as offering hope that they could be included as a recognized international tendency in the Fourth International. In the new situation they need not fear a repetition of what was done to them by Pablo in 1952.

Whatever their reasons, their move testifies to the pulling power of the Fourth International.

In our opinion, little is risked by responding in a fraternal way to the OCI. No immediate commitment is required other than careful exploration of the differences, their depth, and the possibility of a fruitful exchange of opinion. If nothing but an unprincipled maneuver is involved, this will become self-evident in short order -- to the discredit of the OCI.

October 24, 1974

5. November 6, 1974, letter to OCRFI from Mary-Alice Waters.

November 6, 1974

Dear Comrades,

Thank you for the copies of Correspondance Internationale No. 9, your 1974 pregress report on the international situation, and the transcript you prepared for your leadership following the meeting with the United Secretariat delegation on October 15. I am enclosing a copy of the report prepared by Joe Hansen for the United Secretariat and the SWP leadership concerning the same meeting.

Under separate cover we have sent you a number of items:

1. A complete set of the International Internal Discussion bulletin in English, starting with the preparations for the 1969 World Congress. If you would like the French-language bulletin please let us know, and we will arrange it.

2. A set of the Spanish-language discussion bulletin covering the same period.

3. A complete set of Volume 32 of the internal discussion bulletin of the Socialist Workers Party, which covers the period

prior to our August and December 1973 conventions. Also enclosed are two books, "A Revolutionary Strategy for the '70s" and "Towards an American Socialist Revolution," which provide a good compilation of the SWP's views and positions on political perspectives for the United States.

4. A complete set of the "Education for Socialists" bulletins.

5. Two copies of the Bulletin Catalog covering the years 1938-1973. The catalog lists all the internal documents published by the SWP in English during this period. If you would like any of the material listed, please let us know.

We are looking forward to receiving the full collection of Informations Ouvrieres and the other documents from your international discussion, as well as the internal discussion bulletin of the OCI. It would be very useful if you would send us two copies of each.

Comradely,

Mary-Alice Waters

cc: United Secretariat

6. November 22, 1974, article from *Workers Vanguard*, "SWP-OCI Discussions: WV Exclusive."

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

of the USec." These "tactical steps" amount to abandoning twenty years of struggle against Pabloist liquidationism.

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

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

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

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

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

"The Fourth International was pushed into a dead end by Pabloism. . . . This bears witness to the need to examine anew the entire field of the international workers movement, to take into account changes which have come up, to correctly evaluate the new groupings and, in this framework, to proceed to examine the differences which arose in the Fourth International in 1950-53 and which have grown considerably since then." -- Correspondance Internationale No. 8, July 1973.

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

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

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

The OCI capitulates to Jack Barnes

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

But this meeting and letter should be a cause of great concern to the OCI membership, as they open the door to the pos-

sibility of an international OCI-SWP-PST bloc. Such an abomination would presage a still further shift to the right for the OCI, toward mainstream social-democratic reformism, in a bloc which would make the London Bureau of the 1930s seem like a nest of flaming ultra-lefts.

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

7. October 20, 1974 report to the International Bureau of the OCRFI by François (reprinted from *Intercontinental Press*, January 13, 1974).

Paris, October 20, 1974

Dear Comrades,

Enclosed we are sending you the minutes of the meeting that took place October 15 in Paris between a delegation from the United Secretariat headed up by the SWP and also including two representatives from the FCR of France, and a delegation from the OCI.

First the circumstances and composition of this meeting.

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

Hence a delegation which was in fact a delegation of the "International Leninist-Trotskyist Faction" under the "supervision" of two leading members of the FCR. This group in-

cluded Hansen, Barnes, M.A. Waters (SWP); Riddell (LSA-Canada); Pierre Rousset and Olivier (FCR). The OCI was represented by Comrades Lambert, Just, Raoul, Francois, and Vespa. Rousset's presence was significant, as he belongs to the most extreme tendency in the US majority and the SWP has conducted a sharp polemic with him over Vietnam.

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

The course of the meeting is quite clear from reading the minutes, and thus there is no need to add any superfluous comment.

Here we merely want to offer some conclusions and make a proposal.

The conclusions that can be drawn from this meeting are the following:

1. The very fact that it was held confirms the correctness of the tactical steps taken by the International Bureau to intervene in the crisis of the US. More basically it was a confirmation of the correctness of the "Open Conference" method.

2. The meeting was a new expression of the intolerable pitch the differences have reached inside the US.

It is what might be called the "objective" development

of this crisis that today has led the organizations affiliated to the US to agree to a meeting (whose limitations should be clearly understood) where their basic disagreements were expressed.

3. As you will see, one of the features of the meeting was that, with the agreement of our interlocutors, it proceeded within the framework laid out by the proposals made in our letters.

We were the only ones to speak in the name of an international mandate. We spoke within the framework of the mandate given by the decisions of the International Bureau in favor of international discussion. Facing us were delegations from different organizations who had no common mandate except to hear us out.

4. Hansen's remarks about the need for maintaining an area of political exchanges and common activities, regardless of decisions arrived at concerning a substantive debate, reflect the following:

In the first place, by raising the possibility of "common actions," in particular with the FCR in France, without regard to the political differences and prior to discussion of these differences, the SWP, as he explained, proposes to maintain its tie with the US.

Secondly, by insisting on an organization-to-organization exchange of internal bulletins on activities such as those relating to Eastern Europe and the USSR, the SWP reserved the right, regardless of whatever decisions the majority of the US may make, to pursue discussions.

5. There can be no question of indulging in risky speculations on the consequences of this meeting. What is sure is that while the process of dislocation in the US may be slowed it cannot be stopped. What is sure is that there will be more and more maneuvers on all sides to prevent a discussion of principles.

For example, in Argentina, where it seems that Moreno is being obliged to take up this discussion, he is trying to

short-circuit it by offering *Politica Obrera* unification without discussion in the style of the 1963 operation. But in the conditions that exist today, for us, for the comrades of PO, such a maneuver is a springboard from which to push even more strongly to force a discussion of principles on the national and international levels.

Thus, this event redoubles the importance of our own political work: The European Conference and preparations for a Latin American Conference assume still more significance.

It is within this framework that we make the following proposal:

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

Such an initiative will make it doubly clear that our desire -- without any organizational preconditions and in whatever form may be chosen -- to carry out a discussion that touches on the questions of principle that lie at the root of the crisis of the Fourth International does not represent a maneuver but rather a specific orientation for reconstructing the Fourth International.

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

We request that you decide on this proposal so that we can extend an invitation before long and make this an element of the political struggle.

Since the French post office is at present on strike, do not hesitate to send us a brief communication by telephone.

Fraternal greetings,
Francois

8. Undated circular from the Political Bureau of the FCR to all members.

From: the Political Bureau
To: City and Section leaderships, cells
Subject: the meeting with the OCI

On October 15, a meeting between members of the leadership of the international and the OCI took place in Paris.

In accordance with the decisions of the Halloween Cen-

tral Committee meeting, plus some additions, this circular provides:

- A presentation explaining under what circumstances this meeting was decided upon.
- Our opinion on the proposals made by the Lambertists.
- The report of the SWP comrades to the U.S.
- The transcript of the essential part of the meeting.
- The letter of the OCI on this matter as distributed by the Spartacist League.

The final discussion of this question should take place at the next U.S.

I. Introduction

At the U.S. [United Secretariat] meeting in early October, SWP comrades invited to attend reported on requests for contacts, which P. Broué had conveyed from the OCI during his trip to North America this summer. The SWP had replied that it would not take any separate initiatives in this matter and that it would first speak with the international leadership. In this regard two "imprecisions" should be noted in the introduction of the OCI circular letter: it was not at the request of the SWP that the meeting took place, but at the request of the OCI (or its international bureau?), clearly made during Broué's trip; and the SWP comrades made it quite clear that they had not participated in any "preliminary meeting" with the OCI and that they were waiting for the U.S. discussion before any initiative would be taken.

This is not the first time the OCI has made such requests. They had already asked, in two letters, to participate in the internal discussion of the Fourth International prior to the Tenth World Congress. For reasons we will return to, the reply was in the negative.

The U.S., after hearing the report from the SWP comrades, decided that a contact would be made with the OCI to see if they had anything new to propose and if their request for a meeting simply prolonged the earlier maneuvers or revealed an evolution in their positions (provoked by the extreme crisis of their international movement).

In these circumstances the comrades of the SWP, the LSA-LSO of Canada and the FCR (Rousset and Olivier) were present at the October 15 meeting. For the OCI there were Lambert, Just, Raoul, Francois and Chisserey.

2. What we think

The Lambertist policy is clear to us. They have the following analysis of the situation of the international: two tendencies confront each other, one of them revisionist in the strict sense (the majority and especially the French), the other opportunist, with more a national than a really international outlook, but still standing on the programmatic ground of Trotskyism (the SWP). From this (and following the habitual practice of the Lambertists) flows a tactic: to intervene in this confrontation so as to explode the "bloc." The tactic was expressed in particular at their last international conference, by Lambert during the meeting, and in their internal circular letter reproduced below.

It is necessary to understand the importance of this question for them (which explains why one of the essential activities of the OCI today is "intelligence" work and activities in relation to us). Their international movement has in effect largely fallen apart: a split between the OCI and the British

SLL, the obscene expulsion of Varga as a GPU and CIA agent (!), thus a crisis in their Eastern European work; tension and semi-split with Lora, thus a crisis in their relations with Latin American groups.

In this context, the proposals of the OCI are essentially part of a maneuver which complements the others. For our part, we see no purpose in privileged semi-internal discussions with the Lambertists. It is in France that the international contacts take on their full significance (it is the only strong point that is strictly speaking Lambertist). Nothing has changed in relation to the past: a total absence of any common area of activities (on the contrary, the Lambertists have refused to participate in campaigns for defense of soldiers, etc.); their continued characterization of us as elements "alien to Trotskyism" (if not to the workers' movement!); unacceptable practices in relation to other currents or individuals (characterizing Piaget as an agent of the employers and the Catholic hierarchy; attacking and striking a member of the pro-Varga league in a Paris market); no relationship whatsoever to the development of the far left, and an alignment with the social democracy (for example their voting with them in the national teachers union against the solidarity strike with the postal workers).

Under these conditions and inasmuch as nothing has changed, privileged and semi-internal contacts are politically unjustifiable and miseducating. Nor can we consider formulating our policy as a "counter maneuver" against the Lambertist maneuver when the opening of a specific discussion is not fundamentally justified.

II. Transcript of the October 15 meeting

At this meeting only two persons spoke, with few exceptions: Lambert for the OCI and an SWP comrade. Note that this report is only made from my notes (Rousset) and not read by those who spoke.

SWP: The comrade introduced the discussion by recalling what had preceded the meeting: the request Broué made in New York, the fact that previously two letters had been sent by the OCI to participate in the discussion prior to the World Congress. He took the occasion to apologize that the second reply of the U.S. to the second letter of the OCI had not been sent as planned. He recalled its contents: a refusal to allow the OCI to participate in the internal discussions of the Fourth and a noting of the very fraternal tone of the OCI; the U.S. did not shut the door permanently. You have requested discussions with the leaders of the SWP, he said. We have no objection to discussing with anyone who claims to be Trotskyist. But we do not want unilateral responses. Hence we first had a discussion in the U.S., which agreed to this discussion being held. This delegation, therefore, is of the U.S., not the SWP; comrade Moreno could not attend.

LAMBERT: expressed satisfaction that the U.S. is begin-

ning to initiate a discussion with the OCI, which was mandated moreover by the International Bureau. He emphasized the special character of their request for a discussion. Since 1953 (the date of the international split), he pointed out, they had rejected any discussion between the I.C. and the U.S. in the framework of the U.S.

Lambert then turned to the 1952-53 split and their refusal to take part in the 1963 reunification (at length). The third conference of the I.C. (their international movement) held in 1966 defined an orientation: a revisionist current exists inside the U.S., and our perspective is to reconstruct the Fourth with the rest [my emphasis]. In 1970 we were informed of the discussion inside the U.S. [sic!]. We mandated Healy at that time to contact the U.S. through Pierre Frank. The mandate was precise (open the international discussion), but Healy modified it by proposing a fusion between the Ligue and the OCI! But the OCI-Ligue Communiste differences could not be understood except in the international framework! And we are big enough not to need Healy to decide a fusion. Therefore we broke this personal initiative of Healy's.

Following this we have very carefully followed the discussion in the U.S. We found the means to have contacts and access to all the elements of this discussion, as we required [sic again!!!]. Hence the sending of letters before the Tenth World Congress. For the first time a discussion has begun of PRINCIPLE. This signifies taking up the 1950 discussion again. Our proposal, formulated before the Tenth World Congress, had nothing to do with sentiments or a desire to organize a split in the ranks of the U.S. (or to widen the split . . .). Our proposal, from the international bureau, is aimed at opening up a debate to resolve the difficulties and to envision principled relations and envision regroupments as a result. In such a case we would be ready to apply democratic centralism in the framework of the 1938 program. This is our proposal at all times!

That gives the framework of the mandate Broué received to make contact with the SWP. We knew that in these discussions the SWP comrades had taken a position for opening up the discussion. What does our proposal signify? We put no conditions on the opening of the discussion; no prerequisite, nothing excluded. For example, we are familiar with the internal discussions of the U.S. which favors the New Vanguard. . . or we can discuss Portugal, etc.

Whatever may be the problems we start from, we will in any case get into the principled differences which have separated us into those who wanted to defend Trotskyist principles and those who wanted to revise them. The cleavage is manifested everywhere.

What are the reasons for our self-assurance?

a. First of all, in France and on the international scale (to a lesser degree), we have resisted revisionism because we are solidly grounded on the program.

b. Secondly, because the objective needs of the world situation encourage the reconstruction of the Fourth International. If this did not happen, it would be one of the greatest blows to the struggle of Marxism in a hundred years!

c. Finally, because the political problems have arrived at maturity and can be resolved inside Trotskyist organizations.

SWP: So on the whole you propose for us to begin a discussion with you, is that it?

LAMBERT: You are going to reopen your international discussion. We want to participate in it in whatever form you prefer. Will there be practical consequences? Yes, but that will come later.

SWP: One little question: What if the U.S.'s plans for the discussion are unsatisfactory to you?

LAMBERT: Considering the state of the discussions in the U.S., there is no danger of this and we are not concerned about it. The problems of principle will in any case be posed. The present discussions pose again the fundamental problems posed from 1950 to 1954 by Pablo. We do not want historical discussions, but what was at the root of the crisis then has not been resolved. This remains the present basis for the crisis of the Fourth. We do not want to do anything to block the discussion. Let's leave aside the question of "slanders"; everyone could bring that up. If you want to discuss the attitude of the OCI in Algeria, the Permanent Revolution, the errors made on Indochina, on Bolivia (we have the agreement of the POR-Lora), OK!

SWP: It's still not clear. What are your aims?

LAMBERT: To reconstruct the Fourth on the basis of loyalty to principles. We think there are currents which are alien to the Fourth inside the Fourth. (Alien to its program.) [That's us! --R.]

In this spirit the problem of split, of splitting activity, is not posed [sic!] We want to convince [sic again!] in order to reconstruct a reunified Fourth, a Trotskyist instrument reconstructed in 1943-46 and broken up in 1950-53.

SWP: We cannot go any further at this meeting, so let's leave aside the purposes of the discussions. . . . An acute problem exists: where both of us are present and strong (with publications, bookstores, etc.), i.e., in France, what common activities can we carry out? (We have posed this problem for some years.)

In addition, we must get Trotskyist material into the USSR and Eastern Europe. You have contact in Poland. Part of your material is excellent (interview, reportage); it would be worth distributing by all. It is not necessary to compromise concrete work but participate in the distribution. Finally there are questions of common interests. What do you

think of the SLL (Healy's group in Great Britain)? Impressions and information could be exchanged. As for fundamental discussions, our mandate stops there. But it would be necessary for everyone to know each other, and you do have our bulletins! This should be reciprocal in order to eliminate false debates. Therefore I propose to you to exchange internal bulletins. Not all the back numbers, obviously! We would also like to have MASAS (journal of the POR-Lora). The general approach is the following: exchanges of this type could take place even before the coming discussion in the U.S. The discussion could take place externally in order to have a minimum of control over it. But this is a personal opinion.

SWP (someone else): If you are not familiar with our situation we can help you. And you? You have discussions with Lora and the Lora-ists (in Latin America)? Would it be possible to bring them into a process of this type?

LAMBERT: In reality, the areas of contact between the FCR and the OCI are very limited in the trade unions and the factories. . . Rouge is read So there will be no problem in that department! The most explosive areas of contact are in the teacher milieus and the student milieus. The problems can be resolved. If necessary the atmosphere could be improved, [sic]. The essential problem is this: the present tactical differences come from differences of principle. In 1936 there were two organizations in France. In 1943 there was a fusion because there were the same views on principles and the same reference to the program. Today in the ranks of the U.S., the program is considered OBSOLETE! That is the problem. The differences are not personal. We want to open the discussion to get over these problems! The

present contradiction is this: organizations or currents which claim to be of the Fourth are revising its principles. This contradiction can and should be "surmounted" [an apt word] if the problem is posed in the restraining framework of the Fourth because it poses the problem of loyalty to principles.

Other questions: Agreement to exchange material and information. OK to exchange documents on the USSR. OK to exchange internal bulletins (we have been obliged [sic] to procure them by our own means). OK to send MASAS. As for relations with LORA, see the upcoming pamphlet. . . . There are certain differences between us on some fundamental points. The discussion is open. It will be discussed at the next meeting of the international bureau (on the basis of a report from Politica Obrera). In Argentina political discussions are underway with Moreno. In Peru there are relations with Hugo Blanco. Brazil, there are two groups of the international bureau and fusion discussions. Venezuela, one group. In Mexico, a group in contact with the official group. Canada you know about.

(The rest is galloping consumption, Raoul adds. . . ??)

The SLL is a complicated problem!! It's a reign of terror against discussion! . . .

He proposed drafting a common communiqué following this meeting. Raoul added: an internal communique. The common communique was rejected by the SWP and the FCR.

[The remainder of the circular comprised a translation of the report by Joe Hansen to the United Secretariat (see #4) and the internal circular of the OCRFI (see #7).]

9. November 29, 1974, letter to Ernest Mandel from Joe Hansen.

November 29, 1974

Dear Ernest,

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

The letter, which Robertson says was signed by Francois Forge, indicates that the OCI leadership was caught by sur-

prise by the favorable response they received to their request for a meeting. They were faced with the need to explain to their members without delay what had happened. They had to justify what they had done and convince those who doubted its wisdom. They had to reassure those who feared some kind of trap that nothing had been lost and that proceeding further did not involve any violation of principles. So the letter is hardly sensational.

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

Robertson, with his excellent contacts inside the OCI, is

in position to know about internal differences on this point. He is obviously seeking to address certain elements in the OCI.

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

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

Now knowing Jack Barnes, the OCI may wonder what Robertson is talking about. Maybe Robertson had a different audience in mind when he said that, or maybe it's a simple case of projection -- if Robertson knows it, everybody knows it. It is not altogether bad to see attention center on this new devil, but as you can see from the article, Robertson reminded himself not to forget two other devils, so he included their photographs.

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

Robertson is not going to say any such thing, of course. Nevertheless, he appears to consider that it costs him nothing and might gain him a bit of goodwill to alert the FCR to a possibility the FCR might not have thought of; that is, that at the bottom of it all is a bit of skulduggery cooked up by the SWP against the FCR; "The SWP, for its part, is interested in putting pressure on its factional opponents of the USec Euro-

pean majority by pointing out that it has other options open. Hansen must have enjoyed the spectacle of Rousset (who detests the SWP), chaperoning his tryst with Lambert. And if the maneuver makes Mandel squirm a little, so much the better."

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

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

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

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

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

With best regards,
Joe

Enc.

10. December 9, 1974, letter to Joseph Hansen from Ernest Mandel.

December 9, 1974

Dear Joe,

Thank you for your letter of November 29 and the Workers Vanguard issue enclosed. I hadn't seen the Workers Vanguard, but I had indeed seen the Lambert circular letter, which the French "section" of the Spartacists had distributed widely at an FCR meeting in Paris.

I find your comments more interesting than the Robertson article itself, which is just the latest variation of the theme that they are the "only consistent" opponents of "pabloism." Incidentally, do you know that there exists a "Fifth International," which is supposed to call itself "the single greatest threat to the Spartacists"?

The Lambert circular letter includes at least one blatant falsification: the statement that this meeting was called by the SWP (on the request of the SWP) and not on the request of the Lambertists themselves. This is a minor matter, but it does not appear promising as to assessing their good faith. In addition it contains the allegation that prior to the meeting, and independently of the Broue meeting in New York, there was a meeting between the SWP and the Lambertists. I wondered why you didn't comment on this allegation in your letter. Perhaps you'll return to it during our next meeting.

• • •

Fraternally yours,
Ernest

11. December 22, 1974, letter to Ernest Mandel from Joseph Hansen.

December 22, 1974

Dear Ernest,

Your letter of December 9 was not delivered until December 16, which, of course, was after we had left for Brussels. So I did not see it until I returned to New York.

No. I didn't know about the formation of a "Fifth International" dedicated to becoming "the single greatest threat to the Spartacists." The Fifth International seems to merit being placed on the list I keep of ultraleft sects to be followed for enlightenment, instruction, and entertainment. How do I go about getting on their mailing list?

On the Lambert internal letter, I don't think the formulation you mention is actually a "blatant falsification." After all, since it was not intended for publication, the document is written loosely for an "in group" that automatically fits seemingly obscure references into the frame of previous internal communications and decisions. The formulation in question is that the meeting "was held at the request of the SWP leadership." But all of the OCI leaders to whom the letter was sent know that the OCI took the initiative as early as May 1973 in accordance with a decision they must have participated in making (whether they were for or against). And all of them know that the initiative was renewed in October 1973.

In those two instances, the OCI addressed the United Sec-

retariat directly. After not getting a reply to the initiative of October 1973, the OCI tried again about a year later, this time turning to the SWP. The SWP referred the matter to the United Secretariat (which is what we told Broué we would do). It appears to me that this is what the author of the document was talking about when he said "at the request" of the SWP leadership -- that, and the fact that the SWP leadership favored exploring the advance made by the OCI.

The stress is on the role of the SWP, naturally; but I don't see any problem in clarifying the point in view of the clear emphasis placed in the document on the policy of the OCI, which was adopted some time ago: "We were the only ones to speak in the name of an international mandate: we were intervening in the framework of the mandate established by the decisions of the International Bureau in favor of international discussion. Facing us were delegations from different organizations without any common mandate except to listen to us." Note especially: "we were intervening."

As to your question about a "preliminary meeting," this no doubt refers to our informing them of the decision reached by the United Secretariat and our outlining the conditions of the meeting. You will recall that after the United Secretariat decided to meet with representatives of the OCI to hear their proposals, we agreed to get in touch with them to make the practical arrangements. We carried out the assignment, paying special attention to making clear to them what the conditions were. It turned out that they were ready to accept whatever framework the United Secretariat proposed. We

then got in touch with the FCR to set the time and place.

That the OCI leaders got the point on how the United Secretariat wanted to proceed is shown by the following paragraph in their internal report: "By its very existence the meeting is a verification of the correct character of the tactical steps taken by the International Bureau to intervene in the crisis of the USec. More basically, it is a confirmation of the correctness of the 'open conference' method." The second sentence is the significant one -- open conference method; that is, meetings with all present, aboveboard procedures, no secret behind-the-scenes deals or understandings. I would disagree with the first sentence, in which they take credit for insisting on this way of conducting talks and probing the possibilities; but I would not make it a fighting issue as long as they accept the "open conference method" and adhere to it. (Notice also in that first sentence the clear reference to who took the initiative -- "tactical steps taken by the International Bureau to intervene. . .")

It is worth noting that in this highly confidential internal report the outline of what occurred at the meeting (leaving aside the self-congratulations, etc.) is substantially the same as the outline reported by the comrades on our side. To me this indicates that the OCI leaders were trying to be accurate as to the facts in their confidential report while interpreting them from their special point of view and with their internal problems in mind (which, of course, colors the facts in a way that might not have occurred had the report been written with the idea of its being published).

12. December 22, 1974, letter to Pierre Lambert from Joseph Hansen.

December 22, 1974

Pierre Lambert
Informations Ouvrières
Paris, France

Dear Comrade Lambert,

It occurred to me that because of the postal strike in France or some other reason you may not have seen the November 22 issue of the Workers Vanguard, the paper of the Spartacist League; so I am enclosing a copy. It contains an English translation of a confidential internal report, presumably sent by your Political Bureau, informing members of your Central Committee of the details of the meeting in which members of the United Secretariat and observers of the Socialist Workers Party heard the proposal of representatives of the Organisation Communiste Internationaliste to open a discussion and your explanation of the motivations of the OCI in taking the initiative in this.

While I am on the point, I should remind you that besides Broué, whom you mention, we also talked with Francois Demassot. I forget the exact date -- was it a year and a half ago? -- but I reported that to the United Secretariat at the time. As you will recall, he sought to sound me out on the possibility of the OCI participating in the discussion then going on in the Fourth International and I told him that in my opinion it was excluded.

Also, you will recall, we reported that when Broué was in New York, some of the comrades around the office got into debates with him on the positions held by the OCI, particularly the OCI's calling for a vote for the candidates of the Union of the Left. Since he was here for several weeks, this occurred more than once.

So much for that.

Upon returning from Brussels, we included in our report the points you and Charles made concerning the appropriateness of the SWP making a public statement with regard to the OCI's internal document. The comrades agreed that it might be a good idea but they wanted first to pay the OCI the courtesy of asking them about the accuracy of the document. So I drew up a letter on this. A copy is enclosed. A copy for the FCR is being sent directly to them.

Fraternally yours,
Joe

In addition, the Spartacist League distributed a mimeographed French version of the OCI internal report at public meetings of the Front Communiste Révolutionnaire in Paris. We assume that they also distributed it at public meetings of the OCI, although we have received no confirmation of this. If by chance you have not seen a copy, we can send a Xerox of one that was forwarded to us.

In view of the publicity given to your confidential internal report -- which occurred, of course, through no bad faith on your part -- the Political Bureau of the Socialist Workers party is considering making a public comment on the incident. We would therefore appreciate learning from you whether the version of the internal report circulated by the Spartacist League is accurate. For instance, is it complete?

As you will gather from the way the Workers Vanguard attacks the OCI and the other participants in the meeting, the Spartacist League is vexed at the initiative you took and alarmed over the possibility that the willingness of the United

Secretariat to consider your proposal might lead to some kind of rapprochement. The leaders of the Spartacist League would like to block any amelioration of relations. As we know from experience with this sectarian grouping, they would not hesitate to resort to a provocation to accomplish such an objective.

We would appreciate hearing from you by return mail.

Comradely yours,
Joseph Hansen

cc: United Secretariat
Front Communiste Révolutionnaire

13. January 3, 1975, letter to the United Secretariat Bureau from Mary-Alice Waters.

New York
January 3, 1975

Dear Ernest,

Under separate cover we've sent double copies of several additional documents that the O.C.I. gave me when I was last in Paris. As Joe mentioned to you, I went by their headquarters to deliver the documents decided on by the United Secretariat.

Our xerox machine has been broken for a week, or these would have been sent off sooner. The second set of copies is for the LCR leadership.

Of particular interest are 1) the two items related to the recent split in the Healy organization; 2) the translation of a document from the POR-Lora; and 3) a rough draft of the political resolution being discussed at the O.C.I. European conference this weekend.

Francois D. indicated that they would be sending us an additional package of stuff. Since I didn't give them much advance notice that I was going to drop by with the material from the United Secretariat they did not have time to prepare a larger package for us.

Comradely,
Mary-Alice

14. January 2, 1975, letter to Charles Michaloux from Jack Barnes.

New York
January 2, 1975

Dear Charles,

Enclosed is the public statement that several of you at the last United Secretariat meeting urged us to make.

Comrades here (including myself) still were not totally convinced a public move was the best next step. But our report on the insistence of your request at the last United Secretariat meeting swayed them.

Joe tells me I.P. will publish the OCI internal circular signed Francois as a document along with our statement. Francois confirmed its authenticity when Mary-Alice exchanged the internal bulletins with him.

When you run our statement in Rouge, please use larger size type than you used for Sandor's note on the OCI internal letter -- we almost went blind trying to read it.

Comradely,
Jack

cc: Ernest
Daniel

15. January 2, 1975, letter to the United Secretariat from Jack Barnes.

January 2, 1975

Rouge, and Informations Ouvrieres.

United Secretariat

Dear Comrades,

I am enclosing a public statement issued by the Political Bureau of the Socialist Workers Party that is self-explanatory.

Copies have been sent to Intercontinental Press, Inprecor,

Comradely,
Jack Barnes
National Secretary

cc: Intercontinental Press
Inprecor
Rouge
Informations Ouvrieres

16. January 2, 1975, statement by the Political Bureau of the Socialist Workers party (reprinted from *Intercontinental Press*, January 13, 1975).

On October 15, 1974, a meeting was held between representatives of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International and representatives of the Organisation Communiste Internationaliste. Observers of the Socialist Workers Party were present. The purpose of the meeting was to hear proposals made by the OCI to engage in a discussion of their differences with the United Secretariat.

The initiative in this move was taken by the leaders of the OCI. In May 1973 they wrote to the United Secretariat proposing that they be permitted to participate in the discussion then going on in the Fourth International. Because of the hostile way in which it was presented, the proposal appeared to be merely a factional maneuver and it was rejected.

The OCI leaders repeated their advance in a much more comradely way in October 1973. The United Secretariat decided to respond in kind, informing the OCI that while their proposal could not be accepted at the moment it could be reconsidered at a later time. Unfortunately, in the pressure of preparations for a world congress, the letter was not sent.

In September 1974 the OCI again took the initiative. This time, however, the OCI leaders did not go first to the United Secretariat but to the Socialist Workers Party. One of their representatives engaged in literary work in the United States became involved in private discussions with various members of the SWP. They pressed him on some of the issues that have kept the OCI separated from the Trotskyist movement as a whole.

Later the OCI representative asked for a meeting with the leadership of the SWP. This was granted, and two leaders of

the SWP met with him. He said that the OCI was still interested in opening a discussion with the United Secretariat, but if this proved to be impossible, the OCI would like to invite the SWP to hold such a discussion.

The SWP representatives said that it would be incorrect for the SWP to act unilaterally in such a matter. They did agree, however, to pass the OCI's request on to the United Secretariat.

The United Secretariat, after considering the question, decided to hear the proposals of the OCI and to explore the possibility of ameliorating relations. A first step in this direction could be the exchange of internal bulletins.

Practical arrangements were made and the meeting was held. The OCI representatives outlined their proposals and explained their motivation. Some preliminary statements were made concerning the differences. A possible framework for probing the differences and trying to ameliorate relations was discussed. No agreement was reached beyond such minimal steps as exchanging internal bulletins. The participants then reported back.

A copy of the internal report made by the OCI representatives to the top leadership of their organization happened to fall into the hands of one of the ultraleft sects in the United States, which immediately published it along with a provocative attack accusing the OCI of "capitulation" to the United Secretariat.

Some of the things said in the internal report were interpreted by others as indicating bad faith on the part of the OCI leaders in their approach to the United Secretariat.

Certain formulations in the internal report lend themselves to misinterpretation, it appears to us. They could be taken as indicating a hope of making immediate gains by maneuvering in the internal discussion that has been going on in the Fourth International for the past five years. However, one is led to an opposite conclusion if the internal report is considered as a whole and viewed in the more general context of the development of all the organizations claiming adherence to Trotskyism.

From this angle, the internal report tends to confirm the sincerity of the OCI leaders. As we see it, they are neither capitulating nor trying to carry out a raid. The OCI leaders, we think, have reached the conclusion that the Fourth International is discussing questions of prime importance to the revolutionary-socialist movement. In a debate of that depth they feel that their views as serious revolutionists ought to be taken into consideration.

While they hold firm positions, which they intend to defend vigorously, they are prepared to modify them in the face of compelling arguments and draw the requisite practical conclusions. They expect that the organizations adhering to the United Secretariat, or in sympathy with its general aims, will display similar good faith.

The willingness of the OCI leaders to engage in the give-and-take of a free discussion is a favorable development, in our opinion. It promises to open the way to a fruitful dialogue.

Nevertheless, an obstacle still stands in the way. Some of the public characterizations used by the OCI in the past with regard to members of the United Secretariat, particularly leaders of the Front Communiste Revolutionnaire in France, were excessive, in our view. If they were to be echoed now, it would be hard to avoid concluding that the OCI is engaging

in a short-term maneuver rather than moving toward a basic discussion with an open mind.

An example is to be found in Informations Ouvrieres No. 679 (November 14-20, 1974). One of the leaders of the United Secretariat is called a "sycophant" and is accused of having written "perfidiously" eighteen years ago with regard to the proletarian uprising in Hungary. (The record of the comrade in question is absolutely clear on the decisive question -- complete support of the incipient political revolution and opposition to Moscow's repressive intervention.)

We think that such characterizations are out of order. We consider them to be hangovers from past factional positions that demand reexamination if a serious discussion is to be undertaken. Particularly important is the question of accuracy and objectivity in considering the positions held by different individuals and tendencies at the time.

The issues in those factional battles and who turned out to be correct historically can be debated without the use of epithets. To let disparaging labels stand in the way of comradely discussion of current differences (however much the current differences may be related in the final analysis to past positions) would be a political mistake, in our opinion.

It would be excellent if the OCI would again take the initiative and clarify this question in an unmistakable way.

We hope that the OCI will do its part to eliminate such obstacles and thereby help clear the way for a comradely discussion of current and past differences. Without such a discussion, it is hardly possible in this instance to reach a point where a principled basis can be found for closer fraternal relations and the kind of comradely collaboration that would give the Fourth International a new impulse forward.

17. January 2, 1975, letter to Joseph Hansen from François.

Paris, January 2, 1975

Dear Comrade,

You will find enclosed two copies of a letter, one for you and one which we would like you to forward to the USecretariat.

As you will see we have joined two copies of the resolution adopted by the last session of our International Bureau.

Greetings,
F.

18. January 14, 1975, letter to the OCI from Joseph Hansen.

January 14, 1975

OCI
Paris

Dear Comrades,

We received the copies of your letter addressed to the

United Secretariat and the resolution adopted by the fifth session of the International Bureau. In accordance with your request, we are forwarding a copy of each to the United Secretariat.

Comradely yours,
Joseph Hansen

cc: United Secretariat

19. December 31, 1974, letter to the United Secretariat from the International Bureau of the OCFI.

Paris, December 31, 1974

Comrades,

The International Bureau of the Organizing Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International met December 27-31.

During this meeting, which discussed and took a position on the enclosed documents which we are forwarding to you, we discussed the decisions of your tenth world congress.

On two occasions the International Bureau asked to participate in the preparatory discussion for your tenth congress because we believe, as our first letter stated, that for the first time since 1952-53 the present discussion, which encompasses all the major problems of principle, strategy and tactics, offers the possibility of taking up on a new basis and with a considerably enriched international experience the debate that led to the split in the Fourth International, which had been founded in 1938 and reconstituted in 1943-46.

You replied to our first letter in the negative, putting forward arguments which we showed in our letter of October 10, 1973, could not justify refusing to broaden the discussion. And it was not until October 15, 1974, at the time of the meeting between a delegation from the United Secretariat and a delegation from the OCI that the United Secretariat replied to that second letter, putting off until after your congress the problem of the Organizing Committee's participation in the discussion being conducted within your organization.

Since we sent our letters, your congress has taken place. We are anxious to let you know the estimate we made, based on the documents coming out of that congress, of certain points that seem essential to us. In the first place, we note that on none of the questions in dispute have the differences

been resolved. The congress was divided into two almost equal currents, without an area of political agreement on a single important question.

To that extent -- and it is not up to us to determine what its forms will be in the framework of your organization -- the international discussion cannot help but continue.

Indeed, the problems over which the two major currents that crystallized before and during the congress itself collided politically touch not only on incidental disagreements but raise problems of principle and of strategy. Moreover, in this sense we find that the discussion has deepened along the lines that we brought out in our first letter and that motivated our approach; these are the key questions on the agenda.

In particular, two points drew the International Bureau's attention.

1. We noted that the document on the strategy for building revolutionary parties in Europe, adopted by the majority of your congress, takes up the draft report submitted to the discussion by the United Secretariat majority, a draft of which the OCI, for its part, made a criticism it considered a contribution to the discussion.

This document raises important questions of a principled nature:

-- first of all, this document makes a radical cleavage between the struggle of the working class in the capitalist countries of Europe and the struggle in countries where capital has been expropriated but where the proletariat is deprived of political power by a usurping bureaucracy. It thus continues and sanctions the division of the world into a "Stalinist world" and a "capitalist world" that was so dear to Pablo. Thus it denies the international unity of the class struggle and

as a result, its pretense of presenting a "continental strategy" places the latter outside the concrete unity of the European working class. Indeed, the indispensable slogan for uniting the struggle of the European proletariats, the slogan of a socialist united states of Europe, takes on its entire revolutionary dimension from the fact that it unites social revolution and political revolution in a common task. But this slogan is devoid of all content if it is presented in the framework of accepting the division of Europe. What could it mean to the German working class, for example, if it is used within the framework of the division of Germany?

-- further, for all the countries located in this arbitrarily carved out zone of "capitalist Europe," the axis of the strategy for building the revolutionary party is to be that of the revolutionary party winning the leadership of the "new vanguard."

This new vanguard, whose class boundaries or political outlines are not defined by the report, therefore has the peculiarity of culling its membership -- in large measure, at least -- from outside the struggles of the working class, the organized workers movement and the differentiations developing within it. In fact the leftist milieu, whose center of gravity is found in the petty bourgeoisie, is presented as the milieu in which the revolutionary party should make sure of its control in order to then turn it back toward the working class. "The revolutionary Marxists struggling for political hegemony within the new vanguard cannot reject all of this organized far left as simply 'ultraleft'. . . . They are striving. . . to become the principle pole for regroupment for the far left."

Revolutionaries start from the interests and objective needs of the working class as a class: that is the meaning of transitional demands which "stemming from today's conditions and from today's consciousness of wide layers of the working class and unalterably leading to one final conclusion: the conquest of power by the proletariat."

The approach of the report on building the revolutionary party in Europe is the opposite. It starts from the "preoccupations" of what it defines as a vanguard to deduce an orientation and slogans. For the method of mobilizing the masses on the basis of the objective role of the working class in capitalist society, they actually substitute that of "exemplary action" external to the proletariat's actions.

This strategic line leads to a break with the very foundations of the Transitional Program. It results in calling into question the revolutionary role of the proletariat and in so doing it connects with and extends Pablo's revisionist orientation which is the source of the crisis in the international.

Recent developments in the class struggle alone are sufficiently compelling reason to once again take up the discussion of this orientation.

Two months after your congress, we saw the collapse of the oldest dictatorship in Europe, that of Salazar-Caetano,

with the Portuguese masses forcibly entering "into the realm of rulership over their own destiny," to use Trotsky's expression from the History of the Russian Revolution.

Whatever estimate one makes of the current level of development of the revolutionary process in Portugal, one thing is certain: it is in Portugal that the mobilization of the masses against the bourgeoisie and its state has today come the furthest of any country in Europe. Revolutionary upheavals always constitute the most important test of an orientation.

The developments in the class struggle in Portugal have provided no confirmation for the "new vanguard" strategy. As a result of the revolutionary process and the radicalization of the working class, no "new vanguard of a mass character" has appeared. On the contrary, the masses flocked to the reconstituted traditional organizations, at the same time that they began building embryonic organs of their own power through the factory committees. It is the very method of the Transitional Program that was confirmed anew. An attempt to breathe life into supposed "new vanguards" in Portugal would mean creating a petty-bourgeois barrier to constructing the revolutionary party.

The concrete course of the revolutionary development in Europe (especially the conditions of the open revolutionary crisis ripening in Spain), all of the battles being joined by the workers, underscore the urgency of reopening a debate on an orientation the pursuit of which can only lead to catastrophic results.

2. The other point that seems essential to us is the way yours congress took up the problems of "armed struggle."

As you will see from the documents we are sending you, this meeting of the International Bureau discussed the problems posed by the balance sheet of "focoism," "guerrillism," in Latin America.

We note that the discussion on armed struggle presented an opportunity for some elements of the United Secretariat, such as the reporter for the majority on the question of armed struggle in Latin America, to explicitly call into question the Transitional Program:

"A general programmatic weakness of the International in a very important domain, that of choosing the forms of armed struggle and integrating them into our revolutionary strategy."

Such a weakness would mean that the Program of the Fourth International does not meet the needs of the socialist revolution, that another program is necessary.

At the heart of this debate are questions of principle which constitute the very foundations of the Fourth International, because at the heart of this debate lie vital problems of the class struggle.

No organization, no current that claims adherence to

Trotskyism can avoid facing them in one form or another.

Thus, the WRP-SLL in England is being torn apart by a severe crisis. Nearly two hundred militants were expelled on the eve of the WRP congress.

The stress lines of this crisis cut across the problems we have posed from the start of this letter. At the heart of the struggle between the present WRP leadership and the opposition, we find fundamental questions of program and strategic orientation with regard to the mass movement contained in the program. The opposition's initial criticisms had to do with the leadership's attempt to build a party outside the concrete expression of the working class movement in the Labour Party and in the trade unions. In the Healy leadership's analyses, this method is rejected at every level; the leaders of the Labour Party and of the Trade Union Congress are regularly characterized as corporatists; in its program transitional demands are deleted and demands addressed solely to the ranks and never to the leaders of the trade union organizations. And the disastrous error of wishing to pose the WRP as a seeming rival to the Labour Party at the time of the February 1974 elections was repeated in those of October. Transforming the SLL into a "party" is itself a demonstration of sectarianism.

For the opposition, the radicalization of the British working class poses the question of fighting to break it from reformism; for the Healy leadership this break can be made spontaneously and to some extent has already occurred.

Those who are struggling to defend the gains of Trotskyism embodied in the WRP which are today threatened by the course of the Healy leadership, see no solution for this question except struggling for the Transitional Program, mobilizing the working class around its demands which lead the masses into conflict with their leaders in the very course of the struggle.

The WRP leadership's abandonment of a strategic orientation towards the traditional workers organizations is fundamentally an expression of a false, narrowly nationalistic concept of the revolutionary party that can be built in England outside the struggle to reconstruct the Fourth International.

The International Marxist Group, the British section of the United Secretariat, has been suffering for several years from the same sectarian illness as the WRP leadership. In 1970, the IMG did not even call for a vote for the Labour Party in the general elections, stating that the Labour Party was no different than the Conservative Party. IMG members and sympathizers went so far as to try to disrupt Labour Party campaign meetings.

Like the SLL/WRP, the IMG tried to set in motion its own "miniature workers movement," building "Trade Union Com-

mittees" and action committees that remained stillborn.

No organization, no current that claims adherence to the Fourth International can avoid this discussion.

We repeat, for us the goal of this discussion is rebuilding the Fourth International on the basis of the principles of the Transitional Program.

The entire accumulated experience of the class struggle has confirmed the solidness of the base on which the Fourth International was founded. But far from making reference to the Transitional Program and its method a formality, this fact gives a crucial role to defending it. Only on the basis of its principles can the long, deep crisis the Fourth International has experienced be resolved.

The organizations present at the International Bureau meeting take into account what the OCI representative told your delegation at the time of the October 15 meeting when the OCI intervened within the framework of the mandate entrusted to it by our International Bureau.

"We pose no preconditions on opening discussions. We are ready to deal with any problem. No preconditions, nothing excluded. . . . We believe that, regardless of the starting point, the discussion will embrace all the problems that have led to the crisis in the Fourth International and that separate those who want to fight for Trotsky's principles from the revisionists."

Also, the International Bureau states that, whatever agenda you decide on for the discussion when you open preparations for your next congress, we are ready to take part in it.

In another connection, informed during this meeting by a letter from Politica Obrera of the extension of the murderous extreme-right terrorism that strikes all the organizations and particularly those claiming adherence to Trotskyism, the International Bureau approves Politica Obrera's proposal to begin an international solidarity campaign, a campaign to be conducted along the lines of a united front.

The International Bureau also approves on the one hand Politica Obrera's proposal to the PST to engage in a joint campaign in Argentina, and on the other hand the proposal to organize this campaign on the international level jointly between the organizations affiliated to the United Secretariat and those adhering to the Organizing Committee.

Trotskyist greetings,

The International Bureau of the
Organizing Committee for the Recon-
struction of the Fourth International

20. Undated letter to Joseph Hansen from Pierre Lambert for the OCI Political Bureau (received May 1975).

Dear Comrade Hansen,

Our Political Bureau has discussed your January 2, 1975, statement and assigned me to reply to it.

The Political Bureau of the OCI considers this statement concerning our proposal to discuss our differences to be a positive one. By accurately reporting the facts about the relations between the SWP and the OCI and the proposals of the Organizing Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International to the United Secretariat, it blocks maneuvers aimed at hindering the development of the discussion. In addition, it is correct in its political estimate of our objectives and motives.

Indeed, as we have written -- and as we reiterated at the time of the October 15 interview -- the basis of our intervention is that among those who claim adherence to the Fourth International, the problems have now reached maturity and can be settled.

In other words, we are convinced, as the Organizing Committee's letter of May 28, 1973, states, that "for the first time since 1952-53, the current discussion, which encompasses all the major issues of principle, strategy and tactics, presents the possibility of resuming, on a new basis and with considerably enriched international experience, the debate that led to the split in the Fourth International, founded in 1938 and reconstituted in 1943-46."

That is why, for our part, we place no preliminary conditions on the discussion, leaving the United Secretariat free to decide on the agenda. We are aware that regardless of the starting point, the discussion will inevitably end up on the principled issues raised in the 1950-1953 crisis, which have not yet been resolved.

Our goal is the reconstruction of the Fourth International on the basis of the principles of the program of the Fourth International, as we explained in our letter of October 10, 1973.

We repeated our proposals again in the letter adopted in December 1974 by the Organizing Committee's International Bureau, which we asked you to pass on to the United Secretariat: "The entire experience accumulated in the class struggle has confirmed the soundness of the basis on which the Fourth International was founded. But, far from converting references to the transitional program and its method into a formality, this fact makes its defense crucially important. Only on the basis of its principles can we find a solution for the long, deep crisis the Fourth International has undergone. . . . In

addition, the International Bureau declares that, whatever agenda you decide on for the preparatory discussion for your next congress, we are prepared to participate in it."

In the same letter, the International Bureau stated that it was taking up Politica Obrera's proposal for a joint international campaign by the organizations affiliated to the United Secretariat and those of the Organizing Committee against anti-working-class terrorism in Argentina.

We regard it as a favorable development for the international discussion and for the interests of the Fourth International that the SWP, taking its stand from the point of view of "the development of all the organizations claiming adherence to Trotskyism," has publicly taken the responsibility of describing the OCI's proposals as opening the door to a "fruitful dialogue."

If we understand you correctly, an obstacle lies in the fact that some of our former characterizations of members of the United Secretariat, particularly of leaders of the French section, were "excessive." It goes without saying that the evaluations we make or were able to make of currents or of political leaders claiming adherence to the Fourth International are themselves part of the discussion and can be put in question.

But you are concerned that such evaluations may still be "echoed" in our press, and that in this event, you say, "it would be hard to avoid concluding that the OCI is engaging in a short-term maneuver rather than moving toward a basic discussion with an open mind." As an example, you cite an article which appeared in Informations Ouvrieres for November 14, 1974, in which a member of the United Secretariat was described as a "sycophant" and accused of having written "perfidiously" concerning the Hungarian revolution.

In your statement, you indicate that we are "serious revolutionists." You will admit that one aspect of this characterization is not to bring forward the personal side or to consider positions previously held by anyone on either side to be an indelible brand.

Polemics have always been a natural form of expression in discussions between organizations and militants claiming adherence to Marxism. And in polemics, epithets are often harsh. "Sycophant" would have been a mild designation from Lenin's pen when he was polemicizing against Trotsky at the time of the August bloc.

But epithets are not essential, and for our part we are pre-

pared to make all the accommodations in form, if they will permit a discussion to take place, which, as you say, must be "basic."

We shall take two examples to illustrate our position. We have expressed clearly our opinion of the significance of the Tenth World Congress resolution on "armed struggle": we have defined it as contrary to the Marxist principles of the Fourth International. And when we see that Ernest Mandel, who approves this orientation, declares at the same time in a debate with the right-wing Social Democrat Mansholt, "We do not advocate violence or terrorism," is it not difficult to consider his behavior to be that of a responsible leader?

Another example: The French student syndicalist organization, UNEF, has been divided since 1971. The Stalinist fraction provoked a split because they could not tolerate a tendency led by OCI militants to gain recognition as a majority and to struggle to reconstruct the UNEF as a trade-union organization, after it had been severely damaged by leftist elements.

This year UNEF decided to participate in some university elections. It was clear that this signified a test of political strength between us and the Stalinists. Furthermore, the PCF apparatus understood it as such. We consider it a political victory that the slates of the tendency we supported gained a vote that stood at 75 percent of what the Stalinists obtained (31,000 votes for the slates we supported, 48,000 for those supported by the PCF).

One may certainly disagree about the advisability of running in such elections, or even about the need for a student union. But when the LCR's organ *Rouge*, which in earlier years simply ignored these elections (when the slates led by the CP and the traditional conservative slates were the only ones), advises a "boycott" and justifies it by the fact that the Stalinists and our comrades are nothing but bureaucratic manipulators, we are compelled to state that (aside from the epithets applied to us) this political identification of us with the Stalinists is a service rendered to the latter.

To come to the article you quote, we readily grant that the epithet of sycophant applied to Ernest Germain adds nothing to it. But eliminating it does not take away much. The designation "perfidiously" is applied to a statement that Imre Nagy yielded "without discrimination" to the pressure of the revolution. And what follows the quoted passage shows it clearly: it is the Stalinist version used by the bureaucracy to try to justify the second intervention, that of being "out-flanked from the right."

The heart of the matter is that in that December 1956 article, Ernest Germain contrasts the "spasmodic" development of the political revolution in Hungary with the "Polish victory;" Gomulka's damning of the political revolution in Poland is considered a victory, while the dangers of an "elementary, spontaneous explosion" are denounced.

Furthermore, it would be unfair to bear down on Germain alone for this. It was the basic position of the International Secretariat of Germain, but also that of Pablo, of Frank, of Maitan, which was affirmed in particular in their position with respect to the workers insurrection in East Berlin in June 1953, a position fought by the International Committee that was formed following your National Committee's open letter.

Thus we cannot consider that the balance sheet of Ernest Germain on the question of the political revolution is unambiguous.

But that is not the main point. The essential thing is that, in our opinion, these positions of "eighteen years ago" remain current, because they are at the root of the current orientation of the majority tendency. When the Belgian section's organ, *La Gauche*, writes that the Portuguese Communist party has "one foot in reformism and the other in the revolutionary struggle," the same method, contrary to the basic heritage of Trotskyism, lies at the bottom.

In addition, what would show that the OCI is not engaged in some short-term maneuver is that if that were so we would conceal the fact that, in our opinion, there are within the United Secretariat and its organizations currents that place in question the programmatic basis of Trotskyism, as I personally stated at the October 15 interview. Having said this, it goes without saying that we are prepared to modify the form, especially in our public statements, if that would allow the discussion to open.

Dear Comrade Hansen, now I would like in conclusion to come to what is central to me and to the whole OCI leadership. I have just referred to Portugal. The proletarian revolution is developing in Portugal and is on the agenda throughout Europe. In an international context, the Portuguese revolution occupies a place similar to that held by the Spanish revolution and the revolutionary rising in France in 1936. At that time our international movement under Trotsky's leadership, in spite of its difficulties, differences and splits at the national level, acted like an international political unit and was ready for action.

Today, because the differences relate to the most vital issues of the proletarian revolution itself, the Fourth International cannot assert itself politically as a coherent force. That is why, to give only one example, the Portuguese LCI declares in its electoral manifesto that it is necessary "to bar capitalist reaction from all the roads (even electoral) to control of the state apparatus." Which means that the state apparatus in existence is "neutral," that the task is not that of proletarian revolution, of the destruction of the bourgeois state. Where are the principles on which our movement rests?

That is why we are so insistent on opening this frank, deep international discussion and why we place no formal condition on how it begins. Only through this discussion will the Fourth

International be able to function on the basis of democratic centralism and within the framework of the principles of the transitional program.

Let me add that we believe that the concrete historical development of the Fourth International has created a situation in which organizations like the SWP and the OCI have special responsibilities.

That is why, in reiterating the proposal made by the Organizing Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International in its December 27 letter, that of participating in the preparatory discussion for your next international congress, I appeal to you on behalf of the OCI leadership -- we believe

that organizing a real exchange of views between the leadership of the SWP and that of the OCI would represent an extremely important, positive step.

For my part, I am prepared to travel to the United States this summer, preferably during the month of August, to conduct such a responsible discussion around an agenda which we can draw up together, in whatever form and circumstances you believe to be best.

With fraternal greetings,
for the OCI Political Bureau
P. Lambert

21. June 5, 1975, letter to Pierre Lambert from Joseph Hansen.

14 Charles Lane
New York, N.Y.
June 5, 1975

Dear Comrade Lambert,

Thank you for your letter again outlining your position regarding a discussion of the balance sheet to be drawn on the internal differences in the world Trotskyist movement going back several decades. For the moment I will not take up the points you raise in your letter save for two items.

One is the importance of a comradely, open-minded attitude, particularly in public polemics. It is true that revolutionary-Marxists are characteristically not given to restraint in debating differences. However, this is rarely justified inside the movement, in my opinion. And certainly it is out of place if there is a narrowing of political differences, however deep the differences may be on other levels.

The other item is your reference to Comrade Mandel's denial to Mansholt that he "advocates" terrorism. Comrade Mandel made a similar denial at greater length in his reply

to Newsweek, which was published in the October 9, 1972, issue of Intercontinental Press. His current statement should be weighed in that context.

In the final part of your letter, you indicate your readiness to visit the United States this summer to discuss a possible agenda and the forms and conditions of a responsible discussion. The leadership of the Socialist Workers party would be opposed to taking up such a question unilaterally. A thoroughgoing discussion such as you envisage would necessarily involve the United Secretariat and would have to be taken up there.

If you plan, despite this, to visit the United States in August, you and any other comrades of the Comite d'Organisation would be welcome to attend as observers at the open sessions of the convention of the SWP, which is scheduled for that month. In case you are interested, I would be glad to send you the necessary details.

Fraternally yours,
s/Joseph Hansen

cc: United Secretariat

22. June 29, 1975, letter to the Executive Committee of SWP from Alain Krivine for the LCR Political Bureau.

Paris
June 29, 1975

To the Executive Committee
of the SWP

Dear Comrades,

The enclosed letter was discussed and approved at the

most recent meeting of the LCR Central Committee on June 29. It concerns the letter from Comrade J. Hansen to Lambert, a member of the leadership of the OCI, inviting him to the coming convention of the SWP.

Awaiting a rapid response, we send our fraternal greetings.

For the Political Bureau:
Alain Krivine

23. June 29, 1975 letter to the Executive Committee of the SWP from the Central Committee of the LCR.

Paris
June 29

To the Executive Committee
of the SWP

Dear Comrades,

The United Secretariat has forwarded to us a copy of Comrade J. Hansen's answer to an undated letter from Lambert.

We agree with Comrade Hansen when he writes that any discussion with the OCI or its Organizing Committee is a matter that primarily concerns the United Secretariat. We will not fail to make our position known on this matter when it comes up on the USec agenda.

However, we do not think your invitation to Lambert to attend the coming convention of the SWP is an internal affair of the SWP. We think that this is also a matter for discussion in the USec and, in particular, that it concerns the LCR (French section of the Fourth International) very directly.

You know that since May 1968, without going back further, the relationship between the LCR and the OCI has been essentially a hostile one because of the grave political differences that exist between the two organizations and because of the OCI's conduct in the class struggle in France. We have never refused to meet with all the groups on the far left with a view to carrying out joint actions. This includes the OCI despite its scandalous conduct in May 1968, the most important event in the history of the French workers movement in decades. The Lambertists, let us not forget, called for abandoning the barricades in the Quartier Latin. During the six weeks of the crisis and general strike, they never issued calls for demonstrating for the overthrow of the government. This got them a clean bill of health from the Conseil d'Etat, when the other revolutionary organizations were banned by the government.

Unfortunately, there have been very few meetings with the OCI and still less common actions, less than with any other organization. The reason for this can be easily understood when you consider the following facts.

Throughout the Vietnam war, the Lambertists hardly ever participated in solidarity demonstrations. They even wrote once that the Vietnamese struggle was hopeless. They showed a particular predilection for denouncing the Vietnamese leaders, even on the eve of the liberation of Saigon, accusing them of not wanting to take the city!

In the 1974 presidential election, they supported Mitterrand on the first round, against our candidate and the Lutte Ouvriere candidate. Before in 1973, in the legislative elections, after several months of tripartite discussions including us and Lutte Ouvriere, the aim of which was to reach an agreement on a geographic distribution of candidates, they broke off the negotiations to run a few candidates only in places where we and Lutte Ouvriere had candidates, in order deliberately to damage these campaigns.

As regards Portugal (where they in fact have no organization) their articles and leaflets in Paris have "unconditionally" supported Soares' party and presented the slogan "All Power to the Constituent Assembly." Recently, they participated in anti-Franco demonstrations under the slogan "Long Live the Republic!"

Last year in the Force Ouvriere convention, they voted for the leadership report given by the General Secretary Bergeron, who is opposed to any unity in action with the CGT [Confederation Generale du Travail]-- General Confederation of Labor, the CP-controlled union federation and who has acted openly as a strike-breaker against the printing workers at the Parisien Libere, which at present is the main test of strength in the class struggle in France. Out of the last three issues of the Lambertist organ, we find a short note in the first saying that the attitude of Force Ouvriere in this strike is "unacceptable" (such a moderate term is not usual in their polemics against us); the following issue says nothing about the strike, and the last issue has an article whose fire is directed entirely against the union the strikers belong to and which is defending a trade-union gain.

Moreover, they have called the LIP strike leader Piaget, an agent of the bosses and the Catholic hierarchy.

Let us also refer in a few words to their methods in the workers movement. Like Healy, the Lambertists habitually poison political discussions, including those that lead to splits in their ranks, by hurling accusations about people being agents of the bourgeoisie or the Kremlin. They have done so against us. Thus, in their commentary on the last convention of the LCR, they put us in the category of "all the forces that defend the social relations of capitalist production," saying that our role was to "betray the revolution in the name of the Fourth International." So, after this no credibility can be given to any accusations they raise.

The Lambertists also habitually use violence within the workers movement, especially against the far-left organiza-

tions. They have done so again recently against a grouplet that broke from them.

But while these few indications explain the paucity of common actions with the OCI, this is not the essential, fundamental reason for our objection to the invitation you have sent to Lambert and his people.

You have always said that only your country's reactionary laws prevented you from formally being members of the Fourth International. This is why we have always considered you as morally an integral part of the Fourth International, that is, as a part of the World Party of the Socialist Revolution, whose existing framework all members respect and in which all members are in solidarity with the other organizations of the Fourth International in other countries, not just in general solidarity in the struggle against capitalism but also against the dissident groups that have broken with the Fourth International. We have no objections in principle to inviting formations outside the Fourth International to a convention -- we do it -- but in the context of the conception we jointly hold of the Fourth International, we do not think that it is possible to invite a group without first knowing the opinion of the section in the country in question.

The invitation to Lambert, in whatever form it is made, will inevitably become known publicly and interpreted by everyone, starting with the OCI, as a political act. Everyone will conclude that the SWP intends to put the OCI and the LCR on the same level. And this conclusion will be correct. In the past of the Trotskyist movement, this was the interpretation given to the invitation issued by Nin and his organization to a representative of a dissident group to attend the convention of the Spanish organization in March 1932

with the same status as the delegates of the International Secretariat and the French section at the time, and Trotsky was the first to so interpret it. This is how the members of the LCR will understand it today. They will understand that at the very time they are carrying out an audacious decision -- launching a daily, the first daily published by a section of the Fourth International -- at a time when they have the right to expect the moral support of all those who justly claim to be members of the Fourth International, the SWP leadership has put them on the same level as the OCI. They will understand that at the very time when you want to celebrate the 1963 reunification at your convention, a celebration we would like to join in, you are giving aid to a group, which along with Healy, has been the most vicious foe of reunification and which has not given up its intention to destroy it. The OCI is seeking only to sharpen the differences and tensions in the International and to this end it will use the invitation given it to redouble its struggle against what it calls the "currents that challenge the programmatic bases of Trotskyism" "within the USec and its organizations."

For these reasons we were surprised by your move. We appeal to you vigorously to change a decision that puts in question whether we can attend your convention. We ask you to inform us as soon as possible of your final decision.

Fraternally,
The Central Committee of the
Ligue Communiste Revolutionnaire
(French Section of the Fourth
International)

copy to the United Secretariat
of the Fourth International

24. July 28, 1975, letter to the Central Committee of the LCR from Mary-Alice Waters for the Political Committee of the SWP.

July 28, 1975

To the Central Committee of the Ligue Communiste
Revolutionnaire (French Section of the Fourth International)

Dear Comrades,

We received your letter of June 29 indicating that you may not attend our August 17-21 convention because of the invitation extended by the SWP Political Committee to the Organizing Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International to observe the open sessions. We were sorry to learn that you had placed a question mark over your attendance. We hope our reply will clarify the matter and that a sizable delegation from your leadership will be present in accordance with the practice you have followed in recent years.

For our part we were genuinely surprised by your reaction. We consider our invitation to the Organizing Committee to be within the general framework of the unanimous decisions taken by the United Secretariat last October and December. Since this essential framework of the previous decisions of the United Secretariat (which the SWP leadership agrees with) is not referred to in your letter to us, perhaps it would be worthwhile to begin by recalling those decisions.

At the meeting of the United Secretariat last October 12-13, fraternal observers of the SWP reported on the new request from the leadership of the Organization Communiste Internationaliste, on behalf of the Organizing Committee to Reconstruct the Fourth International, to open a political discussion with the United Secretariat. After considering the request and

the background leading up to it, the United Secretariat unanimously agreed to send a delegation to meet with the OCI leadership to hear their proposals. It was agreed that this United Secretariat delegation should include at least one of the leaders of the FCR. It was further agreed to propose that internal bulletins be exchanged, and that the possibility be considered of collaboration in areas such as defense work and publishing projects for Trotskyist literature in the various East European languages. Several members of the political bureau of the French section participated in this United Secretariat discussion and voted for taking this step.

Comrades in the leadership of the LCR are familiar with the October 15 meeting with the OCI leadership as three reports on it -- one by Pierre Rousset, one by Joseph Hansen and one by Francois DeMassot -- were circulated in the FCR last fall.

As proposed by the United Secretariat, arrangements were made to exchange internal bulletins.

At the November 16-17, and December 17, 1974, meetings of the United Secretariat there was further discussion on the steps to be taken in response to the request for political discussion as spelled out by Comrade Lambert at the October 15 meeting. There were differences among the members of the United Secretariat on how to interpret the overtures from the OCI leadership. Some thought it was nothing but a maneuver to try to exploit and deepen the political differences within the Fourth International; others thought the evidence indicated that the OCI leadership was sincere in its desire to participate in the discussion of questions of prime political importance taking place within the Fourth International.

Despite differing evaluations of the OCI's intentions, however, there was again unanimous agreement on the next step. The United Secretariat decided to take up two points with the OCI leadership before proceeding to further discussions. The first was clarification of some statements open to misinterpretation in the internal report by Francois DeMassot referred to above. The second was a commitment by the OCI leadership to cease using public characterizations of leaders of the international that are out of place if they are serious about establishing a framework for comradely debate.

In addition, comrades of the leadership of the French section felt strongly that a public statement by the leadership of the SWP was in order, in light of the publicity given to the OCI's contacts with the United Secretariat by opponents of the international and their accusations of a secret intrigue between the SWP and OCI. We were dubious about the wisdom of such a public move, but the opinions of the French leadership were of concern to us, and we acquiesced. The SWP Political Bureau issued a statement, published in the January 13, 1975, issue of Intercontinental Press. Since, to our knowledge, this has not been published for the information of the LCR membership, or commented on by the leadership, we have enclosed a copy.

As you can see, the statement details the history of the contacts between the United Secretariat and the Organizing Committee and asks the OCI leadership to alter the character of its public polemics.

The letter of Comrade Pierre Lambert is a reply to the statement of the SWP Political Bureau. This reply clearly provides additional confirmation of the desire of the Organizing Committee to remove obstacles standing in the way of a political discussion.

This was the context in which the SWP Political Committee asked Joe Hansen to answer Comrade Lambert's letter specifying that we continue to be opposed to unilateral discussions between the SWP and OCI, but would take the matter up with the United Secretariat. As Comrade Lambert indicated he might be in North America in the month of August, we extended an invitation to him or any other comrades representing the Organizing Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International to observe the open sessions of our convention.

In regard to your letter of June 29 objecting to this invitation we would like to make several observations.

1. You note that the invitation is of particular concern to the LCR (French section of the Fourth International). We of course agree with you that the OCI is the strongest component of the Organizing Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International, and in that sense the invitation is of interest to the French section. But we would remind you that there are significant groups affiliated to the Organizing Committee in other countries, including Canada, Mexico, Britain, Israel, and Argentina, where there are also sections and sympathizing organizations of the Fourth International which are directly affected. That is why we consider the question of contacts with the Organizing Committee or leaders of the OCI acting on behalf of the Organizing Committee, to be a matter for consideration by the United Secretariat, not simply the French section.

Our invitation was extended not to the OCI per se, but to the Organizing Committee -- an international current that considers itself part of the world Trotskyist movement and with whom the United Secretariat unanimously decided to investigate possibilities for certain kinds of joint work; with whom the United Secretariat unanimously agreed to exchange all internal discussion material; and with whom the United Secretariat agreed to explore the fruitfulness of more extended political discussion.

We would note that other sections directly concerned, such as the Canadian section, expressed an opinion opposite to that now voiced by the LCR. At the July 1975 United Secretariat meeting they pointed out that those observing the SWP convention might be influenced enough by what they heard and saw to consider it desirable for the groups affiliated to the Organizing Committee to move more actively towards the United Secretariat.

While there were differing views within the United Secretariat concerning the degree to which this invitation advanced the process initiated by the earlier United Secretariat decisions the July United Secretariat meeting decided to express no opinion in disagreement with the invitation.

2. The largest part of your letter deals with an enumeration of political differences that have divided you from the OCI for the last seven years, "without going back further," as you say. We would only note that these are beside the point. A similar list could have been drawn up any time in the last decade. But again, you leave out what has changed: the disintegration of the former International Committee including the split between Healy and Lambert, between Lambert and Varga, between Wollforth and Healy, between Healy, Thornett and Black, and so on; the effect of the increasing pace of the class struggle on the forces around the Organizing Committee; the effect of the continued growth and development of the Fourth International; and the effect of the proof of our ability since 1969 to conduct a far-ranging political debate in a comradely way despite sharp differences. You also leave out something else that has changed -- the attitude of the OCI leadership as shown by their request to open a political discussion with us; their willingness to accept whatever format or agenda for discussion we prefer; and their demonstrated willingness to remove obstacles to this discussion by altering the character and tone of their polemics. These were the new factors that prompted the United Secretariat to respond in the first place.

Under such conditions, to reply by simply repeating a list of political differences that may be under process of alteration, and to refuse on those grounds to discuss, would be a response more appropriate to dead-end factionalists than to revolutionary Marxists. The conclusions that would be drawn by the entire workers movement is that we are not confident or capable enough to confront the OCI politically or that we are beginning to act more like a sect than a Leninist leadership determined to build the Fourth International.

You seem to recognize this problem when you state, "this is not the essential, fundamental reason for our objection to the invitation."

3. If we understand you correctly, your fundamental objection is that you consider our invitation to be a breach of the norms of democratic centralism because it is not "possible to invite a group without first knowing the opinion of the section in the country in question."

But the fact is that the leadership of the LCR voted in favor of the course set by the United Secretariat. Our invitation to the Organizing Committee comes within this framework and has nothing to do with challenging the norm you outline.

4. The invitation to the Organizing Committee is, as you say, a political act, but there is no basis for your assertion that the SWP thereby intends to put the OCI and the LCR on

the same level. As everyone on the left knows, the LCR and SWP are part of a common international current. Were it not for reactionally legislation in the United States we would be the American section of the Fourth International. Representatives of our respective leaderships regularly attend each other's conventions and national committee meetings, not merely as observers at the open sessions but as fraternal delegates to whom the courtesy of voice has been extended when requested.

To avoid any misunderstanding owing to incomplete information, we should call attention to the fact that unlike the conventions of the French section, our conventions are generally open. Not only elected delegates, but all members of the SWP and YSA, selected sympathizers, and members of any section or sympathizing organization of the Fourth International are all invited to attend. At this year's convention we anticipate that more than a hundred nonmembers will be present and possibly even reporters from major daily newspapers.

Under the circumstances, an invitation to the Organizing Committee to send a delegation to listen to the oral reports and debates, which are based on the written discussion that has already been made available to them by the United Secretariat, cannot reasonably be construed as a decision by the SWP leadership to place the OCI in the same category as the LCR.

5. Your reference to Nin's invitation to Collinet of the Gauche Communiste in France to represent the French section of the International Left Opposition at the convention of the Spanish Left Opposition in March 1932 does not appear pertinent in our opinion. Did the International Secretariat, with the agreement of Molinier, Frank and Naville, decide in late 1931 to meet with Rosmer's group to explore possibilities for political discussion and areas of collaboration? Did the International Secretariat decide to give Rosmer's group all internal discussion material of the Left Opposition and its Spanish section? Did Nin keep the International Secretariat informed of his contacts with the Gauche Communiste? Did he send copies of all correspondence and related documents to the French section and the International Secretariat? Did the International Secretariat delegation (Molinier, Frank and Naville) boycott the Spanish convention when it was agreed to seat Collinet as an observer, while they were seated as fraternal delegates? The answer to each question is, No. Such details, all of which are pertinent to the international framework, but which you fail to mention in your letter, are rather important.

6. You seem to imply that our action is particularly dubious in light of the decision of the LCR to launch a daily paper. The exact connection between the two is not very clear to us. In any case, we are certainly pleased that the French section of the Fourth International today feels itself strong enough to take the step of publishing a daily and we wish you the best of success in the venture. In light of this considerable expansion of the Trotskyist propaganda apparatus in France, however, it seems to us that it would be desirable to seek to mobilize support for this undertaking from all sections of the

French left, including organizations that claim to be Trotskyist.

We thus see no contradiction between launching a daily and responding to overtures from a group that might decide to move further in our direction.

For all these reasons we think the objections you raise in your letter do not warrant withdrawing the invitation to the Organizing Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International to observe the open sessions of our convention. In fact it would be difficult to offer a reasonable explanation for such a turnaround and it would open the United Secretariat and the SWP to charges of bad faith.

We repeat that we sincerely hope that representatives of the Political Bureau of the LCR will attend our convention. They will be welcomed as fraternal delegates and accorded all the courtesies that have unfailingly been extended to the French section at every past convention of the Socialist Workers Party.

With comradely greetings,
Mary-Alice Waters
for the SWP Political Committee

cc: United Secretariat