

March 29, 1975

TO LENINIST-TROTSKYIST COORDINATORS

Dear Comrades,

Enclosed are the following items:

1. A report by Galois on the March 15-16 meeting of the United Secretariat.
2. A letter from Comrade George Fyson to Gus Horowitz about his discussions with the Lebanese comrades.
3. An exchange of letters between the LSA central office and the RMG concerning joint sponsorship of a Canadian tour by a leader of the Antilles section of the Fourth International.

Comradely,

Ed Shaw

Report on the March 15-16, 1975, Meeting of the  
United Secretariat, by Galois

Johnson is preparing the minutes of the March Secretariat meeting, and they should be available soon. I think it is useful to give you a brief report on the meeting, placing it in the context of other developments here.

Collaboration on a daily basis is beginning to develop, but it must be seen as a process that is only in the initial stages. While we are informed about some developments, we are still kept in the dark about many matters. This side of things will undoubtedly take some time to change. The majority has expressed its willingness to include LTF supporters in what are referred to as the various "commissions," but here too it is uneven. For example, M. is willingly accepted as one of the Bureau members who will keep in touch with Spain, but our suggestions on having someone work along with Duret concerning Portugal are never picked up. On the other hand, the IMT comrades proposed that Galois take responsibility for keeping in touch with the Mideast, which he will do. We are still mulling over some of the other possible areas of involvement, particularly the proposal that M. take responsibility in antimilitarist work. Aside from all else, we were told that if M. took this assignment, it would entail quite a lot of travel. There is an antimilitarist conference nearby in Holland this weekend, and a couple of comrades will go there in order to get a feel for the situation.

On Inprecor, most of the "technical" responsibilities seem to be already parceled out among the comrades who have been doing them. But there still remain the European workers bulletin, the internal bulletins, and the various informational circulars that will hopefully come out from the Bureau. Josephine and Elizabeth will work on the latter items. By the way, Alex is supposed to be coming up from Paris to do a lot of French-English "technical" work.

The Bureau as a whole is considered politically responsible for the content of Inprecor, on the level of deciding what subjects to have articles about. But Aubin has direct editorial responsibility regarding the content.

Walter has told us that the IMT considers the two essentials for maintaining collaboration to be satisfactory solutions to the problem of the IT and the problem of what items we are given moral credit for. The latter problem seems to be the one uppermost on their minds now, or so it appears from the discussions that have been held. But this point never did come up at the March Secretariat meeting, and it seems that the comrades now expect that this will be discussed around the time of the April meeting. However, this point was still a source of tension at the March meeting, if only as an undercurrent.

Unfortunately, organizational frictions did come to the fore openly at the meeting -- frictions that should have been avoided, and would have been had the IMT comrades subordinated their factional interests to the objective needs of the movement. The key issue here involved Portugal.

The Bureau had agreed that there would simply be a political report and discussion on Portugal, and that there would be proposals for solidarity with the LCI election campaign. As you know, the LCI comrades registered quite an achievement in obtaining more than the 5,000 minimum signatures required for ballot status (as in Argentina, the petitions required people to sign as members, with a little extra red tape.) If the discussion could have been limited to these points, it would not only have met the needs of the situation, but would have set a good tone for the general process of developing collaboration. But this was not to be the case.

In informal discussions, and at the Bureau, the comrades of the IMT raised various charges against the GMR in Portugal. This seemed to be a real sore point with them. But the Bureau agreed that discussion or proposals concerning internal organizational matters in Portugal were not supposed to come up at the Secretariat meeting itself. Duret's report at the meeting was basically an informational report along the lines of the article appearing in the March 13 Inprecor. The report did include some jibes at the GMR, but only in passing. His summary, however, included a broadside attack on the GMR, and on the conduct of the LTF with respect to it. Following this, Roman presented a motion orally (to be written up for a vote on the following day) implying that the LCI's prerogatives as the sympathizing section were not being respected by LTF leaders. Several other IMT comrades spoke on this point. In general the tone was very bad. Claudio even said they could not accept a PSTer as an observer on the Secretariat if the comrade named by the PST was working against the sympathizing group in Portugal.

The discussion on Portugal consumed most of the first day's session, which began in the afternoon. There was no session that evening, because the IMT wanted to caucus. (The caucus meeting had been planned earlier. We had been told that its purpose was to discuss South Asia, including the work of the South Asia Marxist Review, and the scheduled IMT trip to India by Vergeat.) Clearly, the IMT caucus was going to discuss Portugal, but it was not clear what kind of motion they would finally want to present, or even if a motion beyond solidarity with the LCI would be presented. (In the Secretariat discussion, neither Walter nor Duret seemed very enthusiastic about presenting a formal motion on other points.)

The second day, shortly before the lunch break, the LTF comrades at the Secretariat meeting were handed the written motion on Portugal drafted by the IMT caucus. The motion was to be voted on later.

One part of the motion called for a vote for the general line of the Portugal report. We were opposed to taking such a vote, because it was not really clear what the general line was. Most of Duret's report was not controversial, but woven into it were some of the concepts of the IMT's European resolution as well as a few points from the statement on Portugal that the LTF comrades voted against last year. It was never clearly explained whether these latter aspects were to be considered included as part of the general line of the report that was put to a vote.

The other part of the IMT motion called for solidarity with the LCI's election campaign. But it included the gratuitous statement that the LCI was the only group of the Fourth International in Portugal. Of course, the purpose of this gratuitous remark was to introduce, by allusion, the IMT's accusations against the GMR and to imply that some comrades were challenging the fact that the LCI was recognized as a sympathizing organization by the last world congress. This kind of motion was, of course, unacceptable; but it was also milder than Roman's oral proposal the previous day. So, after reading the motion from the IMT caucus, we demanded a discussion in order to try to see if it was possible to work out a common motion. We met over lunch with Aubin and Duret and came to agreement. The internal organizational matters required further discussion in the Bureau. The proposal to vote on the general line of the report was dropped, and a simple motion of solidarity with the LCI campaign was drafted.

But, while agreeing with us on this, Aubin and Duret decided to bring this back to the IMT caucus. The IMT caucus then met at length, rejected the agreed-upon motion, and came into the final session of the Secretariat with a motion to adopt the general line of Duret's report, and with the following motion:

"1) The LCI is the sympathizing section of the Fourth International, recognized as such by the 10th World Congress of the Fourth International (Fourth Since Reunification).

"2) Therefore, no organizational relations with Portuguese militants, non-members of the LCI and claiming to be Trotskyists, can be established outside the agreement of the LCI comrades.

"3) Given the expanding opportunities for revolutionary Marxism in Portugal, the United Secretariat emphasizes the importance of the electoral campaign of the LCI. The United Secretariat calls on all sections and sympathizing organizations of the Fourth International to give material aid, to organize solidarity work, and to give maximum press exposure to the LCI campaign. A circular letter will be sent to this effect."

Faced with this situation, we decided to register "not voting" on the general line of Duret's report, and on the first two points of the above IMT motion, while voting for point 3.

As you can imagine, the IMT's decision to stress this organizational matter created a bad tone in the meeting. There are several other aspects to note about their decision. First is the fact that the IMT decided to spring this motion on us after telling us before the meeting that there would be no such motions. Second was the inability of the IMT negotiators to convince the IMT caucus of what they had agreed to. And, finally, the possibility that if each comrade had voted their conscience, rather than voting according to IMT discipline, the motion might not have received a majority.

Another disquieting sign at the meeting, and in informal discussions has been the remarks made about IP, particularly in rela-

tion to IP's coverage of Portugal and Belgium. Regarding the latter point, Rudi insisted on bringing up before the Secretariat the exchange of correspondence concerning the Marcel Smet article. He said that the line of the Marcel Smet article was in contradiction to that of the Belgian section. No formal proposal was made at the Secretariat at this time; it was agreed to wait for a written response from the Belgian Political Bureau to Joe's letter. In the brief discussion at the Secretariat, however, Comrade Walter charged that IP was being transformed into a public faction organ, and that if this continued, they would pass a motion either forbidding comrades to write for IP or else declaring that IP was not of any moral value to the world Trotskyist movement as a whole. This was the first time that I had ever heard of remarks along those lines being openly expressed at a meeting.

Several other points about the meeting:

In the Bureau report, Walter said that Quatrième would no longer be published by the French section, but from now on would be published by the Secretariat, although it would still be printed in France. (In fact, the last issue under the old arrangement has just come out. The LCR will from now on publish its own magazine, to be called, it is said, Cent Fleurs [A Hundred Flowers]). Walter reported that the Secretariat, in undertaking to publish Quatrième, would do so on the principle that it would be self-supporting.

Walter also reported on the Bureau discussion on Africa, which had occurred while Johnson was away. He said that there is a Trotskyist group in Angola (in Luanda), which publishes a paper called "Socialist Revolution," but that the Bureau does not have a copy of the paper. There is also a group of Senegalese comrades, he reported, in both Senegal and France. He also proposed to start a discussion on Eritrea and Ethiopia.

A point on South Asia was added at the meeting. It included a report on the progress of the Indian section, by Galois; a proposal from Roman to draft a statement in the name of the Secretariat in defense of Wijeweera and a campaign to collect signatures for a public appeal on his behalf; and a report on the activities of the South Asia Marxist Review. Under the latter point it was reported that 2,000 copies of the review are printed in Britain, of which 1,000 are sent to Asia. Of these, some 500 are sent to India, free of charge, to a central address. These can be sold by the recipient in India, who can then use the income for political work there. I am sure that the elected central leadership of the Indian section will be interested to learn about this.

The discussion on Spain was hampered by the fact that there was no one present who could report on the LC's analysis of the current situation. It was decided to schedule another discussion on Spain for the next meeting, for which the Bureau will prepare a written draft. It was also agreed to conduct a campaign in defense of political prisoners in Spain. Later in the week, the Bureau held a meeting with comrades from various European sections to discuss this campaign. It was decided to plan on the week of April 25 - May 1 as a week of action, calling for the release of all political prisoners. (The Spanish government is supposed to be proclaim-

Galois Report/5

ing a partial amnesty ("indulto") during the Easter week, which will free prisoners condemned to six years or less, but not including repeaters or those who are accused of being terrorists.)

Other matters that occurred at the Secretariat will be self-explanatory from the minutes.

March 21, 1975

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Wellington,  
New Zealand

March 14th, 1974

Dear Gus,

I have just arrived back here after visiting Lebanon and India. (I was delayed in India because of sickness).

I had a number of discussions with comrades in Beirut; as you know the leadership supports the IMT, and there is one comrade who supports the LTF. He was planning to draw up a document on the work of the section and then formally apply to join the LTF when this had appeared. I suggested that it would be best if he formally applied to join the faction immediately, as direct collaboration would help him in his isolated position. I gave him your address and he said he would write to you.

I reported on the IEC meeting to the student cell plus leading comrades (minus Jaber, who had not returned from Europe). I concentrated on the situation in Argentina and the content of the PST statement which was supported by the LTF. None of them had read the statement (though a number of them receive IP). The comrades had a completely one-sided picture of the PST's work (they seemed to think that it does nothing but hold private meetings with the government and bourgeois parties, and they described it as "very reformist"). Nor did they seem to know much about the general political situation in Argentina. The discussion lasted for some hours and perhaps clarified a few points. I think they will all read the PST statement.

In India I visited Bombay, Surat and Baroda. We are thinking seriously about organizing a speaking tour of Australia and New Zealand by one of the leading woman comrades in Baroda, perhaps in June-July this year.

Comradely,  
s/George Fyson

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LEAGUE FOR SOCIALIST ACTION/  
LIGUE SOCIALISTE OUVRIERE,  
334 Queen St. W.,  
Toronto,  
March 7, 1975.

Political Committee,  
Revolutionary Marxist Group.

Dear Comrades,

We learned on March 2 that work is underway to organize a Canadian tour by a leader of the Groupe Revolution Socialiste, the Antilles section of the Fourth International. The GRS comrade is due to arrive in Canada March 14 or 15.

We think the Revolutionary Marxist Group has taken a very positive and timely initiative in inviting a leader of the GRS Political Bureau to speak in Canada. This tour can bring many Caribbean black militants closer to the ideas and program of the Fourth International. The GRS, through its successful work in Martinique, can play a big role in resolving the general crisis of revolutionary leadership in the Caribbean. The tour can win new support for the Fourth International across Canada. We give this tour our full support.

Jackie Larkin of the RMG Political Committee met on March 4 with Phil Courneyeur of our Political Committee to discuss arrangements for the tour. Tony Thomas of the Socialist Workers Party PC, who was in Toronto to interview Rosie Douglas for the Militant, attended the meeting as an observer. We proposed at this meeting that the tour be jointly sponsored by the Revolutionary Marxist Group (sympathizing group of the Fourth International in Canada) and the League for Socialist Action/Ligue Socialiste Ouvriere (Canadian section of the Fourth International).

When leaders of the Fourth International make speaking tours in countries where two or more organizations of the Fourth International exist, joint tour sponsorship maximizes the gains of the tour. This was proven by the success of Ernest Mandel's recent tour of Australia, jointly sponsored by the Communist League and the Socialist Workers League.

Joint sponsorship and joint organization of the GRS tour will enable the forces of both groups to build the tour in a coordinated way and gain the maximum audience for the GRS speaker. It will demonstrate publicly the unity of the International, increasing greatly its attraction to revolutionary militants in Canada now considering the International's program. Specifically, it will implement the unanimous decision of the recent International Executive Committee meeting to charge "the incoming United Secretariat to do its utmost to lower tensions and to foster moves toward unification where the movement is split."

We make the following specific suggestions on how joint sponsorship of the tour could in our view be best implemented.



--A joint organizing committee of representatives of the RMG and LSA/LSO political committees should be established to take responsibility for organizing the tour in English Canada as a whole. Committees should also be set up in cities where we both have branches, to take charge of local arrangements.

--The GRS speaker will decide the nature of his speeches and other actions in Canada; these will not be the business of the joint organizing committee.

--The tour aims to provide a platform for the GRS comrades to explain their work and their views. The joint organizing committee will aim to achieve the broadest hearing for the GRS speaker, through planning the practical arrangements for the tour, and through throwing the coordinated strength of our two organizations into building it.

--The joint organizing committee will work within the framework of the decisions already taken by the RMG to get the tour rolling, decisions taken before the joint committee is established.

--The tour will be organized so as to make clear publicly the fact that it is jointly sponsored by our two groups. This can be done, for example, by joint sponsorship of public meetings by the two organizations, in addition to endorsement by a wider range of organizations and individuals. It can be done by selecting platform guests and speakers at public meetings to include representatives of both organizations, in explaining to these meetings the nature and purpose of the tour, and in other ways.

--Any problems which arise in organizing the tour will be resolved, if necessary, by consulting the GRS speaker and respecting his views.

--Any surplus funds from the tour will go to a project designated by the GRS speaker.

In addition, we favor asking organizations like Dominicans in Support of Progress, the Antiguan Association, and other black liberation and Caribbean left groups to arrange meetings for the GRS speaker of special interest to Caribbean and black workers, students and radicals.

We think it would be valuable for the tour to include a defense project in its goals -- that is, the defense of Desmond Trotter, a Dominican black militant, framed on a murder charge and sentenced to death. The Feb. 1 issue of Revolution Socialiste indicates the GRS's stand in support of this defense campaign.

We hope to discuss this project with representatives of your Political Committee as soon as possible. We will consider your proposals, and objections you may raise to our suggestions, with a view to reaching agreement without delay for joint sponsorship and organization of the tour.

LSA-LSO/3

On Jackie Larkin's suggestion, we are approaching the Groupe Marxiste Revolutionnaire of Quebec independently, with the same proposals, for joint organization of the tour in Quebec. Of course, we will also pass on our proposals to the leadership of the GRS.

Our agreement for joint sponsorship will help greatly to promote the success of this tour, and thus to promote the growth of the revolutionary movement here and in the Caribbean.

Comradely,  
s/Phil Courneyeur,  
for the LSA/LSO Political  
Committee.

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March 1975

Political Committee,  
League for Socialist Action.

Dear Comrades,

Concerning your letter of March 7 about the GRS tour, we think it best to speak frankly. Your initial assumption, that "this tour can bring many Caribbean black militants closer to the ideas and program of the Fourth International" is shared by us. Nevertheless, this rather vague formulation must be concretized.

First of all, the term "Caribbean black militants" is a bit misleading. Of course, most of the militants in the Toronto black community (in fact, most of the community itself) are immigrants from the English-speaking Caribbean. They are naturally very concerned with political developments in the Caribbean and maintain close links with their counterparts there. Undoubtedly, some will return to the Caribbean and play a role in the development of the vanguard in that region. In this sense, the tour of a GRS comrade in Canada is obviously related to the expansion of the Trotskyist movement in the Caribbean into the English-speaking sector of the region.

However, the black community in Toronto is neither an exile nor a transitory community. It is a relatively large and stable part of the Toronto proletariat. Most blacks in Toronto intend to stay in Canada permanently or at least indefinitely. Many of the radicalized black militants have been in Canada for many years. Hence our relationship to these militants is primarily a question of the construction of the Fourth International in Canada itself within an especially oppressed sector of the Canadian working class. It was within this framework that we invited the GRS comrades to send a representative.

And this is where political problems are posed, problems which are completely ignored in your letter. The Fourth International in Canada is divided into two organizations with different lines and different practice, as all of us are well aware. We find it rather difficult to conceive of building "support for the Fourth International," in tangible terms, which is not support for one of the two national organizations of the Fourth International in Canada. And we find it difficult to imagine that there are any elements who will support both of our organizations, simply because they are both members of the International. We don't agree with the category of "opponent organizations" in the sense that you have used this term, but our organizations are certainly competing for political influence and recruits in Canada. This is currently the case in the anti-racist movement, where we have major differences with your line and practice, and you with ours. You are attempting to politically defeat us in this milieu; we wish to defeat you (within the framework, of course, of an anti-racist united front). This has been the case virtually from the outset of this work.

We initiated this tour because we believe that a fight must be waged in this milieu against reformist conceptions, in favour of a

RMG Political Committee/2

class view of racism, a class view of how to fight it and a clear and explicit anti-imperialist understanding among both black and white radicals of the interrelationship between the Canadian and Caribbean revolutions. This has been the content of our propaganda in this field and has shaped our interventions and action proposals, both within the Alliance Against Racism and Political Repression and within the Ad Hoc Committee Against the Deportations. You have consistently taken a different approach, in the name of constructing a "mass, single-issue, democratic demand, non-exclusionary coalition." Such a line leads in practice to positions like your opposition to holding the proposed national anti-racist demonstration on May 1st, on the grounds the May 1st is a "sectarian" date, and to your position that the proposed teach-in on the Green Paper on immigration be advertised as a teach in "about" the Green Paper rather than against the Green Paper with leading Conservative MP's invited to speak (which is many things, but certainly not "exclusionary").

Your stated desire to utilize the GRS comrade to address Canadian black militants is also not without its hesitations, which originate in this same line. We note that at the March 7 meeting (the same date as your letter) of the Ad Hoc Committee, you opposed the proposal that a representative of the Fourth International address the Toronto public meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee.

Your proposal for LSA-RMG joint sponsorship of the tour is therefore unacceptable to us. We intend to organize the tour in a manner similar to the way in which you organized the Boston meeting. In other words, we will initiate the meeting and ask for the endorsement of a number of other groups. We would welcome your endorsement. This applies to one of the meetings which we will have in Toronto. It is possible that we may also organize a united front meeting, in which case, we will follow the usual procedure for united front meetings.

Communist Greetings,

s/ Jackie  
For the RMG Political Committee