

June 30, 1974

TO THE STEERING COMMITTEE OF THE LENINIST TROTSKYIST FACTION

Dear Comrades,

Enclosed with this letter are the following items:

1. A report on the May 29-30 meeting of the United Secretariat.
2. A resolution endorsing the electoral tactics of the FCR, adopted by a majority at the May meeting of the United Secretariat.
3. Seven items concerning an exchange between the United Secretariat majority and the PST leadership around the PST's participation in a series of meetings with Peron and members of his cabinet.
4. Two recent articles from the Spanish press reporting on action of the first military commando unit of the LCR-ETA VI. To date there has been no comment on these articles by the leadership of the LCR-ETA VI or by the United Secretariat majority.
5. A letter to comrade Johnson concerning the July meeting of the United Secretariat.
6. A letter from the Political Committee of the SWP to comrade Mandel concerning the discussion on "finances" that took place at the May United Secretariat meeting.
7. A letter from comrade Sakai commenting on the LTF political resolution.

A reminder: At the faction steering committee meeting following the world congress it was decided to schedule the next meeting for late August, to be held in Canada. It is important that this meeting be as broadly representative as possible, so members of the steering committee should be considering arrangements for attending. Travel details will have to be worked out individually.

Comradely,

Mary-Alice Waters

TO THE STEERING COMMITTEE OF THE LENINIST TROTSKYIST FACTION

Report on the May 29-30 United Secretariat Meeting  
by Thérèse

At the May meeting of the United Secretariat the most important points on the agenda were Portugal, the French elections, Argentina, United Secretariat and bureau membership, "finances," and publication of world congress documents.

1. Portugal. The discussion on Portugal centered around the draft of a United Secretariat statement on the fall of the Portuguese dictatorship. The final version of this statement is printed in the June 24, 1974 issue of Intercontinental Press. Members of the United Secretariat who are ITF members voted against the final version of the document for four main reasons.

a. The role of the CP and SP. The statement describes the policies of the CP and SP leaderships as being policies of "partial and timid reforms," and speaks of "shilly-shallying and vacillations" by the Stalinists and social democrats (pg. 835). It would be hard to arrive at a more erroneous assessment of the thoroughly counterrevolutionary line of the CP and SP, on both domestic and foreign policy. Domestically their role has been to hold back, wear out and act as strike-breakers against the mass movement. In foreign policy they are acting as the agents of imperialism in their line on the colonies.

The United Secretariat majority did finally accept our amendment to the statement and incorporated a call for the CP and SP to break with the junta and the bourgeois ministers and leave the government. But the statement fails to place this demand in the perspective of the fight for class independence on all levels, including political independence, and the fight for a workers and farmers government.

b. Mass mobilizations against the continuation of the colonial war. In discussing the draft resolution it became obvious that there were differences over the question of what orientation revolutionists should have on the war question. We argued that one of our central tasks must be to mobilize the broadest possible mass actions for immediate independence and the withdrawal of all troops. The comrades of the majority opposed a mass orientation and clearly counterposed "far left" demonstrations on the war and other issues in order to establish a "revolutionary pole."

c. We argued against the ultraleft bravado reflected in the statement that "The time has come for a revolutionary effort aimed at accelerating the disintegration of the bourgeois military apparatus." (pg. 834) We pointed out that in a statement of this kind it is sufficient to emphasize the fight for democratic rights in the army, the right for soldiers to form their own councils and debate their perspectives. It's

not necessary to give the Portuguese ruling class a weapon with which to victimize comrades inside the army.

d. We objected to the loose way in which the term fascism is used in the statement. It was the view of LTF comrades present at the United Secretariat meeting that it is more accurate to refer to the Salazar regime as a military-police dictatorship with strong fascist features. Since there is so much political confusion on the left about fascism, and a tendency to label many regimes as fascist simply as an epithet, it is important for us to use the term only in a rigorously scientific fashion.

2. French elections. By a majority vote the United Secretariat adopted the enclosed resolution endorsing the line of the Revolutionary Communist Front on the second round of the elections. We opposed the resolution and voted against it. We proposed that the internal discussion bulletin of the international be opened to contributions on the question of the French elections, starting with the United Secretariat's resolution. This motion was rejected.

Several comrades on the LTF steering committee are in the process of drafting a signed contribution to the discussion on the French election taking up three points:

1. The proposed Piaget candidacy as an example of the European document's line on regrouping the "vanguard;"

2. the fundamentally ultraleft character of the Krivine campaign and how this led the FCR into an opportunist error on the second round;

3. the character of Mitterrand's campaign as the candidate of a class-collaborationist coalition.

3. Argentina. The enclosed correspondence between Walter and the PST leadership, including the majority resolution adopted by the last United Secretariat, fairly well summarizes the new campaign being waged by the IEC Majority to try and read the PST out of the Fourth International.

The IEC Majority formally decided not to publicly circulate the sections of the world congress resolution on Argentina that attack "Morenoism" and characterize the PST as being "so far removed from the principles and traditions of our movement" that they cannot be recognized as a section. But that formal decision has already been rendered meaningless by the public circulation of the full text of the Argentine resolution in Argentina itself, and the public attacks on the PST in the May and June issues of Combate, the paper of the Fraccion Roja.

If the United Secretariat majority decides to make public its May 30 statement attacking the PST (and they have indicated that this is their intention) it will finish any pretense of

their trying to live up to the nine-point agreement adopted at the world congress.

Under the Argentine point on the agenda comrade Livio also reported on a recent split in the Red Fraction. He indicated that while no documents have been written, the differences seem to be over the evaluation of the ERP: was it correct in the past and is it correct now for the PRT to have its own army. Both sides apparently claim a majority. Livio reported that he had convinced both sides to hold a joint discussion and congress and thus reversed the split course they were on. We were informed that these differences had already been reflected in the leadership of the Red Fraction prior to the world congress; that both tendencies had been represented in the Red Fraction delegation; but that only the position held by a majority of the political bureau had been expressed at the world congress.

4. The meeting rejected our nominations for the United Secretariat and Bureau by voting to seat Crandall, Pepe and Williams while rejecting Arturo. (See letter to Johnson.) This is a blatant violation of the nine-point agreement which states explicitly that "full members and consultative members [of the IEC] shall have the same rights in everything except voting." They also refused to vote on our proposals for bureau and staff, stating that sections and sympathizing organizations whose leaderships agree with the LTF are not paying dues or sustainers to the International. We pointed out that:

1. LTF members of the United Secretariat had no knowledge about the dues situation of any section or sympathizing organization since we are excluded from the Bureau. If some groups are behind that is a matter to be taken up directly with the leaderships of the particular groups. The LTF's policy is as outlined in our faction declaration--to set an example for the International on such questions.

2. It is really grasping at straws to try and maintain that there is some relationship between the Australian SWL's dues status (for example) and whether or not comrades Martinez and Johnson have something to contribute to the daily leadership of the international movement--both as individuals and as representatives of 50 percent of the International.

In other words, the majority of the United Secretariat has decided to continue its policy of maintaining a 100 percent monopoly on the daily leadership, excluding the LTF from the Bureau.

5. Publication of world congress documents. The United Secretariat majority voted to proceed with the publication of documents as outlined in Ernest's April 30, 1974 letter to Joe Hansen. They rejected publication of our Argentine or Bolivian balance sheet in any form, and they decided to edit Joe's counterreport on armed struggle to eliminate any reference to the position taken by the LCR-ETA VI on the Carrero Blanco

assassination. To date we have not yet seen the special world congress issue of Quatrieme Internationale so we do not know the final form of the world congress documents or what kind of editorial comment is included.

June 29, 1974

RESOLUTION OF THE UNITED SECRETARIAT ON THE  
ELECTORAL TACTICS OF THE FCR

The decision of the Front Communiste Révolutionnaire to call for a vote for Mitterrand in the second round of the French presidential elections has given rise to important discussions and taking of positions in several sections of the International. For this reason the political leadership of the FCR asked the United Secretariat to detail its position on the disputed questions.

1.) The presidential election held under the French constitution lend an especially important role to the individual candidate. But that is no excuse for neglecting to analyze a candidacy by starting from the nature of the political forces that it represents and that are embodied in it. In effect, one would then be led to determine one's position essentially on the basis of the "personal program" of the candidate (Mitterrand, in this case) or to advocate abstention as a matter of principle in presidential elections (as opposed, for example, to legislative elections). This is why an analysis of what the Union de la Gauche represents is so important for determining a vote recommendation in the May 1974 presidential elections in France.

2.) The "Union de la Gauche" represents essentially an alliance between the two main French reformist workers parties, the Social Democratic party (of which Mitterrand is a leading member) and the Stalinist party. During the most recent elections, it was strengthened by the support of the two main workers trade-unions, the CGT and the CFDT (FO, being extremely pro-employer and very small, did not endorse any candidate), and of the teachers union (the FEN) and the Parti Socialiste Unifié, a left-centrist group. The rallying of the "left radicals," a handful of bourgeois politicians, to the "Union de la Gauche" after the signing of the Common Program, could not have changed the nature of this alliance. During the 1973 legislative elections, the revolutionary militants should have called exclusively for votes to the CP and SP, because the left radicals symbolized and concretized the desire for an interclass alliance. But the left radicals did not bring any section of the bourgeoisie into the Union de la Gauche with them. The same is true of the call for a second-round vote for Mitterrand raised by some leftover "left Gaullists" who rejected the candidacy of Giscard d'Estaing, an Independent Republican. (This electoral call was not accompanied by any organic or programmatic modification of the Union de la Gauche or by any rallying to his candidacy by significant bourgeois formations.)

On the contrary, behind the left vs. right electoral confrontation, there emerged an unprecedented electoral class polarization. And it is symptomatic that Mitterrand, despite the narrow margin that separated him from Giscard in the polls, refused to negotiate with Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber about changing the Common Program on the question of nationalizations.

Thus, the Mitterrand candidacy can in no case be characterized as the candidacy of a fully-formed Popular Front.

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3.) The real question, then, hinges on the analysis of the Socialist party. If the SP is defined as a bourgeois party, then the vote for Mitterrand would be a vote for a bourgeois candidate. The whole policy of revolutionary militants during the electoral period would have had to be modified in line with that definition. But this is not the analysis of the United Secretariat -- or of the Tenth World Congress in its document on Europe. The French Socialist party remains a reformist workers party (or, as Lenin said, a bourgeois workers party). And this constitutes the nub of the analysis.

4.) To be sure, the desire for an alliance with sectors of the bourgeoisie was many, many times reaffirmed during the election campaign by Mitterrand, the SP, and the CP. This desire was concretized by the form of the appeals put out to the Chaban voters between the first and second rounds. That is why the FCR made denunciations of the perspective of class collaboration and warnings against it one of the axes of its campaign. But this project did not materialize, for Mitterrand the "Union de la Gauche" are not currently seen by any sector of the bourgeoisie as a desirable solution to the bourgeois crisis of governmental leadership or to the social crisis. Now, to make a plan of class collaboration and alliance with important sectors of the bourgeoisie a determining criterion in deciding what vote revolutionary Marxists should call for in an election would amount to throwing the revolutionary Marxists into a tangle of insoluble contradictions. It can lead to a generalization of an abstentionist position, because every reformist Social Democratic party -- and, today every Stalinist party as well -- has a political line of class collaboration and has a program of alliance with sectors of the bourgeoisie. That should not make us forget that reformists, when they are in the government, do not necessarily need bourgeois ministers to practice an anti-worker, counterrevolutionary policy. For that would make light of what is the basis of revolutionary-Marxist policy on electoral matters: the necessity of the masses experiencing in practice reformism "in power" if they are to shed their bourgeois-democratic illusions and how the actual fact (and not the abstract possibility) of significant sectors of the bourgeoisie entering the government (like the military figures entering the Allende government) can allow for a shift in the attitude of revolutionary-Marxist militants toward a government of reformist workers organizations.

5.) That is the essence of the problem. It is not a question of saying that Mitterrand (any more than Wilson in Britain) in any way represents the interests of the working class or of suggesting that his policy would be "socialist." On the contrary, the FCR campaign insisted on showing how much Mitterrand could not -- and did not want -- to break out of the framework of bourgeois society. It is enough to say that it was up to the revolutionaries to help the masses go through the indispensable experience of what they believe should be "their" government. On this point, the case of France is especially clear, almost caricatural. It is not only that a serious electoral defeat of the "left" would have weighed very negatively on the relationship of forces between the classes. It is that for the first time since 1958 (and, for the CP, since 1947) workers parties could have been endowed with governmental responsibilities. The only alternative to a Mitterrand vote on the second round was a call

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for abstention, which was proposed only by the Mao-Stalinist sects. Since the abstention rate was the lowest ever, and since Giscard obtained a majority of less than 1%, the revolutionaries would have been seen very concretely as the ones responsible for stopping the working class from going through the experience of reformism in power, of the reformist road to socialism, and of having been "neutral" in a confrontation between the whole organized working class under reformist leadership on the one side and the totality of parties representing the bourgeoisie on the other side.

6.) The FCR's electoral tactic falls completely within the logic of the one Lenin proposed to the Communists of Great Britain in "Left-wing Communism: an Infantile Disorder." In fact, the union of bourgeois political forces around Giscard d'Estaing was greater than that ever assembled in Great Britain. And the rallying of workers around Mitterrand was greater than the rallying of British workers to Labour candidates ever was. That a tiny handful of liberal-bourgeois politicians also joined the Mitterrand camp changes nothing in this situation. Elsewhere, Lenin explicitly mentioned the rallying of a few liberal-bourgeois politicians to the Labour party, which occurred at the beginning of the 1920s.

The vote for Mitterrand no more constitutes support to the program, political line, or class-collaborationist plans of the leaders of the French SP and CP than the vote for the Hendersons and Snowdens in 1921 implied support to the same sort of program of the social-patriotic and social-imperialist traitors of that era. (Lenin noted that the Labor leaders preferred an alliance with bourgeois parties and that this in itself was not at all sufficient for Communists not to vote for them). The Mitterrand vote has but one function: to create better tactical conditions for a greater section of the masses, who still partially hold reformist illusions (the fault of the Stalinist leaders), thus enabling them more rapidly to divest themselves of these illusion and to begin to accept the alternative, revolutionary solution.

According to the results of the first round, there are in France today 12 million workers who hold partial reformist illusions, and nearly 1 million workers who no longer do. The central problem for revolutionaries is to convince these 12 million workers of the pernicious character of these illusions. That can be accomplished only on the basis of experience and of common battles in practice, and not on the exclusive or principal basis of abstract propaganda against coalition with any bourgeois politician.

If these 1 million workers had abstained on the second round, that is, if they had declared themselves indifferent and neutral in the conflict between Mitterrand and Giscard, thus in practice identifying the reformist leader of the organized workers movement with the political chief of the united bourgeoisie, the differentiation and progression of political consciousness among the masses of workers influenced by reformism would have been retarded. By calling for a vote to Mitterrand, all the while expressing the indispensable criticism and suspicion of his political program, the FCR on the contrary created the tactical conditions needed for a more rapid break with reformist illusions



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It goes without saying that, had Mitterand been elected, and had he included bourgeois ministers in his cabinets, the revolutionaries would have called for their removal.

The references to Trotsky's analyses on the Spanish Popular Front within which only the "shadow of the bourgeoisie" was present, are totally off the mark. Trotsky spoke in these terms when referring to the Popular Front after Franco's coup d'etat (before this coup, one of the main bourgeois parties had been supporting the Popular Front), that is, after the workers had formed their own organs of dual power, after they had armed themselves, and after they had occupied and taken over the management of the factories and the large agricultural enterprises.

Under these conditions, when the immediate problem at hand was the opposition between the embryonic workers power and the program of re-establishing the bourgeois state, the counterrevolutionary role of the CP, the SP, and their allies was ideologically justified by the presence of the "shadow of the liberal and 'anti-fascist' bourgeoisie" within the republican government.

The situation in France today is totally different. There are scarcely any organs of workers power. The bourgeois state is not being reconstructed but is still solidly standing. The workers do not have to be led back to the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie; they still believe in it in large part. Under these conditions, to allow the reformist experiment to go into effect through the election of Mitterand would mean allowing the class consciousness of the majority of the working class to advance and not to participate in the operation of catastrophic retreat of this consciousness, as in Spain after July 1936.

7.) The essential condition for calling for a vote for a reformist candidate is that the revolutionaries maintain their total independence of propaganda and agitation and that this independence be utilized. This is what the FCR did with all the means at its disposal by running Alain Krivine on the first round and by waging a revolutionary campaign aimed at organizing distrust of Mitterand. The two vote recommendations -- for a revolutionary candidate on the first round, for Mitterand on the second round -- were fully justified, both from the standpoint of the general revolutionary-Marxist policy on electoral matters and from the standpoint of the concrete political situation that existed in France.

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April 12, 1974

Political Bureau of the PST

Dear Comrades,

The Bureau of the United Secretariat has decided to propose to the next United Secretariat meeting to discuss the political evolution in Argentina. In addition, we received a letter from the PRT/Fraccion Roja which wants the United Secretariat to deal with your attendance to a meeting called by general Peron of representatives of all political parties, in order to strengthen the "institutionalization process" in your country.

We have sent you yesterday a copy of the letter received from the Fraccion Roja.

In order to enable us to discuss these matters on the basis of a full and contradictory information, we should like you to inform us in the way which you feel adequate about this question. In particular we should like to know:

- (a) for what reasons comrades Coral and Arturo were present at that meeting;
- (b) whether, as the bourgeois press alleges (see photocopy of "La Opinion" March 22, 1974) you signed a common declaration of 8 political parties;
- (c) whether you published any communique or public declaration in relation with that meeting;
- (d) whether, in any you did not sign said common declaration, you published a denial of this allegation.

Questions (c) and (d) cannot be answered by us on the basis of material in our possession, as we have received no issue of "Avanzada Socialista" nor any other communication from you since six weeks.

Please take into consideration that the next Un. Secr. meeting takes place on April 20-21, and that your answer should therefore come immediately here.

Fraternally yours,

For the Un. Secr. Bureau,

Walter.

Copy to JH

To the United Secretariat of the Fourth International

Dear Comrades,

The Tenth World Congress adopted a resolution on the "Political Crisis and Revolutionary Perspectives in Argentina," which, in one section where it drew a critical balance sheet of the orientation and activity of the Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores, included a specific negative evaluation of the PST leadership's habit of going to the Government Palace to explain to a bourgeois government its views on the evolution of the capitalist economy, the university reform bill, etc. No reference to Leninist realpolitik can justify this kind of "respectful and constructive dialogue," or this kind of "platform" with a government which, along with its Peronist demagogy, has adopted a clearly repressive policy contrary to the interests of the Argentine working class.

It turns out that while the World Congress was meeting, the PST leadership was repeating this kind of operation, which is worthy of Social Democrats but contrary to the principles and the tradition of our International, to explain to the present government that the Fourth International had nothing to do with the attack on the Azul barracks, an action that was carried out by the ERP. We think that this kind of defender is not helping the Fourth International.

But our indignation overflowed when we saw a report in the press about the PST leaders Juan Carlos Coral and Arturo Gómez participating in a delegation of bourgeois and reformist "politicians" headed by an enemy of the working class like Ricardo Balbin that visited Peron. Ironically, Gómez was the reporter for the LTF on Argentina in the Tenth World Congress. The character of the meeting and its objectives are made absolutely clear by the statement that was issued unanimously by this group of "politicians." The objective was the defense of bourgeois democracy, of the existing democracy, of this bourgeois state and the so-called process of institutionalism (the restoration of constitutional government) by which the bourgeoisie is trying to overcome its political crisis by exacting greater sacrifice from, and imposing repression on, the workers. We think that this is incompatible with our objectives of destroying the bourgeois state and replacing it with a workers government. We think this is incompatible with the program of the Fourth International. We think that it is grotesque to go on talking in this way to a government that is directing the terror of parapolice gangs, trampling on the very democratic freedoms that it claimed in the electoral campaign to defend. We think that the place for Trotskyist militants is not with the gang of reactionaries, exploiters, and traitors, but on the other side of the line--in the struggles that our working class and our people are waging against the plans of the bourgeoisie, its Social Pact, its repressive laws, its terrorist escalation.

Concerned about strict defense of the 10th World Congress line and the rules of democratic centralism, we think that the United Secretariat must take a public stand against this kind of an attitude on the part of an organization that enjoys the status

of a sympathizing organization of the Fourth International, and as a result casts on the entire International the opprobrium of its opportunistic practices, which are unworthy of revolutionary Marxism. The latest episode we have described is of extreme gravity and cannot be left without a public answer in which the Secretariat disassociates itself from the attitude of the PST, which has sunk into legalistic considerations to the point of breaking with the principles and traditions of revolutionary Marxism.

We attach the press clippings on the episode we mentioned.

Fraternally,

A. for the Political Bureau  
of the Fraccion Roja

(The following is translated from the March 22, 1974 issue of La Opinión.)

The eight parties of the center-left that met yesterday with the president issued the following communique after the conference.

"Those who attended the conference with the president reiterated their fundamental aim of sparing no effort to maintain and consolidate the process of institutionalization in the country (that is, return to legal, constitutional forms of rule), under the rule of democracy and by applying the principles of pluralism and constructive dialogue.

"They voiced these views because they had noted with increasing disquiet the development of disruptive factors affecting various expressions of the country's institutional life, despite the broad mandate with which the government took office.

"In the name of their parties, which retain their distinct points of view and independence, they declared their desire to see the struggle for national liberation and social justice develop in the democratic framework described above, and expressed their view that the essential precondition for such a struggle going forward was that all Argentines be able to freely defend their programs and their own evaluations of economic and social facts, as well as their own judgments about the actions of the government.

"The difficult moments that lie ahead for the republic, as a consequence of confronting the powers that have long held it in subjection, will be overcome by the united action of the sectors that respect the will of the majority of the people that was expressed in the elections to seek liberation, and which jointly guarantee their right to continue speaking out in the future in order to make this will effective, to end the burdens of dependency and turn over to the workers the benefits of the wealth created by their efforts.

"As a part of this process, we have not opposed carrying out these objectives. The development of a genuine federal system in the country, the integration of Latin America, solidarity with the oppressed peoples of the world, and the struggle against imperialism and the oligarchy can only be achieved by the creative agreements that emerge from the full exercise of democracy in all fields, in order to define clearly the political line in economic, social, trade-union, and cultural affairs.

"Because of the representativeness of the participants and the development of its substance, the meeting must be considered a concrete step designed to bring about a pooling of forces to assure the course of institutionalization in the channels voted for by the people. All the participants recognized the risks involved in the undertaking the country demanded, while agreeing--over and above their respective points of view on the deepening and the rate of the process of change--on the vital necessity for carrying it out.

"It could be regarded as an especially positive outcome of the meeting that it in itself represented an explicit statement by the country supporting the process of institutionalization at all levels and at the same time condemning all those who are trying to interfere with this process in one way or another. (This apparently refers to the purge of provincial governors, in particular the Cordoba coup.)

"Pursuant to these common positions, the participants stressed--agreeing with previous public statements of the president--how counterproductive and dangerous any attempt would be to blur the distinction between the state and the party apparatus or to use the state apparatus to intervene in internal party struggles that should be resolved in their natural course. They stressed how negative it was for officials to use their power to influence these internal struggles, injecting elements that have disturbed and dismayed public opinion.

"Finally, the participants agreed on the need for constant and easy communication and for assuring precise information on the moves and objectives of the government and of the political forces in every case in order to block rumors and false versions which in themselves are a disruptive element that plays into the hands of reaction.

"Those who are trying to wreck the constitutional system or hope for the appearance of circumstances that would permit a new reactionary adventure; those who are trying to manipulate sections of the government in order to gain an influence over future alternatives; those who are promoting totalitarian or corporatist practices, who agree ideologically with the fascist demands and the interests of the multinational corporations that are being pressed on our country from every side; all these elements must realize that the nation has met here and, reaching fundamental agreement, has given its answer."

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May 8, 1974.

Political Bureau of the PST

Dear Comrades,

We recall our letter of April 12, 1974 concerning the meeting of cdes Coral and Arturo with general Peron, letter to which we have not received an answer till this day.

We want to inform you that the next meeting of the United Secretariat, which will be held on May 29 and 30, will probably discuss this matter. We would urge you to send us a detailed answer to the questions raised in our April 12 letter before that Un/ Secr. meeting.

You have of course the right to send a comrade to participate in that discussion of the Un. Secr. and we would welcome such a participation.

We also remind you that you have not replied to a previous letter of the Un. Secr./Bureau concerning your payment of dues to the International.

Fraternally yours,

For the Un. Secr. Bureau,

Walter.

Copy to JH

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Buenos Aires, May 23, 1974

Dear Walter,

Reasons which are publicly known and the organizational consequences they mean for us make it impossible for us to attend (as we had planned) the meeting of the U.S. Thus we feel it appropriate and necessary to postpone consideration of our tactic of attending meetings with the Argentine government (with other political parties) until we can be present. We are committed to attending the next meeting of the U.S. to be held.

Nonetheless, cde. Livio will have gotten to you part of the documentation you requested along with his oral report of the meeting with us. As a memory-aid, we repeat that report. We have not signed either that or any other document with the parties who attended those meetings. I repeat: not with any other party. The only thing involved is an error by the director of our newspaper who repeated the reports of other organs of the press. As we said to Livio, we were not planning to center our report on that episode since *Politica Obrera* had attacked us publicly for it, and our defense would appear to be a posteriori. Even more so since our own paper had published the tale, tacitly approving it by so doing and defending it explicitly in an absurd polemic.

To clarify the problem we awaited patiently our turn to speak on television for two hours to the whole country. On that occasion, cde. Coral reported, in the first place, that we had not signed any document, nor had we turned over any document to the government. In the second place, he explained that there had been an error by the director of our newspaper in repeating the false news reports from the bourgeois press.

We used this means of communication, taking advantage of the fact that it was a television program where the most important Argentine politicians have spoken and that it reaches an audience of several million people. This gave us the assurance that if what cde. Coral said was false, the people mentioned would have denied it immediately. The fact is that no one denied what Coral said, much less those mentioned.

We attach the summary made by a commercial magazine of the program in question. It is useful for corroborating the importance of that interview and also as a proof of our principled politics at such meetings, since Coral reported extensively to the people on our position. Since in this summary the denial by Coral of our supposed signature on the document is not mentioned, we place at the disposal of any comrade who comes to Argentina the complete tape of the television program.

However, if it is possible to delay consideration of the precise tactical and subtactical aspects of our frontal and intransigent fight against the government and against any attempt at a popular front, it is impossible to delay on an absolutely preremptory question: the U.S. must organize an international campaign of denunciation of the fascist, bureaucrat, and government attacks against our party, the other parties on the left,



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and the class-struggle tendencies (in the unions).

On that question it is obvious that not a moment should be lost. Thus we are very surprised at the fact that you are pressuring us so persistently for the documentation on a tactical question and don't ask us for any documentation in view of the attacks of which we have been the object. Nor has any demonstration of solidarity reached us from the United Secretariat.

Finally, in relation to the other problem that you raise, of financial contributions. All we have to say is that we sense a contradiction between what was agreed and what you are now asking us. The meeting you will have soon with our delegate will be a good opportunity to complete arrangements in writing on this old problem.

Trotskyist greetings,

s/Arturo

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June 3, 1974.

To the Political Bureau of the PST.

Dear comrades,

We have received your letter of May 23, 1974, on Saturday June 1, i.e. after the United Secretariat meeting of May 29-30. At that United Secretariat meeting we adopted a statement on the visit of comrades Coral and Arturo to Peron, and the statements published with that respect by Avanzada Socialista. We decided however to keep this statement internal (it will only be circulated to members of Central Committees of sections and sympathizing organizations), so as to enable you to state your case before the leadership of the movement before any public criticism is printed.

We add to the present letter the text of the statement and of the accompanying letter sent to the leadership of the sections.

The next meeting of the United Secretariat will take place on July 3-4, 1974. We hope you will be able to attend that meeting and to clarify in a satisfactory way the problems raised by the meetings with Peron and the issue of Avanzada Socialista of March 28.

The explanations contained in your letter of May 23 leave us perplexed however. You say that the PST did not sign any declaration with the other parties participating in the meetings with Peron, and that the editor of your paper made an "error" referring to that signature on the basis of "certain press organs".

However, the issue of Avanzada Socialista of March 28 does not only contain the information about this alleged signature of the joint statement. It contains also:

- a) the full text of that statement;
- b) an editorial defending the signature;
- c) a letter by a "comrade F" mildly criticizing the signature;
- d) a long political defence of the signature in answer to that criticism.

It is hard to believe that this whole political debate covering several pages of Avanzada Socialista was based only on the "echo of the report of some newspapers" and was due to a error of your editor. Doesn't your Political Bureau exercise some control over that editor? Didn't he contact your Political Bureau before answering the criticisms of "comrade F" and raising a series of political issues of the greatest political and programmatic importance?

Our attention is also drawn to the fact that the PRT(U), which collaborates closely with your party, and one of whose main leaders is a leading member of your party, came out, in public, shortly before the issue of the common statement with the other political parties visiting Peron arose, in favor of a bloc with bourgeois parties for the organization of "free elections". Was there also some mistake by an editor involved? Is this pure coincidence? Or are the positions defended by the issue of

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Avanzada Socialista of March 28 the political positions of the Leadership of the PST, in which case we have to point out that they are in complete opposition with the tradition of Trotsky and the Fourth International on this question?

Whatever this may be, you explain that you found it unwise to rectify your position in the pages of Avanzada Socialista, as comrade Coral had the opportunity to speak before television, and could thereby rectify the false information before a larger audience. We have read the summary of comrade Coral's speech in the magazine "Asi" (issue of May 14, 1974). This could only increase our perplexity: this speech does not contain a single word of rectification concerning the PST's alleged non-signing of the common declaration of the eight parties.

The least one could therefore conclude is, that in order to eliminate the impression created before the Argentine masses and especially the vanguard that the trotskyist movement has changed its traditional opposition to any "bloc" with bourgeois parties, including for the alleged "defence of democratic liberties" (and in the March 28 issue of Avanzada Socialista those liberties are identified with the institutions of the bourgeois-democratic State, which makes the matter even worse), Avanzada Socialista should publish a clear rectification of this error and set the record straight as to what is the position of trotskyism with that respect. That would then end the problem for us.

We understand perfectly that you are under heavy attack to-day by terrorist forces of the right, and we are indignant at the murders committed against PST comrades. We are ready to start immediately an international campaign of denunciation of these crimes, and of defence of the PST against right-wing terrorism. Please send us immediately a draft statement for publication, and all the necessary information (we do not receive Avanzada Socialista regularly since several months); send it to the address Gisela Scholtz, Boîte Postale 1166, 1000 Brussels, Belgium, not as a registred letter (which takes much longer).

But precisely in the light of these crimes committed against your comrades, with the complicity and under the cover of the peronist government, the declaration of the 8 parties and other material published in Avanzada Socialista of March 28, are all the graver, because they participate objectively in a campaign of mystification and cover up about the real nature of those who guide and cover the murderers!

As to the final paragraph of your letter, we cannot understand it. The question of payment of dues is independent of the recognition or not as a section, or of the level of political debate going on between the leadership of the International and a section or sympathizing organization. In order to have rights in the movement, you have to implement your duties. The rights you exercised fully, before, during and after the world congress. We could expect that you should at least exercise your elementary duty of making a contribution in relation with the membership which you claimed, and whose vote was fully counted at the world congress.

Fraternally yours,  
For the United Secretariat/Bureau  
Walter.

The following statement was adopted by a majority of the United Secretariat at the meeting of May 29-30, 1974.

\* \* \*

On March 22 Argentine President Juan Peron met with representatives from 8 parties -- at their request: Union Civica Radical, Partido Revolucionario Cristiano, PST, Partido Socialista Popular, Partido Intransigente, UDELPA, Partido Comunista, Democracia Progresista. This meeting wasn't an isolated incident: it is part of a series of initiatives Peron has taken aimed at "normalizing" relations with the officially recognized parties. But the March 22 interview was the most significant to date because at the end the parties published a common declaration.

Among other things the declaration stated: "Those who attended the conference with the president reiterated their fundamental aim of sparing no effort to maintain and consolidate the process of institutionalization in the country (that is, return to legal, constitutional forms of rule), under the rule of democracy and by applying the principles of pluralism and constructive dialogue.  
...

"The difficult moments that lie ahead for the republic, as a consequence of confronting the powers that have long held it in subjection, will be overcome by the united action of the sectors that respect the will of the majority of the people that was expressed in the elections to seek liberation, and which jointly guarantee their right to continue speaking out in the future in order to make this will effective, to end the burdens of dependency and turn over to the workers the benefits of the wealth created by their efforts.

"As a part of this process, we have not opposed carrying out these objectives....

"Because of the representativeness of the participants and the development of its substance, the meeting must be considered a concrete step designed to bring about a pooling of forces to assure the course of institutionalization in the channels voted for by the people. All the participants recognized the risks involved in the undertaking the country demanded, while agreeing--over and above their respective points of view on the deepening and the rate of the process of change -- on the vital necessity for carrying it out....

"Those who are trying to wreck the constitutional system or hope for the appearance of circumstances that would permit a new reactionary adventure; those who are trying to manipulate sections of the government in order to gain an influence over future alternatives; those who are promoting totalitarian or corporativist practices, who agree ideologically with the fascistoid demands and the interests of the multinational corporations that are being pressed on our country from every side; all these elements must realize that the nation has met here and, reaching fundamental agreement, has given its answer."

The declaration, which was published in all the daily newspapers on March 22, was reprinted in the March 28 - April 5 issue of Avanzada Socialista, organ of the PST. Avanzada, however,

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published not only the communique; it added two commentaries in the form of editorials.

After reviewing the escalation of violence on the part of the extreme right, which culminated in the coup in Cordoba by the chief of police Navarro, the first editorial explains that "participating in the discussion with the president of the republic" was "a concrete act in defense of the democratic freedoms heroically conquered by the workers and popular mobilizations that unfolded after the Cordobazo." It went on to explain that the "defense of constitutional stability" didn't have to coincide with political defense of the government and it drew the following conclusion: "It is extraordinarily important that the eight political parties have come together to ask for a meeting to pose the problem of institutionalization. But as always, we continue to assert that democratic openings will be defended above all through mobilizations as the struggles of Acindar and the bank workers show us. That is why we ceaselessly demand that unity to defend democratic liberties be expressed in action, beginning with a large public meeting of all the political parties and youth groups and all the worker and student organizations." The same call for a joint meeting with the bourgeois parties is repeated at the end of the second editorial, which preaches the necessity of "concrete and flexible responses at each conjuncture in the class struggle."

The PST leadership must have realized that its decision to participate in a meeting that gave a cover to Peron's "normalization" program; to jointly sign a document with bourgeois parties, including the Unión Cívica Radical, a traditional bourgeois party and moreover today the bourgeoisie's main political force aside from Peronism; to announce "fundamental agreement" between all the signers concerning the defence of the process of institutionalization and the acceptance of "projects" approved by "the people" (in practice, projects outlined by Campora and Peron); to put forward the thesis that the struggle against fascism can and must be carried out with parties representing the class enemy -- the PST leadership must have realized that these would produce a reaction among the militants. That's why in the same issue of Avanzada Socialista they published a letter signed by "comrade F," which arrived at the editor's desk surprisingly fast, and a response that took almost two pages.

The letter seems to admit collaboration with bourgeois parties: in effect while falsifying a quotation from Trotsky -- referring to the necessity of a united front with the Social Democracy at the beginning of the 1930s in Germany -- it affirms that the "united front is admissible even with the class enemy and with the devil's grandmother." But the author criticizes signing the statement of the eight parties because, according to him, the PST helped Peron reinforce his prestige and propped up a bourgeois government that was on the point of collapsing. The editorial response clarifies the heart of the question. It states that the starting point must be "the fundamental fact: a semi-fascist coup overturned a provincial government, this coup was not an isolated thing but represents a step in the escalation of the extreme right, which is on the offensive and hasn't the least intention of stopping." The conclusion is that in the given context what must be done is not fight to overturn the government

or the institutions but, on the contrary, defend the "democratic institutionalization" and that to bring this about it is correct to make a pact with bourgeois parties by signing common declarations and calling for joint demonstrations.

The PST leaders have in the past criticized the Stalinist conceptions of a popular front and they formally reiterate their criticism in the issue of Avanzada Socialista in question. But at the same time, they supported the Frente Amplio in Uruguay, headed by the bourgeois representative Seregni. Today they sign a joint declaration with bourgeois parties and make an appeal for a common action with them. To justify this ultra-opportunist attitude they use essentially the same argument the Stalinists put forward in the mid-1930s to justify the popular front line, namely that it is o.k. to make an alliance with the bourgeoisie or so-called democratic sectors to meet the fascist danger. With this the PST leadership takes another step in its evolution and openly breaks with the revolutionary Marxist concept of the proletarian united front, which is based on the Leninist conception of the Third International and reaffirmed by Trotsky.

At the same time, the PST leadership forgets the fundamental distinction between democratic liberties which the workers movement demands and the structures of bourgeois democracy. By signing a document that praises the process of institutionalization of the country and by presenting themselves as "participants in this process of institutionalization" along with the bourgeois parties, the PST leadership contributes to the far-reaching mystification of Peron, to the pseudo-democratic farse the Argentine bourgeoisie has been playing for three years, and swallows whole the maneuver to present Peron as the guarantor of a "democracy" that embraces everyone -- except the organizations of the extreme right and extreme left (Peron has expressed himself clearly on this point). The expression used at several points by Avanzada Socialista -- dialogue with the president -- says much about the opportunist conceptions of the PST leadership.

The United Secretariat of the Fourth International -- which has always rejected any form of class collaboration and has constantly counterposed the conception of a workers or workers and peasant united front to the reformist and Stalinist conception of collaboration with the "democratic" parties; which believes that the task of revolutionaries in Argentina is, while taking advantage of the margins of legality or semi-legality, to denounce the fraudulent operation that started with the GAN and was developed by Peron, and to fight without compromise or truce against the existing government and the bourgeois state -- declares that it bears no responsibility for the PST's opportunistic and rightist attitude, which it considers as being in contradiction with the concepts and tradition of Trotskyism and which it condemns in the sharpest manner.

May 29, 1974

The following article appeared in the May 14, 1974, Barcelona newspaper Noticiero Universal.

\* \* \*

#### BREAK-UP OF FIRST MILITARY COMMANDO GROUP OF ETA VI ASSEMBLY

Bilbao, 14. The first military commando group of the ETA VI Revolutionary Assembly has been broken up by the Civil Guard as the result of an investigation carried out following an attempted hold-up of the Bolueta Foundry, Inc., May 9.

The commando group was made up of two of the perpetrators of the attempted hold-up, Gregorio Martínez García and María Josefa Ana Leceartua Goni, both of whom were arrested by the Civil Guard the same day. Later the woman succeeded in fleeing while she was being interrogated. Two other participants in the attempted hold-up fled successfully, when they realized their companeros had been detained.

Gregorio Martínez García, alias Daniel, a 27-year-old native of Baracaldo -- near Bilbao -- is a machinist and has been married approximately a year to María Josefa Leceartua, alias Fifi, a 21-year-old native of Bilbao and a student. Both were members of the military commando group of the ETA VI Assembly/Liga Comunista Revolucionaria and had been recruited by ETA in 1971 by Julián Abad Rodríguez, who has fled to France.

Later, after their recruitment, they remained "in limbo" until they formed the commando group. The first operation of this group was not carried off, since the robbers were arrested by the Civil Guard. To plan the hold-up they had held a meeting with another military commando group fifteen days ago, where they were told that they would have to carry out an action. They were given a Colt 48 revolver and a Firebird pistol. One day earlier they received concrete instructions for the hold-up.

First thing on the morning of May 9 they went to the Bolueta Foundry, Inc. with two other individuals, and, as reported earlier the Civil Guard succeeded in discovering the projected hold-up and in arresting two of those who were going to participate in it.

The two were taken to the offices of the Civil Guard. María Josefa Ana Leceartua, in spite of being handcuffed, managed to escape when she was being interrogated in the information service. When she was alone for a minute in the headquarters, she opened the window and jumped from a height of ten feet to the outside. The guard there could not shoot for fear of injuring some children who were playing nearby and the girl succeeded in escaping. Up to the moment she has not been located.

Through the investigations begun by this service of the Civil Guard, two other arrests have been carried out of presumed members of ETA and it has been learned that in Guipúzcoa and Bilbao two other military commando groups of ETA VI/Liga Comunista Revolucionaria are functioning. Their mission is to carry out robberies of businesses and banks to get money with which to buy arms.

The military commando group in Bilbao has been broken up

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and at this time attempts are being made to find the Guipúzcoa group. — Cifra.



The following article appeared in the May 25 issue of the Spanish weekly Mundo.

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#### REPORT FROM BILBAO: NEW BASQUE CLANDESTIN GROUP

A new armed-action political group has come on the scene in the Basque country. It is the so-called ETA VI Asamblea/LCR (Euzkadi ta Azkatasuna VI/Liga Comunista Revolucionaria -- Basque Nation and Freedom/Revolutionary Communist League).

Its public armed debut was a failure; nonetheless, it still exists menacingly. On Thursday, May 9, a married couple, Gregorio Martínez, "Daniel," 27, and María Josefa Ana Lecertua Goni, "Fifi," 21, attempted to hold up the Bolueta Foundry, located on the outskirts of Bilbao.

The newly born violent version of the ETA VI/LCR needed money to pay for arms and hideouts and went into action. Its objective: the 5 million pesetas of the Bolueta Foundry payroll.

But "Daniel" and "Fifi" did not manage to even get into the factory. Almost at the door, they were discovered by the Civil Guard and their plans were spoiled. There was a struggle. Shots were fired. Though no one was wounded, it was enough to convince Daniel and Fifi to give up.

By 10:30 a.m. Thursday, May 9, the two were entering the general headquarters of the Civil Guard in La Salve (Bilbao), arrested and demoralized by the failure.

The two, along with another youth who was not arrested, formed the Fleming commando group, the first military commando group of the ETA VI/LCR.

#### Free Within Four Hours

But it did not take Fifi even four hours to get out of the La Salve headquarters. She did not go out the way she came in to be sure. Her exit was more risky, fantastic, and eventful. Fifi escaped jumping through a window while her hands were handcuffed. It seems unlikely, but that is the reality of the situation.

Carelessness and the tremendous audacity of the young wife did it all. The girl was in an office undergoing interrogation. When she was left alone for a minute, she climbed up to a window-- which was not barred -- and jumped from the ten-foot sill to an interior patio. Afterwards, though she was hand-cuffed, she began to run across an open area.

How did she manage, in spite of all that, to escape the pursuit of the police? Who released her from the handcuffs once she reached the street? It is not known....

Result: Fifi, mother of a four-month-old child, a resident of Bilbao, a revolutionist, and student of philosophy and letters, leader of the first military commando group of the ETA VI, managed to win her freedom, while her husband, a machinist from Baracaldo, remained a prisoner.

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What is ETA VI/LCR?

As with all things, we must begin at the beginning.

Since its founding fourteen years ago, state its statutes, the ETA's highest controlling body has been the Blitzar Nagusia or General Assembly. All decisions and political positions are worked out by this body.

In all general meetings up to the time they held their VI Assembly, they had been zig-zagging from one position to another. However, they always came out ahead, apparently, at least, without too many problems.

Then came the VI Assembly (in September 1970) in the pretty French tourist fishing spot, San Juan de Luz. All the tensions, differences, and struggles, which were more or less dormant or slowed down, were raised in a chaotic manner.

And the VI Assembly marked the splitting of the organization into many groups. One of them, of course, was the ETA VI.

On the other hand, immediately after the fracturing of the organization produced by the assembly at San Juan de Luz, the so-called ETA V came to the forefront as the true representative of the ideological line hammered out at the preceding Blitzar Nagusia.

During recent years, for all practical purposes, ETA VI has been silent, or reduced to propaganda and proselytizing work.

On the other hand, ETA V has been the protagonist of almost all the activism which developed between 1972 and the present and which reached its peak with the death of Admiral Carero Blanco.

In reality, ETA V members had pushed ETA VI into the background. Nonetheless, the latter is now coming onto the scene hand in hand with the Liga Comunista Revolucionaria, and, in addition, via a struggle with military commando groups.

A Team with the LCR

It was March 14, 1973, when the remains of the ETA VI Assembly and the Liga Comunista Revolucionaria signed the agreement on "joint work," based on the line of the Fourth International.

Are the ETA VI members "important" guests within the LCR? They do not seem to be. They are just ordinary types on "promotion" in the lobby.

In the Basque country, the LCR at first brought two tendencies into play: the "encrucijada" (crossroads) -- for all practical purposes dismantled and in the ditch, and the "en marcha" (on the move) or "marchanges" (the marchers) -- who continue to be active and collaborate closely with ETA VI.

The initials ETA VI/LCR appeared on the walls in southwestern France for the first time at the end of 1973, in relation to trial No. 1,001. In Spain, their propagandistic debut took

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place in spring 1974 in Durango, Bilbao, and San Sebastián.

This new political group has a clearly Trotskyist line, which has thus accentuated still more its ideological differences with the official ETA, which came out for socialism at the Fifth Assembly.

#### A Weak Movement

It would clearly be premature to predict the future of this new armed political group, which has gone into action. However, what we can say is that even before picking up the gun, the group developed an intensive work of subversive propaganda and that it is thought that the group is very small.

In spite of all that, we cannot take lightly the obvious fact that there are new armed commando groups in the Basque country, which are willing to take their activism along the road of hold-ups, violent actions, and kidnappings. -- Jose Maria Portell.

New York  
June 29, 1974

Johnson  
Brussels

Dear Comrade Johnson

Just after you left the plenum to return to Brussels we received the proposed agenda for the July 3-4 United Secretariat meeting. Since we weren't able to discuss it with you before you left, we thought we should indicate our opinions on several points on the agenda. Joe is still quite ill from the penicillin reaction, and Crandall indicated that he will be unable to attend this meeting due to the press of the election campaign responsibilities. After seeing the routine character of the proposed agenda it seems unwarranted to go to the additional expense for me or Ed to replace Joe.

1. On France, we are of course interested to see what additional comments the comrades have on the position taken by the FCR in the last elections. As for expressing our own opinion several comrades here are now in the process of drafting a written contribution to the discussion. We think this is more useful than continuing the somewhat haphazard discussions in the United Secretariat. Our written contribution will be forwarded to the United Secretariat when it is ready. As we stated at the last Secretariat meeting, we think it would be in the best interests of the International to open the discussion bulletin to contributions on this question. (We should reraise the contributions to the IIDB from the Vietnamese comrades, too.)

2. On Argentina we think it is important to stress the very difficult position in which the comrades of the PST find themselves. At least four comrades have been killed in the recent period by the stepped-up goon attacks from the right-wing Peronists. We don't know whether the PST leadership will be able to send someone to this meeting as they planned, but I would not be surprised if they find it impossible. At any rate, we think that the International should make a serious effort to mobilize a real campaign in defense of the PST.

We are opposed to public circulation of the United Secretariat resolution adopted by a majority at the last meeting. If the comrades of the majority are really interested in helping the PST to correct errors rather than pillorying them and trying to read them out of the Fourth International, we would propose that the United Secretariat designate a delegation of Joe and Livio (or Ed and Livio if Joe is unable to participate for health reasons) to visit the comrades in Argentina and discuss with them in a spirit of fraternal solidarity rather than acting like a lynch mob.

By the way, we have just received the May and June issues of Combate, the organ of the Fraccion Roja, both of which carry public

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attacks on the PST. It also appears that they are publicly circulating the final version of the Argentine resolution of the majority -- including the sections attacking the PST and "Morenoism." We received a copy from a comrade who bought one in B.A. Enclosed is a xerox of the cover. It is a 34-page mimeod bulletin.

We should also reiterate our motivation for proposing that Arturo be placed on the United Secretariat. Their concern about consultation with the PST leadership rings rather hollow and hypocritical in light of their refusal to involve a representative of the PST in the daily leadership of the International. Walter's argument, incorporated into his motion at the May United Secretariat meeting, to reject comrade Arturo "because the nine point agreement does not include any notion of consultative United Secretariat members, and comrades who have no right to vote on IEC cannot have right to vote on United Secretariat," is nothing but self-serving demagogy. Comrades Domingo and Williams -- both of whom have been placed on the United Secretariat -- have no right to vote on the IEC either, yet their right to serve on the United Secretariat was challenged by no one. And the nine points explicitly state that "full members and consultative members shall have the same rights in everything except voting." Unfortunately, the majority United Secretariat members don't seem to comprehend how explosive their decision to reject our nominations is. It is the end of any pretense that they are abiding by the "Agreement on Measures to Help Maintain Unity of the Fourth International."

3. On the "finances" point, the SWP leadership has sent the enclosed letter to Ernest outlining the problem as we see it. After they have had a chance to think about it, we propose that the comrades of the IEC majority let the SWP PC know their opinions.

4. As for composition of the bureau and staff I see no point in continuing the discussion any further. Our motions were rejected at the last Secretariat. If they want to diddle around with this question further that's up to them, but I see little purpose in our pursuing the issue.

By the way, the minutes of the May meeting are simply fraudulent on this point. Even the motions we handed in in writing have been reformulated to say what Ernest or someone else wishes we said. For example, under point one, the motion by Marcel, handed in in writing was: "Motion: that comrades Arturo, Crandall, Pepe and Williams be added to the United Secretariat; that comrades Johnson and Martinez be placed on the bureau of the United Secretariat immediately; and that comrade Josephina be added to the staff of the United Secretariat bureau."

There was no proposal from us concerning "payroll" at any time during the entire United Secretariat meeting! They were the ones who insisted that the bureau and finances had to be considered jointly. We argued that the composition of the bureau was a political question that should be considered independently of whether such comrades were on "payroll," or at what subsidy.

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Walter made no such motion as recorded in the minutes under point one. He never proposed points a or b of the motion recorded. And there was never any motion, "carried unanimously," to seat comrade Williams. We would not have voted for such a motion as we considered Marcel's composite motion to be acceptable or rejectable only as a totality. We do not accept their right to pick and choose amongst those we nominate. That is why we are correctly listed as not voting on their nominations under point 10.

To correct all the errors in the minutes would take a document longer than the minutes themselves. It is now obvious that the agreement to submit all motions in writing makes no qualitative difference in the accuracy of the minutes. I propose that you simply keep your own minutes from now on and that the LTF members on the United Secretariat draw them up after the meeting.

The remaining points on the proposed July agenda are all informational. No action is proposed. Charles indicated that there was a new declaration on Portugal being drafted, but that is not indicated on the agenda so he may have been misinformed on that point. In any case, if declarations are submitted only in French as at the last meeting, we'll simply have to reserve the right to record our vote after a written translation is available and we have a chance to study the document.

Speaking of Charles, we were sorry he cancelled his requested meeting with Jack scheduled for Monday morning following the plenum. He requested it be postponed until the YSA plenum, which is the same time as the United Secretariat meeting. It also turns out that Alain Krivine is going to be present in Canada to help the Canadian section and sympathizing organization in the final week of their election campaign. We hope we will get a chance to talk with him while he is in Canada.

Comradely,

s/Mary-Alice

P.S. On the Portugal fund drive: Contrary to the May minutes, there were no "quotas assigned." Some proposals were made for consideration by the leaderships of several sections and sympathizing organizations. You can inform the United Secretariat that the SWP is working on raising a fund to help the comrades.

New York  
June 28, 1974

Ernest Mandel  
Brussels

Dear Comrade Mandel,

The Political Committee of the Socialist Workers Party has considered the report from Comrades Johnson, Atwood and Thésese on the discussion that took place at the May meeting of the United Secretariat under the agenda point designated as "finances." Their report raised several questions which the PC asks be clarified.

First of all, we were extremely disturbed by the character of the discussion. As you well know, the SWP is prohibited from making any financial contribution to the Fourth International by the reactionary legislation in effect in this country. Until the recent period no attempt has ever been made, even by the most bitter critics of the SWP, to take factional advantage of this situation.

However, at the last meeting of the United Secretariat, some comrades of the majority, we were told, even went so far as to make remarks like, "We're getting tired of hearing about this Voorhis Act excuse," and comments of a similar nature. Threats were made by some to bring out alleged "records" to "prove" that the SWP has in the past given cash to the Fourth International. We can only assume that such comments stem from ignorance, since obviously there have been no such contributions.

Given the irresponsible attitude of several United Secretariat members as demonstrated at the last meeting, we advised Comrade Johnson that in the future it would be incorrect for him to participate in discussions of this nature.

On the substance of the matter, it seems to us that some of the implications are quite grave.

Since the SWP is unable to affiliate with, accept financial support from, or contribute to the Fourth International, it was always understood that the SWP took responsibility for legitimate SWP expenses, such as:

1. Living and travel expenses abroad for one or more SWP leaders;
2. Travel expenses for our observers, which are extremely high because of the fact that the headquarters of the world movement is located in Europe;
3. Printing and distributing free of charge as a fraternal courtesy to the United Secretariat an English-language internal discussion bulletin (in the last year this has been expanded to include a series of Spanish-language bulletins also);
4. Postage for international bulletins printed in the U.S.A.;

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5. Purchase of substantial quantities of Trotskyist literature published in the U.S.A. to facilitate its circulation at reasonable prices in colonial and semicolonial countries;

6. Assuring the regular publication of Intercontinental Press, politically the weekly magazine of the Fourth International.

Since these expenses come to many thousands of dollars a month (several times more than the contributions of the largest sections and sympathizing organizations) our cothinkers in the world Trotskyist movement have always agreed with us that morally this was equivalent to what official sections of the International contributed to the work of building the world movement.

The proposal made at the May United Secretariat meeting is a unilateral reversal of this basis on which we have collaborated in the United Secretariat since reunification. The SWP leadership was given an ultimatum: we will no longer be given moral credit for expenditures that have always been accepted in the past. A small portion of expenditures will be acknowledged, if we understand the ultimatum correctly, provided we also agree to meet a considerable part of the daily operating expenses of the center of the Fourth International. Since this is a demand you know we cannot meet for legal reasons, why is it made? We can only assume it is for factional purposes, to poison the atmosphere in the International and lead the ranks of the International into believing that it is we and not the comrades of the United Secretariat majority who have altered the mutually agreed upon basis that has governed the way in which we have functioned for the last decade.

Since we never before had any difficulty working out problems of this nature, we can only assume you have now decided that some of the expenses covered by the above six categories are no longer considered legitimate contributions toward building the world movement. It appears that you have decided to cease acknowledging any moral credit stemming from them.

Are these assumptions on our part correct?

Comradely,

s/Barry Sheppard, Organization Secretary  
for the SWP Political Committee

cc: Benson



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Tokyo, May 29, 1974.

Dear Mary-Alice,

The LTF draft political resolution has been just published in our internal bulletin, and I will send a copy to you. We published the draft resolution as early as possible in our internal bulletin, because we thought the LTF document was a historical one at the present stage of the internal debates. It is a new step of the LTF and it is an international political program of the LTF. We think the LTF draft political resolution is a qualitative step initiated by the LTF at the present international internal debates and fights; every comrade of our international has been forced to take a position in relation with the third World Congress, the split of 1953 and the IS-IC "fights." The document means that the SWP has been always correct in principle in defending the "orthodoxy" of Trotskyism against the European "impressionist" and "adaptationist" tendencies of the IS under Pablo and the IMT under "Mandel-Maitan-Frank". Such is my understanding of your draft political resolution in essence, and I think that the document is liquidationist in relation with the position of the third World Congress, which was supported by the comrades of our SWP just at that time. Cde. Peng seems to be a real victor in relation with the past history of our International, in the document, and the SWP seems a real leader of the present policies in the document. I have finally decided my mind to study the history of our SWP in order to understand the present debates and the LTF draft political resolution more seriously. And I will ask you to help me to study the history of our SWP.

We will publish your draft resolution in our magazine after correcting the first translation based upon the edited version.

A little more on the draft resolution; the political resolution, which was adopted at Sweden, says that our International will open its internal discussion on the world program of the International. We welcome the decision. And the draft resolution of the LTF is a basis of it for the discussion and the discussions on the LTF draft resolution will be a part of the whole discussions on the international program. In that sense, I appreciate the LTF initiative to have drafted the document.

Fraternally yours,

s/Sakai