14 Charles Lane
New York, New York 10014
June 8, 1976

TO THE LENINIST TROTSKYIST FACTION STEERING COMMITTEE

Dear Comrades,

Enclosed are the following items:

1. Minutes of the United Secretariat meeting of April 24, 25, 1976.

2. Report on the April Secretariat meeting by Johnson.

3. Attachments to minutes and report.

4. Translations of an exchange of correspondence between Rouge and the OCI in France, and a translation of the first OCI "Open Forum" printed in Rouge No. 54.

5. Excerpts from a May 15 letter from LTF member Elizabeth on the French student strike that occurred last spring.

Comradely,

Caroline Lund

MINUTES UNITED SECRETARIAT MEETING April 24, 25, 1976

PRESENT: Claudio, Duret, Fourier, Frey, Galois, Georges, Jaime, Johnson, Julio, Kurt, Marcel, Marline, Otto, Roman, Walter, Werner

IEC PRESENT: Karl, Stateman

Agenda:
1. Israel
2. Argentina
3. Italy
4. Greece
5. Spain
6. European Perspective Document
7. Mexico
8. Bureau Report

Meeting convened: 3:20 p.m.

Chair: Galois

1. Israel

Report by Werner on the recent demonstrations and strike by Palestinians in Israel.

Discussion

Agreed Werner to prepare informational report to circulate to sections and sympathizing organizations.

2. Argentina

Report by Julio on the situation in Argentina after the coup and a proposal for an international solidarity campaign for political prisoners. (Attachment A)

Discussion

3. Italy

Report by Claudio on the political situation in Italy, the likelihood of early elections, and the positions of the tendencies in the working class movement toward these elections.

Recess 7:25 p.m.
Reconvene Sunday April 25, 10:15 a.m.

Discussion on Italy.

4. Greece

A. Report by Johnson on results of discussions with comrades concerning the expulsion of comrade Christos.

Agreed that Johnson and Otto will prepare a written report and draft a proposed letter to the comrades involved along the lines of the report for the May United Secretariat meeting.

B. Report by Otto on discussions between Organization of Communist Internationalists of Greece (Greek section) and the Revolutionary Communist Front, an organization which states it supports the Fourth International.

Discussion

5. Spain

Report by Jaime on the current political situation in Spain.

Recess: 1:00 p.m.
Reconvene: 3:00 p.m.

Discussion on Spain

Agreed the bureau to organize a meeting at the time of the next United Secretariat meeting to discuss the coordination of Spanish solidarity work and how to make information more rapidly available to sections and sympathizing organizations.

6. European Perspectives Document

Walter reported on a new European Perspectives Document presented by the IMT for the next world congress.

Agreed to circulate it to United Secretariat members for a discussion at the next United Secretariat meeting.

Discussion

7. Mexico

Stateman reported on progress of the work of the Mexican commission. It has scheduled further meetings and has no report yet.

Discussion

Motion by Walter: To adopt the following statement. (Attachment B)

Motion by Stateman: To make available to the members of the United Secretariat a translation of Comrade Ricardo's article before any determination is made in this matter.

For Walter motion: 12
Full members: 11 (Claudio, Duret, Fourier, Frey, Georges, Kurt, Marline, Otto, Roman, Walter, Werner)
Consultative member: 1 (Julio)

Against Walter motion: 3
Full members: 1 (Marcel)
Fraternal members: 2 (Galois, Johnson)

For Stateman motion: 3
Full members: 1 (Marcel)
Fraternal members: 2 (Galois, Johnson)

Against Stateman motion: 11
Full members: 10 (Claudio, Fourier, Frey, Georges, Kurt, Marline, Otto, Roman, Walter, Werner)
Consultative members: 1 (Julio)

8. Bureau Report

A. Stateman reported on request by the Socialist Workers Party Political Committee to attach material concerning a news conference organized by Hedda Garza to the United Secretariat minutes.

Discussion.

Agreed to attach the material along with additional statements by John Barzman, by Ernest Mandel, and by Barnes, Waters, Hansen, and Novack. (Attachments C,D,E.)

Motion by Duret: to adopt the following resolution. (Attachment F)
For: 8
Full members: 8 (Duret, Fourier, Frey, Georges, Kurt, Marline Otto, Werner)
Against: 3
Full members: 1 (Marcel)
Fraternal members: 2 (Galois, Johnson)

Not voting: 2
Consultative members: 2 (Jaime, Julio)

Claudio not present wants to be recorded in favor.

Statement by Claudio and Fourier (Attachment G)

B. Duret reported on correspondence from a minority in the Liga Comunista of Spain concerning the expulsion of several comrades.

Discussion.

Motion: To circulate the correspondence to United Secretariat members and to the Political Bureau of the Liga Comunista, to write to the Liga Comunista asking their opinion of the matter and to discuss the question at the May United Secretariat meeting.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Discussion on proper relations between the Liga Comunista Revolutionaria and the Liga Comunista leadership and the minority tendency.

Motion by Georges: The United Secretariat mandates the bureau to inform the LC and the LCR comrades that the question of internal relations between the two organizations will be discussed at the next United Secretariat meeting in order that an urgent decision imposed by the situation can be taken.

Motion by Galois: To place the question of the proper procedure to recommend concerning the discussions between the LC and the LCR-ETA VI on the agenda for discussion at the next United Secretariat meeting.

To advise the LC and LCR-ETA VI of this and to request their presence.

For Georges motion: 10
Full members: 9 (Duret, Fourier, Frey, Georges, Kurt, Marline, Otto, Roman, Werner)
Consultative members: 1 (Julio)

Against Georges motion: 3
Full members: 1 (Marcel)
Fraternal members: 2 (Galois, Johnson)

For Galois motion: 3
Full members: 1 (Marcel)
Fraternal members: 2 (Galois, Johnson)

Against Galois motion: 2
Full members: 2 (Kurt, Werner)

Abstentions: 8
Full members: 7 (Duret, Fourier, Frey, Georges, Marline, Otto, Roman)
Consultative members: 1 (Julio)

C. Motion by Georges on Argentina solidarity (see attachment A)

CARRIED.

D. Motion by Otto: to send the following letter unedited to the Greek section:

Following a report from the two members of the United Secretariat concerning the unification initiative you took towards the FCR during the presence of these two comrades in Greece, the United Secretariat expresses its satisfaction over the possiblities of a coming together in one single organization of all those in solidarity with the Fourth International and its programmatic base in Greece.

As this process has gone further since the United Secretariat comrades left Greece, the United Secretariat would like to be informed on the following questions:

1. What happened at the common meeting between the OCIG and FCR decided to be held the 31st of March for continuing the discussion on the problem how the unification of the section and FCR should be done?

2. In a letter from the FCR to you (dated April 12, 1976) the United Secretariat notes that the comrades of the FCR say that you only want to accept forty percent of their members as members in the section after a unification. As we would like to know your reasoning behind this position, on what type of criteria you have based your proposal, because if you don't have an objective criteria for your proposal it would seen to us that it will be counterproductive and pushing the FCR away from the unification discussions and process. In relation to this we also notice that the FCR in its letter to you proposes a common discussion with you on the problem how to come to agreement on a criteria for membership and candidate status, and therefore we would like to know what your answer has been to the letter of FCR and their proposals.

Fraternally yours,

United Secretariat

Motion by Galois: The United Secretariat affirms its full support of the position taken by the leadership of the Greek section in favor of unity with the FCR. The United Secretariat stands willing to use its influence in full collaboration with the leadership of the Greek section, to help this along. The bureau is instructed to write a letter to the leadership of the Greek section, informing it of the Secretariat's position, and asking the leadership of the section to keep the Secretariat informed of developments towards this objective.

Galois motion
For: 9
Full members: 6 (Duret, Fourier, Georges, Marcel, Marline, Werner)
Consultative members: 1 (Julio)
Fraternal members: 2 (Galois, Johnson)

Against: 0

Galois motion
For: 9
Full members: 6 (Duret, Fourier, Georges, Marcel, Marline, Werner)
Consultative members: 1 (Julio)
Fraternal members: 2 (Galois, Johnson)

Against: 0

Abstentions: 2
Full members: 2 (Frey, Roman)

Not voting: 1
Full members: 1 (Otto)

Otto motion
For: 9
Full members: 8 (Duret, Fourier, Georges, Frey, Marline, Otto, Roman, Werner)
Consultative members: 1 (Julio)

Against: 3
Full members: 1 (Marcel)
Fraternal members: 2 (Galois, Johnson)

Meeting adjourned: 6:30 p.m.

Report on April United Secretariat meeting

by Johnson

At the April 24-25, 1976, United Secretariat meeting, there were reports on the political situation in Spain, Italy, and Israel. Articles along the general line of the reports on Spain and Italy appear in issues number 50 and 51 of Inprecor.

A report was given on the situation facing our comrades in Argentina since the coup. Large numbers of trade unionists have been arrested by the military government, including over 100 members of the PST and of other sympathizing organizations of the Fourth International. The United Secretariat decided to appeal for an international solidarity campaign for the political prisoners and to attempt to raise aid for the prisoners and their families. A summary of the report was prepared by the United Secretariat bureau. The report and motion on the solidarity campaign are attached to this report.

A new European Perspectives Document was circulated to United Secretariat members for discussion at the May meeting. It has been prepared by the IMT for the next World Congress. Comrades said that it is based on the European resolution from the last World Congress and is an attempt to update that resolution. At the same time, the document prepared by comrade Fourier on the evolution of the Communist parties and the French and Soviet party congresses was not made available. Comrades reported that they felt a longer more rounded document was necessary. Thus the discussion on this important question is taking place inside the IMT rather than the leading bodies of the world movement.

The IMT placed the question of Mexico on the agenda again, and passed a motion that "rejects comrade Hansen's personal decision to refuse to publish in ICP comrade Ricardo's answer to the previous one-sided Hansen report on the Liga Socialista split in Mexico." The article by comrade Ricardo was not available to United Secretariat members. LTF members at th meeting argued that it was the content itself of Ricardo's article that violated the IEC agreements, but this question could not be discussed until after secretariat members had read the article. Our motion to circulate the article before making any decision on this question was voted down by the IMT. The IMT motion is attached. Other material relating to this was included in the April 21, 1976 mailing.

The SWP Political Committee had requested that excerpts from its minutes be attached to the secretariat minutes. This was agreed to. John Barzman and Ernest Mandel requested additional statements be attached. Observers from the SWP leadership submitted a statement in response to the Mandel statement (see attachments C,D, E). The IMT adopted a motion (attachment F). Fourier and Claudio submitted a statement with their vote, which is also attached.

The leadership of the French LCR raised two points concerning comrade Nemo's addition to the IEC. First they said that the IEC minutes were incorrect in recording his vote and asked that a correction be made. We pointed out that he was a member of the IEC at the time of the voting and as such, he had as much right to vote as any other full member. Also, he was not the only member added at the 1976 IEC who had voted. Second, they requested that an LCR central comiittee motion be attached to the minutes that made objections to Nemo's being added to the IEC. They raised such arguments as: the IEC is elected by the World Congress and tendencies do not have the right to change membership; that the person he replaced was a member of a different section; that he was not a member of the LTF at the time of the World Congress; and that the French central committee was not consulted before the change was made. However, the procedure followed with comrade Nemo is exactly the same as that followed by both the IMT and LTF in replacing other IEC members at the 1975 IEC meeting. In a reply for the French central committee minutes, comrade Nemo pointed out the decision to propose adding him to the IEC was made after the final central committee meeting before the IEC. We requested that Comrade Nemo's reply be attached to the minutes also. After some discussion the comrades of the LCR requested that these two questions be postponed to the next United Secretariat meeting.

The leadership of the LCR made clear that it is opposed to a member of the LCR belonging to the Leninist Trotskyist Faction being a member of the IEC.

In the Communist League of Spain, a minority has arisen that is apparently aligned with the PST of Argentina. Several of the minority members had been expelled and have appealed these expulsions to the United Secretariat. The correspondence had not been circulated to the members of the Secretariat nor had the opinion of the LC leadership been received. No one from the LC was able to attend the meetings therefore, it was agreed to postpone the discussion on the question to the next meeting. The question of relations between the LCR-ETA VI and the LC arose. The LCR-ETA VI requested that the Secretariat give it advice on the possibility of direct relations between the LCR-ETA VI and the LC minority. We explained that all relations between the two organizations and members of the organizations had to be under the control of the respective leaderships. This did not appear to be satisfactory to the LCR-ETA VI, although it was agreed to refer further discussion on this to the next meeting also.

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Attachment A

Summary of the Report Given by PST Representative to the United Secretariat Meeting of April 24-25, '76 (as prepared by the United Secretariat Bureau)

1. As yet we cannot adequately or very precisely characterize the period that began with the March coup, or the government. Provisionally, and at first glance, we can say that in comparison with previous regimes this government bears a greater resemblance to the "gorilla" government of 1955-1958 than to any other. Obviously, there are great differences. For example, this government acts much more cautiously and tries not to repeat the blunders of 1955. Furthermore, although these "neo-gorillas" seem for the moment to be able to count on vast support from the bourgeoisie, unlike in 1955 they do not have at their disposal the feverish, combative support of a middle class that profoundly hates the workers movement. At best, this middle class has an expectant attitude vacillating between petty-bourgeois hope and distrust.

2. We could multiply the analogies, but that would not be much use to us because we believe that the present reality does not yet allow us to answer the key question: is this government and the period now opening the ultra-reactionary continuation of the previous period? Or are we on the contrary entering a counter-revolutionary stage? To better illustrate the problem, let us pose the question from another angle: what is happening to and within the workers movement? Is it destroyed, crushed? Are we faced with a partial, temporary interval of one, two, or three years? Or are we faced with a historic defeat of the workers movement for a long period?

Reality provides very contradictory data in relation to these questions, starting from the very fact--a basic one--that the coup was not carried out at a time of an ebb or retreat of the workers movement, but on the contrary at a time when a rise of the workers movement (along with the deepening economic crisis) was shaking up the government, the Peronist movement, and the trade union bureaucracy.

At that level, the workers movement did the best it could without a new leadership that could replace the "Miguelist bureaucracy" on a national scale. Let us put it another way. There was an uneven situation: the upsurge was strong enough to lead to a gigantic crisis of the government and the Peronist movement, but it was too weak and especially lacking a leadership that could qualify it to sweep out Isabel and impose a SOLUTION from the left. Thanks to this unevenness the way could be cleared for the military to organize the coup and to make things go the opposite direction. But to what point? To what extent? The evidence of reality in answer to this question as we have stressed, is contradictory: on the one hand, a brutally anti-working class plan was imposed: the right to strike and the right of trade union activity were suspended, representatives of the state intervened directly into the CGT and the most important unions, class-struggle militants were arrested and dismissed from their jobs (purges were carried out especially among public workers), etc., ... Likewise, the armed forces banned our activity and that of the leftist parties. Several dozen of our comrades were arrested, nearly all of them militant trade unionists.

But on the other hand, this government is trying to avoid a head-on, bloody battle with the workers movemen as a whole. In the large private factories, wholesale dismissal of delegates and militants does not yet seem to be the rule. Instead there is an effort to neutralize them by keeping them in the plant on condition that they keep quiet. This is occurring even in a large state concern.

As for the left, except for the guerrillas it is not up against brutal, generalized persecution. The FIP and CP were not formally banned, although more recently they have been strongly repressed on the trade union level on the same grounds as we were.

3. On the subjective level, one element impelling us to define the situation as counter-revolutionary is none other than the guerrillas. They have continued to function. In the last few days they have increased their executions of policemen. In return, bodies have begun to appear in no-man's land, assassinated by the A.A.A. The new government has taken many steps against the ERP (according to the press, the police allegedly raided one of their Central Committee meetings), but that does not mean that the guerrillas have been liquidated, particularl the Montoneros. Consequently, at the same time as the guerrillas act as a cohesive element on the armed forces, they tend to push the situation to the right.

4. The PST's situation is as follows: in addition to being banned, to losing our legal headquarters, we have been subjected to numerous arrests, especially of worker militants. We believe that a tough period is ahead for us. But our perspectives are outlined in the same fashion (especially if we are not entering a particularly counter-revolutionary period in which the retreat of the workers movement would also imply an important retreat for us). The working class's experiences with Peronism, the trade-union bureaucracy's collapse, the CP's limited implantation and prestige in the large factories, the dead-end the guerrillas are in, all give us a central place in many locations. Consequently, in the next rise of struggles, if we don't have to wait ten years for it, we will be in a one hundred times better position than before to take advantage of it.

Motion on Argentine Solidarity Campaign:

Having been informed of the dramatic consequences of the coup d'etat for the situation of Trotskyists in Argentina, which is marked among other things by the banning of the PST and the arrest of a hundred of its members, the United Secretariat decides in response to the PST comrades' request along these lines:

1) to support at the international level the development of campaigns--united ones, if possible--for freedom for political prisoners in Argentina;

2) to collect within two weeks an initial sum from the sections and sympathizing organizations that will be sent to the sympathizing groups of the Fourth International in Argentina.

Since the PST has asked for $20,000 the United Secretariat asks the leaderships of the sections and sympathizing organizations to take every step that will allow us to make that goal.

3) to take steps to cover that sum through public meetings and subsequent collections.

Attachment B

Motion by Walter on Intercontinental Press and Mexico

The United Secretariat rejects comrade Hansen's personal decision to refuse to publish in ICP comrade Ricardo's answer to the previous onesided Hansen report on the Liga Socialista split in Mexico, which appeared in ICP.

It recalls that the February 1976 International Executive Committee Plenum unanimously decided to recommend the publication of such a reply by comrade Ricardo in ICP and to stop the matter there. Instead of doing that, ICP has published further onesided and factional reports by the former Liga Socialista minority, while refusing to act upon the IEC recommendation to print comrade Ricardo's article.

It recalls that, according to the procedure decided upon by the IEC, the contents of that article were and remain open to mutual consultation between the author, the editor, and the contributing editors of ICP or between the author and the Mexican Commission of the IEC within reasonable limits.

A new possibility appears in the first week of May to solve the problem in this way. The United Secretariat urges comrade Hansen to act accordingly now. In case this problem is not solved at the next United Secretariat meeting, the United Secretariat will take appropriate steps to make comrade Ricardo's answer to the initial ICP known to all those concerned.

Attachment C

Statement by John Barzman

In voting for this statement [April 9 statement signed by SWP Political Committee, John Barzman, and Joseph Hansen, included in April 21 LTF mailing] I must clarify the following points:

-the basic reason for the uncollaborative or even hostile attitude of the comrades involved originates in the SWP leadership's factional treatment of the IT and its refusal to abide by the IEC recommendations of 1975 and 1976.

-nonetheless, we must condemn factional responses to factional acts and demand of our "exceptional," "would be," at-large members certain minimum standards of disciplined conduct and responsible behavior.

-I stand for the application of the IEC recommendations not only to those comrades who have resorted to unfriendly acts towards the SWP, but also to those who have consistently collaborated with the SWP and should have been--but have not--immediately reinstated with the status of full members. Only such an even-handed policy can dispel the impression of a one-sided factional brandishing of the IEC recommendations.

Attachment D

Statement by Ernest Mandel

On the eve of Hedda Garza's press conference, and while there had been no SWP observers at the Bureau since many weeks, which would make current consultation possible, I received an urgent phone call to sign a common statement, in the name of the F. I., together with the SWP leadership, statement intended to clarify the organizational status of those who had called that press conference with regard to the F. I. The leading comrades of the SWP explained that a refusal to sign such a common statement would force them, for legal reasons, to dissociate themselves publicly from the F. I.

In order to avoid a new and grave crisis in our movement which would certainly have followed such a step, I finally accepted to sign a revised statement. I precise now, as I did before signing it, that the words "not members of the F. I." referring to Hedda Garza et. al. therein, only mean "not members of the F. I. because of the Voorhis Act." This is exactly what is said in the last paragraph of the February 1976 IEC resolution on the L. T. comrades. For me, this formula in the statement does not mean and could not mean anything less or anything more. I have no authority nor received any mandate to state anything else.

Attachment E

Statement by Jack Barnes, Joseph Hansen, Mary-Alice Waters, and George Novack

The statement by Ernest Mandel, attached to the minutes of the April 1976 meeting of the United Secretariat, contains an error of fact.

Comrade Mandel says that in a phone call, in which the advisability of issuing a joint public statement on a projected press conference organized by Hedda Garza was discussed, "The leading comrades of the SWP explained that a refusal to sign such a common statement would force them, for legal reasons, to dissociate themselves publicly from the F. I."

No such threat was made or intended. The absurdity of such a threat should be obvious from the fact that the Socialist Workers party publicly disaffiliated from the Fourth International in 1940. The fact itself and the reasons for it are well known.

What the leading comrades of the SWP explained was the advisability of disavowing in advance that Hedda Garza represented either the SWP or the United Secretariat of the Fourth International. If Hedda Garza gave an impression at her press conference that she represented the views of the United Secretariat, or was speaking in its behalf, then--in the absence of a disavowal from an authoritative representative of the United Secretariat--the SWP would be compelled in all likelihood to issue a public statement contesting the position of the United Secretariat as voiced by Hedda Garza.

Comrade Mandel agreed to a joint statement formulated in such a way as to make clear that Hedda Garza is neither a member of the SWP nor a person authorized to speak for the United Secretariat. This was satisfactory to us, as we indicated at the time.

Jack Barnes, Joseph Hansen,
George Novack, Mary-Alice Waters

Attachment F

Motion by Duret

The United Secretariat is of the opinion that the refusal of comrades Hedda Garza and Ernest Liane to cancel the public press conference called on April 6, 1976, after the SWP leadership had strongly urged them to do so for legal reasons represents a grave error on their part. It is obvious that, given the delicate legal implications of the SWP suit against the FBI, any action directly or indirectly related to that trial should be taken only after prior consultation with the SWP leadership, which alone should have the right of final decision on the matter. The refusal to act upon that elementary principle of solidarity represents a manifestation of irresponsible factionalism, regardless of the actual political content or political intentions of the press conference.

The United Secretariat therefore approves the Bureau's efforts to dissuade comrades Hedda Garza and Ernest Liane from holding their press conference. Only the fact that these comrades, as well as the SWP, cannot be members of the Fourth International because of the Voorhis Act, prevented the Bureau from issuing an order forbidding them to hold that conference under the threat of disciplinary actions.

However, if these comrades have acted irresponsibly the leadership of the SWP bears a heavy responsibility for their actions. By continuously refusing to collectively reintegrate all those I. T. comrades who reiterated their willingness to build the SWP and respect its statutes, organizational principles, and discipline, by flouting for more than 15 months the unanimous recommendations of the February 1975 IEC Plenum, the SWP leadership, itself guided by blind factionalism, has led loyal and valuable comrades, whose only "crime" has been to politically dissent from the majority opinions of the SWP and to be in political agreement with the majority of the Fourth International, into a situation of growing attrition and demoralization, in which irresponsible acts can be easily provoked.

For that reason the United Secretariat is of the opinion that said press conference, condemnable as it is, does not qualitatively modify the situation regarding the I. T. comrades as it stood when the February 1976 IEC resolution was being debated and voted. Only those I. T. comrades still outside the SWP whose actions or writings could cast doubt on their bona fide resolution to loyally apply SWP discipline once readmitted to the party, fall outside the last paragraph of the February 1976 IEC resolution. At this stage, this cannot be deduced from the fact of organizing the April 6, 1976, press conference in and of itself.

Attachment G

Statement by Claudio and Fourier on Duret Motion

We are voting for this resolution because of its overall estimate and because of its conclusions, but nevertheless without sharing all the motivations in it.

We believe it was a glaring political error to hold a press conference about the "hearings" and the comrades should have followed the Bureau's recommendations on this matter.

Especially deplorable in our opinion is this situation which both sides at the slightest excuse undertake to escalate the situation, undoing the International's efforts to assist the American Trotskyists to act in a united fashion within the SWP.

From Information Ouvrieres, No. 747, p. 3

The leadership of the OCI received the following letter from the editors of the newspaper Rouge:

Paris, April 6, 1976

Comrades,

We hope you have followed attentively the appearance of the daily Rouge. As a revolutionary Marxist daily, it intends to carry information about everything that concerns the workers movement, and naturally, about the debates within it.

That is why we are addressing ourselves to all the organizations of the workers movement, so that from time to time, on specific subjects, they can express their point of view in our columns.

Of course, we establish priorities in our relationships with different organizations in discussion and action, and we never hide our differences. This grows out of a unity policy that our organization elaborated at the time of our last congress. But these priorities, this search for common action and a privileged discussion with certain currents (which we have named in our newspaper) does not mean that we want to exclude discussion with all the other currents of the workers movement, whatever be the profound differences that separate us in these cases.

The rhythm of the debate and the space that we are planning to devote to it in the newspaper are not the same.

We have explained the reason why we did not think the relationship between our two organizations can be such that we could propose to you regular "free space" in our daily: we mean that first of all, all practice of violence inside the workers movement must be clearly denounced by you.

Now, in order that there be no misunderstanding, we want to make it clear to you that, as for other organizations of the working class movement that would accept it, be it the PCR(ml), the PCMLF, or the PCF, the CERES, or the PS, or others, just to give a few examples, we invite you at certain times to express yourself through the form of "open forums."

Thus, we propose concretely to you to begin, if you want, with a forum of 3,000 to 4,000 characters (an average of what is done in this kind of thing), either on the political situation in France and the tasks of revolutionary Marxists as you see them, or more specifically, on the struggles of youth that are now taking place.

We are ready to discuss with you the technical forms (day, hour, number of characters, topic, etc.) in order for such a column to occur. You can contact the political department of Rouge by telephone to study this.

Trotskyist greetings,
for the Rouge leadership,
Gerard Filoche

Paris, April 12, 1976

Comrade Filoche,

The letter that you sent us in the name of the editors of Rouge calls for some thoughts and recollections.

The OCI, conforming to the traditions of the workers movement, has always spoken out for workers democracy, and for free discussion between the organizations claiming to be of the working class, without either exceptions or preconditions. More especially, as concerns the organizations claiming to be Trotskyist, as you know the OCI and the Organizing Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International asked the United Secretariat to be able to participate in the discussion prior to the holding of the 10th World Congress. We did not pose any preconditions, either on the agenda, or the forms of our participation. We have not received any response.

As you also know, after the 10th World Congress of the US, we renewed our standing proposals aimed at the opening of a discussion, during a meeting between the United Secretariat, represented by comrades of the Socialist Workers Party, of the LSA-LSO [The Canadian organization affiliated with the United Secretariat], and of your organization. All these proposals remain without any response. I remind you that through the intermediary of the SWP, the OCI had invited the United Secretariat to its 20th Congress, which took place at the end of December 1975. During our congress, we received a negative response signed by Comrade E. Mandel, which for the first time officially took up the fallacious argument of the violence that we were supposedly perpetrating inside the workers movement. This is an argument that Rouge, in its March 25 issue, used to indicate that it refused to open its columns to us.

Comrade Filoche, you are not without knowledge: we are sufficiently informed about the problems related to Stalinist and imperialist provocations to be the first to condemn violence in the workers movement.

It must be made clear: we are not in the habit of giving way to threatening injunctions, wherever they come from.

To accept your allegations about our alleged violence would be to accept that you relegate us to an episodic "open forum" different from the regular "free space," which from your point of view would mean the acceptance of a discussion according to your political choices alone.

You will understand that this has nothing to do with worker: democracy, nor with free discussion. In this connection, we renew to you the proposal to begin this discussion between our two organizations, as well as between the United Secretariat and the Organizing Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International. We are ready to meet with you.

One last word. How can you offer us an "open forum" after having excluded us from the "free space" for the reasons you invoke? Do you think that your readers will understand these acrobatics?

You will understand that, in the present state of things, we decline your proposition with regret.

With my Trotskyist greetings,

For the Political Bureau of the OCI, Claude Chisserey

From Information Ouvrières, No. 751, p. 3 (12-19 May, 1976)

We communicated to our readers (see "IO" 747) the April 6 letter addressed to the OCI leadership by the editors of the newspaper Rouge, and the response of the OCI leadership dated April 12.

Here is the correspondance that followed.

Rouge's letter

Revolutionary Communist League
(French Section of the IV International)

Paris, April 22, 1976

Comrades,

Without touching on the rest of the problems that you pose and which concern the United Secretariat of the Fourth International, we respond to your April 12 letter as concerns the "free spaces" and "open forums" in our newspaper.

There is no "threatening injunction" toward you in our letter. We propose to you that you express yourself freely on this or that concrete subject determined by current events or by the necessities of discussion merely according to the "rules" of functioning for a daily newspaper. Therefore the only restrictions are of a technical and not a political order.

Why then, you will say, do we make this distinction between a "free space" and "open forum," since in both cases we allow total freedom of expression to the contributors? What is the meaning of this "jargon" for the Rouge editors?

The answer is this: at our last congress, we adopted a special unity policy toward certain organizations. The "free spaces" are reserved for these organizations. Rouge has listed them: "Revolution!" the OC-GOP, the PSU, Lutte Ouvrière. The expression "free space" covers this choice and special category. In not including you under this heading, in not proposing an automatically reserved place for you, we are nevertheless not brushing you aside from our newspaper, any more than the other currents of the workers movement, whether it be the CP, the SP, or others, as we stated to you in our letter.

To avoid all misunderstanding, we state that the heading of the Lutte Ouvrière article that you mention (in the March 25 issue) defined, in fact, in spite of the heading pasted in by error, the status of what we call a "free space," and nothing else.

We are proposing to you a formula--very classic in all the press--of "open forums." We will propose them to you, or you can propose them to us. Like every working-class newspaper, we keep our independendance; we reserve the right to respond afterward. We do not believe that this depends on the precondition of changes in the political relations between us. This is another question to be studied by our respective international leadership bodies.

On the French level, we have posed, as a precondition for an improvement in our relationships, the condemnation by you of all recourse to violence in the ranks of the workers movement. We take note that, in your letter, you declare yourselves "sufficiently informed about the problems related to Stalinist and imperialist provocations to be the first to condemn violence in the workers movement." But once again, a change in our relationships is not, in our opinion, a precondition for you to express yourselves in Rouge, any more than we would make it a precondition for other currents in the workers movement with whom our differences are deep and to whom we could make a similar reproaches.

Our readers can understand this--without difficulty--but they will be less likely to understand why it is you who pose a precondition--the change in our relations--for accepting this offer cleared of all "threatening injunctions."

As for your two-fold offer of discussion between our international leaderships and our French organizations, the United Secretariat and the Political Bureau of the Lige Communiste Révolutionaire will reply as soon as possible.

Trotskyist greetings,
For the Rouge editors,
Gérard Filoche

The OCI's Reply

International Communist Organization
For the Reconstruction of the IV International

Paris, April 28, 1976

Comrades,

In our opinion, the letter of April 22, 1976, signed by comrade Filoche in the name of the Rouge editors, allows the obstacles to our participation in the "open forum" of your newspaper to be removed.

We would like to bring the following concrete points to your attention, in order that the problems be perfectly clarified.

1. We do not contest your intention to respect the decisions of your congress, which led you to make a distinction between a "free space" and an "open forum." All the more so in that it is not our intention to take part in a discussion in the framework of a "unity policy" with organizations not claiming to be Trotskyist. We have never wanted to participate in an

undertaking aiming to realize the "unity of revolutionaries" with organizations that declare that their policies are not based on the principles of the Transitional Program.

Having proposed the opening of a discussion "between our international leaderships and our French organizations," as you say, we take note that "the United Secretariat and the Political Bureau of the LCR" are going to "reply as soon as possible" to us.

2. We likewise take note of this passage in your letter: "to avoid all misunderstanding, we propose [sic--Filoche letter says "state"] that the heading of the Lutte Ouvrière article that you mention (in the March 25 issue) defined, in fact, in spite of the heading pasted in by error, the status of what we call a "free space," and nothing else."

We are pleased to see that you also admit that the OCI, Trotskyist organization of the Fourth International, condemns violence in the workers movement.

In the same way we are pleased with comrade Marion's declaration during the commission of inquiry that you formed with other organizations:

"I want to say this: until there is proof to the contrary, I do not doubt the authenticity of the documents. As things appear to me, I do not believe I am poorly informed, but for the moment Varga has recognized their authenticity and on that, he is in spite of it all the judge in the matter. . . I think that for the moment, unless new facts contradict this, the documents are not documents falsified by you, and if you want note of this you have it."

The OCI, a responsible organization, would never level an accusation as grave as the one it has leveled against Varga without having gathered the proof of the fact that this individual sought to obtain funds from the Department of State and the CIA.

3. Of course, with these obstacles lifted, we are likewise in agreement on the point that there is no**point** in refusing to recognize "the deep differences," to adopt your terminology, that exist between our two organizations, as well as between the United Secretariat and the International Bureau of the Organizing Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International.

In general, for our part, and in the concrete framework of organizations that claim to be of the Fourth International, we have always considered it absolutely necessary to respect free discussion.

In addition we point out that it was the decision made in 1952 by the International Secretariat and the IEC to prohibit the pursuit of the discussion that constituted the major reason for the split.

Having made these clarifications, we are ready to meet with you to determine the technical conditions of our participation in your newspaper's "open forum."

For the Political Bureau,
Claude Chisserey

A new letter from Rouge

Revolutionary Communist League
(French Section of the Fourth International)

Paris, May 3, 1976

Comrades,

In response to your second letter--dated April 28, 1976--that indicates that the obstacles have been lifted from the possibility of your organization expressing itself in Rouge in the form of open forums (or communiques, interviews, or other forums. . .), you propose to us a technical meeting to move to practical realization.

Such a meeting poses no problem: one of our journalist comrades will come to your office to pick up a first "forum." We propose to you that it be 3,000 to 4,000 characters (no more, for journalistic convenience) an we suggest to you some current subjects such as: the political situation in France as you see it, the struggles of youth. . . . But this is only a suggestion at this juncture and we leave you free to make your own choice. When it is ready, telephone us; then a Rouge journalist will come by to get it and will submit to you at the same time a questionnaire for a survey that we are making about all the organizations of the workers movement. This investigation (which concerns, among others, Lutte Ouvrière, the PSU, the OC-GOP, the OCR, the Maoists) is a kind of presentation of these different currents for our readers: history, membership strength, program, reference texts, positions on important points, interview with one of the best-known leaders. . . . Each organization will be presented separately in a "series" in which, of course, we reserve the right to formulate our own judgments. In order to make this investigation as serious as possible, we will try as much as possible to have the organizations speak for themselves. As this job will require some time it is just as well to inform you in advance and leave it to you to suggest a date at which one of your leaders can be available to respond to our questions.

Finally, and still in the framework of these technical journalistic relationships, when you have press releases (for occasions like May 1, or for the freeing of Cuentas and Cuadros), we ask you to send them directly to our editorial staff.

For anything related to other questions raised in your two letters, that is, for nontechnical questions, our political bureau will respond to you within a short time.

Trotskyist greetings,
for the Rouge editors,
G. Filoche

From Rouge p. 4 - Issue #54

[We publish below the first open forum that the OCI has sent us. We are not in the habit of attaching comments alongside the open forums published in Rouge. However, it seems to us that this one requires a clarification. Contrary to what Claude Chisserey asserts, it is unfortunately not true that there are "no more obstacles to the discussion between the OCI and the LCR." The publication of an occasional open forum by the OCI in the daily Rouge does not demonstrate any change of judgment in the matter. We nevertheless hope that this can contribute to lifting the obstacles that still remain in the way of establishing normal relations with the OCI, similar to those that we maintain with other revolutionary organizations in France as well as at the international level.

Alain Krivine]

* * *

First of all, before going further, why this OCI column in the pages of the newspaper Rouge? Such a question must be posed, because the fact that a militant writes a free column for a newspaper that is not published by his own organization deserves an explanation. As a matter of fact, in general the OCI deliberately does not utilize the "mass media." Certainly this does not touch on a question of principle, but because at this stage of its development, drawing the balance sheet of the whole experience of the Fourth International founded in 1938 on the basis of the Transitional Program, the OCI knows that it is not through the media, nor through spectacular initiatives, that the revolutionary party will be constructed in every country as the section of the Fourth International. We refer the readers further to our pamphlet, "Some Lessons from our History," where they will see that there exists no short cut, no royal road, to assembling on a world scale the militants supporting the Transitional Program of the Fourth International in each country.

Let's go on. For OCI militants, members of the Organizing Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International the question of questions is the Fourth International, the inheritor of the traditions of the First, Second, and Third Internationals, i.e., the continuity of the workers movement in space and time.

Internationalism has nothing to do with simple "human fraternity," but is based on the existence of a world working class, and its national sections. It is itself a product of capitalism, the international division of labor and the existence of national states. As Trotsky wrote it in the preface to the French edition of The Permanent Revolution, "Marxism takes its point of departure from the world economy, not as a sum of national parts, but as a mighty and independent reality which has been created by the international division of labor and the world market. . . .The national peculiarities represent an original combination of the basic features of the world process. This can be of decisive significance for revolutionary strategy over a span of many years. . . ." [See Pathfinder edition, pp. 146-147, introduction to German edition of March 29, 1930.]

It is this dialectic that the OCI expresses when it fights in the national framework of the French bourgeois state by posing the problem of the dictatorship of the proletariat, the problem of the workers and peasants government, the question of a CP-SP government without bourgeois ministers, against popular fronts, and at bottom, the internationalist content, when it fights for the reconstruction of the Fourth International, which it believes was destroyed in 1953 by Pabloist revisionism.

Having brought about this split, revisionism left profound aftereffects which are revealed at each stage of the discussion, whether it be, to take only two examples, on the question of "focoism" in Latin America or more recently in Portugal, the support to the FUR, linked to the absence of a fight for a workers and peasants government such as it is defined in the Transitional Program.

That is why the International Bureau of the Organizing Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International has attentively followed the discussions unfolding in the United Secretariat and has seen the possibility of again taking up all of the problems. At the time of the Tenth World Congress of the United Secretariat, we proposed a discussion on the reasons and roots that led to the split of 1953, whose prologue was the expulsion of the PCI majority that rejected the decision of the International Secretariat and the International Executive Committee to forbid the pursuit of the discussion and thereby to stifle it. In spite of the lack of a response from the United Secretariat, we invited the US (United Secretariat) to our Twentieth Congress. A negative response signed by Ernest Mandel was sent to us, raising false arguments about alleged violence that we were supposed to have perpetrated. Following Comrade Marion's acknowledgement, in relation to the affair of the provocateur Varga, that the documents published by the OCI were not falsified, and satisfied by the fact that the US and the BP (Political Bureau) of the LCR have decided to respond to "our twofold offer of a discussion between our international leaderships and our French organizations," the Political Bureau of the OCI has therefore charged me to write this article for the free column in Rouge, which we consider to be a working-class newspaper.

Now that all the "preconditions" to the discussion have been removed, the discussion can and should begin.

Claude Chisserey

Excerpts from a May 15 letter from LTF member Elizabeth on the French Student Strike.

I think it is uncontestable that the LCR led the left wing of this struggle. The Ligue claims to have a fraction of about 1,000 on the campuses now--I think this includes organized sympathizers as well as members of the organization. Sometime ago the leadership made a turn back to the student movement, recognizing that there were struggles and demands that students could be mobilized around. The main proposal advanced was the construction of a "united, permanent movement," to overcome the political divisions among students (which correspond roughly to the divisions in the workers movement, and are being aggravated now because of intensified CP and SP activity among students for recruitment). The idea was to build a federation of campus action committees that would involve all political tendencies for united struggle around specific questions. (The T4 advanced this perspective at the last congress, and the leadership now says that T4 was correct.) The fight against the Soisson reform was seen as the jumping off point for building this new organization. Out if this, the Ligue had hoped it could force the Stalinists and others into a permanent united structure. They haven't gotten very far with this, mainly because of PSU's decision to organize the MAS (Mouvemene d'action syndical--it also includes some SPers), and the discussion in the leadership now is whether or not we should enter the MAS.

In the course of the strike, the Ligue sought to keep the Stalinists in the united front committee by leading a fight against those (Revolution!, the GOP and various Maoist groups) who wanted to vote them out each time they violated the decisions of the student strike committee. (Of course, the fact is that the Stalinists stayed in the committee because they wanted to, but nonetheless, the Ligue's moves were correct.) On the other hand, the Ligue also fought for procedures through which all forces would be represented on a proportional basis, including the AJS-UNEF (Soufflot), (The AJS is the youth organization associated with the OCI), with whom they were effectively in a united front from April 10 on in calling for a national strike of all schools against the reform. The Ligue and the AJS were the main forces leading the fight against the anarchists and provocateurs who tried to use the demonstrations as a base for their trashing operation. Both groups organized the marshal services that isolated these elements.

Needless to say, the united front with the AJS caused a good deal of discomfort for some in the LCR leadership. On one occasion, at the Tolbiac university center, for example, the Ligue comrades allotted an equal number of places on the strike committee to the AJS in a situation where it seemed that this was the best thing to do. The comrade in the cell from the ex-Tendency 3 demanded a self-criticism from those responsible, as he said that the AJS had been completely discredited in the struggle before April 10 and therefore this was incorrect. The cell (a majority of whom are not IMTers and regard the Ligue's position on the AJS-OCI as incorrect) refused to vote the criticism.

It is hard to tell just what kind of forces the AJS or UNEF (Soufflot) have on the campuses. They had only 10 out of the almost 300 delegates at the last national strike committee meeting (whether this is because they were not elected or just did not bother to show up, I don't know). They do seem to be stronger outside Paris than inside, and in some places, such as Dijon, they are stronger than the Ligue. However, even comrades in the Ligue who agree with us on the need for a discussion with them say that they have little representation left in the student movement outside their own members.

As for Lutte Ouvriére, it seems to have very little on the college campuses and was never present in the strike committees. All of its forces are concentrated in the technical schools, which are called C.E.T.'s. There are varying estimates of their strength here. Matti said in his last report to the Central Committee (reprinted in LCR internal bulletin #41) that they have 700-800 militants there (p. 20). Many comrades say it is more like 400.

We have just had a new comrade apply to join the LTF (you should be getting his letter soon) who used to be in Lutte Ouvriére. He explains that all their militants work in either factories or C.E.T.'s, and that the kind of work they do is extremely exhausting for their members because they think their main struggle is against the bureaucracy, and thus are always getting themselves kicked out of the unions. He estimated that they have lost a lot of members in the last couple years because of this.

The Ligue's influence on the campuses is increasing as a result of their turn. At Tolbiac, for example, they won six or eight people to the Rouge committee in the last several months. But what this means for actual recruitment is hard to say. At Tolbiac, only three comrades were brought in this year, because they were the only ones considered "integreable." I also have no real idea of how recruitment is going in cells outside of the universities, but all the LTF comrades feel it has slowed down considerably in the last couple years, and the organization continues to have a high turnover. There was a general malaise that had settled in just before the daily came out which seems to have been lifted a bit now that it is out, but nonetheless, there continue ti be a lot of problems with demoralization or exhaustion. How much this is balanced by the entry of new comrades, I don't know.

In future reports I think we must be cautious about saying that the three groups (LCR, OCI, and Lutte Ouvriére) are the same size. I think that Lutte Oivriére is clearly smaller than the other groups, and in general they even admit this in their press. The OCI may have lost some strength on the campuses, but its meetings at the Mutualité, particularly when they are centered on political prisoners, are the same size or larger than the Ligue's. The OCI is gaining a solid reputation for this work."