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## **How the United Secretariat Majority Mishandled the Fraternal Approach of the OCRFI: The Record of a Default in Leadership**

**By Jack Barnes**

[This report was adopted by the Twenty-Eighth National Convention of the Socialist Workers Party, held in August 1976.]

More than three years ago the Fourth International was presented with an exceptional opportunity, the first since the reunification of the international in 1963. We received a request from the Organizing Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International, the OCRFI, to open a discussion with them, with a view towards strengthening the forces of the Fourth International. The OCRFI is an international Trotskyist current with organizations in numerous countries whose combined membership is several thousand.

While, of course, there are never any prior guarantees about the outcome of such processes, this initiative by the OCRFI opened the possibility of the first major international fusion of forces since the reunification of the Fourth International thirteen years ago. If realized, such a fusion would be a qualitative advance towards ending one of the remaining big splits in the world Trotskyist movement and healing some of the wounds created by it. That was one of the goals the Fourth International unanimously set for itself at the reunification congress.

In response to reservations expressed by the United Secretariat of the Fourth International, the OCRFI took a series of steps. They made a number of public gestures, modifying the tone of the polemics in their press, avoiding the use of some of the sharpest characterizations that had been used in the past—on all sides, it might be added. They agreed to abide by whatever agenda, form of discussion, timing, and other conditions might be set down by the United Secretariat. They publicly stated their willingness to be tested in a whole series of related practical responsibilities: translation of discussion material, its circulation to the rank and file of the OCRFI-affiliated groups around the globe, and contributions from their leaders reflecting the various views within the OCRFI on the topics under discussion.

From the time of the very first meeting with a United Secretariat delegation, the OCRFI agreed to common though modest action to begin with on either a national or international level, and proposed some joint campaigns, such as defense of the victims of repression in Argentina. They agreed to collaborate on the publication and circulation of Trotskyist material in the languages of the Eastern European countries and the Soviet Union.

The Organisation Communiste Internationaliste (OCI), the French section of the OCRFI and its strongest single affiliate, opened its convention to a delegation from the United Secretariat, inviting us to observe, to speak, to play whatever role we wanted.

The OCI accepted the formation of an international commission to look into the allegations and counter-allegations in the "Varga affair" and, unlike the expelled Varga, agreed to cooperate, placing all their evidence before the commission.

The OCRFI responded—more rapidly and vigorously than anyone else in continental Europe—to the scandalous and scurrilous attacks by Healy on Joe Hansen, George Novack, and the SWP leadership. In doing so, they drew a further balance sheet on Healy's methods and the historical dead end of Healy's brand of national "Trotskyism."

The comrades of the OCRFI stressed the importance of the political debate in the world Trotskyist movement. They stated frankly that in their opinion some of the positions maintained by comrades in the Fourth International represented a departure from Trotskyist principles. That was their initial reading of the debate in the Fourth International as seen from the outside. They also added—as Comrade François repeated in his greetings to this convention [see SWP Internal Information Bulletin No. 10 in 1976.]—that they could be wrong in some of these judgments. They approached the discussion with an open mind. They assumed others did the same.

The OCRFI told us frankly, at the one meeting with a delegation from the United Secretariat, that their forces are divided on some of the same political questions that divide the United Secretariat and that they are grappling with many of the same problems. They agreed that all minorities on their side should participate in the discussion with no restrictions. They accepted the possibility that as a result of the discussions they might find themselves in agreement with the program and basic politics adopted by a democratically prepared world congress of the Fourth International, but at the same time be in a minority on some questions. If this were true they would accept and abide by the norms of democratic centralism as members of a single international organization.

### **A Default in Leadership**

What has happened as a result of this promising opportunity for the Fourth International? It produced a crisis. The majority of the United Secretariat has not made the timely political moves required of a competent and confident leadership ready to take advantage of such an opening. It did not grab the opportunity to take a step forward, or even in good faith explore the possibilities of moving ahead in this area toward the goal of strengthening the Trotskyist movement on a world scale. They did the opposite. We can report no gains, no progress. Instead

we have to report growing threats of disciplinary measures and organizational reprisals within the Fourth International.

We have to report a course by the majority of the United Secretariat that even puts the democratic character and thus the authority of the next world congress in jeopardy.

How did we arrive at this sorry state of affairs? I have to take the time to outline the highpoints.

In May 1973 the United Secretariat received a letter from the Organizing Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International asking for discussion. [This document originally appeared in the English language International Internal Discussion Bulletin Vol. XII, No. 6, pp. 46-47. It is reprinted as an appendix to this report.]

I remember very clearly the day it was discussed. It was first taken up at a meeting of the parity committee set up prior to the last world congress, composed of Ernest Mandel, Pierre Frank, Joe Hansen and myself. We were all surprised by the letter—and pleased. We saw the proposal from the OCRFI as a vindication of the 1963 reunification and a historical condemnation of the course that Healy had taken against the reunification.

The timing and tone of the letter from the OCRFI was such that we thought it could not be taken at face value, especially in light of the character of the public polemics that had appeared in the press of the sections of the OCRFI. So the parity committee proposed, and the United Secretariat agreed, to reply with a letter setting forth three conditions: (1) the OCRFI would have to renounce any objective of **splitting the Fourth International**, since there is no purpose in talking to people who state that such is their objective; (2) they would have to agree to accept the decisions of a democratic discussion and world congress before we could agree to their participation in the preparations; (3) they would have to act as if they seriously wanted such discussions, and their press would have to reflect this attitude.

This response by the United Secretariat apparently sparked considerable discussion, as we did not receive a reply until the fall of 1973. But this second letter was quite an advance in tone and character over the first one. The comrades of the OCRFI accepted all the conditions. They expressed the opinion that even though they were not being invited to attend the world congress they thought the struggle to build the Fourth International was objectively an imperative necessity, putting every revolutionist to the test. They felt a responsibility to work toward that goal.

To us this renewed initiative from the OCRFI was proof of the *continuing* correctness of the perspectives adopted by the reunification congress. At that time the Fourth International not only projected growth through the recruitment of new members to our sections and sympathizing organizations around the world, and through fusions with forces coming out of centrist organizations and new revolutionary movements whenever possible. It also laid out a perspective of growth through driving forward on the still uncompleted process of reunification of the world Trotskyist movement.

The perspective adopted unanimously by the reunification congress was to keep the doors open for those forces that were invited to participate in the congress but refused. As the information bulletin of the United Secretariat that preceded *Intercontinental Press* put it, "The congress . . . unanimously reaffirmed its appeal for the unification of

all Trotskyist forces."

To our knowledge, no one in the Fourth International today has indicated that they consider that perspective adopted thirteen years ago to be incorrect.

At the United Secretariat meeting where we discussed the second letter from the OCRFI, we assumed that we would have to work to overcome deep negative feelings on both sides. The 1952 split in the French section was a very bitter one, which is still reflected in the character of the polemics written today. We're all human beings. It takes time to adjust to changes.

We talked about this and agreed that there would undoubtedly be resistance on both sides. It was inevitable that some comrades would want to concentrate on the past, would find it difficult to put aside the desire to settle scores on the historical differences. There would certainly be differing degrees of comfortableness with the projected course; some mistakes would be made. We could expect errors to be made in the press on both sides. But our job would be to prevent such obstacles and reservations from blocking the process, from being used as provocations to alter the direction in which we all agreed we were moving.

We also knew that by taking this course we would help draw along and convince any resisters in our own ranks. In addition, such a course was the best way to deal with the possibility that the whole approach of the OCRFI was simply a maneuver. If that were true, our positive response would cause the maneuver to backfire and expose them.

This was all part of the ABCs of revolutionary politics, the fundamentals of making any move of this kind. We were acting unanimously. Our job was simple. It was to help the OCRFI to move along the course they had proposed. That was our responsibility as leaders.

The whole discussion in the United Secretariat was positive, a reaffirmation of the reunification and the course charted back in 1963. It was unanimously agreed to send a positive reply to the OCRFI, and an experienced French comrade was assigned to write the letter.

## A Disquieting Incident

Then a **disturbing** thing happened. There was no response from the OCRFI. We feared they had changed their minds. Almost one year went by, and still no response to the letter.

Finally, in September 1974, we heard from the OCRFI again, but not in the way we expected. We got a rude jolt, one of the first of many that began to raise more and more doubts in our minds about the frankness of some of the leaders involved—not on the side of the OCRFI, but on the side of the United Secretariat.

One of the leaders of the OCRFI who had been in Québec working on a publishing project stopped in New York on his way back to France and asked to meet informally with a couple of leaders of the SWP. We of course agreed. In the course of that meeting we discovered that *the letter unanimously voted on by the United Secretariat had never been sent!*

Confronted with this embarrassing information, we did the only thing we could. We assured the OCRFI comrades that there must have been an inadvertent slip-up. In the press of world congress preparations someone must have forgotten their assignment. We apologized and assured him that we would take this information to the United Secretariat, and promised that there would be a rapid

response.

At the October 1974 meeting of the United Secretariat where we reported all this, there was a bit of chagrin. I might add that there was no talk about violations of democratic centralism, no threats of discipline against the comrade who had failed to write the letter unanimously decided upon by the United Secretariat. No one thought he should be "taught a lesson." We all simply assumed the comrade had "forgotten."

The United Secretariat unanimously decided to immediately organize a meeting with the OCRFI, and sent a delegation of comrades from the French LCR, the LSA/LSO of Canada, and the SWP. It was a good meeting. We exchanged opinions. We agreed to begin an exchange of internal bulletins so that we could all get to know each other's political positions better. We agreed to work toward greater collaboration in one area where we thought there would be greatest agreement, circulation of Trotskyist material in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union and defense of political prisoners in those countries. We agreed that everyone should feel free to write up their own internal reports on the meeting and circulate them to their members.

The OCRFI leaders let us know in that meeting that there was no unanimity on their side. They explained that they felt strongly committed to the course they had embarked upon. They felt obliged by objective necessities. But they knew they were making a turn. Both they and various leaders of the United Secretariat had said and written many things about the split in 1952 that seemed to preclude such a turn. There was resistance inside their own organizations. We had to be aware of that fact and it was the responsibility of leaders on both sides to try to help each other make the turn.

### Seizing on a Minor Point

A little later, after we had gotten over some of these initial hurdles and we thought things were beginning to roll, an incident occurred. The *Spartacist* newspaper began needling the United Secretariat about the discussion with the OCRFI. This tiny parasitic sect felt threatened by the new course of the OCRFI and hoped, of course, to slow things down.

About the same time, the OCI's weekly newspaper, *Informations Ouvrières*, carried a background article on the Hungarian revolution. In passing it took up views expressed by Ernest Mandel at the time of the uprising, and used some epithets to characterize his positions. They weren't exceptionally strong, but they were out of order. They gave an exaggerated interpretation to something Ernest had written.

The article did not surprise or bother us too much. When you start to make a turn, after twenty-odd years in separate and bitterly competing organizations, such vestiges of old factional disputes are to be expected. In the pre-1963 period when we were moving toward reunification, many of our members still referred to the "Pabloites." When I mentioned this to comrades who were formerly in the leadership of the International Secretariat they admitted it was true on their side too. A few of them continued to refer to us as "archeo-Trotskyists" and "Cannonites." Breaking down such barriers always takes a little time.

But some of the leaders of the LCR reacted to this article

and the needling from the Spartacists very differently from the way we did. Instead of trying to overcome such minor obstacles, instead of refusing to be provoked, instead of going to the OCI leadership informally and raising the things that concerned us—in short, instead of acting like responsible leaders, they seemed to be looking for an excuse to blow up the process before it could gather momentum. They demanded that we, the SWP, make a public statement clarifying the history of the OCRFI's initiatives toward the United Secretariat, and explaining why articles like the one on Hungary were an obstacle to further discussions.

We told them this wasn't a good idea. In fact, it was a stupid idea. We explained that it could be interpreted in the radical movement as a childish reaction. But they insisted. So we acquiesced. We figured it was better to simply get the obstacle behind us and try to move forward. But this whole incident raised a second serious doubt in our own minds. It was becoming clear that at least some of the comrades in the majority were not looking for ways to drive forward along the line adopted by the United Secretariat, but were simply hunting for a way to blow it up.

In May 1975 the OCRFI responded to our public statement with a letter in which they acknowledged the error of using epithets. While they pointed out that epithets had been used by both sides, they rejected this course and stated that "for our part we are prepared to make all the accommodations in the form, if they will permit a discussion to take place." They reiterated the great opportunities before the Fourth International and urged that we move forward toward discussion. In other words, they demonstrated once again the sincerity of their desire to put aside all obstacles and provocations, and clear the way to open discussion with the United Secretariat. They acted like leaders, committed to pushing the process forward.

### The 1975 SWP Convention

With that hurdle behind us, we took what seemed a routine step. We invited the OCRFI to send an observer to attend the open sessions of the 1975 SWP convention. Because of the United Secretariat agreement to exchange all internal bulletins, they had been reading our discussions and following our material. It seemed obvious to us that if they could at least observe the open sessions of our convention it would help break down any residue of prejudices, since they would see a living fraternal party of the International from the inside, see the way it operated. They could meet and socialize with the comrades to begin the process of getting to know each other a little bit instead of just hearing labels like "LAM-BER-TISTS," or "PAB-LO-ITES," which makes you expect someone with a third ear or a double nose.

I stress *observers* and I stress the *open* sessions of the convention. We assumed there would be some closed sessions to take up questions not yet part of the public international debate.

In view of the response by the OCRFI comrades, the reaffirmation of their desire to move forward, we thought the decision to invite them to observe our convention was an important gesture. It was certainly in harmony with the United Secretariat's decisions to exchange all internal discussion material.

To our amazement, that was not the reaction of some of the leaders of the French LCR. They threw a temper tantrum and decided to boycott our convention. They even tried to generalize the boycott, urging other European sections to do the same. The Political Committee of the SWP wrote them a letter asking them to reconsider, pointing out that they were reacting subjectively, that they misread the entire thing, and that we very much wanted them to attend our convention. The United Secretariat, which fortunately had a meeting scheduled prior to our convention, also considered the French comrades' objections and decided to take no action requesting us to withdraw the invitation.

This episode was the third big warning sign for us. Instead of seeing the importance of responding immediately to the letter from the OCRFI comrades, instead of objectively considering the most effective ways of drawing the OCRFI closer to the Fourth International, they saw the step forward as a threat. A threat to what? Apparently a threat to their *real* objective, which was to blow up any serious discussion between the United Secretariat and the OCRFI.

Thus we had to draw the conclusion that the majority of the French leadership had from the beginning been less than straightforward. They had gone along with the United Secretariat decision to respond to the OCRFI initiatives, only in the expectation that the OCRFI could be easily provoked and thus the whole thing could be blown sky high. But it didn't work out that way, so they had to start looking for pretenses to try to block any discussion from proceeding.

And, of course, it's not hard to find pretenses when you're looking for them, because there will inevitably be errors on both sides which can be seized upon.

I think we made a mistake at the 1975 SWP convention. In light of the reaction of the majority of the French LCR leadership we decided to proceed cautiously. We did not even ask the OCRFI comrades to bring greetings, or to express a ten-minute opinion on the international political questions being discussed in open sessions. I think it is one of the few times we have been a little impolite to an international current observing a convention of the SWP. It is alien to our traditions. But the OCRFI comrades did not seem disturbed, they put forward no conditions, made no subjective requests. They came and observed, then went back and reported to their leaderships.

### Invitation to OCI Convention

The SWP's initiative produced some results. A month after our convention, in a letter dated September 23, 1975, the OCI invited the United Secretariat to send a delegation to participate in the OCI convention scheduled for December. [See appendix to this report.]

We considered this an extremely significant gesture on the part of the OCI. The United Secretariat was invited to come and meet with all the international guests who would be there from Latin America, the Mideast, and elsewhere. We were offered unlimited speaking rights on political questions, as much time as we might request for greetings. We were urged to take our views directly to the delegates of the OCI and assembled representatives of the OCRFI. It was a real leadership move from the OCI. And we felt vindicated. The decision to invite the OCRFI to our

convention had resulted in moving the whole process forward. The United Secretariat now had a chance to make up for its two-year default. We thought the majority of the French leadership would now obviously see the value of the previous moves we had made.

So we went to the United Secretariat hopeful that this new opening would draw the Secretariat back together again, that we would have the same kind of unanimity as before. Maybe from our point of view the United Secretariat delegation to the OCI convention would not be the very best one, maybe it would not choose to speak on all the points that we thought deserved priority, but it seemed inconceivable to us that the United Secretariat would make any other decision than to accept the invitation, to respond positively to this big move by the OCRFI, to act like leaders.

We could not have been more wrong. The results of the three United Secretariat meetings in the fall of 1975 were a disaster for the Fourth International, for its leadership, for its democratic underpinnings, and thus for its authority.

At the October meeting, instead of responding favorably to the step forward taken around the SWP convention and clearly dissociating itself from the temper tantrum of the majority of the French leadership, the United Secretariat majority adopted a motion saying they were going to centralize all relations with the OCRFI through the United Secretariat. This struck us as a rather peculiar motion, since all relations with the OCRFI had been centralized through the United Secretariat from the beginning—all letters, all requests for meetings, all exchanges of bulletins and information. It was clear the motion meant something other than centralize. In light of the general tenor of the discussion, we came to the conclusion that the real intention was to "paralyze," to try to reverse the process of opening a political discussion with the OCRFI.

### A New Pretext

At the November meeting, the United Secretariat took up the invitation to the OCI convention. Far from accepting it, a new pretext was brought forward. The comrades of the French leadership charged that the OCI systematically uses physical violence against its opponents in the labor movement. Of course this concerned us very much because we are against such violence as a matter of principle. So we agreed that the charges brought by the LCR comrades should be looked into and a dossier documenting all the known cases and all relevant facts should be prepared.

But when comrades of the SWP leadership arrived in Paris the next week and informed the LCR leadership that they intended to ask the OCI what they had to say about the matter, the LCR leadership objected! And when we discussed with Lutte Ouvrière their proposal to organize an international commission to look into the allegations and counter-allegations surrounding the Varga and the OCI and establish the facts, the LCR Political Bureau sent a formal protest to the SWP leadership asserting that we had no right to discuss such a topic with Lutte Ouvrière without first getting approval from the LCR!

So we were forced to conclude that what was involved was not an attempt to establish the truth and to halt the use of violence in the workers movement if that was involved. The LCR leadership seemed to be more interested in using the accusations of violence against the OCI in

order to prevent the opening of political discussion.

Our fears on this were confirmed by the December United Secretariat meeting, where the majority voted to reject our motion to send a United Secretariat delegation to the OCI convention, and to take advantage of the time given us to bring greetings and to raise our concerns about the use of violence in the labor movement and to explain why this was an obstacle to the discussions we all wanted. This proposal, which was obviously the most effective way to put pressure on the OCI to halt any violent acts, was rejected out of hand. We found this astounding.

### Teaching the Ranks a Lesson

The real stance of the United Secretariat majority, though, can best be judged by other decisions that were reached at the November and December meetings.

At the November meeting an event occurred that is, in my opinion, the worst thing I have ever seen happen in a United Secretariat meeting. One of the older central leaders of the IMT enunciated the principle "teaching the minority a lesson," and utilized that as the justification for suppressing certain contributions by the minority to the International Internal Discussion Bulletin, and censoring other contributions, thereby depriving the members of the Fourth International of their basic democratic right to full, timely, and accurate information concerning all aspects of the political life of the international and its sections.

Of special significance was the fact that the material the United Secretariat majority ordered suppressed was the entire documentary record of the two-and-a-half years of contact between the OCRFI and the United Secretariat. [For Secretariat motion, see appendix to "Statement of the Political Committee of the Socialist Workers Party on the Objections Raised to Inviting the OCRFI to Observe the 1976 Convention," IIDB Vol. XIII, No. 5.]

At this same meeting the "right to private correspondence" was also introduced as a corollary to the principle of "teaching the minority a lesson." The "private correspondence" principle was invoked as justification for rejecting publication in the IIDB of Pierre Frank's letter to Murry and Myra Weiss [See SWP Internal Information Bulletin (IIB) No. 3 in 1975], in which Comrade Frank decries the "Stalinophobia" of the SWP leaders and concurs with the estimate of the Weisses that the SWP has been propelled "into the camp of American imperialism."

Pierre Frank is entitled to his political opinions, but one can hardly claim that such exchanges of opinion with opponents of the SWP constitute "private correspondence" and that the ranks of the international are not entitled to read it and judge for themselves.

I might add that we were not the only ones shocked by the establishment of these guidelines for "teaching the minority a lesson" by depriving the membership of information to which they are entitled. Some IMT comrades also found it scandalous and argued against the decision to suppress material, to reject contributions, to censor others, and to block the rapid translation and distribution of contributions to the discussion.

That November meeting was a turning point. It marked a new departure from the democratic norms of the Fourth International, and a breakdown of its organizational integrity. Totally factional decisions were justified on the basis of these newly enunciated "principles." The bitterly ironic thing was that they weren't teaching the minority a

lesson at all. The minority was not the real target. The target was the ranks of the Fourth International, who were indeed being taught a sad lesson about the character of the majority leadership.

Perhaps they thought that because the information was suppressed the ranks would never find out that it had been suppressed. I believe they will learn a lesson themselves: They underestimate the ranks of the Fourth International.

### Overstepping Their Authority

Finally, at the December meeting, after rejecting the invitation to the OCI convention, the IMT outdid themselves once more. They went on to issue orders to the leadership of the Canadian section, the League for Socialist Action/Ligue Socialiste Ouvrière, instructing them to rescind an invitation to observe their convention that had been extended to the GSTQ (Groupe Socialiste des Travailleurs du Québec), the Québec organization that is affiliated to the OCRFI. Once again the real character of the IMT's so-called democratic centralism was illuminated.

The invitation to the GSTQ was based on the fact that for some months the LSO and GSTQ had been working together on a series of common activities in the class struggle in Québec. The LSA/LSO leadership felt that it would help to facilitate future work and a better understanding of each other's positions if the GSTQ were to observe their convention. After a thorough discussion, the convention rejected the attempt of the United Secretariat to decide a tactical question such as what Québécois groups the LSA/LSO invites to observe their convention, what groups they work with in the class struggle in Canada, whom they try to recruit to the Canadian section and whom they do not.

In its factional blindness, the United Secretariat majority had once again overstepped its authority. In the process they helped to demonstrate that while they have always said they agree that national tactics are the prerogative of national sections, in practice their conception of democratic centralism is in contradiction even with the statutes of the Fourth International now in force. [For exchange of correspondence on the LSA/LSO convention see appendix to this report.]

Perhaps we are a little slow, but by this time it became clear to us that we were dealing with hardened factionalism that could end in ossified sectarianism. At best, the whole response to the OCRFI initiatives had not been thought out, representing a bungling of leadership responsibilities. At worst, the course represented a maneuver from the beginning, with no serious intention of ever trying to probe the opening given us by the OCRFI and pushing forward in an attempt to strengthen the Fourth International.

### The February 1976 meeting of the IEC

The majority did not place the question of relations with the OCRFI on the agenda at the February 1976 IEC meeting. But IMT comrades often get confused between what is on the agenda in their faction meetings and what is on the agenda of the elected decision-making bodies of the Fourth International. So when Comrade John Barzman wrote a report on the IEC meeting for publication in the SWP information bulletin he included a summary of the "IEC" discussion on the OCRFI question. [See SWP

IIB No. 6 in 1976.] He just forgot that there had been no such discussion. He was reporting on the IMT's caucus meeting.

There are two points of interest to note. One is that Comrade Barzman offered a new explanation as to why the IMT is against discussions with the OCRFI. He argued that the OCRFI wants discussion because they tend to agree with the SWP on Portugal. There is only one problem with that explanation. The IMT forgot to consult a calendar. The OCRFI's overtures to the United Secretariat began more than *one year before the opening of the Portuguese events*. If the IMT's explanation is correct, then the OCRFI must be clairvoyant, and we should obviously bring such far-sighted comrades into the Fourth International immediately.

Comrade Barzman also made it clear that there is at least a wing of the IMT that considers guaranteeing the permanent majority of the IMT as a *sine qua non* that guides any discussions aimed at strengthening the international.

Apparently a faction discussion along these lines was considered by the IMT to be preferable to putting the point on the IEC agenda and presenting their views openly for discussion. [See "A Few Observations on Comrade Barzman's 'Evaluation' of the February 1976 IEC Plenum," by Joseph Hansen, IIB Vol. XIII, No. 5, 1976.]

## A Total Default

That was the situation we faced in May 1976 as we started preparing for this convention of the SWP. Nothing was being done to respond to the opportunity offered by the OCRFI initiatives. There was no international discussion bulletin coming out, neither a regular one nor a special one for discussions with the OCRFI. There were no plans for any. No request had been made to the OCRFI to translate or circulate a single one of our resolutions to their ranks, not a single one! There was no response, no schedule, no proposal for any meetings, no plans. **NOTHING**. Just total factional paralysis, incompetence, sectarian impotence. It was simply "OCRFI, go away, quit bothering us, leave us alone." That was the totality of the IMT's vision. And they hoped that after enough rebuffs they could turn this stance into a self-fulfilling wish.

In short, we were faced with a group of comrades who had taken the stance of a *sect*, not the stance of leaders of the world party of socialist revolution.

This was not true of all the comrades of the IMT leadership. Some of them told us frankly that they disagreed, that they found the leadership default grotesque. But talk as they might about the desirability of changing the line of the United Secretariat majority, nothing happened.

Each section or sympathizing organization was on its own in Canada, Great Britain, Brazil, Argentina, France, Mexico, Germany, and wherever groups affiliated to the OCRFI existed. Each section had to act as best it could to try to find a way to these forces whose international organization was banging on our doors, demanding a discussion.

Even then, I have to admit, we were naive. The fact that nothing was being discussed in the United Secretariat or the bureau, didn't mean that nothing was happening. We don't even know if the planned actions were being discussed in the IMT Steering Committee. But somewhere

discussions were held and decisions were made.

Any pretense of an objective course, a political attitude, or a good faith response to the OCRFI overtures was utterly demolished by two events that transpired in Paris in June.

## The Lequenne Article

First, the May-June issue of *Revue de Critique Communiste*, the theoretical magazine of the French section carried an article by Michel Lequenne, a member of the LCR Political Bureau. It was entitled, among other things, "A Contribution to the History of a Degeneration," and unfortunately, it was.

There is only one purpose that can be ascribed to this article. It was designed to harden the membership of the LCR, to close the minds of anyone they influence in the international who might be inclined to probe this opening provided by the OCRFI. And it was intended to provoke the OCI to respond in kind. The article strung epithet after epithet together in a sequence that sounds like the incantation of a dyed-in-the-wool sectarian.

The article characterizes the OCI as non-Trotskyist, non-Marxist, a group that has been in its death agony for twenty-five years, practically ossified. How an ossified, moribund sect could give the LCR so much trouble is not explained.

The complaints that the OCI uses epithets in describing leaders of the United Secretariat are exposed in their full hypocrisy. There is no comparison between the language of Lequenne and that of the OCI leaders.

It is all personalized against Pierre Lambert, the most prominent single leader of the OCI whom Lequenne describes with terms like: "despicable falsifier," "a miniature Stalin," "a fake left," a loyal ally of "outstanding figures of Freemasonry," the architect of "a sect of impotent barking dogs, whirling dervishes of the Transitional Program transformed into a prayer wheel, phobic anti-Stalinists . . ." And that is only a sampling from this public article.

It was translated and distributed to the delegates yesterday so you can all read it for yourselves and judge.

The entire article contains not one word on what has happened these last three years since the OCI made a serious overture to the Fourth International for discussion. Not one word. It's a sorry spectacle for a magazine that claims to be a theoretical organ that defends historical materialism.

But the Lequenne article was not the only *fait accompli* that had been decided upon. At its June 26-27 meeting, the majority of the Central Committee of the French section decided to let it all hang out. Instead of repudiating the excesses of the Lequenne article, they carried the operation one step further. They adopted a resolution that stated baldly: It is likely the OCI will end up on the side of the counterrevolution; "the most that can be hoped for is to split them." [See IIB Vol. XIII, No. 5, 1976.]

And that makes everything quite clear. The complaints about epithets and nasty name-calling; the accusation that the OCI was interested in only one thing; and that was to split the Fourth International—it turns out that these were all a series of pretexts, a cover for the real policy of the French LCR majority. They codified it in a Central Committee resolution that stated point-blank: Our goal is to split the OCI.



Of course there had been no discussion in the United Secretariat on the Lequenne article or the proposed goal to simply split the OCI. No discussion in the bureau. Here we saw a real "initiative in action."

After receiving the Lequenne article and being told about the Central Committee motion, we made an immediate decision. It was a very simple one. We decided to send invitations to the international Lutte Ouvrière current and the OCRFI, asking them to observe our convention. We felt that something had to be done to demonstrate that somewhere in the Fourth International political people existed, that the international wasn't composed solely of dead-end factionalists whose actions made a mockery of the United Secretariat's positions and responses to their initiatives.

It was the only move we could make. Our hands were tied. We couldn't initiate any organized discussion or make any organizational moves outside the framework of the United Secretariat. That would be incorrect. We did the one thing we could, in light of the fact that the Lequenne article and the Central Committee motion themselves demolished any pretenses of centralizing policy vis-à-vis the OCRFI through the United Secretariat.

(By the way, I should note in passing that LCR Central Committee motions don't remain "internal" for long. They get printed up in thousands of copies for all the members and they get around fast. It usually doesn't take more than about twenty-four hours for the word to start spreading among all the different tendencies on the French left. The Central Committee motion was another convenient way, along with the Lequenne article, to let the OCRFI know the real attitude of the LCR leaders.)

### The French Voorhis Act

The United Secretariat majority came in fast on the heels of these two actions—not to call the French majority to order for its violations of democratic centralism, for its failure to centralize all relations with the OCRFI through the United Secretariat, for its publication of a scurrilous, personal attack against the leader of a current with whom the United Secretariat had unanimously voted to open discussion and explore areas of common work, for its unilateral attempt to sabotage United Secretariat decisions. Oh no! Instead they passed a motion charging the SWP with a breach of democratic centralism for inviting the OCRFI to observe our convention, an action that was in harmony with the unanimously agreed upon United Secretariat policy decided almost three years ago and never rescinded!

And then they wonder why their authority diminishes rather than increases from day to day; they wonder why even some of the IMT comrades conclude that the United Secretariat majority's actions are not based on advancing the best interests of the Fourth International.

Following upon this demonstration of factionalism by the United Secretariat majority, democratic centralism—more accurately known as "teaching the ranks a lesson"—got a new and vicious twist. The Political Bureau of the French section passed its own Voorhis Act. The super-centralizers announced that any member of the French section of the Fourth International who happened to be in the United States at the time of our convention and who decided to observe the proceedings of this gathering would be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including

expulsion. [See IIDB Vol. XIII, No. 5, 1976.]

There is a banner on the wall back there that expresses one of the themes of this convention. It is rather ironic, isn't it? "End All Travel Bans." "Por un mundo sin fronteras," for a world without frontiers. And the third one, one that I learned from the French comrades during the great worker and student upsurge in 1968—"A bas les frontières," down with all national boundaries. Those banners emblazon the spirit of our convention and the program of the Fourth International, the world party of socialist revolution. Sadly, the majority leadership of the French section has acted in a different spirit. Any member of their party who attends our convention is threatened with expulsion! One could not find a more appropriate name for that ban than the French Voorhis Act.

George Novack commented to me yesterday that in more than forty years in the revolutionary movement he has had to fight just about every imaginable kind of defense case for the right of travel. But he never thought he'd live to see the day when he had to take on the struggle against a travel ban *inside* the Fourth International.

The decision of the French Political Bureau wasn't the worst that happened. The United Secretariat majority *in practice* assumed responsibility for upholding this new Voorhis Act.

The United Secretariat met four days before our convention. The rank-and-file French comrades who were directly affected by this ban decided to appeal to the United Secretariat to intervene and use its moral authority to try to persuade the majority of the LCR Political Bureau to reverse its scandalous decision.

It's important to understand what this ban meant in human terms. There were about eight or ten French comrades, all but one of them rank-and-file members of the LCR, some LTF members, some not, who had organized their entire summer vacation plans around a trip to the United States that included attending our convention. That happens every summer, and we are always very pleased that some French comrades are interested enough in U.S. politics and the activities of the SWP to want to observe our conventions. Some of these comrades were already in the U.S. when they learned of the ban. Others had not yet left France, but they had prepaid tickets on charter flights. It was impossible to get a refund or alter travel plans at that late date. They had all gotten approved vacation leaves from their cells, there was nothing out of order with their plans and then they were suddenly faced with what Comrade Matti, the one dissenting member of the Political Bureau, called a *lettre de cachet*, a royal order sealed with the signet ring of the Political Bureau, a practice that theoretically went out with the defeat of the absolute monarchy at the time of the victorious bourgeois democratic revolution.

These comrades had only one recourse. They appealed to the United Secretariat to bring some moral pressure to bear on the Political Bureau. Both of the United Secretariat representatives here at our convention tried very hard to get the United Secretariat to use its moral authority. Both of them failed. Instead a motion introduced by Comrade Ernest was adopted. To paraphrase it, the motion said: Many bad things are going on in the international these days, in many different countries. Comrades are not being treated properly. There is no way to single out any one of these bad things. We'll write a

letter to all groups concerned and urge them to act more correctly. [See appendix to this report for August 1976 United Secretariat motions.]

This was impotency at best, and complicity at worst. It assured that there would be no pressure on the French majority to rescind its scandalous action. I should add that Comrade Jones continued to try. He called the French Political Bureau members and argued with them, told them their action was unheard of in the history of the movement, that no one, not even Pablo, had ever dreamed of such an indefensible act. He pointed out that their action would be interpreted as an attempt to simply read the SWP out of the Trotskyist ranks, and that it was a violation of the most basic democratic rights of their own membership. All to no avail.

Comrade Jones did manage to establish that there was no royal order prohibiting members of the LCR from being present in the town where the convention was being held, between August 7 and 14, and they would not be disciplined for eating in the same restaurants and talking with comrades attending the SWP convention. But if they set one foot inside a convention session, where delegates are seated to discuss and decide on the line of the SWP, they will be subject to disciplinary action upon return. And even if this ban is reversed a week from now "for the record," the damage cannot be reversed.

If comrades have no objection, I think it would be appropriate to formally adjourn the convention before we sing the "Internationale" this afternoon. Then we can invite the visiting comrades of the LCR to come and sing the "Internationale" with us, without jeopardizing their membership in the Fourth International.

This vindictive, petty and mean-spirited act of the French majority leadership, upheld by the United Secretariat majority, demonstrates once again that the IMT's "democratic centralism" is not in accord with the democratic functioning of the international; it accords with the principle of "teach the minority a lesson." And its victims are the rank-and-file comrades of all sections and sympathizing organizations.

The United Secretariat majority's refusal to try to reverse the action demonstrates the deadly logic of blind factionalism, whose song is "Majority Forever." It can only lead to deeper and deeper sectarianism.

It also reflects the French majority's policy of blackmail. I first saw this at the 1969 World Congress of the Fourth International where the delegation from the newly formed French Ligue Communiste applied to be recognized as the French Section of the Fourth International. They announced, however, that their decision to join the international was *conditional*, they were joining the international in order to *transform* it, and the first condition for their affiliation was the adoption and full implementation of the guerrilla turn. I sat there and listened to the speeches. I watched those who were falling all over themselves not to do or say anything or vote in such a way as to ruffle the leaders of the new French section. And I wondered what would have happened if *others* had made affiliation to the international conditional on adopting and carrying out the line they considered correct.

Then we went through everything we have seen in the last eight years: a secret faction in the majority leadership, the exclusion of the minority from the "real" leadership; the adaptation to forces like Santucho's current which resulted in the death and destruction of hundreds of

cadres; the engineering of splits in Canada, Spain, the United States, and elsewhere; attempts to oust the leadership in other sections such as Britain; the dispatching of political commissars to Portugal to overturn leaderships and assure carrying out "the line of the international"; the ordering of unprincipled fusions without any discussion or agreement on the tasks of a unified organization. And the list could go on.

But there was a political basis for the arbitrary and undemocratic conduct of the majority leadership, and that was the turn of the 1969 World Congress itself and their attempt to implement that ultraleft turn and to cover for the disasters it produced. This remains a deadly danger to the Fourth International. If it is not eradicated, if a critical balance sheet that *reverses* that line is not drawn, there can and will be no change. Many comrades, including Comrade Jones, have spoken of the tremendous opportunities before the Fourth International today, but those opportunities will mean nothing, will lead to nothing, if we are not capable of arriving at a correct program and constructing the kind of organization that can take advantage of them.

### Where do We Stand Today?

First of all, by unilateral decision of the editors of *Critique Communiste*, and whoever they consulted with, another topic of discussion within the Fourth International has been made public—the character of the OCI and its overtures to the United Secretariat. We will have to participate in this discussion, and we will do everything within our power to lift it above the dismal level of the Lequenne article. We will try to show the whole world that this was an irresponsible act, and demonstrate to the comrades of the OCRFI that the Lequenne article does not reflect the view of the Fourth International as a whole.

Second, it becomes more and more clear that each section is on its own to do the best it can to attract towards the Fourth International forces like those in the OCRFI, or other international currents like Lutte Ouvrière, and to find ways to discuss and work with them. In places like Canada where new possibilities are developing for greater collaboration and more fraternal relations between the section and the sympathizing groups, they must all simultaneously take advantage of the collaboration offered by the GSTQ and the possibilities for common work, discussion, and perhaps an eventual fusion. The same is true of the Fourth Internationalists in Brazil, Mexico, Argentina, etc., and it is true in the U.S. in relation to the Spark comrades.

Thirdly, we have to say that the United Secretariat majority leadership has been working overtime to make itself look like a fool to the radical political public. We have not increased our collective power of attraction, or demonstrated our political alertness or leadership capacities, or even increased our own self-respect by such acts. That is the accurate balance sheet that must be drawn on the history of the United Secretariat's response to the overtures from the OCRFI, especially these latest episodes.

We must reverse this course. We must begin by reversing the political lockout of the minority. We must begin to translate and distribute all internal material in French. We must end the suppression of information from the ranks of the international. We must end the censorship of contributions from the minority. The ranks of the

international have the right to full, timely, accurate information on all questions of concern to our movement. That is the only basis for democracy, and democracy is the only basis for centralism.

There has been a complete breakdown of the democratic norms of the international, the very basis for all our functioning. We will cooperate with anyone who wants to reverse this. We remain absolutely convinced that there are many comrades who support the political positions of the IMT who reject the direction in which the United Secretariat majority is moving, who see the disaster into which it is leading the Fourth International, and who want to reverse it.

Our goal remains what it has been all along, what we have discussed many times. We are striving for political clarity. We are working to assemble the cadres of the Fourth International.

Yesterday's debate on Portugal and Mexico was a symbol of this process: clear presentations of all points of view, freedom of debate, democratic decision-making. I might add, that we even took time to listen to and consider the views expressed during ten minutes by comrades from Lutte Ouvrière and the OCRFI, and no one developed leprosy or broke out in purple and green spots. In fact we all learned something by listening to what these comrades had to say about the issues under discussion.

The great opportunities before us make our two goals even more important. Clarity on the program and strategy of the Fourth International is the only basis on which to recruit, train, and fuse. And the purpose is to gather the cadres to build revolutionary parties, constituent parts of the Fourth International, in every single country, to build parties capable of leading the revolution to success.

That is the goal we have been committed to since the founding of the Fourth International. That is the course we have been following for decades, and we will not be diverted from it.

## SUMMARY

The Political Committee report presented a series of facts detailing what has occurred in the Fourth International in the last three years. The report was based on documents, letters, written proposals, and formal motions—every single one of which has been made available to the members of the Socialist Workers Party so that you could read, study, and verify the accuracy of the report yourself. We attempted to make them available to the members of the Fourth International.

The facts show that for more than three years the Fourth International has defaulted in its leadership responsibility, has proved incapable of taking advantage of an extraordinary opportunity and challenge.

Secondly, the record demonstrates a consistent course on the part of the IMT, or at least of its French component, a pattern of provocations and sabotage of decisions.

A third pattern emerges from studying the record, leading us to an inescapable conclusion about the functioning of the IMT leadership. We see what I can only describe as adaptation to French majority blackmail. We see what is otherwise inexplicable behavior from comrades who state clearly and sincerely that they disagree with the course being followed, but in practice find themselves incapable of doing anything about it.

Fourth, I reminded comrades that we first saw some of

these patterns emerging not when the international was faced with the challenge of responding to the initiatives of the OCRFI, but at the 1969 World Congress. That was the turning point in the recent history of the Fourth International. The patterns do not stem from organizational methods. The organizational steps flow of necessity from a wrong political course and an attempt to cover up its consequences.

The reporter for the majority of the United Secretariat does not contest the accuracy of the facts we presented. They are all documented, and the entire record has been translated and published in English, even though it has been suppressed in French. The reporter for the United Secretariat majority has nothing to say about any of the facts. Instead he gave us an abstract lecture about democratic centralism.

He stresses that he seeks a bloc with other Fourth Internationalists to defend centralism as well as democracy. You can have a bloc with us on centralism very easily. For the first two-and-a-half years of the OCRFI's overtures we were the main centralizers. We brought everything to the United Secretariat, we organized to carry out the United Secretariat's decisions, we actually *were* the ones who carried them out. In fact it was our loyal carrying out of the United Secretariat's decisions vis-à-vis the OCRFI that finally got the United Secretariat delegation and the OCRFI delegation in the same room together and put discussions on the agenda. Then came the attempted sabotage that we documented in the report.

The net result of this course of the majority has been the virtual collapse of the democratic centralist structure of the Fourth International.

So we seem to be at a dead end, an impasse.

It was not we who broke down centralism. We thought centralism was one of the strengths of the United Secretariat, one of our advantages in meeting the initiatives of the OCRFI in a positive manner. We agreed that the OCRFI was attracted not to the LTF, not to the IMG, not to the SWP, not to the PST, not to any individual leaders, but to the Fourth International, which despite political differences was growing in strength. We did everything humanly possible to make this united response to the OCRFI work—and the Fourth International majority leadership did the opposite.

That failure, and the organizational course that followed from it—including the “teach the minority a lesson” principle, the “private correspondence” privilege, and the French Voorhis Act—are what has undermined the structure and integrity of the Fourth International. That includes undermining the valid centralism along with the democracy.

What sort of centralism is there when comrades in Canada are left to go ahead on their own, we in the U.S. are left to go ahead on our own, and the same holds true for the Mexican, the Brazilian, the Argentine comrades and others? Or perhaps you think that a “centralized” response that amounts to “go away; leave us alone; don't come to our meetings; don't discuss with us; don't try to have any common actions with us; stop pretending you're interested in us” can be a guideline for any section anywhere in the world?

I'm the person who used the phrase “three-cornered game” in Canada which the reporter for the United Secretariat majority seems concerned about. Of course it is a three-cornered game in Canada. We have the Canadian

section of the Fourth International, we have the Canadian sympathizing groups which state they are in the process of altering their attitudes towards the section and want to explore the possibilities of greater collaboration, and we have the GSTQ which wants to probe the same thing. And they are all involved as Trotskyists in the class struggle in Québec. What would you call it?

The key thing is the fusion of these forces on the basis of principled political agreement into a single powerful Canadian section of the Fourth International. Just because we wish our forces were not divided in Canada today, that does not mean that either the LSA/LSO or the RMG and GMR can stick their heads in the sand or turn their backs on other forces coming towards the Fourth International, waiting until the split engineered by the United Secretariat majority several years ago is healed. That would amount to a total default in leadership. Any leadership that followed such a course would place a big question mark over its ability to build a party and construct a cadre capable of leading the Canadian revolution. Any international leadership that advised them to follow such a course would be placing a similar question mark over its political acumen and leadership capacities.

Ultimately, only a correct political course can prevent complete disintegration of the democratic centralist norms of the international. There must be a fundamental criticism and *reversal* of the turn of the 1969 World Congress. Deep down that is what is at issue. No matter what our extensive points of agreement may be, since the 1969 World Congress a core of the IMT leadership has considered those who today support the LTF to be nothing but an albatross around their neck. Our mere presence has been a constant irritation to them, a reminder that they would someday have to draw a balance sheet, that we would never let them make a phony accounting or escape this historical responsibility. We directed attention to the truth and thus we were the obstacle in Bolivia, we were the obstacle in Argentina, we were the obstacle in Portugal, and we became the obstacle to carrying out a dead-end factional and sectarian course towards the OCRFI.

We have not changed our mind on the necessity of democratic centralism. Jim Cannon learned it from Lenin and Trotsky, and we practiced it in the International Left Opposition, in the Movement for the Fourth International, and in the founding and building of the Fourth International. We can't even seriously discuss any other form of organization. Everything else has been disproven by history—anarchism, London Bureaus, post-office box coordination, bureaucratic supercentralism as practiced by Pablo. We consider democratic centralism to be an integral part of the program of Trotskyism.

We also believe—and we've never changed our minds one iota on this either—that democratic centralism is quite different on the national and international levels. We've gone through a lot of experiences with this, negatively in the Stalinized Comintern, positively with Trotsky, and we've all learned something.

We believe that the elected leadership bodies of the international have the right to decide the main political positions of the international, that is, to determine what the line of the Fourth International will be on momentous international issues, and they have the right to decide on the international political campaigns that will be under-

taken by the world movement. The sections and sympathizing organizations have an obligation to make these positions known to their members and those they influence and to carry out the international campaigns decided upon, although the tactics of how to carry out any particular campaign in a given country must be decided by the elected section leadership.

The basis for reaching such decisions, however, must be the fullest possible democracy on every level. And this includes the obligation of the leadership to function as an inclusive team, not an exclusive club, the obligation to utilize all the cadres of the movement to the fullest extent. It includes the full, timely, accurate circulation of information, all information relevant to the line and practice of the international and its sections. That involves rapid translation, publication, and circulation of documents as the only real basis for a democratic internal life of the international.

At the same time, international democratic centralism means that no international bodies have the right to impose any course of action on a particular section; that is, for the most obvious reasons, the tactics and strategy for building sections must be in the hands of the elected leaderships of those sections.

No international body has any right whatsoever to overturn any decision of a democratically elected leadership of a section, no right to impose a line on a section against the vote of its own elected bodies. This includes—and up until recently this was simply taken for granted by everyone—that no international body has the right to impose a political line on the press of a section. The line of the public organs of a section is decided by the democratic bodies of the section itself.

For example, at the 1969 World Congress, Comrade Livio who was one of the reporters for the majority on the new line for Latin America, pointed out that of course those sections and groups that did not agree with the guerrilla line were under no obligation to carry it out. The international had a right to decide the line for the international, and to try to persuade groups in Latin America of its correctness. But to demand that a section implement a line with which it vehemently disagreed would have been absurd.

Likewise, one would not expect the *Militant*, for example, to analyze events in Latin America from a point of view that the majority of the elected leadership of the SWP disagreed with. To do so would be to overturn the decisions of the democratically elected leadership bodies and to put the leadership of the section in the hands of a minority.

Apparently both the reporters for the United Secretariat agree with the points I have just outlined. But there is increasing evidence that at least some IMT comrades, the supercentralizers, who don't give a damn about the democratic functioning of the international, want to give the international leadership the right not only to adopt positions and decide on campaigns and similar prerogatives, but the right to *impose* a line on sections against the majority vote of its membership.

That is the source of the danger to democratic centralism in the Fourth International today.

It is not we who have undermined a centralized response to the overtures of the OCRFI, but a section of the United Secretariat majority itself, who have carried out one provocation after another in an attempt to prevent the

United Secretariat's unanimous policy from being implemented. No conceivable interpretation could place the language of the Lequenne article, or the French Central Committee motion to split the OCI, within the framework of the United Secretariat's policy.

The source of the danger to the program of the Fourth International and its democratic centralist structure comes not from us but from the politically erroneous turn of the 1969 World Congress, the attempt to cover up the disasters into which it led the Fourth International, and the failure to draw the balance sheet *reversing* the turn. It was the 1969 guerrilla turn that launched the Fourth International on a course away from the Trotskyist program.

Here today the highest body of the Socialist Workers Party is meeting. The Political Committee is dissolved. The National Committee is dissolved. There is a Presiding Committee that does not even have the right to make motions. The delegates here are the highest body, and they will have to make important decisions.

What are the options before the delegates?

First I should clarify one point. You have before you a strong recommendation from the United Secretariat, adopted by a majority vote, urging you to rescind the invitation that the Political Committee made to the OCRFI to observe the open sessions of this convention. If the SWP were a section of the Fourth International, if we were not prevented from affiliating by various reactionary laws in this country, you would have before you not a strong recommendation, but an order. That's what the Canadian section was sent: instructions to rescind their invitation to the GSTQ.

Now, those of you who believe that the United Secretariat has the right to issue instructions of this kind, to decide what individuals can observe the open sessions of a convention of a national section should vote to rescind the invitation, whether you agree or not.

I suspect that few delegates hold that view. As one of the delegates from Detroit put it rather aptly, any self-respecting party that receives such instructions has no choice but to tell those who issued them to go to hell.

Stop and think about it for a minute. If the United Secretariat had the authority to issue such *lettres de cachet*, there would be no point in having this item on the convention agenda. Why? Because you would have no power to accept or reject the orders. It's been decided. At best we could have a patient educational presentation so you would know why someone else had decided who could be present at your convention and who could not.

We wouldn't have taken that from Lenin. We wouldn't have taken that from Trotsky. We didn't take it from Pablo, and we won't take it today. We would never try to impose a line on any section ourselves, for the most basic political reason: cadres trained to take orders on political questions or to wait for someone else to think through their strategy and tactics for them will never be able to build a party that can lead a revolution.

Those of you who do not believe the United Secretariat has the right to issue such instructions still have an obligation to carefully weigh the arguments advanced by the United Secretariat majority in their written motions and by their reporter here. If you are convinced that their reasons are sound and correct, then you should vote to

rescind the invitation. If you disagree with the case they make and think the Political Committee acted correctly in inviting the OCRFI to observe the open sessions of the convention, then you should reject the recommendations from the United Secretariat.

That is the decision that the delegates of the highest body of the Socialist Workers Party must make today, and you are making that decision not only for yourselves, but as an example to other groups or sections who might be faced with similar *lettres de cachet* from the United Secretariat majority.

I want to end by making two more points.

The most incorrect thing that Comrade Jones said was his assertion that European comrades feel in their guts the need for an international, but Americans just can't have the same gut reaction because they live in the shadow of American imperialism.

I won't call that comment by its right name. It's hard to take back certain things once they are said, and I'd rather give Comrade Jones time to reconsider his remarks.

You are wrong, comrade. Everything we are, our entire history, starting from the day that Jim Cannon smuggled the Criticism of the Draft Program out of Moscow in the stomach of a teddy bear, has been intertwined with the building of a revolutionary International. We cannot conceive of ourselves as anything but partisans of the Fourth International. The Socialist Workers Party would have no meaning. Membership in the Socialist Workers Party would have no meaning if it were not aligned with the Fourth International. It would not and could not be a Trotskyist party.

We will fight with all our power to prevent unprincipled splits from taking place, just as we will fight with all our power for principled unifications and fusions. We will never allow the democracy of the international to be destroyed without a fight, and we think that is what is at stake today, because only on the basis of the fullest democracy can there be centralism. I think we feel this in our guts as much as any European comrade. Besides that, I know we understand it in our heads.

When you start talking about the power of American imperialism and how that prevents us from feeling how much we need to be part of an international, you may not know it, but you sound like Pablo, and his disciples twenty-five years ago when they started harping on the theme that the SWP was bowing to the McCarthyite witch-hunt. That's the kind of argument Pablo used to justify his line and his organizational methods. When you start using arguments like that you've stopped discussing politics and begun to prepare your own ranks for a split.

Finally, the outgoing Political Committee requested that I reiterate the policy of the Socialist Workers Party concerning its members who travel to other countries.

We urge every comrade who is able to do so to visit other countries, to meet comrades there, to discuss with them and get to know their languages, their organizations, the political life of their country. We urge you to attend the conventions of sections and sympathizing groups, or any other political meetings you can attend, whether they are sponsored by Trotskyist groups, centrist groups, CPs, SPs, trade unions, feminists, or anyone else. We believe the SWP will be a better party for the experiences you have and the knowledge you gain. We believe the Fourth International will be stronger as a result of pursuing this policy.

[Following the summary, the following two motions were made by delegates to the convention:

*Motion:* To reject the instructions of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International to rescind the invitation to the OCRFI to send an observer to the open sessions of the

Twenty-Eighth National Convention of the Socialist Workers Party.

*Motion:* To adopt the general line of the Political Committee report by Jack Barnes.

Both were adopted unanimously.]

## Appendix I

### Motions from United Secretariat Meeting of August 2, 1976

#### **PASSED: Motion by Walter:**

The United Secretariat, having been informed during the last month of decisions taken in several national organizations, which, if the information is correct, restrict in an inadmissible way, the rights of individual members to contact leaders, members, sections, sympathizing sections, or organizations in fraternal sympathy with the Fourth International, instructs the Bureau to write a letter to all the organizations involved in order to try and redress such practices. It has no reason to express itself on only one case of these, as the equality of rights and duties of all Fourth International members is a fundamental principle to be defended.

#### **DEFEATED: Motion by Jones:**

To send the following letter to the Political Bureau of the LCR:

Dear Cdes, We have received a letter from cde Nemo et al. On the assumption that the text it contains is the resolution of the PB of the LCR we have the following points to make.

Whether the LCR decides to send a representative to the SWP convention is, of course, a matter for the leadership of the LCR. However, we do not believe that the LCR can prevent *individual* members attending the SWP convention. Membership of the International, not of a national

section, is the basic unit of membership of the Fourth International—as reflected not merely in general positions but concretely in the fact that for example a national section cannot refuse admittance to a member of another section transferring to their country. Attendance at a national convention of another section (subject to evident technical/material factors), discussion with members of sections etc., must be included as falling under the rights of membership of the International. Therefore, the leadership of the LCR cannot prevent individual members of the LCR attending the SWP convention\*—although naturally such individuals cannot speak in any way in the name of the LCR.

We hope, therefore, the cdes. will adjust their position accordingly.

(\* The SWP, of course, is not a section of the Fourth International due to reactionary legislation, however, we extend to it all rights consistent with non-violation of the Voorhis Act.)

#### **DEFEATED: Motion by Adair:**

The United Secretariat considers the motion passed by the PB of the LCR which prohibits all members of the LCR from attending the SWP convention as observers, to be a serious error.

The United Secretariat strongly urges the PB of the LCR to rescind its motion.

## Appendix II

### Letter of Invitation to the 1976 SWP Convention

June 31, 1976

United Secretariat

Dear Comrades,

For your information, the enclosed letter has been sent to the following organizations: Lutte Ouvrière, Organizing Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International, Combat Ouvrière (Antilles), Spark (USA), Workers Socialist League (England), Communist Internationalist League (Greece), Socialist Bloc (Colombia), Revolutionary Socialist Union (Colombia), LEARM (Argentina).

Comradely  
s/Barry Sheppard  
National Organization Secretary

14 Charles Lane  
New York, N.Y. 10014  
June 28, 1976

Dear Comrades,

We would like to invite a delegation of your organization, as well as any of your members who may be interested, to attend as observers the open sessions of the Twenty-Eighth National Convention of the Socialist Workers Party. The convention will take place August 7-14 in Ohio.

This will be an especially important convention for the SWP. It will assess the results of the turn that the party has carried out to take advantage of new opportunities for political work in the trade unions, the antiracist struggle, and the Chicano, Puerto Rican, and women's movements.

In addition, reports will be given on the SWP's suit against the government which is without precedent in the United States. The SWP is demanding spying, burglaries, and other operations of the FBI and CIA against the SWP be halted forthwith. The SWP is the only political group on the left in the United States that has taken advantage of the atmosphere produced by Watergate to launch an offensive in defense of democratic rights. The FBI and

CIA have been forced to turn over thousands of pages of secret documents involving their operations against the labor movement, the Black movement and the socialist movement.

The case is expected to come to trial in late 1976 or early 1977. Much of the trial will focus on the ideas of Marxism and the right of revolutionary socialists to organize politically. Another key question at issue in the suit is the right of the SWP to maintain fraternal relationships with revolutionists in other countries.

In addition, the delegates will discuss our presidential election campaign, which is the largest the SWP has ever conducted.

The agenda of the convention will include: (1) a report on the political situation in the United States; (2) a report and resolution on the current stage of the Chicano movement; (3) a report and resolution on the struggle of Puerto Ricans in the United States; (4) party tasks and perspectives report; and (5) reports on political issues under discussion in the world Trotskyist movement.

In addition to the convention sessions, workshops and meetings will be organized to discuss the party's work in various trade unions, in defense campaigns for political prisoners, in the women's liberation movement, in the Black struggle, and other areas. Two special presentations will be made—one by Tony Thomas on developments in Southern Africa, and one by Mary-Alice Waters on the place of women's liberation in the struggle for socialism.

Simultaneous translation of convention sessions will be available in Spanish, French, and other languages if needed.

Most sessions of the convention will be open to invited guests and observers. Some sessions will be closed, delegates only having the right to attend.

Details on costs, transportation to Ohio, etc., are enclosed.

Fraternally yours,  
s/Barry Sheppard  
National Organization Secretary  
cc: United Secretariat of the Fourth International

## Appendix III

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

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



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

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

Comrades,

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

July 16, 1973

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

Comrades,

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Internationalist communist greetings,

for the United Secretariat of the  
Fourth International

E. Germain

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

To the "United Secretariat of the Fourth International"

October 10, 1973

Comrades,

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

With Trotskyist greetings,

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

differences and their depth would have to be carefully examined.

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

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

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

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

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

\* \* \*

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

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

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

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

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

October 24, 1974

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

November 6, 1974

Dear Comrades,

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

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

1. A complete set of the International Internal Discussion bulletin in English, starting with the preparations for the 1969 World Congress. If you would like the French-language bulletin please let us know, and we will arrange it.
2. A set of the Spanish-language discussion bulletin covering the same period.
3. A complete set of Volume 32 of the internal discussion bulletin of the Socialist Workers Party, which covers the period

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

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

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

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

Comradely,

Mary-Alice Waters

cc: United Secretariat

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

#### The OCI capitulates to Jack Barnes

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Paris, October 20, 1974

Dear Comrades,

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

First the circumstances and composition of this meeting.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

It is what might be called the "objective" development



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Fraternal greetings,  
Francois

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

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

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

In accordance with the decisions of the Halloween Cen-

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

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

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

## I. Introduction

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

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

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

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

## 2. What we think

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

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

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

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

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

## II. Transcript of the October 15 meeting

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

What are the reasons for our self-assurance?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

November 29, 1974

Dear Ernest,

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

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

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

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

Robertson, with his excellent contacts inside the OCI, is

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

With best regards,  
Joe

Enc.

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

December 9, 1974

Dear Joe,

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

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

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

...

Fraternally yours,  
Ernest

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

December 22, 1974

Dear Ernest,

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

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

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

In those two instances, the OCI addressed the United Sec-

retariat directly. After not getting a reply to the initiative of October 1973, the OCI tried again about a year later, this time turning to the SWP. The SWP referred the matter to the United Secretariat (which is what we told Broué we would do). It appears to me that this is what the author of the document was talking about when he said "at the request" of the SWP leadership -- that, and the fact that the SWP leadership favored exploring the advance made by the OCI.

The stress is on the role of the SWP, naturally; but I don't see any problem in clarifying the point in view of the clear emphasis placed in the document on the policy of the OCI, which was adopted some time ago: "We were the only ones to speak in the name of an international mandate: we were intervening in the framework of the mandate established by the decisions of the International Bureau in favor of international discussion. Facing us were delegations from different organizations without any common mandate except to listen to us." Note especially: "we were intervening."

As to your question about a "preliminary meeting," this no doubt refers to our informing them of the decision reached by the United Secretariat and our outlining the conditions of the meeting. You will recall that after the United Secretariat decided to meet with representatives of the OCI to hear their proposals, we agreed to get in touch with them to make the practical arrangements. We carried out the assignment, paying special attention to making clear to them what the conditions were. It turned out that they were ready to accept whatever framework the United Secretariat proposed. We

then got in touch with the FCR to set the time and place.

That the OCI leaders got the point on how the United Secretariat wanted to proceed is shown by the following paragraph in their internal report: "By its very existence the meeting is a verification of the correct character of the tactical steps taken by the International Bureau to intervene in the crisis of the USec. More basically, it is a confirmation of the correctness of the 'open conference' method." The second sentence is the significant one -- open conference method; that is, meetings with all present, aboveboard procedures, no secret behind-the-scenes deals or understandings. I would disagree with the first sentence, in which they take credit for insisting on this way of conducting talks and probing the possibilities; but I would not make it a fighting issue as long as they accept the "open conference method" and adhere to it. (Notice also in that first sentence the clear reference to who took the initiative -- "tactical steps taken by the International Bureau to intervene. . .")

It is worth noting that in this highly confidential internal report the outline of what occurred at the meeting (leaving aside the self-congratulations, etc.) is substantially the same as the outline reported by the comrades on our side. To me this indicates that the OCI leaders were trying to be accurate as to the facts in their confidential report while interpreting them from their special point of view and with their internal problems in mind (which, of course, colors the facts in a way that might not have occurred had the report been written with the idea of its being published).

While I am on the point, I should remind you that besides Broué, whom you mention, we also talked with Francois Demassot. I forget the exact date -- was it a year and a half ago? -- but I reported that to the United Secretariat at the time. As you will recall, he sought to sound me out on the possibility of the OCI participating in the discussion then going on in the Fourth International and I told him that in my opinion it was excluded.

Also, you will recall, we reported that when Broué was in New York, some of the comrades around the office got into debates with him on the positions held by the OCI, particularly the OCI's calling for a vote for the candidates of the Union of the Left. Since he was here for several weeks, this occurred more than once.

So much for that.

Upon returning from Brussels, we included in our report the points you and Charles made concerning the appropriateness of the SWP making a public statement with regard to the OCI's internal document. The comrades agreed that it might be a good idea but they wanted first to pay the OCI the courtesy of asking them about the accuracy of the document. So I drew up a letter on this. A copy is enclosed. A copy for the FCR is being sent directly to them.

Fraternally yours,  
Joe

## 12. December 22, 1974, letter to Pierre Lambert from Joseph Hansen.

December 22, 1974

Pierre Lambert  
Informations Ouvrières  
Paris, France

Dear Comrade Lambert,

It occurred to me that because of the postal strike in France or some other reason you may not have seen the November 22 issue of the Workers Vanguard, the paper of the Spartacist League; so I am enclosing a copy. It contains an English translation of a confidential internal report, presumably sent by your Political Bureau, informing members of your Central Committee of the details of the meeting in which members of the United Secretariat and observers of the Socialist Workers Party heard the proposal of representatives of the Organisation Communiste Internationaliste to open a discussion and your explanation of the motivations of the OCI in taking the initiative in this.

In addition, the Spartacist League distributed a mimeographed French version of the OCI internal report at public meetings of the Front Communiste Révolutionnaire in Paris. We assume that they also distributed it at public meetings of the OCI, although we have received no confirmation of this. If by chance you have not seen a copy, we can send a Xerox of one that was forwarded to us.

In view of the publicity given to your confidential internal report -- which occurred, of course, through no bad faith on your part -- the Political Bureau of the Socialist Workers party is considering making a public comment on the incident. We would therefore appreciate learning from you whether the version of the internal report circulated by the Spartacist League is accurate. For instance, is it complete?

As you will gather from the way the Workers Vanguard attacks the OCI and the other participants in the meeting, the Spartacist League is vexed at the initiative you took and alarmed over the possibility that the willingness of the United

Secretariat to consider your proposal might lead to some kind of rapprochement. The leaders of the Spartacist League would like to block any amelioration of relations. As we know from experience with this sectarian grouping, they would not hesitate to resort to a provocation to accomplish such an objective.

We would appreciate hearing from you by return mail.

Comradely yours,  
Joseph Hansen

cc: United Secretariat  
Front Communiste Révolutionnaire

**13. January 3, 1975, letter to the United Secretariat Bureau from Mary-Alice Waters.**

New York  
January 3, 1975

Dear Ernest,

Under separate cover we've sent double copies of several additional documents that the O.C.I. gave me when I was last in Paris. As Joe mentioned to you, I went by their headquarters to deliver the documents decided on by the United Secretariat.

Our xerox machine has been broken for a week, or these would have been sent off sooner. The second set of copies is for the LCR leadership.

Of particular interest are 1) the two items related to the recent split in the Healy organization; 2) the translation of a document from the POR-Lora; and 3) a rough draft of the political resolution being discussed at the O.C.I. European conference this weekend.

Francois D. indicated that they would be sending us an additional package of stuff. Since I didn't give them much advance notice that I was going to drop by with the material from the United Secretariat they did not have time to prepare a larger package for us.

Comradely,  
Mary-Alice

**14. January 2, 1975, letter to Charles Michaloux from Jack Barnes.**

New York  
January 2, 1975

Dear Charles,

Enclosed is the public statement that several of you at the last United Secretariat meeting urged us to make.

Comrades here (including myself) still were not totally convinced a public move was the best next step. But our report on the insistence of your request at the last United Secretariat meeting swayed them.

Joe tells me I.P. will publish the OCI internal circular signed Francois as a document along with our statement. Francois confirmed its authenticity when Mary-Alice exchanged the internal bulletins with him.

When you run our statement in Rouge, please use larger size type than you used for Sandor's note on the OCI internal letter -- we almost went blind trying to read it.

Comradely,  
Jack

cc: Ernest  
Daniel



**15. January 2, 1975, letter to the United Secretariat from Jack Barnes.**

January 2, 1975

United Secretariat

Dear Comrades,

I am enclosing a public statement issued by the Political Bureau of the Socialist Workers Party that is self-explanatory.

Copies have been sent to Intercontinental Press, Inprecor,

Rouge, and Informations Ouvrières.

Comradely,  
Jack Barnes  
National Secretary

cc: Intercontinental Press  
Inprecor  
Rouge  
Informations Ouvrières

**16. January 2, 1975, statement by the Political Bureau of the Socialist Workers party (reprinted from *Intercontinental Press*, January 13, 1975).**

On October 15, 1974, a meeting was held between representatives of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International and representatives of the Organisation Communiste Internationaliste. Observers of the Socialist Workers Party were present. The purpose of the meeting was to hear proposals made by the OCI to engage in a discussion of their differences with the United Secretariat.

The initiative in this move was taken by the leaders of the OCI. In May 1973 they wrote to the United Secretariat proposing that they be permitted to participate in the discussion then going on in the Fourth International. Because of the hostile way in which it was presented, the proposal appeared to be merely a factional maneuver and it was rejected.

The OCI leaders repeated their advance in a much more comradely way in October 1973. The United Secretariat decided to respond in kind, informing the OCI that while their proposal could not be accepted at the moment it could be reconsidered at a later time. Unfortunately, in the pressure of preparations for a world congress, the letter was not sent.

In September 1974 the OCI again took the initiative. This time, however, the OCI leaders did not go first to the United Secretariat but to the Socialist Workers Party. One of their representatives engaged in literary work in the United States became involved in private discussions with various members of the SWP. They pressed him on some of the issues that have kept the OCI separated from the Trotskyist movement as a whole.

Later the OCI representative asked for a meeting with the leadership of the SWP. This was granted, and two leaders of

the SWP met with him. He said that the OCI was still interested in opening a discussion with the United Secretariat, but if this proved to be impossible, the OCI would like to invite the SWP to hold such a discussion.

The SWP representatives said that it would be incorrect for the SWP to act unilaterally in such a matter. They did agree, however, to pass the OCI's request on to the United Secretariat.

The United Secretariat, after considering the question, decided to hear the proposals of the OCI and to explore the possibility of ameliorating relations. A first step in this direction could be the exchange of internal bulletins.

Practical arrangements were made and the meeting was held. The OCI representatives outlined their proposals and explained their motivation. Some preliminary statements were made concerning the differences. A possible framework for probing the differences and trying to ameliorate relations was discussed. No agreement was reached beyond such minimal steps as exchanging internal bulletins. The participants then reported back.

A copy of the internal report made by the OCI representatives to the top leadership of their organization happened to fall into the hands of one of the ultraleft sects in the United States, which immediately published it along with a provocative attack accusing the OCI of "capitulation" to the United Secretariat.

Some of the things said in the internal report were interpreted by others as indicating bad faith on the part of the OCI leaders in their approach to the United Secretariat.

Certain formulations in the internal report lend themselves to misinterpretation, it appears to us. They could be taken as indicating a hope of making immediate gains by maneuvering in the internal discussion that has been going on in the Fourth International for the past five years. However, one is led to an opposite conclusion if the internal report is considered as a whole and viewed in the more general context of the development of all the organizations claiming adherence to Trotskyism.

From this angle, the internal report tends to confirm the sincerity of the OCI leaders. As we see it, they are neither capitulating nor trying to carry out a raid. The OCI leaders, we think, have reached the conclusion that the Fourth International is discussing questions of prime importance to the revolutionary-socialist movement. In a debate of that depth they feel that their views as serious revolutionists ought to be taken into consideration.

While they hold firm positions, which they intend to defend vigorously, they are prepared to modify them in the face of compelling arguments and draw the requisite practical conclusions. They expect that the organizations adhering to the United Secretariat, or in sympathy with its general aims, will display similar good faith.

The willingness of the OCI leaders to engage in the give-and-take of a free discussion is a favorable development, in our opinion. It promises to open the way to a fruitful dialogue.

Nevertheless, an obstacle still stands in the way. Some of the public characterizations used by the OCI in the past with regard to members of the United Secretariat, particularly leaders of the Front Communiste Révolutionnaire in France, were excessive, in our view. If they were to be echoed now, it would be hard to avoid concluding that the OCI is engaging

in a short-term maneuver rather than moving toward a basic discussion with an open mind.

An example is to be found in Informations Ouvrières No. 679 (November 14-20, 1974). One of the leaders of the United Secretariat is called a "sycophant" and is accused of having written "perfidiously" eighteen years ago with regard to the proletarian uprising in Hungary. (The record of the comrade in question is absolutely clear on the decisive question -- complete support of the incipient political revolution and opposition to Moscow's repressive intervention.)

We think that such characterizations are out of order. We consider them to be hangovers from past factional positions that demand reexamination if a serious discussion is to be undertaken. Particularly important is the question of accuracy and objectivity in considering the positions held by different individuals and tendencies at the time.

The issues in those factional battles and who turned out to be correct historically can be debated without the use of epithets. To let disparaging labels stand in the way of comradely discussion of current differences (however much the current differences may be related in the final analysis to past positions) would be a political mistake, in our opinion.

It would be excellent if the OCI would again take the initiative and clarify this question in an unmistakable way.

We hope that the OCI will do its part to eliminate such obstacles and thereby help clear the way for a comradely discussion of current and past differences. Without such a discussion, it is hardly possible in this instance to reach a point where a principled basis can be found for closer fraternal relations and the kind of comradely collaboration that would give the Fourth International a new impulse forward.

#### **17. January 2, 1975, letter to Joseph Hansen from François.**

Paris, January 2, 1975

Dear Comrade,

You will find enclosed two copies of a letter, one for you and one which we would like you to forward to the USecretariat.

As you will see we have joined two copies of the resolution adopted by the last session of our International Bureau.

Greetings,  
F.

**18. January 14, 1975, letter to the OCI from Joseph Hansen.**

January 14, 1975

OCI  
Paris

Dear Comrades,

We received the copies of your letter addressed to the

United Secretariat and the resolution adopted by the fifth session of the International Bureau. In accordance with your request, we are forwarding a copy of each to the United Secretariat.

Comradely yours,  
Joseph Hansen

cc: United Secretariat

**19. December 31, 1974, letter to the United Secretariat from the International Bureau of the OCRFI.**

Paris, December 31, 1974

Comrades,

The International Bureau of the Organizing Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International met December 27-31.

During this meeting, which discussed and took a position on the enclosed documents which we are forwarding to you, we discussed the decisions of your tenth world congress.

On two occasions the International Bureau asked to participate in the preparatory discussion for your tenth congress because we believe, as our first letter stated, that for the first time since 1952-53 the present discussion, which encompasses all the major problems of principle, strategy and tactics, offers the possibility of taking up on a new basis and with a considerably enriched international experience the debate that led to the split in the Fourth International, which had been founded in 1938 and reconstituted in 1943-46.

You replied to our first letter in the negative, putting forward arguments which we showed in our letter of October 10, 1973, could not justify refusing to broaden the discussion. And it was not until October 15, 1974, at the time of the meeting between a delegation from the United Secretariat and a delegation from the OCI that the United Secretariat replied to that second letter, putting off until after your congress the problem of the Organizing Committee's participation in the discussion being conducted within your organization.

Since we sent our letters, your congress has taken place. We are anxious to let you know the estimate we made, based on the documents coming out of that congress, of certain points that seem essential to us. In the first place, we note that on none of the questions in dispute have the differences

been resolved. The congress was divided into two almost equal currents, without an area of political agreement on a single important question.

To that extent -- and it is not up to us to determine what its forms will be in the framework of your organization -- the international discussion cannot help but continue.

Indeed, the problems over which the two major currents that crystallized before and during the congress itself collided politically touch not only on incidental disagreements but raise problems of principle and of strategy. Moreover, in this sense we find that the discussion has deepened along the lines that we brought out in our first letter and that motivated our approach; these are the key questions on the agenda.

In particular, two points drew the International Bureau's attention.

1. We noted that the document on the strategy for building revolutionary parties in Europe, adopted by the majority of your congress, takes up the draft report submitted to the discussion by the United Secretariat majority, a draft of which the OCI, for its part, made a criticism it considered a contribution to the discussion.

This document raises important questions of a principled nature:

-- first of all, this document makes a radical cleavage between the struggle of the working class in the capitalist countries of Europe and the struggle in countries where capital has been expropriated but where the proletariat is deprived of political power by a usurping bureaucracy. It thus continues and sanctions the division of the world into a "Stalinist world" and a "capitalist world" that was so dear to Pablo. Thus it denies the international unity of the class struggle and

as a result, its pretense of presenting a "continental strategy" places the latter outside the concrete unity of the European working class. Indeed, the indispensable slogan for uniting the struggle of the European proletariats, the slogan of a socialist united states of Europe, takes on its entire revolutionary dimension from the fact that it unites social revolution and political revolution in a common task. But this slogan is devoid of all content if it is presented in the framework of accepting the division of Europe. What could it mean to the German working class, for example, if it is used within the framework of the division of Germany?

-- further, for all the countries located in this arbitrarily carved out zone of "capitalist Europe," the axis of the strategy for building the revolutionary party is to be that of the revolutionary party winning the leadership of the "new vanguard."

This new vanguard, whose class boundaries or political outlines are not defined by the report, therefore has the peculiarity of culling its membership -- in large measure, at least -- from outside the struggles of the working class, the organized workers movement and the differentiations developing within it. In fact the leftist milieu, whose center of gravity is found in the petty bourgeoisie, is presented as the milieu in which the revolutionary party should make sure of its control in order to then turn it back toward the working class. "The revolutionary Marxists struggling for political hegemony within the new vanguard cannot reject all of this organized far left as simply 'ultraleft'. . . . They are striving. . . to become the principle pole for regroupment for the far left."

Revolutionaries start from the interests and objective needs of the working class as a class: that is the meaning of transitional demands which "stemming from today's conditions and from today's consciousness of wide layers of the working class and unalterably leading to one final conclusion: the conquest of power by the proletariat."

The approach of the report on building the revolutionary party in Europe is the opposite. It starts from the "preoccupations" of what it defines as a vanguard to deduce an orientation and slogans. For the method of mobilizing the masses on the basis of the objective role of the working class in capitalist society, they actually substitute that of "exemplary action" external to the proletariat's actions.

This strategic line leads to a break with the very foundations of the Transitional Program. It results in calling into question the revolutionary role of the proletariat and in so doing it connects with and extends Pablo's revisionist orientation which is the source of the crisis in the international.

Recent developments in the class struggle alone are sufficiently compelling reason to once again take up the discussion of this orientation.

Two months after your congress, we saw the collapse of the oldest dictatorship in Europe, that of Salazar-Caetano,

with the Portuguese masses forcibly entering "into the realm of rulership over their own destiny," to use Trotsky's expression from the History of the Russian Revolution.

Whatever estimate one makes of the current level of development of the revolutionary process in Portugal, one thing is certain: it is in Portugal that the mobilization of the masses against the bourgeoisie and its state has today come the furthest of any country in Europe. Revolutionary upheavals always constitute the most important test of an orientation.

The developments in the class struggle in Portugal have provided no confirmation for the "new vanguard" strategy. As a result of the revolutionary process and the radicalization of the working class, no "new vanguard of a mass character" has appeared. On the contrary, the masses flocked to the reconstituted traditional organizations, at the same time that they began building embryonic organs of their own power through the factory committees. It is the very method of the Transitional Program that was confirmed anew. An attempt to breathe life into supposed "new vanguards" in Portugal would mean creating a petty-bourgeois barrier to constructing the revolutionary party.

The concrete course of the revolutionary development in Europe (especially the conditions of the open revolutionary crisis ripening in Spain), all of the battles being joined by the workers, underscore the urgency of reopening a debate on an orientation the pursuit of which can only lead to catastrophic results.

2. The other point that seems essential to us is the way your congress took up the problems of "armed struggle."

As you will see from the documents we are sending you, this meeting of the International Bureau discussed the problems posed by the balance sheet of "focoism," "guerrillaism," in Latin America.

We note that the discussion on armed struggle presented an opportunity for some elements of the United Secretariat, such as the reporter for the majority on the question of armed struggle in Latin America, to explicitly call into question the Transitional Program:

"A general programmatic weakness of the International in a very important domain, that of choosing the forms of armed struggle and integrating them into our revolutionary strategy."

Such a weakness would mean that the Program of the Fourth International does not meet the needs of the socialist revolution, that another program is necessary.

At the heart of this debate are questions of principle which constitute the very foundations of the Fourth International, because at the heart of this debate lie vital problems of the class struggle.

No organization, no current that claims adherence to

Trotskyism can avoid facing them in one form or another.

Thus, the WRP-SLL in England is being torn apart by a severe crisis. Nearly two hundred militants were expelled on the eve of the WRP congress.

The stress lines of this crisis cut across the problems we have posed from the start of this letter. At the heart of the struggle between the present WRP leadership and the opposition, we find fundamental questions of program and strategic orientation with regard to the mass movement contained in the program. The opposition's initial criticisms had to do with the leadership's attempt to build a party outside the concrete expression of the working class movement in the Labour Party and in the trade unions. In the Healy leadership's analyses, this method is rejected at every level; the leaders of the Labour Party and of the Trade Union Congress are regularly characterized as corporatists; in its program transitional demands are deleted and demands addressed solely to the ranks and never to the leaders of the trade union organizations. And the disastrous error of wishing to pose the WRP as a seeming rival to the Labour Party at the time of the February 1974 elections was repeated in those of October. Transforming the SLL into a "party" is itself a demonstration of sectarianism.

For the opposition, the radicalization of the British working class poses the question of fighting to break it from reformism; for the Healy leadership this break can be made spontaneously and to some extent has already occurred.

Those who are struggling to defend the gains of Trotskyism embodied in the WRP which are today threatened by the course of the Healy leadership, see no solution for this question except struggling for the Transitional Program, mobilizing the working class around its demands which lead the masses into conflict with their leaders in the very course of the struggle.

The WRP leadership's abandonment of a strategic orientation towards the traditional workers organizations is fundamentally an expression of a false, narrowly nationalistic concept of the revolutionary party that can be built in England outside the struggle to reconstruct the Fourth International.

The International Marxist Group, the British section of the United Secretariat, has been suffering for several years from the same sectarian illness as the WRP leadership. In 1970, the IMG did not even call for a vote for the Labour Party in the general elections, stating that the Labour Party was no different than the Conservative Party. IMG members and sympathizers went so far as to try to disrupt Labour Party campaign meetings.

Like the SLL/WRP, the IMG tried to set in motion its own "miniature workers movement," building "Trade Union Com-

mittees" and action committees that remained stillborn.

No organization, no current that claims adherence to the Fourth International can avoid this discussion.

We repeat, for us the goal of this discussion is rebuilding the Fourth International on the basis of the principles of the Transitional Program.

The entire accumulated experience of the class struggle has confirmed the solidness of the base on which the Fourth International was founded. But far from making reference to the Transitional Program and its method a formality, this fact gives a crucial role to defending it. Only on the basis of its principles can the long, deep crisis the Fourth International has experienced be resolved.

The organizations present at the International Bureau meeting take into account what the OCI representative told your delegation at the time of the October 15 meeting when the OCI intervened within the framework of the mandate entrusted to it by our International Bureau.

"We pose no preconditions on opening discussions. We are ready to deal with any problem. No preconditions, nothing excluded. . . . We believe that, regardless of the starting point, the discussion will embrace all the problems that have led to the crisis in the Fourth International and that separate those who want to fight for Trotsky's principles from the revisionists."

Also, the International Bureau states that, whatever agenda you decide on for the discussion when you open preparations for your next congress, we are ready to take part in it.

In another connection, informed during this meeting by a letter from Politica Obrera of the extension of the murderous extreme-right terrorism that strikes all the organizations and particularly those claiming adherence to Trotskyism, the International Bureau approves Politica Obrera's proposal to begin an international solidarity campaign, a campaign to be conducted along the lines of a united front.

The International Bureau also approves on the one hand Politica Obrera's proposal to the PST to engage in a joint campaign in Argentina, and on the other hand the proposal to organize this campaign on the international level jointly between the organizations affiliated to the United Secretariat and those adhering to the Organizing Committee.

Trotskyist greetings,

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

**20. Undated letter to Joseph Hansen from Pierre Lambert for the OCI Political Bureau (received May 1975).**

Dear Comrade Hansen,

Our Political Bureau has discussed your January 2, 1975, statement and assigned me to reply to it.

The Political Bureau of the OCI considers this statement concerning our proposal to discuss our differences to be a positive one. By accurately reporting the facts about the relations between the SWP and the OCI and the proposals of the Organizing Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International to the United Secretariat, it blocks maneuvers aimed at hindering the development of the discussion. In addition, it is correct in its political estimate of our objectives and motives.

Indeed, as we have written -- and as we reiterated at the time of the October 15 interview -- the basis of our intervention is that among those who claim adherence to the Fourth International, the problems have now reached maturity and can be settled.

In other words, we are convinced, as the Organizing Committee's letter of May 28, 1973, states, that "for the first time since 1952-53, the current discussion, which encompasses all the major issues of principle, strategy and tactics, presents the possibility of resuming, on a new basis and with considerably enriched international experience, the debate that led to the split in the Fourth International, founded in 1938 and reconstituted in 1943-46."

That is why, for our part, we place no preliminary conditions on the discussion, leaving the United Secretariat free to decide on the agenda. We are aware that regardless of the starting point, the discussion will inevitably end up on the principled issues raised in the 1950-1953 crisis, which have not yet been resolved.

Our goal is the reconstruction of the Fourth International on the basis of the principles of the program of the Fourth International, as we explained in our letter of October 10, 1973.

We repeated our proposals again in the letter adopted in December 1974 by the Organizing Committee's International Bureau, which we asked you to pass on to the United Secretariat: "The entire experience accumulated in the class struggle has confirmed the soundness of the basis on which the Fourth International was founded. But, far from converting references to the transitional program and its method into a formality, this fact makes its defense crucially important. Only on the basis of its principles can we find a solution for the long, deep crisis the Fourth International has undergone. . . . In

addition, the International Bureau declares that, whatever agenda you decide on for the preparatory discussion for your next congress, we are prepared to participate in it."

In the same letter, the International Bureau stated that it was taking up Politica Obrera's proposal for a joint international campaign by the organizations affiliated to the United Secretariat and those of the Organizing Committee against anti-working-class terrorism in Argentina.

We regard it as a favorable development for the international discussion and for the interests of the Fourth International that the SWP, taking its stand from the point of view of "the development of all the organizations claiming adherence to Trotskyism," has publicly taken the responsibility of describing the OCI's proposals as opening the door to a "fruitful dialogue."

If we understand you correctly, an obstacle lies in the fact that some of our former characterizations of members of the United Secretariat, particularly of leaders of the French section, were "excessive." It goes without saying that the evaluations we make or were able to make of currents or of political leaders claiming adherence to the Fourth International are themselves part of the discussion and can be put in question.

But you are concerned that such evaluations may still be "echoed" in our press, and that in this event, you say, "it would be hard to avoid concluding that the OCI is engaging in a short-term maneuver rather than moving toward a basic discussion with an open mind." As an example, you cite an article which appeared in Informations Ouvrieres for November 14, 1974, in which a member of the United Secretariat was described as a "sycophant" and accused of having written "perfidiously" concerning the Hungarian revolution.

In your statement, you indicate that we are "serious revolutionists." You will admit that one aspect of this characterization is not to bring forward the personal side or to consider positions previously held by anyone on either side to be an indelible brand.

Polemics have always been a natural form of expression in discussions between organizations and militants claiming adherence to Marxism. And in polemics, epithets are often harsh. "Sycophant" would have been a mild designation from Lenin's pen when he was polemicizing against Trotsky at the time of the August bloc.

But epithets are not essential, and for our part we are pre-

pared to make all the accommodations in form, if they will permit a discussion to take place, which, as you say, must be "basic."

We shall take two examples to illustrate our position. We have expressed clearly our opinion of the significance of the Tenth World Congress resolution on "armed struggle": we have defined it as contrary to the Marxist principles of the Fourth International. And when we see that Ernest Mandel, who approves this orientation, declares at the same time in a debate with the right-wing Social Democrat Mansholt, "We do not advocate violence or terrorism," is it not difficult to consider his behavior to be that of a responsible leader?

Another example: The French student syndicalist organization, UNEF, has been divided since 1971. The Stalinist fraction provoked a split because they could not tolerate a tendency led by OCI militants to gain recognition as a majority and to struggle to reconstruct the UNEF as a trade-union organization, after it had been severely damaged by leftist elements.

This year UNEF decided to participate in some university elections. It was clear that this signified a test of political strength between us and the Stalinists. Furthermore, the PCF apparatus understood it as such. We consider it a political victory that the slates of the tendency we supported gained a vote that stood at 75 percent of what the Stalinists obtained (31,000 votes for the slates we supported, 48,000 for those supported by the PCF).

One may certainly disagree about the advisability of running in such elections, or even about the need for a student union. But when the LCR's organ Rouge, which in earlier years simply ignored these elections (when the slates led by the CP and the traditional conservative slates were the only ones), advises a "boycott" and justifies it by the fact that the Stalinists and our comrades are nothing but bureaucratic manipulators, we are compelled to state that (aside from the epithets applied to us) this political identification of us with the Stalinists is a service rendered to the latter.

To come to the article you quote, we readily grant that the epithet of sycophant applied to Ernest Germain adds nothing to it. But eliminating it does not take away much. The designation "perfidiously" is applied to a statement that Imre Nagy yielded "without discrimination" to the pressure of the revolution. And what follows the quoted passage shows it clearly: it is the Stalinist version used by the bureaucracy to try to justify the second intervention, that of being "out-flanked from the right."

The heart of the matter is that in that December 1956 article, Ernest Germain contrasts the "spasmodic" development of the political revolution in Hungary with the "Polish victory;" Gomulka's damning of the political revolution in Poland is considered a victory, while the dangers of an "elementary, spontaneous explosion" are denounced.

Furthermore, it would be unfair to bear down on Germain alone for this. It was the basic position of the International Secretariat of Germain, but also that of Pablo, of Frank, of Maitan, which was affirmed in particular in their position with respect to the workers insurrection in East Berlin in June 1953, a position fought by the International Committee that was formed following your National Committee's open letter.

Thus we cannot consider that the balance sheet of Ernest Germain on the question of the political revolution is unambiguous.

But that is not the main point. The essential thing is that, in our opinion, these positions of "eighteen years ago" remain current, because they are at the root of the current orientation of the majority tendency. When the Belgian section's organ, La Gauche, writes that the Portuguese Communist party has "one foot in reformism and the other in the revolutionary struggle," the same method, contrary to the basic heritage of Trotskyism, lies at the bottom.

In addition, what would show that the OCI is not engaged in some short-term maneuver is that if that were so we would conceal the fact that, in our opinion, there are within the United Secretariat and its organizations currents that place in question the programmatic basis of Trotskyism, as I personally stated at the October 15 interview. Having said this, it goes without saying that we are prepared to modify the form, especially in our public statements, if that would allow the discussion to open.

Dear Comrade Hansen, now I would like in conclusion to come to what is central to me and to the whole OCI leadership. I have just referred to Portugal. The proletarian revolution is developing in Portugal and is on the agenda throughout Europe. In an international context, the Portuguese revolution occupies a place similar to that held by the Spanish revolution and the revolutionary rising in France in 1936. At that time our international movement under Trotsky's leadership, in spite of its difficulties, differences and splits at the national level, acted like an international political unit and was ready for action.

Today, because the differences relate to the most vital issues of the proletarian revolution itself, the Fourth International cannot assert itself politically as a coherent force. That is why, to give only one example, the Portuguese LCI declares in its electoral manifesto that it is necessary "to bar capitalist reaction from all the roads (even electoral) to control of the state apparatus." Which means that the state apparatus in existence is "neutral," that the task is not that of proletarian revolution, of the destruction of the bourgeois state. Where are the principles on which our movement rests?

That is why we are so insistent on opening this frank, deep international discussion and why we place no formal condition on how it begins. Only through this discussion will the Fourth

International be able to function on the basis of democratic centralism and within the framework of the principles of the transitional program.

Let me add that we believe that the concrete historical development of the Fourth International has created a situation in which organizations like the SWP and the OCI have special responsibilities.

That is why, in reiterating the proposal made by the Organizing Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International in its December 27 letter, that of participating in the preparatory discussion for your next international congress, I appeal to you on behalf of the OCI leadership -- we believe

that organizing a real exchange of views between the leadership of the SWP and that of the OCI would represent an extremely important, positive step.

For my part, I am prepared to travel to the United States this summer, preferably during the month of August, to conduct such a responsible discussion around an agenda which we can draw up together, in whatever form and circumstances you believe to be best.

With fraternal greetings,  
for the OCI Political Bureau  
P. Lambert

### 21. June 5, 1975, letter to Pierre Lambert from Joseph Hansen.

14 Charles Lane  
New York, N.Y.  
June 5, 1975

to Newsweek, which was published in the October 9, 1972, issue of Intercontinental Press. His current statement should be weighed in that context.

Dear Comrade Lambert,

Thank you for your letter again outlining your position regarding a discussion of the balance sheet to be drawn on the internal differences in the world Trotskyist movement going back several decades. For the moment I will not take up the points you raise in your letter save for two items.

One is the importance of a comradely, open-minded attitude, particularly in public polemics. It is true that revolutionary-Marxists are characteristically not given to restraint in debating differences. However, this is rarely justified inside the movement, in my opinion. And certainly it is out of place if there is a narrowing of political differences, however deep the differences may be on other levels.

The other item is your reference to Comrade Mandel's denial to Mansholt that he "advocates" terrorism. Comrade Mandel made a similar denial at greater length in his reply

In the final part of your letter, you indicate your readiness to visit the United States this summer to discuss a possible agenda and the forms and conditions of a responsible discussion. The leadership of the Socialist Workers party would be opposed to taking up such a question unilaterally. A thoroughgoing discussion such as you envisage would necessarily involve the United Secretariat and would have to be taken up there.

If you plan, despite this, to visit the United States in August, you and any other comrades of the Comité d'Organisation would be welcome to attend as observers at the open sessions of the convention of the SWP, which is scheduled for that month. In case you are interested, I would be glad to send you the necessary details.

Fraternally yours,  
s/Joseph Hansen

cc: United Secretariat

### 22. June 29, 1975, letter to the Executive Committee of SWP from Alain Krivine for the LCR Political Bureau.

Paris  
June 29, 1975

To the Executive Committee  
of the SWP

Dear Comrades,

The enclosed letter was discussed and approved at the

most recent meeting of the LCR Central Committee on June 29. It concerns the letter from Comrade J. Hansen to Lambert, a member of the leadership of the OCI, inviting him to the coming convention of the SWP.

Awaiting a rapid response, we send our fraternal greetings.

For the Political Bureau:  
Alain Krivine



**23. June 29, 1975 letter to the Executive Committee of the SWP from the Central Committee of the LCR.**

Paris  
June 29

To the Executive Committee  
of the SWP

Dear Comrades,

The United Secretariat has forwarded to us a copy of Comrade J. Hansen's answer to an undated letter from Lambert.

We agree with Comrade Hansen when he writes that any discussion with the OCI or its Organizing Committee is a matter that primarily concerns the United Secretariat. We will not fail to make our position known on this matter when it comes up on the USec agenda.

However, we do not think your invitation to Lambert to attend the coming convention of the SWP is an internal affair of the SWP. We think that this is also a matter for discussion in the USec and, in particular, that it concerns the LCR (French section of the Fourth International) very directly.

You know that since May 1968, without going back further, the relationship between the LCR and the OCI has been essentially a hostile one because of the grave political differences that exist between the two organizations and because of the OCI's conduct in the class struggle in France. We have never refused to meet with all the groups on the far left with a view to carrying out joint actions. This includes the OCI despite its scandalous conduct in May 1968, the most important event in the history of the French workers movement in decades. The Lambertists, let us not forget, called for abandoning the barricades in the Quartier Latin. During the six weeks of the crisis and general strike, they never issued calls for demonstrating for the overthrow of the government. This got them a clean bill of health from the Conseil d'Etat, when the other revolutionary organizations were banned by the government.

Unfortunately, there have been very few meetings with the OCI and still less common actions, less than with any other organization. The reason for this can be easily understood when you consider the following facts.

Throughout the Vietnam war, the Lambertists hardly ever participated in solidarity demonstrations. They even wrote once that the Vietnamese struggle was hopeless. They showed a particular predilection for denouncing the Vietnamese leaders, even on the eve of the liberation of Saigon, accusing them of not wanting to take the city!

In the 1974 presidential election, they supported Mitterrand on the first round, against our candidate and the Lutte Ouvriere candidate. Before in 1973, in the legislative elections, after several months of tripartite discussions including us and Lutte Ouvriere, the aim of which was to reach an agreement on a geographic distribution of candidates, they broke off the negotiations to run a few candidates only in places where we and Lutte Ouvriere had candidates, in order deliberately to damage these campaigns.

As regards Portugal (where they in fact have no organization) their articles and leaflets in Paris have "unconditionally" supported Soares' party and presented the slogan "All Power to the Constituent Assembly." Recently, they participated in anti-Franco demonstrations under the slogan "Long Live the Republic!"

Last year in the Force Ouvriere convention, they voted for the leadership report given by the General Secretary Bergeron, who is opposed to any unity in action with the CGT [Confederation Generale du Travail]-- General Confederation of Labor, the CP-controlled union federation and who has acted openly as a strike-breaker against the printing workers at the Parisien Libere, which at present is the main test of strength in the class struggle in France. Out of the last three issues of the Lambertist organ, we find a short note in the first saying that the attitude of Force Ouvriere in this strike is "unacceptable" (such a moderate term is not usual in their polemics against us); the following issue says nothing about the strike, and the last issue has an article whose fire is directed entirely against the union the strikers belong to and which is defending a trade-union gain.

Moreover, they have called the LIP strike leader Piaget, an agent of the bosses and the Catholic hierarchy.

Let us also refer in a few words to their methods in the workers movement. Like Healy, the Lambertists habitually poison political discussions, including those that lead to splits in their ranks, by hurling accusations about people being agents of the bourgeoisie or the Kremlin. They have done so against us. Thus, in their commentary on the last convention of the LCR, they put us in the category of "all the forces that defend the social relations of capitalist production," saying that our role was to "betray the revolution in the name of the Fourth International." So, after this no credibility can be given to any accusations they raise.

The Lambertists also habitually use violence within the workers movement, especially against the far-left organiza-

tions. They have done so again recently against a grouplet that broke from them.

But while these few indications explain the paucity of common actions with the OCI, this is not the essential, fundamental reason for our objection to the invitation you have sent to Lambert and his people.

You have always said that only your country's reactionary laws prevented you from formally being members of the Fourth International. This is why we have always considered you as morally an integral part of the Fourth International, that is, as a part of the World Party of the Socialist Revolution, whose existing framework all members respect and in which all members are in solidarity with the other organizations of the Fourth International in other countries, not just in general solidarity in the struggle against capitalism but also against the dissident groups that have broken with the Fourth International. We have no objections in principle to inviting formations outside the Fourth International to a convention -- we do it -- but in the context of the conception we jointly hold of the Fourth International, we do not think that it is possible to invite a group without first knowing the opinion of the section in the country in question.

The invitation to Lambert, in whatever form it is made, will inevitably become known publicly and interpreted by everyone, starting with the OCI, as a political act. Everyone will conclude that the SWP intends to put the OCI and the LCR on the same level. And this conclusion will be correct. In the past of the Trotskyist movement, this was the interpretation given to the invitation issued by Nin and his organization to a representative of a dissident group to attend the convention of the Spanish organization in March 1932

with the same status as the delegates of the International Secretariat and the French section at the time, and Trotsky was the first to so interpret it. This is how the members of the LCR will understand it today. They will understand that at the very time they are carrying out an audacious decision -- launching a daily, the first daily published by a section of the Fourth International -- at a time when they have the right to expect the moral support of all those who justly claim to be members of the Fourth International, the SWP leadership has put them on the same level as the OCI. They will understand that at the very time when you want to celebrate the 1963 reunification at your convention, a celebration we would like to join in, you are giving aid to a group, which along with Healy, has been the most vicious foe of reunification and which has not given up its intention to destroy it. The OCI is seeking only to sharpen the differences and tensions in the International and to this end it will use the invitation given it to redouble its struggle against what it calls the "currents that challenge the programmatic bases of Trotskyism" "within the USec and its organizations."

For these reasons we were surprised by your move. We appeal to you vigorously to change a decision that puts in question whether we can attend your convention. We ask you to inform us as soon as possible of your final decision.

Fraternally,  
The Central Committee of the  
Ligue Communiste Revolutionnaire  
(French Section of the Fourth  
International)

copy to the United Secretariat  
of the Fourth International

#### **24. July 28, 1975, letter to the Central Committee of the LCR from Mary-Alice Waters for the Political Committee of the SWP.**

July 28, 1975

To the Central Committee of the Ligue Communiste  
Revolutionnaire (French Section of the Fourth International)

Dear Comrades,

We received your letter of June 29 indicating that you may not attend our August 17-21 convention because of the invitation extended by the SWP Political Committee to the Organizing Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International to observe the open sessions. We were sorry to learn that you had placed a question mark over your attendance. We hope our reply will clarify the matter and that a sizable delegation from your leadership will be present in accordance with the practice you have followed in recent years.

For our part we were genuinely surprised by your reaction. We consider our invitation to the Organizing Committee to be within the general framework of the unanimous decisions taken by the United Secretariat last October and December. Since this essential framework of the previous decisions of the United Secretariat (which the SWP leadership agrees with) is not referred to in your letter to us, perhaps it would be worthwhile to begin by recalling those decisions.

At the meeting of the United Secretariat last October 12-13, fraternal observers of the SWP reported on the new request from the leadership of the Organization Communiste Internationaliste, on behalf of the Organizing Committee to Reconstruct the Fourth International, to open a political discussion with the United Secretariat. After considering the request and

the background leading up to it, the United Secretariat unanimously agreed to send a delegation to meet with the OCI leadership to hear their proposals. It was agreed that this United Secretariat delegation should include at least one of the leaders of the FCR. It was further agreed to propose that internal bulletins be exchanged, and that the possibility be considered of collaboration in areas such as defense work and publishing projects for Trotskyist literature in the various East European languages. Several members of the political bureau of the French section participated in this United Secretariat discussion and voted for taking this step.

Comrades in the leadership of the LCR are familiar with the October 15 meeting with the OCI leadership as three reports on it -- one by Pierre Rousset, one by Joseph Hansen and one by Francois DeMassot -- were circulated in the FCR last fall.

As proposed by the United Secretariat, arrangements were made to exchange internal bulletins.

At the November 16-17, and December 17, 1974, meetings of the United Secretariat there was further discussion on the steps to be taken in response to the request for political discussion as spelled out by Comrade Lambert at the October 15 meeting. There were differences among the members of the United Secretariat on how to interpret the overtures from the OCI leadership. Some thought it was nothing but a maneuver to try to exploit and deepen the political differences within the Fourth International; others thought the evidence indicated that the OCI leadership was sincere in its desire to participate in the discussion of questions of prime political importance taking place within the Fourth International.

Despite differing evaluations of the OCI's intentions, however, there was again unanimous agreement on the next step. The United Secretariat decided to take up two points with the OCI leadership before proceeding to further discussions. The first was clarification of some statements open to misinterpretation in the internal report by Francois DeMassot referred to above. The second was a commitment by the OCI leadership to cease using public characterizations of leaders of the international that are out of place if they are serious about establishing a framework for comradely debate.

In addition, comrades of the leadership of the French section felt strongly that a public statement by the leadership of the SWP was in order, in light of the publicity given to the OCI's contacts with the United Secretariat by opponents of the international and their accusations of a secret intrigue between the SWP and OCI. We were dubious about the wisdom of such a public move, but the opinions of the French leadership were of concern to us, and we acquiesced. The SWP Political Bureau issued a statement, published in the January 13, 1975, issue of Intercontinental Press. Since, to our knowledge, this has not been published for the information of the LCR membership, or commented on by the leadership, we have enclosed a copy.

As you can see, the statement details the history of the contacts between the United Secretariat and the Organizing Committee and asks the OCI leadership to alter the character of its public polemics.

The letter of Comrade Pierre Lambert is a reply to the statement of the SWP Political Bureau. This reply clearly provides additional confirmation of the desire of the Organizing Committee to remove obstacles standing in the way of a political discussion.

This was the context in which the SWP Political Committee asked Joe Hansen to answer Comrade Lambert's letter specifying that we continue to be opposed to unilateral discussions between the SWP and OCI, but would take the matter up with the United Secretariat. As Comrade Lambert indicated he might be in North America in the month of August, we extended an invitation to him or any other comrades representing the Organizing Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International to observe the open sessions of our convention.

In regard to your letter of June 29 objecting to this invitation we would like to make several observations.

1. You note that the invitation is of particular concern to the LCR (French section of the Fourth International). We of course agree with you that the OCI is the strongest component of the Organizing Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International, and in that sense the invitation is of interest to the French section. But we would remind you that there are significant groups affiliated to the Organizing Committee in other countries, including Canada, Mexico, Britain, Israel, and Argentina, where there are also sections and sympathizing organizations of the Fourth International which are directly affected. That is why we consider the question of contacts with the Organizing Committee or leaders of the OCI acting on behalf of the Organizing Committee, to be a matter for consideration by the United Secretariat, not simply the French section.

Our invitation was extended not to the OCI per se, but to the Organizing Committee -- an international current that considers itself part of the world Trotskyist movement and with whom the United Secretariat unanimously decided to investigate possibilities for certain kinds of joint work; with whom the United Secretariat unanimously agreed to exchange all internal discussion material; and with whom the United Secretariat agreed to explore the fruitfulness of more extended political discussion.

We would note that other sections directly concerned, such as the Canadian section, expressed an opinion opposite to that now voiced by the LCR. At the July 1975 United Secretariat meeting they pointed out that those observing the SWP convention might be influenced enough by what they heard and saw to consider it desirable for the groups affiliated to the Organizing Committee to move more actively towards the United Secretariat.

While there were differing views within the United Secretariat concerning the degree to which this invitation advanced the process initiated by the earlier United Secretariat decisions the July United Secretariat meeting decided to express no opinion in disagreement with the invitation.

2. The largest part of your letter deals with an enumeration of political differences that have divided you from the OCI for the last seven years, "without going back further," as you say. We would only note that these are beside the point. A similar list could have been drawn up any time in the last decade. But again, you leave out what has changed: the disintegration of the former International Committee including the split between Healy and Lambert, between Lambert and Varga, between Wolforth and Healy, between Healy, Thorntt and Black, and so on; the effect of the increasing pace of the class struggle on the forces around the Organizing Committee; the effect of the continued growth and development of the Fourth International; and the effect of the proof of our ability since 1969 to conduct a far-ranging political debate in a comradely way despite sharp differences. You also leave out something else that has changed -- the attitude of the OCI leadership as shown by their request to open a political discussion with us; their willingness to accept whatever format or agenda for discussion we prefer; and their demonstrated willingness to remove obstacles to this discussion by altering the character and tone of their polemics. These were the new factors that prompted the United Secretariat to respond in the first place.

Under such conditions, to reply by simply repeating a list of political differences that may be under process of alteration, and to refuse on those grounds to discuss, would be a response more appropriate to dead-end factionalists than to revolutionary Marxists. The conclusions that would be drawn by the entire workers movement is that we are not confident or capable enough to confront the OCI politically or that we are beginning to act more like a sect than a Leninist leadership determined to build the Fourth International.

You seem to recognize this problem when you state, "this is not the essential, fundamental reason for our objection to the invitation."

3. If we understand you correctly, your fundamental objection is that you consider our invitation to be a breach of the norms of democratic centralism because it is not "possible to invite a group without first knowing the opinion of the section in the country in question."

But the fact is that the leadership of the LCR voted in favor of the course set by the United Secretariat. Our invitation to the Organizing Committee comes within this framework and has nothing to do with challenging the norm you outline.

4. The invitation to the Organizing Committee is, as you say, a political act, but there is no basis for your assertion that the SWP thereby intends to put the OCI and the LCR on

the same level. As everyone on the left knows, the LCR and SWP are part of a common international current. Were it not for reactionally legislation in the United States we would be the American section of the Fourth International. Representatives of our respective leaderships regularly attend each other's conventions and national committee meetings, not merely as observers at the open sessions but as fraternal delegates to whom the courtesy of voice has been extended when requested.

To avoid any misunderstanding owing to incomplete information, we should call attention to the fact that unlike the conventions of the French section, our conventions are generally open. Not only elected delegates, but all members of the SWP and YSA, selected sympathizers, and members of any section or sympathizing organization of the Fourth International are all invited to attend. At this year's convention we anticipate that more than a hundred nonmembers will be present and possibly even reporters from major daily newspapers.

Under the circumstances, an invitation to the Organizing Committee to send a delegation to listen to the oral reports and debates, which are based on the written discussion that has already been made available to them by the United Secretariat, cannot reasonably be construed as a decision by the SWP leadership to place the OCI in the same category as the LCR.

5. Your reference to Nin's invitation to Collinet of the Gauche Communiste in France to represent the French section of the International Left Opposition at the convention of the Spanish Left Opposition in March 1932 does not appear pertinent in our opinion. Did the International Secretariat, with the agreement of Molinier, Frank and Naville, decide in late 1931 to meet with Rosmer's group to explore possibilities for political discussion and areas of collaboration? Did the International Secretariat decide to give Rosmer's group all internal discussion material of the Left Opposition and its Spanish section? Did Nin keep the International Secretariat informed of his contacts with the Gauche Communiste? Did he send copies of all correspondence and related documents to the French section and the International Secretariat? Did the International Secretariat delegation (Molinier, Frank and Naville) boycott the Spanish convention when it was agreed to seat Collinet as an observer, while they were seated as fraternal delegates? The answer to each question is, No. Such details, all of which are pertinent to the international framework, but which you fail to mention in your letter, are rather important.

6. You seem to imply that our action is particularly dubious in light of the decision of the LCR to launch a daily paper. The exact connection between the two is not very clear to us. In any case, we are certainly pleased that the French section of the Fourth International today feels itself strong enough to take the step of publishing a daily and we wish you the best of success in the venture. In light of this considerable expansion of the Trotskyist propaganda apparatus in France, however, it seems to us that it would be desirable to seek to mobilize support for this undertaking from all sections of the

French left, including organizations that claim to be Trotskyist.

We thus see no contradiction between launching a daily and responding to overtures from a group that might decide to move further in our direction.

For all these reasons we think the objections you raise in your letter do not warrant withdrawing the invitation to the Organizing Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International to observe the open sessions of our convention. In fact it would be difficult to offer a reasonable explanation for such a turnaround and it would open the United Secretariat and the SWP to charges of bad faith.

We repeat that we sincerely hope that representatives of the Political Bureau of the LCR will attend our convention. They will be welcomed as fraternal delegates and accorded all the courtesies that have unfailingly been extended to the French section at every past convention of the Socialist Workers Party.

With comradely greetings,  
Mary-Alice Waters  
for the SWP Political Committee

cc: United Secretariat

## Appendix IV

### Correspondence between Walter and the LSA/LSO Leadership

#### Letter to the Political Committee from Walter for the United Secretariat Bureau

December 12, 1975

To the Political Committee of the LSA/LSO, Canadian  
section of the F.I.

Dear Comrades,

We have been informed that you have decided to invite to the preconvention discussion and the Christmas 1975 convention of your organization the Canadian group affiliated to the so-called "O.C.R.F.I."

We don't know whether that information is adequate and whether it was taken in full knowledge of the October 1975 USEC decisions. Please let us know as soon as possible whether this is the case or not.

We wish to draw your attention to the fact that at the October 1975 USEC meeting, two motions were adopted in relation with the so-called "O.C.R.F.I.", one of which has the following content:

"That sections, sympathising organizations and organizations in political solidarity with the F.I. should take no initiative in relation with the O.C.R.F.I. or its sections, without prior consultation of and approval by the USEC."

If under these circumstances the Canadian group affiliated to the so-called "O.C.R.F.I." indeed is invited to your convention and (or) preconvention discussion, without prior consultation of and approval by the USEC, in spite of the above quoted resolution and after your having unambiguously been informed about it, this would mean an open and deliberate defiance of the organizational integrity and structure of the Fourth International, and a clear breach of discipline.

Please let us know your opinion on the matter. We will put the question on the agenda of the December 22-23 USEC meeting, if the information indicated in the first paragraph of this letter shows itself to be correct.

For the USEC/Bureau,  
Comradely yours,  
Walter

Copies to: RMG/GMR, SWP National Office, Jack, Alain

**Reply to Walter by Art Young for the Political Committee  
of the LSA/LSO**

December 18, 1975

United Secretariat  
Brussels, Belgium

Dear Comrades,

As you know, we have been unable to attend the meetings of the United Secretariat in recent months. And we did not

receive any record of its meetings until yesterday, when the minutes of the September, October, and November meetings arrived simultaneously, one day after the letter from Comrade Walter. The delay may have been caused by this country's postal strike, which has only now ended. In any case, we were unaware that the United Secretariat had adopted the motion quoted in Walter's December 12 letter. After reading his letter carefully, we believe that it can only be based on a misunderstanding of the facts of the matter.

Our invitation to members of the Groupe Socialiste des Travailleurs du Québec [GSTQ] has nothing to do with relations on an international level between the United Secretariat and the Organizing Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International [OCRFI]. Nor does it involve relations between the Canadian section and the Organisation Communiste Internationaliste, the French affiliate of the OCRFI. We have been dealing with the GSTQ as a political organization within Canada. Often we find that we are working in the same areas as the GSTQ—in the student movement, or in the unions, for example—and that its members show interest in our activities. It is not a question of collaboration with another international current, but rather of a concrete opening for party building within Canada, a question of national tactics.

This opening has increased significance because of the GSTQ's weight as a political organization in Québec. It has a size and influence roughly comparable to that of the Groupe Marxiste Revolutionnaire and to the Québec forces of the Canadian section—the two organizations of the Fourth International in Québec. In addition, the GSTQ has members in leadership positions in two major Québec unions, and it has broader influence in the organized labor movement.

To be sure we have many political differences with the GSTQ but detailing them is not to the point in this letter. More relevant is the fact that in the recent period, the GSTQ has collaborated with us on an increasing range of projects where areas of political agreement exist. This has made common work between us fruitful in a number of instances. To cite a few examples:

- The September 22 protest against the murder of eight members of the Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores in Argentina, signed by political groups and labor leaders in Québec. Signatories of the protest included leaders of the GMR, LSO, and GSTQ. (Although the signature of the GSTQ was omitted in the text published in the English edition of the October 9 *Inprecor*, it was included in the French edition.) The editors of *Inprecor* considered the initiative to be exemplary, stating, "We urge other comrades around the world to follow this example of the Québécois comrades. . . ." It should be added that the collaboration of the GSTQ was indispensable in securing the signatures of the labor leaders."

- Our work with the GSTQ in winning support for a strike of Montreal public transit workers, a strike in which GSTQ union members played a leading role.

- The GSTQ's role in securing labor endorsements for a struggle against the rise in transit fares (a struggle in which the comrades of the GMR also participated).

- Opposing repression in Spain following the assassination of opponents of Francoist tyranny. In this case, once again, the protests carried the signatures of the GMR, LSO, and GSTQ among others.

- Collaboration in the labor movement in opposing supporters of the bourgeois Parti Québécois and promoting proposals for independent labor political action.

- We have also had a good experience with a few members of the GSTQ who live in English Canada.

We have kept the GMR informed of our initiative towards the GSTQ and have sought to work jointly with them in bringing the GSTQ closer to the Fourth International. We also pressed the GSTQ to invite the GMR to its coming convention.

While the development of common work in some areas has not eliminated other differences we have with the GSTQ, it has helped in Québec to cut across the slander that the Trotskyists are a group of warring sects, more concerned with fighting each other than with promoting the class struggle.

The participation of the GSTQ in some common activities has reinforced the positive image of Trotskyism for the radical public. In addition, practical cooperation has produced important concrete gains.

Our intent is to push forward this process. We want the GSTQ members to get to know us better and we seek more exchanges with their leaders and with their membership. The goal is to win them to membership in the Canadian section of the Fourth International. We believe that this is possible and that a positive beginning in this direction has been made.

We have invited a broad range of our contacts to attend our December convention. Our policy is to make available copies of our preconvention bulletins to all those invited to the convention.

In view of these recent experiences, it was obvious that we should include the members of the GSTQ among those invited. We wrote to the GSTQ leadership, transmitting this invitation.

Clearly, then, what is involved is our relation to a political organization inside Canada. Our actions are designed to strengthen the section, increase its effectiveness in the class struggle, and hopefully win new forces in Canada to the Fourth International. In other words it is a question of a tactical orientation of a national section.

Whatever our differences on other matters, all members of the leading bodies of the international have affirmed that these bodies do not attempt to dictate tactics to the national sections.

Since you cite the motion passed at the October Secretariat meeting concerning relations with the OCRFI, and since you include a reference to "the organizational integrity and structure of the Fourth International" we can only conclude that you thought that the invitation of the GSTQ to our convention is in some way connected to the United Secretariat's relation with the OCRFI. We trust that our outline of the facts qualifies that this is not the case.

Your letter arrived as we were making final preparations for our convention. It is not possible for us to participate in the December United Secretariat meeting, to be held four days from now. To insure that you receive this letter in time

for the meeting, however, we are transmitting the text to Comrade Stateman, who will present it at the meeting.

Comradely yours,  
Art Young  
for the LSA/LSO Political Committee

CC: GMR, RMG, Alain, Jack, SWP N.O.

### Letter to the Leadership of the LSA/LSO from Walter for the United Secretariat

December 23, 1975

To the leadership of the LSA/LSO, Canadian section of the F.I.

Dear Comrades,

We have received and discussed your answer to the letter of the USEC/Bureau of Dec. 12 relative to the invitation of the Québécois grouping adhering to the "OCRFI" to your national convention.

We note your statement that your invitation of that grouping occurred before you had received the October 1975 USEC minutes, and without your having been informed, prior to the reception of these minutes, about the contents of the two motions voted during the October 1975 USEC meeting on the relations between the F.I. and the "OCRFI." We accept your statement.

However, we cannot accept your argument that even now, after having received the text of the motions voted at the October 1975 USEC meeting, the question of the invitation of the Québécois grouping adhering to the "OCRFI" is a purely national tactical matter for the Canadian section alone to decide.

We are faced with an international offensive of the "OCRFI" which, under the guise of a unity maneuver, pursues the avowed and openly expressed goal of splitting the F.I. The Québécois grouping which is a member of the "OCRFI" has, to our knowledge, never dissociated itself from this goal, nor has it clearly condemned the use of physical violence and slander against political opponents inside the working class movement, systematically practised by the OCI, the main component of the "OCRFI."

Furthermore, any attempt at "regroupment" in Quebec or in Canada—as different from punctual united front agreements which any national section is of course free to conclude with any working class organisation—with the Québécois formation adhering to the "OCRFI" without a previous clarification of these questions, without a clear break of that grouping with the "OCRFI", and without serious guarantees against double membership, would be in contradiction with the organisational and political principles of the F.I. as defined by the statutes.

We therefore request you to suspend your invitation of the Québécois grouping adhering to the "OCRFI" to your national convention, pending clarification of the above-named issues. If you would not conform yourself to this decision, the USEC would have no choice but to:

(a) request that a delegation of the GMR/RMG defends before your national convention the positions of the Fourth International leadership developed in the third, fourth and

fifth paragraphs of this letter, and strongly condemns the violation of discipline involved in that invitation, which could only be considered as a questioning of the organisational structure of the F.I. as defined by the statutes;

(b) submit to the incoming I.E.C. the question of the Canadian section's leadership's breach of discipline.

We hope that you will conform yourself to our decision, even if you don't agree with it, and that you will avoid a further sharpening of the conflict arising out of the question of how to handle our relations with the "OCRFI."

We do not reject in any way the possibility or advisability of moves made by either the FI or by national sections towards the "OCRFI" or its national groupings to probe the possibility for discussion, collaboration or even regroupment with some or many of these forces. But such moves, in order to be productive from the point of view of building the FI and its national sections, should be made after previous consultation of the USEC, in common agreement of all the forces of the F.I., and not as factional maneuvers or unilateral decisions by any separate section or part of our world movement.

Fraternally yours,  
For the United Secretariat of the F.I.,  
Walter

**Reply to Walter by Art Young for the LSA/LSO Convention**

LSA/LSO  
Toronto, Ontario  
Canada

January 20, 1976

United Secretariat  
Brussels, Belgium

Dear Comrades,

1. Our convention took place without hearing your reaction to our letter of December 18. Your letter dated December 23 arrived in Toronto on December 31, after the convention had ended.

Neither the Groupe Marxist Revolutionnaire nor the Revolutionary Marxist Group were aware of your decision. Leaders of both organizations professed ignorance of any decision of the December United Secretariat meeting. A member of the GMR, François Cyr, addressed the convention, presenting greetings in the name of the GMR and RMG,

but he made it clear that he was speaking only for the leaderships of those two organizations.

2. As we have explained, our invitation to the GSTQ to attend the convention, and our participation in some common projects with them, flow from political developments in this country and the evolution of relations between our two groups, and nothing else. This does not depend on the state of relations between the United Secretariat and the OCRFI; that is a different matter.

For example, you mention your fears that the OCRFI may hope to split the Fourth International, and your concern over alleged actions of the OCRFI's French affiliate, the OCI. But you do not show that these questions have any bearing on the Canadian section's decision to invite a particular organization with whom we have been working in Quebec to our convention.

We think that the United Secretariat should be encouraged by the growing influence and attractive power of the Fourth International in Canada, and appreciate the progress we are making.

3. You believe that the United Secretariat has the power to tell us who may or may not be invited to our convention. Your last letter enlarges this supposed power, informing us that the LSA/LSO may not act "to probe the possibility for discussion, collaboration or even regroupment" with the GSTQ without first clearing our moves with you. In other words, you attempt to arrogate authority not only over our right to discuss and collaborate with another political group in Canada, but over our right to *probe the possibility* for any discussion and collaboration.

We reject this attempt to establish veto power over tactical decisions of national sections. Decisions on how we intervene in the class struggle in Canada are the prerogative of the LSA/LSO. In our opinion, your instructions on this matter are in violation of the norms of democratic centralism as it has been practised in the Fourth International since reunification, and as it has been codified in the statutes.

4. Our convention instructed the incoming leadership to continue our course of seeking discussion and collaboration with the GSTQ on projects where we have agreement as long as this process promotes the building of the Canadian section.

This position was contained in the report on the Fourth International adopted unanimously at our convention. We will send you copies of the report as soon as it is published.

Comradely,  
Art Young

cc: GMR, RMG, Alain Krivine, Jack Barnes



## Appendix V

### Correspondence and Documentation Concerning the OCRFI and the Commission to Investigate the Varga Affair

#### A. OCI-SWP CORRESPONDENCE

##### ORGANISATION COMMUNISTE INTERNATIONALISTE

(pour la Reconstruction de la 4 Internationale)

Paris, September 23, 1975

Jack Barnes  
National Secretary, SWP

Dear Comrade:

First I should like to thank you for the fraternal reception you accorded to our delegation and for the facilities that you made available to them so that they could inform themselves as completely as possible on all the various activities of the SWP.

Comrade François has reported to us on the SWP convention and our Central Committee has thus been able to study the step forward taken by your party.

The Central Committee of the OCI has assigned me to invite the SWP to send a delegation to the Twentieth Convention of the OCI which will take place in Paris December 26-30, 1975.

As both sides put it at the time of the meeting with a delegation of the United Secretariat on October 15, 1974, the discussion on the problems raised by the Tenth Congress of the United Secretariat—which, according to the expression used in your declaration of January 2, 1975, on the subject of this meeting, concern “all organizations claiming to be Trotskyist”—must be followed up in one way or another. But it would be preferable, in the interests of Trotskyism, if this were done in a common, organized framework.

It was from this concern, and the desire to give a certain form to the debate, that the decision to exchange internal documents was arrived at. The decision taken by your leadership to invite the Organizing Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International to attend the SWP convention, with the status of observers, fits into this framework.

Likewise, it is from the same approach that our Central Committee has decided to invite the SWP to send a delegation to our convention. Your delegates may, if they wish, have speaking rights in the discussions at our convention.

We will send you shortly the agenda for the convention

and, as they appear, the documents submitted for discussion.

Accept, dear comrade, my fraternal Trotskyist salutations.

For the Central Committee of the OCI  
Pierre Lambert

##### ORGANISATION COMMUNISTE INTERNATIONALISTE

(pour la Reconstruction de la 4 Internationale)

Paris, September 23, 1975

Jack Barnes  
National Secretary, SWP

Dear Comrade,

In a few days we will send you a short reply to the article signed by Mandel, Maitan, and Frank, which appeared in the *IP* of September 8, 1975.

This reply seems to us all the more necessary because we are directly attacked in this article and in a manner that we consider unfair.

We propose that this reply appear in *Intercontinental Press*.

But, as you know, Comrade Moreno in passing through Paris had a brief meeting with some members of our Central Committee. He stressed in particular how important the question of the form of the discussion is, at a moment when necessarily this discussion—and in particular the debate on the problems of the Portuguese revolution—must become public. Comrade Moreno was conveying here the opinion of the responsible leaders of the international faction with which you are in political solidarity. And by “form” we think that what is involved concerns not only “tone,” but also the consideration of the opportune moment to publish this or that document in this or that publication, etc.

Hence, while we think that it would be a positive thing if

our answer were to appear in *Intercontinental Press*, we are prepared to take into account your opinion on this subject and we do not by any means present the question of its possible publication in the columns of *Intercontinental Press* as an obligation in regard to the "right of reply" but as a proposition which must be considered from the standpoint of the necessities and the depth of the discussion.

The same attitude holds, it goes without saying, for the form of your presence at the convention of the OCI. We are aware of the fact that the relations between the SWP and the OCI take place, for you, in a framework accepted by the United Secretariat. Hence, if you consider it necessary, we have no objection to inviting the US to attend our forthcoming convention.

In any case, in the framework of the preparation of the convention, it is necessary that our members should be informed of the international activities of our Central Committee. To fulfill this obligation we ask from you authorization to publish in an internal bulletin the whole of the correspondence concerning the evolution of our relations since October 1974.

Fraternally,  
Pierre Lambert

copy to J. Hansen

14 Charles Lane  
New York, N.Y. 10014  
October 9, 1975

Dear Comrade Lambert,

Thank you for your two letters dated September 23, 1975.

We are happy to hear that you have decided to invite the United Secretariat of the Fourth International to observe the convention of the OCI. The address of the United Secretariat has been changed since your last correspondence. It is now: [address in original]. It would be good for you to send copies of the agenda and documents directly to the above address as they come out.

The SWP Political Committee appreciates your invitation to send observers to your convention. Could you send us three copies of each of your documents as they are printed?

We, of course, have no objections to your informing your membership through internal bulletins of your correspondence with the United Secretariat and other groups. However, none of the internal material that we began

exchanging according to the agreement of the meeting of October 15 should be made public unless it has been released by those concerned.

We did not know about the meeting you had with Comrade Moreno when he passed through Paris until we read about it in your letter. The LTF steering committee met at the end of August, but it did not ask anyone to initiate such a meeting.

I have not yet received the reply you said you intended to write in response to the article by Comrades Pierre Frank, Livio Maitan and Ernest Mandel which appeared in the September 8, 1975, *Intercontinental Press*. We assume that when it is finished you will send a copy of the reply to the United Secretariat at the above address.

We are forwarding copies of your two letters to the United Secretariat and also to Comrade Moreno.

Comradely,  
Jack Barnes  
for the Political Committee  
Socialist Workers Party

cc: United Secretariat, Hugo Moreno

**ORGANISATION COMMUNISTE  
INTERNATIONALISTE**  
(pour la Reconstruction de la 4 Internationale)

[received November 12, 1975]

To: Jack Barnes

Dear Comrade,

Thank you for your letter of October 9. I confirm the terms of the invitation to attend our convention.

In so far as our written communications with the U.S. [United Secretariat] are concerned, if we address ourselves only to you, it is not because we could not make contact with the U.S. But since the U.S. does not reply to our letters, we decided that we must send our correspondence through you as an intermediary.

I am enclosing four copies of the draft report on the tasks of the organization, adopted by the Central Committee, and submitted to the preparatory discussion for our 20th convention.

With fraternal greetings,  
P. Lambert

## B. UNITED SECRETARIAT MOTIONS AND STATEMENTS

### Motions Passed at the October 4-5, 1975, United Secretariat Meeting

*Motion by Walter.* The U.S. notes the confusion, misunderstandings and increase in tensions created by and following the invitation of the OCRFI to the convention of the SWP. The US considers it necessary to take all steps to avoid similar confusions, misunderstandings or exacerbations of tensions in future. The process of discussion, regroupment and fusions with various forces and all initiatives which lie in that direction are indispensable in the construction of the International. However, these steps are only of value from a point of view of the goal of the construction of a mass revolutionary international if they lead to a strengthening and not a weakening of the programme, the cadre, the national sections and the international organisation of the FI as a world party and they do not have the effect of exacerbating tensions, or obscuring political differences within it. Such consideration and the need for a concerted and unambiguous response are particularly applicable in the case of an organization such as the OCRFI which has clearly and explicitly stated its purpose as effecting a split in the International between "genuine Trotskyists" and "Pabloites," which has consistently used the worst tactics of political slander, and which is utilizing physical violence within the workers movement.

In order to ensure a unified response to the approach of the OCRFI, to safeguard the International and its cadres from potential operations of a splitting or maneuverist character, to ensure the closest integration in whatever response is decided to the OCRFI and to avoid a multiplication of suspicions and tensions, the US decides to centralise all relations with the OCRFI through its hand and that all sections and sympathizing sections and all those in political solidarity with the FI shall not take any further step or initiative of any kind in collaboration with the requests of the OCRFI before a new discussion has taken place in the US and before a decision has been taken by this body on each specific initiative.

*7 for, 5 against, 1 abstaining*

*Motion by Walter.* That sections, sympathizing organizations and organizations in political solidarity with the Fourth International should take no initiative in relation to the OCRFI or its sections without prior consultation and approval by the USec.

*8 for, 0 against, 5 no votes*

### Motion Passed at the November 23-24, 1975, United Secretariat Meeting

*Motion:* The U.S. has been informed of the invitation extended to the SWP by the OCI to attend its 20th Congress.

An exchange of letters between the leaderships of the SWP and the OCI seems to indicate that the United Secretariat is also invited.

Given recent physical attacks by the OCI against members of the LCR, the United Secretariat, in conformity with the resolution adopted on this subject, decides:

1. To do everything possible to document the facts on these aggressions.
2. To consult the Political Bureau of the LCR (sfqi).
3. To report the opinion of the PB of the LCR to the next United Secretariat which will take a decision on whether or not to send a USec delegation to the OCI convention.

*Carried Unanimously*

### Motions, Statements from the December 22-23, 1975 United Secretariat Meeting

#### A. Motion adopted by French LCR central committee December 21, 1975

The question posed by the OCI's politico-organizational methods (which consist of using violence in its relations with members of other organizations, including the Spartacists, LIRQI, and the LCR) is a problem that supercedes any confrontation or debate dealing with fundamental political questions.

1. This problem ought to be the subject of a real political offensive against the OCI and its membership.

2. The United Secretariat, having received an invitation to the OCI's Congress, is asking the advice of the Central Committee of the French section of the Fourth International. The Central Committee proposes that the United Secretariat demand that the OCI leadership make a public self-criticism concerning the matters mentioned above and explicitly condemn all forms of violence within the workers movement. This is a precondition for considering the invitation. In the event that this single precondition is met, we are in favor of the United Secretariat discussing a delegation and deciding on its participation in the Congress with the same procedure as with any other organization inviting us under comparable conditions.

3. It is essential to establish accurately a detailed dossier of the various incidents in question (from the attack on the FSI demonstration up to recent events), and to bring it to the attention of the International and of the French organizations concerned.

*Motion adopted unanimously except for 5 abstentions and 1 not voting*

*B. Motion by Fourier:*

The United Secretariat of the F.I. has been informed by the leadership of the SWP that, in an exchange of letters which it has had with the leadership of the OCI, the OCI has invited the USEC to attend its next national congress. The USEC has asked the LCR, French section of the F.I., to give its advice on this question.

The Central Committee of the LCR has submitted a report indicating that the OCI has repeatedly used violence towards militants of other organisations of the labor movement, among them "Spartacists," members of the "LIRQI" as well as against members of the LCR who tried to intervene in order to stop such methods. Hence, the CC of the LCR has proposed to the USEC to demand from the leadership of the OCI that it should make a public self-criticism in relation with the affairs mentioned in the above-named report, and that it should condemn explicitly every form of violence inside the labor movement, this being a precondition before the invitation of the OCI could be taken into consideration and any answer could be given to it.

The USEC recalls that the Fourth International has always vigorously condemned the use of methods of violence inside the labor movement, methods used since a long time by the reformists against the revolutionists, and later developed on a monstrous scale by the stalinists. The USEC decides to adopt the proposal of the Central Committee of the LCR, and empowers its Bureau to transmit the present resolution to the OCI.

9 for

*C. Countermotion by Stateman:*

In view of the evidence presented to the United Secretariat that the OCI employs violence within the workers movement, the USEC decides:

1. To send a USEC delegation to the OCI congress;
2. That a major part of our intervention at the OCI congress should be to denounce OCI violence within the workers' movement, and to explain that any repetition of such action will cut across further discussions with the USEC.

6 for

*D. Statement by Jones:*

I am convinced that supporters of the LTF are acting towards the OCRFI in a way which is provocative, incorrect and which leads to a sharp increase of tensions inside the international—the invitation of the OCRFI to the SWP convention and the invitation to the LSA/LSO convention being the most obvious case. Comrades of the USEC majority correctly believe that such actions tend to increase tendencies towards a split in the International. However such dangers cannot be combatted by the USEC majority itself adopting positions which are not correct. To take the main points raised:

(a) The use of violence and slander; naturally cessation of this is a precondition for political discussion of the type proposed. However it seems obvious that the best way to get this is to go to the OCI convention to make this point absolutely clear to them there.

(b) Splitting manoeuvres; I am sure that the Lambertist leaders are attempting to split the International. However (1) even an approach to Pabloites must create big contradictions for the Lambertists which we should seek to exacerbate (2) We cannot act on the basis of our interpretations of their intentions but only on the basis of their objective actions. By not discussing with them you help convince them of our weakness and inability to discuss.

In my opinion the approach of the USEC majority indicates a subjectivist reaction which cannot be justified.

Despite this however it is the duty of all those who disagree with the position of the USEC on this to fight for a change in this line within the International. I am therefore naturally totally opposed to any act by the LTF or the SWP which goes against decisions of the USEC or which represents a unilateral approach to the OCRFI. I therefore voted for the resolution on Canada and against the SWP attending the OCI convention.

United Secretariat of the  
Fourth International  
December 23, 1975

To the Central Committee of the OCI

Comrades,

At its December 22-23, 1975, meeting the United Secretariat of the Fourth International decided to send you the following resolution, adopted at that meeting:

"The United Secretariat of the F.I. has been informed by the leadership of the SWP that, in an exchange of letters which it has had with the leadership of the OCI, the OCI has invited the USEC to attend its next national congress. The USEC has asked the LCR, French section of the F.I., to give its advice on this question.

"The Central Committee of the LCR has submitted a report indicating that the OCI has repeatedly used violence towards militants of other organisations of the labor movement, among them "Spartacists," members of the "LIRQI" as well as against members of the LCR who tried to intervene in order to stop such methods. Hence, the CC of the LCR has proposed to the USEC to demand from the leadership of the OCI that it should make a public self-criticism in relation with the affairs mentioned in the above-named report, and that it should condemn explicitly every form of violence inside the labor movement, this being a precondition before the invitation of the OCI could be taken into consideration and any answer could be given to it.

"The USEC recalls that the Fourth International has always vigorously condemned the use of methods of violence inside the labor movement, methods used since a long time by the reformists against the revolutionists, and later developed on a monstrous scale by the stalinists. The USEC decides to adopt the proposal of the Central Committee of the LCR, and empowers its Bureau to transmit the present resolution to the OCI".

Internationalist Communist greetings,  
For the United Secretariat Bureau,  
E. Germain

## C. CORRESPONDENCE CONCERNING COMMISSION TO INVESTIGATE THE VARGA AFFAIR

Paris, November 17, 1975

To: LIRQI, LCR, Spartacist League, WSL

Dear Comrades,

After a year of joint meetings about the advisability of complying with LIRQI's request to create a commission of inquiry into the accusations made against its leaders by the OCI, we believe that in view of the impasse the discussions have reached it is advisable to jointly work out some proposals that are on the one hand final, and on the other hand clear and plain.

We therefore state our position:

1. Lutte Ouvrière is ready to participate in such a commission.

2. Lutte Ouvrière will not sign the statement proposed by the LIRQI, attached to present letter, which includes approval of LIRQI's proposal before the commission even meets, thus making it pointless to constitute such a commission.

We do not particularly limit ourselves to the statement we proposed in order to facilitate the discussion, and we are prepared to sign a statement that may not embody such positions.

Enclosed for your information is the statement we suggested.

3. In our opinion, LIRQI cannot be both judge and party to the dispute at the same time, and it would be better that its representatives not be members of the commissions.

In the worst case, if no points of agreement can be reached for a common statement, in our opinion each organization could announce the terms it thinks would be best for forming the commission.

If the LCR believes that LIRQI's presence would not be detrimental, we will accept the constitution of such a commission without going back on our own position.

Having said this, to make our position clear, we believe that the discussions among our various groups are now pointless and we await written proposals whether they be from LIRQI or from another of the groups involved.

Our own proposal is that, given the present state of the matter, the LCR, the Spartacist League, the Workers Socialist League and Lutte Ouvrière constitute this commission immediately and invite LIRQI and the OCI to present evidence to them.

Fraternally,  
Lutte Ouvrière

### STATEMENT PROPOSED BY LIRQI

The undersigned organizations, militants and individuals of the French and international workers and democratic movement met October 30, 1975, in response to an

appeal from the Ligue Internationale de Reconstruction de la IVeme Internationale (International League for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International) and from Comrade Balazs Nagy, also known as Michel Varga, a member of the International League.

They have decided to form a Workers Commission of Inquiry for the purpose of taking a position on

a. the campaign of unproved accusations launched by the leadership of the Organisation Communiste Internationaliste, according to which Comrade Balazs Nagy, a former leader of the Hungarian revolution of 1956 and the former secretary of the Petöfi Club, is an agent provocateur of the CIA and of the KGB.

b. the extension of these accusations to the International League as such, going so far as repeated physical attacks against militants of the OCI-International League Faction, especially at the time of the united demonstrations against Franco and of the diffusion before the meeting for the freedom of Soviet mathematician Leonid Plyushch, and to make its conclusions public in order to put a stop to methods contrary to workers democracy.

The basis for constituting the Commission of Inquiry is that there should be no question in the workers democratic movement of hurling accusations of such a grave nature against a revolutionary militant or an organization without proof. The Commission of Inquiry is being set up because the OCI, contrary to its claims in the various articles and brochures published under its leadership up until now, has not only provided no proof, but even worse it has launched a campaign of physical assaults. Because these accusations and attacks are carried out without proof, assuming that it is up to the accuser to furnish proof, they constitute slanders and provocations.

That is the point of departure for the work of this Commission of Inquiry. Its first action will be to summon the OCI leadership, which claims to have proof, to appear before the Commission to restore Balazs Nagy's archives and to bring forward all the documents in their possession.

Since the Commission of Inquiry is a united organ struggling for respect for workers democracy, and not a political bloc, it is open to all organizations and militants of the international workers movement, including of course militants of the OCI, and all democratic individuals on the basis it was established for. We call on them to take active part in its work which, along with its results, will be made public before the workers movement.

### STATEMENT PROPOSED BY LUTTE OUVRIERE

For some time, the Organisation Communiste Internationaliste has put forward a number of accusations, asserting that Balazs Nagy, also known as Michel Varga, is an agent provocateur of the CIA and KGB, and extending these accusations to the organization Michel

Varga belongs to, the Ligue Internationale de Reconstruction de la Quatrième Internationale.

We consider such an accusation against a militant or an organization to be sufficiently grave to require the entire revolutionary movement to determine whether it is justified or not. For that reason we have decided to form a Commission of Inquiry for the purpose of inviting the OCI leadership to present us with all the proofs they claim to possess, and of asking that all those who may be able to provide evidence for a decision in this matter come and testify.

By means of a scrupulous verification of facts and documents, a verification it will make public, the Commission undertakes to prevent the establishment of a climate of accusations and mutual suspicions foreign to the revolutionary movement. In order for this verification to be accomplished with the greatest possible authority, the Commission invites all organizations claiming adherence to the revolutionary workers movement to take active part in its work.

December 20, 1975

Lutte Ouvrière

Dear Comrades,

We received your letter of November 17, 1975, concerning the organization of a commission of inquiry to look into the accusations made by the leadership of the OCI against Michel Varga and the counteraccusation made by the LIRQI against the leadership of the OCI.

Without going into the history of the attempts to organize such a commission, we would like to inform you that the SWP is ready to take part in any legitimate commission established for this purpose.

It goes without saying that neither the accused nor the accusers can participate in this commission in the capacity of judging the facts presented, but we hope that both the OCI and LIRQI leaderships will cooperate in the fullest to provide the commission with all relevant documentation and information.

In our opinion this is the only responsible way to deal with the question and eliminate the potentially serious

consequences stemming from it.

Please keep us informed about steps taken to set up the commission.

Comradely,  
Barry Sheppard  
For the SWP Political Committee

cc: USFI, LCR, WSL, OCI, LIRQI

14 Charles Lane  
New York, N.Y. 10014  
January 9, 1976

Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire  
Workers Socialist League  
Lutte Ouvrière

Dear Comrades,

The plenum of our National Committee, meeting on January 4, decided to cooperate in the commission of inquiry into the accusations made by the leadership of the OCI against Michel Varga and the counteraccusations made by the LIRQI against the leadership of the OCI.

We have asked John Benson, Gus Horowitz and Ed Shaw to be our representatives on this commission and to do everything possible to gather, in a preliminary way, documentary material and various opinions on these matters. They will get in touch with you in the near future to discuss the organization of the commission and the exchange of information that should be available to all the members of the commission of inquiry.

We've also asked the other members of our leadership to aid the commission in any way possible when they are in Europe.

Please keep us informed as to the results of any preliminary findings.

Best comradely regards,  
Barry Sheppard, for the  
Political Committee  
Socialist Workers Party

cc: USFI, OCI, LIRQI

## D. LCR LETTER TO SWP

Brussels, January 20, 1976

To the Political Committee of the SWP

Dear Comrades,

We thought it was important to send you this letter concerning the recent trip to Paris of Comrades J.B. and M.A.W. We think, in fact, that certain problems must be raised and clarified.

Comrades J.B. and M.A.W.'s coming to France was motivated above all by the desire to assemble documentation concerning acts of violence that the OCI has been charged with recently. We made every effort to help the comrades of the SWP on this. In fact it was Comrade Dominique who suggested that they see leaders of Lutte Ouvrière for information, and who arranged the meeting with them on Friday, December 12. But we were surprised and shocked several times by the attitude of Comrades J.B. and M.A.W. For example, they expressed the desire to go to the bookstore of the OCI to purchase documents there. Comrade Dominique then asked them to wait for a decision by members of the secretariat of our Political Bureau, thinking that, given the present situation, one of our members should be sent to get the literature they wanted. Comrades J.B. and M.A.W., finding difficulty in meeting Comrade Dominique Friday morning (at the headquarters), did not wait before going to the S.L.I.O. [OCI bookstore]. But this was not the most annoying.

The meeting with the leaders of LO was organized to enable the SWP comrades to complete their files in regard to acts of violence by the OCI. Nevertheless, Comrades J.B. and M.A.W. saw fit not only to explain their attitude in relation to discussions taking place in the United Secretariat (particularly concerning possible attendance at the congress of the OCI), but they also made specific proposals to LO which had never been discussed beforehand with the leadership of the LCR.

Comrades J.B. and M.A.W. stressed at great length the

importance of the commission of inquiry which there has been an attempt to set up at the request of LIRQI and which has not yet seen the light of day due to the sectarianism of the latter. Then Comrades J.B. and M.A.W. proposed that the SWP participate in this commission of inquiry as it was, explaining the importance that this question assumed for them and the possibility of effectively putting pressure on the Lambertists to stop the acts of violence. Once they had made this proposal, the SWP comrades stressed the extreme urgency of the matter, going so far as to make an appointment for the next morning with LO at the station where they had to take their train in order to get a letter of invitation to form the commission of inquiry, even though LO had proposed to send it to them by mail. Comrades J.B. and M.A.W. also put forward the idea of organizing a political discussion with the United Secretariat, including the exchange of internal bulletins, formation of a structure appropriate to a discussion by the "Trotskyist movement," and mapping out of subjects for the discussion.

On none of these points was the leadership of the LCR or the FI consulted beforehand. For our part, we think that under present conditions it is totally incorrect to make this kind of proposal to an organization outside of our movement, and we say this without prejudging the substance of the question. We think that the attitude of the SWP comrades is all the more regrettable given the number of incidents that have already occurred in regard to the Lambertists. According to the resolutions of the United Secretariat, the most stringent correctness is called for in these relations.

Fraternal greetings,  
Roman  
For the Political Bureau  
of the LCR

cc: United Secretariat