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by Leonid Brezhnev

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What is The Bolshevik Faction? An Initial Appraisal

By Pedro Camejo

[The following is an edited transcript of the report delivered to meetings of the Revolutionary Socialist Party of Colombia during the month of June 1979.]

There are many political and organizational differences between the leaders of the Bolshevik Faction (BF) and the majority of the United Secretariat. However, the Bolshevik Faction has not concentrated on the real differences on policy in the living class struggle and party building. Instead, it has centered its polemics on matters over which it considers it can create scandals. Before discussing the two contributions of the BF, one a book by Nahuel Moreno titled, *The Revolutionary Dictatorship of the Proletariat* (hereafter referred to as the RDP), and the other, the *Declaration and Platform of the Bolshevik Faction* [IIDB, Vol. XVI, No. 3 in 1979], I would like to review a few of the differences that do exist.

1. Leaders of the BF believe that it is sometimes correct, for tactical reasons, to vote for bourgeois parties or bourgeois candidates. Comrade Moreno, for instance, considers that it was correct to vote in Argentina in 1958 for a bourgeois candidate. This is wrong because elections, above all national elections, pose the question of which class should rule. Our electoral policy, therefore, involves nothing less than class principle.

2. The BF believes that under certain conditions, such as those existing in Brazil today, it is correct to encourage working class figures to run as candidates in a bourgeois party. This is wrong. If the ruling class holds elections in which only two bourgeois parties are legally permitted to run, we should try to find other ways for the workers movement to fight for class independence and democratic rights, such as boycott or independent propaganda campaigns. If, for instance, elections were held here in Colombia in which only the Liberals and Conservatives were allowed to run, it would be incorrect for us to enter the Liberal party to try to present socialist candidates.

3. There are many differences over organizational questions, for example, over the rights of tendencies and factions. In those sections where it has a majority, the Bolshevik Faction holds that a minority's right to form a tendency or faction is operative only during the pre-convention debate, and even that right is restricted by the BF in actual practice. At the same time, the Bolshevik Faction maintains itself as a permanent majority faction in such sections, running the entire party as a faction.

Part of the problem comes from a general confusion in the International concerning what tendencies and factions are, a confusion that the Bolshevik Faction plays upon for its own factional ends. A tendency is defined by political support to certain line political resolutions. Everyone who indicates their support of the defining resolutions is a "member" of the tendency. It has no discipline, and very little structure, usually a listing of comrades on the

appropriate elected leadership bodies who support the defining resolutions. These leaders—or convention delegates—meet only over such questions as who should be its reporters at conventions, national committee plenums, or other meetings.

A faction on the other hand, is a combat formation which fights to change the leadership. It imposes its own discipline (within the higher discipline of the section) and decides by vote on its membership. It can be highly structured, although it is best if its leadership corresponds to those of its supporters who are on the leadership bodies of the organization as a whole. Of course, it is also defined by political resolutions, otherwise it is a clique or cult or permanent factional gang—none of which are factions, properly speaking.

The majority does have the right, and obligation, after a democratic convention, to demand that any minority, whether a faction or a tendency, respect and apply majority decisions; the existence of a faction or a tendency must not interfere with the work of the party.

Discussion on questions settled by the congress is closed for the time being unless decided otherwise by the proper bodies of the section, and can be reopened only during the next normal pre-convention period, unless the section decides to do so sooner. A real tendency, therefore, doesn't exist as an organized faction in periods when the discussion is closed (of course, no one is required to change their opinions on either side) and doesn't hold any meetings of its own in such periods. To do so would mean that it is something other than a tendency, and the majority would have the right to challenge any such "tendency."

A declared faction, however, in a Leninist organization cannot be ordered to "disband" following a convention. The existence of factions is a sign of major crisis in the organization. It implies a struggle over the leadership, a conviction that normal functioning has broken down, and implies a situation where there is the danger that the organization can split. At the same time, one of the aims of the organization of disciplined factions is to avoid the danger of split by bringing supporters under control. But any attempt to ban a faction is often merely a way of carrying through a split.

(In this regard, it is useful to look at the Bolshevik Faction charge that the LTF dissolved without carrying through its objective of changing the leadership of the International. The Bolshevik Faction interprets this in the sense of removing individuals from the leadership. That was never the LTF objective. The LTF stated that it would fight for "a change in the composition of the leadership of the Fourth International to assure a majority pledged to correct the guerrilla-war orientation and its derivatives." The IMT "Self Criticism on Latin America" opened the road to doing just that, together with a majority of former IMT comrades in the International leadership.)

The split in the Colombian PST in early 1978 is a case in point, one most of you are well acquainted with. Comrades who later helped form the PSR faced a situation where the Bolshevik Faction was organizing to expel and crush them for the crime of questioning Moreno's undemocratic methods. They formed a "tendency" to fight for an emergency convention to deal with the situation. In reality, this was not a tendency but a faction. You needed a faction to fight against Moreno's onslaught. But then one of the charges against the comrades was that they had formed a tendency before a preconvention period opened. This charge violated the statutes of the Fourth International, which clearly recognize the right to form factions.

To make clear that the BF is not referring to exceptional conditions of repression, we need only consider the example of Venezuela, where there is at present a bourgeois-democratic regime. The PST in Venezuela, which is led by members of the BF, would not agree to allow comrades supporting the majority of the United Secretariat to be *members* unless they guaranteed beforehand to dissolve their faction on Venezuelan questions, after the next PST congress.

Finally, we should note that the Bolshevik Faction doesn't practice what it preaches where *it* is a minority. In all such situations it maintains itself as a permanent faction—before, during, and after conventions.

4. The BF disagrees with the correct method of debate that has evolved in the Marxist movement: clarification of differences, test of objective experience in the class struggle, and a balance sheet. The discussion may include examination of the class roots of the differences when they are of major scope and have been sufficiently clarified politically. Instead, the BF leaders propose at the *beginning of every debate* to make class characterizations of the opposite sides. In every debate they immediately label those who oppose the BF as petty bourgeois. This method blocks discussion, for if each side considers the other to be hopelessly petty bourgeois, what is the point of discussing their ideas seriously? Furthermore, our experience with BF practices shows that in an internal fight against what they consider to be petty bourgeois currents, no holds are barred. The existence of petty bourgeois minorities is considered a threat to the party. With these concepts, the BF-dominated parties are turned into monolithic groups.

BF minorities are permitted to exist in various sections (Portugal, Spain, Mexico). But where the BF is a majority, comrades who do not share their ideas cannot last more than a brief time. They are all driven out or expelled under one pretext or another (Mexico, Panama, Peru, Venezuela, Ecuador, Colombia).

The BF makes all sorts of extreme and unjustified characterizations against its opponents. They consider this normal. But if anyone criticizes them in plain words, they cry out, "slander" and "scandal."

5. The BF considers that those guilty of certain errors in the past cannot participate in the leadership of the movement. The BF holds, for instance, that Ernest Mandel, Livio Maitan, and others that supported the line of guerrilla warfare in the past cannot be allowed to participate in the leadership of the Fourth International.

The fact that in the past Nahuel Moreno and other central leaders of the BF likewise supported a pro-guerrilla warfare line does not disqualify them from being part of the leadership. According to the BF approach, when Moreno makes a mistake it is for proletarian reasons, but

when Mandel makes a similar mistake, it is for petty bourgeois reasons. This concept that some comrades are eternally damned while others are eternally pure is more appropriate to a religion than a Marxist party.

Factionalism

We could profitably discuss many other political and organizational questions. But the main differences between us over policy in the class struggle and over party building are either completely absent or only referred to in passing in the BF documents. Many of the political differences could be easily debated on their merits, in a fraternal atmosphere of international debate, without either tendency or faction formations. That is our constant goal.

But the Bolshevik Faction continually magnifies and exaggerates differences in order to justify the existence of their factional formation. Sometimes they even resort to complete fabrications of political differences.

The most important organizational difference we have with the BF is that they are building a parallel international. Their faction statement reveals this aspect of their thinking when it refers to the "sections" of the Bolshevik Faction. Factions do not have sections. A faction is an organized current of opinion within a party or the international. Not necessarily all members of the party, but only individuals who agree with a written platform are supporters of tendencies or members of factions.

In Colombia, however, the PST, as a party, is affiliated to the BF. This is so, even though the members of the PST have never seen, discussed, or voted on the Bolshevik Faction declaration that theoretically defines membership in the BF.

The Bolshevik Faction declaration makes a comparison between the two international "centers," even boasting that theirs is larger. The sections of the Bolshevik Faction pay dues to *their* center, according to the BF declaration, amounting to \$10,000 a month. They do not provide any financial support to the Fourth International.

When the Fourth International organizes international campaigns such as the effort to protect the life of Hugo Blanco in Peru, the BF decides on its own whether to support the Fourth International or not. In this case, although they voted for the campaign in the United Secretariat, the sections controlled by the BF did not contribute a penny.

In general, the BF does not participate in a collaborative way, either in the political campaigns of the FI or in the internal discussions leading to adoption of political positions by the leadership bodies of the FI. They have their own separate discussions and their own separate campaigns, and then take these to the FI as if they were intervening in an outside organization.

The line of building a separate international follows directly from the political stance taken by the BF in its written documents. The BF holds that the Fourth International is no longer Trotskyist, but centrist. The BF believes it is the only real Trotskyist group in the world. If carried to its logical conclusion, this political stance could only lead to a split from the Fourth International.

Let us consult their written documents to see how the BF reaches the conclusion that the Fourth International is centrist.

Socialist Democracy and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat

As I mentioned earlier, the BF has not written a counterresolution to any of the four main political documents for the World Congress.

These four documents deal with the current political questions and tasks of the FI. They are the only four resolutions a decisive vote is going to be taken on. The BF has no documents of its own on Europe, Latin America, or the world situation. This offers a revealing insight into the political capacity of the BF. This is a group that claims to be capable of offering an alternative leadership of the FI, but has so far been unable to draft a single political resolution to guide the work of our sections over the next few years.

There is, however, a fifth document voted by the United Secretariat majority for the world congress titled "Socialist Democracy and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat" (hereafter referred to as the SDDP) against which the BF has directed the overwhelming part of its criticism.

This resolution was passed by the United Secretariat as a popular presentation of our views in support of the struggle for democratic rights in the deformed and degenerated workers states and to answer the arguments of the "Eurocommunist" CPs. The resolution makes clear our complete rejection of the Stalinist justifications for repressive policies and our full support for workers democracy. It also tries to defend the traditional Leninist concept of the dictatorship of the proletariat, which has become a hot subject of discussion and is being newly challenged in Europe.

Unfortunately the SDDP includes some incorrect views; it also includes poor formulations that are open to misinterpretation, especially by those whose goals are purely factional. The document has the disadvantage of being written in a popularized form although it is projected as a programmatic statement. In order to avoid political confusion, it is generally best to separate out programmatic statements in thesis form from efforts to write popularized propaganda.

Various comrades criticized the document when it first appeared. The document was never presented as a finished position. On the contrary, suggestions for improvement were solicited. Most comrades felt it best to turn their main attention to the task of drafting collective documents on the most pressing political questions facing the movement—resolutions on the women's movement and on the world political situation, Latin America, and Europe—and then see if real differences were involved over the SDDP. (The SDDP was originally adopted before the IMT and LTF had been dissolved.)

The product of this collective effort was the four major resolutions for the forthcoming World Congress, none of which include the errors of the SDDP. In addition, a resolution on Eurocommunism, with a clear and correct line, was passed at the March 31-April 2, 1978, United Secretariat meeting.

Discussions among United Secretariat members of the problems connected with the SDDP has led to an agreement to redraft it to eliminate possible misunderstandings and correct the errors.

It will be useful to review the errors of this resolution before discussing the BF document, which purports to correct the SDDP. Some of the BF's criticisms of the SDDP

are correct, but the thrust of their document is erroneous in an opposite direction.

Workers Democracy vs. Dictatorship of the Proletariat

The SDDP goes wrong because it fails to establish the correct relationship between the dictatorship of the proletariat and workers democracy. The dictatorship of the proletariat has the function of suppressing capitalist property relations, guaranteeing the consolidation of the working class as the ruling class, and assuring that the capitalist counterrevolution is unable to make headway. Because capitalism is an international system it is impossible for the dictatorship of the proletariat to fully accomplish its task until capitalism has been eradicated on a worldwide basis.

Workers democracy strengthens the dictatorship of the proletariat. It is the form of the dictatorship of the proletariat that can best carry out the repressive anticapitalist tasks of the dictatorship of the proletariat. It makes it possible to effectively mobilize the workers in defense of their state. If workers democracy were introduced tomorrow in the Soviet Union, it would strengthen the dictatorship of the proletariat politically, economically, and militarily.

Only under exceptional and temporary situations can limitations on workers democracy be justified under the dictatorship of the proletariat. Such conditions, for example, could prevail during a civil war.

We are for the right of tendencies and full discussion in the workers movement. But obviously in the middle of a civil war, when life and death questions are settled arms in hand, it might be necessary to limit these rights. Under such circumstances centralism becomes paramount and democratic rights must be temporarily subordinated and restricted.

The SDDP document starts off on the wrong axis: "Thus, the dictatorship of the proletariat is nothing other than a workers democracy." [IP; July 25, 1977; p. 864] If this were true, neither the Soviet Union nor China would be a dictatorship of the proletariat. This formulation simply confuses the dictatorship of the proletariat with the best form that it can take, workers democracy, which is also the form it must take in order to successfully lead to socialism.

The SDDP then states, "It is in this sense that the dictatorship of the proletariat begins to wither away almost from its inception." [Ibid; p. 864] But this is false. Let us take the example of Cuba. Today Cuba has a stronger state apparatus than it had in the early years after overthrowing Batista. Cuba's dictatorship of the proletariat cannot wither away: it must remain extremely strong to protect Cuba from an imperialist invasion. We do not favor the withering away of the workers states until the danger of imperialist invasion is eliminated. The fact that we favor workers democracy does not imply that the dictatorship of the proletariat will immediately wither away.

The SDDP repeats this concept later on: "The withering away of the state, to be initiated from the inception of the dictatorship of the proletariat . . ." It also says, "*Under the dictatorship of the proletariat state power is exercised by democratically elected workers councils.*" [emphasis in original; Ibid; p. 865]

Since everyone agrees that the Soviet Union is a workers state and that it does not function on the basis of democratically elected workers councils and does not permit the freedom of groups, tendencies, or parties, it is clear that the formulations of the resolution introduce confusion rather than clarity over our programmatic position on the nature of the dictatorship of the proletariat and its relationship to workers democracy.

The resolution tends to avoid discussing the dictatorial nature of the dictatorship of the proletariat—its repression of the counterrevolution. A programmatic resolution on this question would have to make clear our position towards the Bolsheviks, who had to—correctly—dissolve the bourgeois constituent assembly, repress the Kronstadt uprising, temporarily ban factions, outlaw other workers parties, and institute red terror in the civil war.

The SDDP says: “Marxist historians can argue whether some of the concrete measures taken by the Bolsheviks even before Lenin’s death may have objectively favored the process of Stalinization, or if Lenin and Trotsky were late in understanding the scope of the danger of bureaucratization. . . .” [Ibid; p. 866]

Social Democrats and bourgeois liberals unremittingly campaign on the theme that Lenin and Trotsky’s repressive measures led to Stalinism, singling out Kronstadt and other alleged scandals. The first task of a programmatic resolution of the Fourth International is to make clear our defense of the general policies that the regime of Lenin and Trotsky took to repress the capitalist counterrevolution. We believe that those policies, taken as a whole, did not contribute to the rise of Stalinism. In fact, they slowed it down. It was the fact that they were unable to extend the revolution beyond backward Russia that gave rise to Stalinism.

We haven’t much interest in whether historians, Marxist or otherwise, argue over this or that specific measure. What we must do is clarify our general support for the key emergency measures that the workers of the first Soviet republic had to take. The SDDP fails to do so. Its formulation implies that this is an open question.

The Party and the Soviets

The SDDP is weak on the role of the party and presents an exaggerated picture of soviets. It states, for instance: “At most, one could defend the thesis that the revolutionary vanguard party alone *programmatically* defends the *long-term historical* interests of the proletariat.” [emphasis in original; Ibid; p. 869] This one-sidedness can easily be misunderstood. We believe the vanguard party and its program represents the immediate as well as the long-run interests of the working class.

The SDDP says that the goal is to reduce the apparatus of the party. On the contrary, upon taking power it will probably be necessary to expand the party apparatus.

Soviets are generally presented as revolutionary by definition. We favor transforming soviets into instruments of revolution and structuring a workers state around them, but they are not automatically revolutionary. They are an organizational form of combat arising in the class struggle. Their nature and function depend on the politics of their dominant current. Soviets have also been used by counterrevolutionary Social Democrats to carry out their policies—as in Germany and Austria.

The SDDP does not make it clear that we favor the

proposal Trotsky included in the Transitional Program on driving the bureaucratic caste out of the soviets in the process of the political revolution.

Eurocommunism

In referring to Eurocommunism, the SDDP leaves out some of the most important criticisms—criticisms that are later spelled out in the United Secretariat resolution on Eurocommunism, as well as in the European resolution. The Eurocommunist claims to defend democratic rights are exposed by their class collaborationist role in their own countries, such as supporting the totally undemocratic austerity programs of the capitalist class and their antidemocratic bureaucratic rule over the trade unions they control.

Nature of Stalinism

The SDDP states “Among those who claim to stand for the dictatorship of the proletariat, it is only the Stalinists who advance a theoretically and politically consistent alternative to our program of socialist democracy based on workers councils and a multiparty system within which the revolutionary vanguard party fights for political leadership by winning the majority of the toilers to its views.” [Ibid; p. 868]

The Stalinists do not have a “theoretically and politically consistent alternative to our program” of workers democracy. The Stalinists are a privileged petty-bourgeois bureaucratic caste attached to the deformed workers states. The shifting rationalizations that justify their privileges cannot be dignified as a program. They are pragmatic and empirical, never consistent theoretically or politically.

What the Stalinists generally do is borrow from the antidemocratic prejudices of bourgeois ideology to justify elitism. They argue, for instance, that the masses do not always know what is for their own good, so the party must decide for them. Or they claim that the masses are not capable of distinguishing propaganda in their own interests from propaganda in favor of a bourgeois counterrevolution—so that it is necessary to censor what they read.

The SDDP approaches the debate with the Stalinists as though what was involved were two competing models of how best to organize a workers state: the Trotskyist model, which favors democratic rights, greater involvement of the masses, the right to more than one party; and the Stalinist model, which limits democratic rights, emphasizes centralism under one party, and doesn’t involve the masses.

What is really involved is not a conflict of models, however, but the opposing material interests of a caste and a class.

There are other problems that should be corrected. The question of direct and indirect democracy is presented in a confused manner. The SDDP entirely leaves out the national question, even though this is extremely important in the struggles for democratic rights in the workers states today. It fails to consider in a clear manner the struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat and workers democracy in the context of a world dominated by imperialism. The document tends to be somewhat abstract, rarely referring to concrete struggles.

Clearly, the SDDP, as a preliminary draft, needs to be

reworked. Most of the above criticisms certainly do not reflect deep differences within the United Secretariat. I'm sure a reworked resolution will disclose substantial agreement on these issues.

I base this assertion on the fact that we have reached basic agreement on the general line of the four subsequent resolutions, which deal with the vanguard party, soviets, workers democracy, Eurocommunism, Stalinism, the dictatorship of the proletariat, etc. These documents, as well as the resolution on Eurocommunism, should indicate to any objective observer that the SDDP can be reworked to fit in more with the line of the other United Secretariat majority documents.

Even more important than the four documents is the fact that the weekly papers and daily practice of our sections do not reflect the errors of the SDDP. When confronted with the overwhelming body of written material and concrete practice in the class struggle by our sections, an objective observer would note right away that one could not rely on one document, the SDDP, to make a rational judgment of the politics of the United Secretariat.

But this is exactly what the Bolshevik Faction attempts to do.

The Revolutionary Dictatorship

The Bolshevik Faction's answer to the SDDP is contained in a book by Nahuel Moreno entitled the *Revolutionary Dictatorship of the Proletariat* (hereafter referred to as the RDP).

The RDP fails to clarify the relationship between workers democracy and the dictatorship of the proletariat. In all 314 pages the RDP fails to mention that workers democracy strengthens the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The RDP makes some correct criticisms of the SDDP, but many of its criticisms are so exaggerated that they have little to do with the original SDDP document. The approach of the RDP is to take a quotation from the SDDP and claim that it implies some deeply revisionist position. Then instead of arguing against what the SDDP actually says, the RDP argues against the revisionist position that it ascribes unjustifiably to the SDDP. Quotations from Trotsky or Lenin are presented to back up the argument. Then Moreno restates the points made by Trotsky or Lenin, often in an exaggerated way. Finally, Moreno makes extreme charges against the United Secretariat, accusing it of abandoning the Trotskyist program.

In addition, the RDP presents some rather new and unique concepts that are contrary to the program of the Fourth International. These political errors are generated by factional heat. It is to be hoped that they will be corrected by the Bolshevik Faction and Comrade Moreno.

The Bolshevik Faction often votes against resolutions proposed at United Secretariat meetings, without explaining why. This is an irresponsible way for leaders to function. The Bolshevik Faction, for instance, voted against the resolution on Latin America at a United Secretariat meeting that I observed. I pointedly asked comrades of the Bolshevik Faction to state their reasons for voting against the resolution. If there were important errors in it which justified voting against its general line, they should feel obligated to inform the other members of the United Secretariat. If their criticisms seemed justified, other comrades would be obliged to alter their position and improve the Latin American resolution.

The Bolshevik Faction comrades refused to state any reason for voting against the Latin American resolution. To this day the majority in the United Secretariat does not know why the Bolshevik Faction comrades voted against the new Latin American resolution.

Likewise, when the SDDP was first presented, no clear opposition was presented by Comrade Moreno, even though he is a member of the United Secretariat and had been familiar for months with the preliminary draft of the SDDP. In fact, when the SDDP came to a vote in the United Secretariat, the members of the BF abstained—not voting against, and not giving a reason. Two years later, Moreno publishes his book. His thinking should have been presented first in the United Secretariat. This might have helped the majority dispose of certain errors, and it might also have helped Comrade Moreno avoid the errors that he has now published in book form. This shows the faults of proceeding in an ultrafactional manner.

Now, I want to take up some of Comrade Moreno's errors.

Stalinism

First is a wrong conception of Stalinism, and of the general meaning of bureaucracy in relationship to the dictatorship of the proletariat.

In order to explain what he sees as the difference between the present majority of the United Secretariat and bureaucratic layers like those of Stalinism, Moreno uses the example of a powerful trade union that has just won a great victory in struggle. He believes there are three alternative lines for such a union to follow depending on its leadership.

The first of the three is "that of the USFI, which would proclaim immediately the withering away of the union (the dictatorship of the proletariat), independently of the rest of the workers of the country which continue suffering the most terrible exploitation by the capitalists. . . ."

The second line "would be that of bureaucracy, which would make an effort to strengthen the trade union, but only its trade union. They would put all their effort in making better clinics, buildings, hotels for vacations." (p. 272)

The third alternative is that of the Bolshevik Faction, which favors strengthening the union and helping to build other unions.

Aside from his utterly false presentation of what the USFI position really is, Comrade Moreno makes a big error in considering that the bureaucracy strengthens the union.

He goes even further astray in drawing out the analogy to claim that Stalinism strengthens the dictatorship of the proletariat. This is contrary to the traditional view of our movement. Moreno says: "It is the Stalinist position which taken at a countrywide level, signifies the bureaucratic strengthening of the workers dictatorship through the imposition of a totalitarian gendarme which obliges the workers to 'construct socialism in only one country'."

It is the ABC of Trotskyism that Stalinism *weakens* the dictatorship of the proletariat. The triumph of Stalinism reflects a partial victory of imperialism and alien class forces against the workers state. The pressures of imperialism are transmitted within a workers state via the Stalinist bureaucracy. Stalinism is the ideology of a parasitic caste that sits on top of the workers state and leaves its

host weakened, not strengthened.

Moreno assures his readers that as long as imperialism exists it is necessary to strengthen the dictatorship of the proletariat where it has triumphed. That is perfectly correct. But Moreno tell us that "in this conclusion, there is a 'coincidence' between Stalin and Trotsky." (p. 272)

Wrong. Trotsky emphasized over and over again that in order to defend their privileges the Stalinists weaken the capacity of the dictatorship of the proletariat to confront the danger of imperialism.

In a confused manner Moreno actually bends to the traditional liberal argument that it was the consolidation of the dictatorship of the proletariat through the repressive measures against the counterrevolution that led to the rise of Stalinism—in other words, that the measures taken under Lenin and Trotsky to defend the Soviet Union led to the rise of Stalinism.

Speaking of the struggle to defend the first workers state, Moreno writes, "Under Lenin and Trotsky this signified the restriction of liberties, the monopoly of power by the communist party, the founding of the Red Army, the Cheka, etc. Afterwards, when other victories kept occurring with opportunist and bureaucratic leaderships in backward countries, this strengthening degenerated until it transformed itself into a totalitarian regime, with the crimes which we all know, and of which the Trotskyists were the first victims." (p. 271)

This is expressed in a confused manner, because the totalitarian regime that victimized the Trotskyists arose before any other workers states were created. But much more erroneous is the concept that the creation of the Red Army, the Cheka, the restrictions of certain liberties under Lenin and Trotsky—that is, those steps which were necessary to "strengthen" the workers state while it was under attack—somehow degenerated into a totalitarian regime.

This adapts to the liberal argument that Leninism leads to Stalinism. Stalinism triumphed *in spite of* and in opposition to the efforts by Bolshevism under Lenin and Trotsky.

All the steps mentioned by Moreno as the process leading to Stalinist degeneration were steps taken to fight world imperialism and strengthen the position of the working class.

Insofar as these measures succeeded, they *strengthened* the power of the workers and weakened the roots of bureaucratic reaction. Thus they strengthened the groundwork for workers democracy.

Insofar as the Bolsheviks were unable to repress the capitalists, unable to defeat them in Poland, to expand the revolution by their political and material support to the German workers—that is, insofar as Lenin's and Trotsky's policies were unable to defeat imperialism, Stalinist tendencies gained ground. Workers democracy was crushed.

Moreno presents the matter backwards. Stalinism rose on the basis of defeats, not victories. And the post-World War II victories, even under bureaucratic leadership, have weakened Stalinism in the long run, not strengthened it.

Revolution Without Liberties

In his factional condemnation of the SDDP Moreno gets carried away in his emphasis on repression. He presents the perspective for the socialist revolution as follows: "Fifthly, the socialist revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat signify the disappearance of liberties and

democracy." (p. 118)

Once again Moreno has things backwards. The socialist revolution opens up more liberties and democracy than has ever existed before under capitalism. That's what happened in the young Soviet republic. That is our perspective. In most of the other socialist transformations enormous social rights were gained. But democratic rights were later gutted by a Stalinist bureaucracy.

Moreno's Zeal for Executions

Moreno calls for a policy of physical liquidation of the capitalists. He recalls that Simón Bolívar once stated that Spaniards who did not help the struggle for independence should be shot. Moreno then writes, "A consistent present-day disciple of Bolívar would put out a decree saying that 'all large bourgeois that do not enter the proletarian army and support it with all their strength should be shot.'" (p. 47)

But since we do not call on the bourgeoisie as a class to join the proletarian army, Moreno is, in effect, calling for the execution of the bourgeoisie as individuals. This flies in the face of the traditional Marxist position, which is to abolish the capitalist class through economic expropriation, not physical liquidation. Our attitude toward the capitalists as individuals is a tactical question, based on what will best help consolidate the rule of the workers. Our considerations in this matter are strictly political. We are prepared to fight by any means necessary to prevent the capitalists imposing their minority rule by force. Insofar as the capitalists resist majority rule by the workers, they must be disarmed and repressed; insofar as they accept, concessions can be made. Trotsky once suggested we offer the North American imperialists an island for retirement if they agreed not to resist the socialist transformation. This is the ABC of revolutionary politics.

In Nicaragua today it would be the height of stupidity to announce Moreno's decree calling for the execution of any bourgeois that does not actively join the Sandinistas. On the contrary, the Sandinistas may find it best, from the tactical point of view, to offer the individual members of the National Guard clemency if they abandon the struggle, and to make secondary concessions to sectors of the bourgeoisie if they stop supporting Somoza.

Unfortunately Moreno's recent infatuation with repression is not limited to the bourgeoisie. He glorifies the need, at times, to repress workers.

Referring to a worker who tries to cross a picket line during a strike, Moreno says it is necessary to stop such a person even physically. This is sometimes in order. But Moreno claims that "this repression is for us the highest expression of workers democracy: it is the working class exercising its right against the bourgeoisie and over the individuals of its own class that respond to them." (p. 96)

The necessity to fight backward workers acting in behalf of the ruling class has to do with centralism and success in combat, not with workers democracy; it is simply a fact of the class struggle.

Moreno proclaims, "A union should defend itself from enemy infiltration, repressing them and not giving them rights of all kinds. The dictatorship of the proletariat should not act in a different way than any class struggle or revolutionary trade union. This is not to say that one should always expel the agents of the enemy from the workers organizations. If those agents have an important

receptivity in the ranks we should content ourselves with an ideological polemic; but once we have convinced the majority of the workers we will carry out a mobilization to expel and repress them. That has always been the politics of revolutionaries in the mass organizations." (pp. 110-11)

In speaking of "agents of the enemy" Moreno is not speaking of police agents. He means workers who support capitalism and class collaborationism. This is clear from the general context from which the above quote is taken and his call for polemicizing with them if they have support in the ranks. We do not polemicize with police agents.

In other words, Moreno wants to expel workers who defend capitalism in mass organizations such as trade unions. For instance, if in Colombia the Trotskyists succeeded in gaining majority support in a union, but some workers still support the Liberal Party, Moreno's line would imply that they be purged from the union.

Moreno's proposed policy is not revolutionary but ultra-left "red unionism." In the mass organizations we aim to win a majority to a class struggle orientation and try to add to that current from the workers who remain under the influence of bourgeois ideology and politics. We do not favor splitting trade unions between the workers who are for us and those still confused by the capitalists.

One Million Confusions

At times Moreno gets tangled up in utter confusion in his unrestrained efforts to condemn the United Secretariat majority. In one long section he vehemently protests against the SDDP for allegedly claiming there is more workers democracy in capitalist countries than in the Soviet Union. This theme is repeated several times in the RDP and in the Bolshévik Faction Declaration.

In his rash polemic Moreno goes overboard once again and makes completely false statements about the nature of the Stalinist-dominated workers states, painting them up as though workers democracy existed in those countries.

Moreno's terminology in this section gets so mixed up that before citing his mistaken views on Stalinism, it is best to define a few terms.

The SDDP refers to *democratic rights* that exist in some capitalist countries but do not exist in Stalinist-dominated workers states. Most established democratic rights are products of the bourgeois revolution, more precisely, of the struggles of masses in those revolutions and subsequent to them. They include the right to free speech, freedom of the press and assembly, the right to vote, and trial by jury. We Marxists consider these rights in a bourgeois-democratic society to be extremely important. We can use them to organize our class—such as this meeting we are holding legally here in Colombia.

But these rights are not what the bourgeoisie makes them out to be. We say that these rights have a built-in problem under capitalism. A millionaire can go out and publish a daily newspaper, but a worker cannot. In a capitalist society it is the ruling class that fully enjoys these democratic rights. The ruling class also deliberately seeks to limit (and at times abolish) these rights for the working class. Under bourgeois-democratic regimes there is a continual struggle by the workers to maintain and extend these rights.

Moreno twists the words "democratic rights" into "workers democracy" in order to claim that the United

Secretariat holds that there is more workers democracy in capitalist countries than in the workers states.

Then Moreno adds further to the confusion by twisting the term "workers democracy," equating it with "social rights."

Social rights are those such as the right to a job, food, housing, clothing, medical care, old age security. These rights are of course interrelated with democratic rights. A worker who has no job and is hungry does not benefit very much by knowing that if he or she had more money they could choose a variety of books to buy. Much more important in the immediate sense would be the right to a job, food, and shelter. That is why Cuba, where all the above-mentioned social rights exist, is qualitatively more progressive than Colombia.

"Workers democracy" is yet another concept. Workers democracy is the form of workers rule that we favor for workers states. An example is the government originally established in the Soviet Union after October 1917, which was based on soviets. These soviets were councils of elected worker, peasant, and soldier delegates. Under this system the workers had more democratic rights and real decision-making power than ever before.

Workers democracy is also popularly used to mean democratic control by the workers over their own organizations, such as trade unions. In capitalist countries there can obviously be no workers democracy at the level of government (except, to some extent, in a situation of dual power where some soviet-type formations have arisen). We can, however, speak of workers democracy in a trade union. This would mean that the workers democratically control their union, they have the right to form tendencies, elect and recall their officers, present criticisms, etc.

Does workers control exist in the Soviet Union today? The answer is no, there is no workers democracy there whatsoever. This is one of the points most debated between Trotskyists and Stalinists for the last 50 years.

Is there workers democracy in the United States? The answer again is no. In some trade unions the workers may gain democratic control. Certainly there is no workers democracy as a form of governmental rule.

Thus it becomes meaningless to say, as Moreno and the Bolshevik Faction do over and over again, that there is a million times more workers democracy in countries like the Soviet Union than in capitalist countries like the United States.

In "The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky," Lenin states that "proletarian democracy [workers democracy] is a *million times* more democratic than the most democratic bourgeois democracy." (*Collected Works*, Vol. 28, p. 248) Lenin is comparing workers democracy with bourgeois democracy. Moreno, on the other hand, is comparing workers democracy in two societies neither of which have any to speak of.

After looking at the difference between democratic rights, workers democracy, and social rights we can see the polemical trick which Moreno plays. The SDDP points out that in some capitalist countries there are more *democratic rights* than in the Stalinist-dominated workers states. This is true; Trotsky has also said this. But Moreno twists this to ascribe to the United Secretariat the view that there is more *workers democracy* in capitalist countries than in workers states. To show there is "a million times" more "workers democracy" in the Stalinist-dominated workers states than in capitalist states, Moreno

twists the word workers democracy to mean *social rights*. Moreno concludes by charging that the United Secretariat majority is thereby preparing the workers to support imperialism in a war with the workers states!

Referring to polemics of this sort, Lenin wrote: "First to ascribe to an opponent an obviously stupid idea and then to refute it is a trick practised by none too clever people." ("The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky," *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, p. 288)

Workers Democracy Under Mao?

As Moreno presses his debaters' tricks, he plunges ever deeper into confusion. In one section he asks, "Which had more workers democracy, Chiang Kai-shek's China or Mao's China?" The correct answer is that neither had any. In Mao's China there was an enormous expansion of social rights (a product of the revolution, not of Mao) making it a qualitatively more progressive society. But, according to Moreno:

"In China, the proletariat is organized in trade unions and the peasants in communes, which are legal and include tens of millions of workers. This fact alone marks an enormous difference with the regime of Chiang Kai-shek, where the trade unions and the communes were practically nonexistent or ferociously persecuted. The same occurs with respect to papers, printshops, radio stations, and meeting halls. Previously they were in the hands of the bourgeoisie and the imperialists; now they are in the hands of the working class and the peasantry although controlled by the bureaucracy. Nevertheless, the workers revolution in China, although led by the bureaucracy, signified a colossal expansion of 'proletarian democracy' not only in relation to the Chiang regime but in comparison with the most advanced bourgeois democracies, which rest on the barbarous totalitarian exploitation of the oppressed nationalities and the colonial peoples." (p. 100)

We can certainly agree with Moreno's point that Mao's China was infinitely more progressive than Chiang's. But it is clearly misleading to present the "legal trade unions" in China the way he does. The trade unions are officially "legal," but they don't have the right to strike; they are completely hamstrung by the Stalinists. It is totally false to say that the workers in any way have printing presses and radio stations in their hands. In Mao's China the Stalinist caste had (and has today) complete control of all newspapers and radio stations. The workers have none. Comrade Moreno has become so carried away by his factionalism, that he paints a false and apologetic picture of Maoist Stalinism.

Third Worldism

The RDP also exhibits a bad case of "third worldism." Throughout the RDP the proletariat of the advanced industrial countries is presented as inherently backward, while that of the semicolonial countries is inherently revolutionary. Moreno claims, for instance, that the proletariat of the advanced industrial countries has bourgeois-democratic illusions, while the proletariat of the semicolonial countries does not. Unfortunately, this is not true; the misleaders of labor in the semicolonial world have managed to convince millions of workers that their future lies with a reformed democratic capitalism. If this were not

true we would be much further along.

Moreno denies the validity of a statement by Ernest Mandel that the overwhelming proletarian composition of the imperialist armies makes the army ranks potentially more inclined to revolutionary ideas than in earlier times. Moreno challenges this, saying that in advanced societies with a large industrial base, and therefore more workers, there are also more privileges. The fact that an imperialist army nowadays may be 80 percent proletarian in composition tells us nothing of value, according to Moreno. In fact, he says that many are workers "who have a relatively privileged life in relation to those marginal sectors of the workers, above all the workers of oppressed nationalities and because of this are proimperialist and/or reformist." (pp. 69-70.)

Moreno concludes these workers may become "... the principal collaborators of the imperialist or bureaucratic counterrevolution through their reformist parties or fascist bands." (p. 70.)

We should stop and realize who Moreno is talking about. Those workers who have a relatively higher standard of living in the advanced countries include most industrial workers such as steel and auto workers.

It was precisely by the mobilization of these industrial workers that the prerevolutionary situation was brought about in May-June 1968 in France, and in 1969 in Italy. They were at the heart of the Portuguese revolution.

Likewise the most militant struggles against the imperialist austerity measures in the United States have come from among the higher paid workers, such as the miners. And during the war in Vietnam, the spread of antiwar sentiment among these workers conscripted into the U.S. army was beginning to make it an unreliable instrument for the imperialists.

Reflecting a deep pessimism about the industrial workers, whose social weight and political importance is increasing in all three sectors of the world revolution, Moreno goes so far as to revise the Trotskyist theory of fascism—turning the industrial workers (who will be the heart of the proletarian defense guards *fighting* the fascists) into the key components of the fascist bands, thus replacing the enraged petty bourgeoisie and lumpenized layers, cops, and lower officers corps, that Trotsky—and all subsequent history—taught us would make up the fascist bands. Such an error could lead the international to total disaster.

Economics of Third Worldism

The most common fallacy of advocates of a third-worldist point of view is the belief that the low wages in the semicolonial countries means that workers get higher wages in the advanced countries. All workers, whether in the advanced or less developed economies, receive less wages than the value they produce. In advanced countries the rate of exploitation—that is, the ratio between the number of hours they work for a boss and the number of hours for themselves—can sometimes be higher than in underdeveloped nations.

Imperialism's historical exploitation of the colonial world means that a worker born today in an imperialist country has a higher standard of living than a worker born in a colonial country. This is because of the history of colonial exploitation and imperialist superprofits, as well as development of industrial production and labor produc-

tivity in the imperialist countries.

But it is utterly false to say as Moreno does: "Imperialism has to exploit the workers of one part of the world more in order to give the advantages that it gives to those of the metropolis." (p. 279.) The imperialists don't exploit to *give*, they exploit to *accumulate*! They *give* nothing to any worker—metropolis or colony. They *take* as much of his or her unpaid laboring time as they can. The more they take from any worker anywhere, the stronger they are in the class battle with other workers. And the more of their product any worker wrests from the exploiters, the weaker it makes them in face of all other workers—metropolis or colony. Thus the development of a powerful class struggle thrust by the labor movement in any country aids the workers of the world in their struggle; it changes the relationship of class forces to the detriment of the employers.

The higher wages in the industrialized countries are used by class-collaborationist labor bureaucracies to try to talk workers into accepting capitalism; practicing class-collaborationism; supporting the bourgeoisie's wars; supporting protectionism; opposing demands of oppressed nationalities, women, unorganized workers, workers in different industries, etc. But this is a *false* consciousness in the interests of the bureaucracy, which can only survive if the workers accept class collaboration and its concomitant lack of democracy and solidarity, and political subordination to the exploiters. This false consciousness is *against* the interests of the working class in that it both weakens them in their day-to-day struggle for better living conditions and puts off further the expropriation of the exploiters and conquest of political power by the workers. It brings barbarism, fascism, and nuclear destruction a step closer.

Thus the imperialists are the only class that benefits historically from the low wages and high profit rates in the semicolonial world.

Imperialism robs the underdeveloped nations through the world market. It utilizes the precapitalist forms of exploitation and the general economic backwardness in semicolonial countries to keep the masses in utter poverty by paying subsistence wages and blocking the rounded development of the economy. That robbery goes into profits and enormous salaries for management functionaries and strengthens their hands against all workers. It is also shared among the politicians ruling over the semicolonial nations and in the repressive apparatuses of imperialism.

Worker Against Worker

This confusion over the divisions in the working class is reflected in another odd—and revisionist—theory. Moreno argues in the RDP that the political revolution in the Stalinized workers states is not between a petty-bourgeois caste and the working-class (as Trotsky believed) but instead between workers!

"This differentiation in two sectors of the proletariat is so brutal and antagonistic that it justifies the call for a violent, political, revolution of one workers sector, the most miserable, against another of the same class, the privileged. The USFI does not seem to understand this aspect of the political revolution. This is so precisely because it is not a social revolution of one class—the workers—against another class—the bourgeoisie—but of one workers sector

against another." (p. 281)

The bureaucratic caste in the deformed workers states is not proletarian but petty-bourgeois in nature. Whatever the class origin of the individuals that make up the bureaucracy, as a social formation it has become petty-bourgeoisified and crystallized into a caste. The bureaucracy in the Soviet Union, like a bureaucracy in the trade unions of the capitalist countries, is fastened like a parasite (not a necessary, if deformed, organ) on a workers organization.

The bureaucracy does draw in new elements from among the workers, just as in the trade unions the bureaucracy does, and has most success in convincing relatively privileged workers that its policies are in their interests.

But once a worker becomes a full-time union functionary as a *career*, defending the interests of the bureaucrats and promoting class collaboration in order to guarantee their privileges, he or she is no longer part of the working class, but of a petty-bourgeois stratum. Class collaboration is not a form of false consciousness for the bureaucrats but in their historic interests as a social formation. They are transmission belts for the bourgeoisie.

In the Soviet Union the bureaucracy is very far removed from the workers in standard of living, outlook, and association.

Is Cuba a Deformed Workers State?

The RDP says that all existing workers states have become bureaucratized. If this is the case, then it would imply that Cuba is as bureaucratized as Russia or China. If this is the position of the BF, it should be stated explicitly. The RDP does not do so.

It would be incorrect and damaging for the Fourth International to adopt Moreno's book as a guiding document for the next world congress, as the Bolshevik Faction proposes.

The Bolshevik Faction's View of the Fourth International

Finally, we come to the worst aspect of Moreno's book—the verdict the Bolshevik Faction renders after its indictment of our world movement. Moreno's conclusion is that the Fourth International is no longer Trotskyist.

In the last chapter of his book Moreno presents a list of 21 accusations against the United Secretariat majority. These include such charges as:

1. The USFI has engaged in "systematic revision" of the Transitional Program and "is rejecting the method of the Transitional Program."
2. The USFI "calls into question the theory of permanent revolution," and "rejects the most important concept of the theory of permanent revolution."
3. The USFI has been led into "abandonment of the international socialist revolution against imperialism and the dictatorship of the proletariat on a world scale."
4. The USFI falls into "forgetting or underestimating the decisive role of the Fourth International both before and after the conquest of power."
5. The USFI "falls back on the theory of building socialism in one country."
6. The USFI "places everything within a perspective of peaceful development of the revolution."
7. The USFI "completely abandons propaganda in

defense of the existing workers states.”

8. The USFI “abandons the Trotskyist program for political revolution in the USSR and the bureaucratized workers states.”

9. The USFI “falls into covering up for the sinister counterrevolutionary role of the Social Democratic and Stalinist parties.”

Given all this, it is not surprising that Moreno characterizes the majority of the Fourth International as a “Euro-trotskyist” current (making a parallel with Eurocommunism).

The Bolshevik Faction’s declaration goes still further by characterizing the United Secretariat majority as centrist.

What this means is that the BF believes the Fourth International can no longer be considered a proletarian current, no longer Trotskyist. It has, in the BF view, decisively broken from its class base and is today a petty-bourgeois grouping.

Materialism versus Idealism

How does the BF arrive at this rather consequential conclusion?

A document is criticized. This document is one of five. The other four are not seriously dealt with. In fact on many points it is not even the SDDP that Moreno criticizes, but an interview by Ernest Mandel. Except for the SDDP and one interview by Mandel, no other proof is given to show that the Trotskyist program has been abandoned by the majority of the USFI.

The RDP does not refer to any actions of the sections that supposedly abandoned Trotskyism on the question of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Not one single example to prove its case!

Let us compare this light-minded procedure to Trotsky’s method when he came to the conclusion that the Third International at that time had abandoned the Marxist program. Trotsky wrote a book on the Chinese revolution of 1925-27. He wrote on the events of the revolutionary upsurge in Germany of 1923 and the British general strike of 1926. He took up Stalin’s internal policies within the Soviet Union and the struggle against the rise of fascism in Germany. The experiences of the living class struggle provided the axis by which Trotsky chose to show how the Communist International had forsaken its program.

Trotsky put almost all his emphasis on the current political policies of those he criticized. Moreno closes his eyes completely to the current questions and to the activities of the sections. He is incapable of politically justifying the existence of his faction. So he desperately seizes on one pamphlet. The errors in the SDDP gave him an opening. He jumped in head first, screaming “petty bourgeois” for more than 300 pages.

Fantasizing

Moreno is driven to fantasy to back up his charge of centrism. This is one of the most bizarre aspects of the RDP. Let me cite a couple of examples.

1. Moreno foresees a battle in the streets of Tehran. On one side, opposing the shah, will be the Bolshevik Faction supporters. On the other side are the supporters of the United Secretariat majority. Moreno writes, “the United Secretariat will demonstrate in the streets of Tehran, along with the shah, his sister and his torturers, in a

demonstration against ours, under the slogans ‘against recourse to retroactive delinquency,’ ‘against judging the Shah and his accomplices unless there is a pre-existing precise penal law.’” (p. 52)

Moreno also predicts that the supporters of the United Secretariat will demand the shah be given time on the radio and Mandel time to answer him.

But, of course, nothing of the kind ever happened.

Since there is absolutely no connection between the real world and Moreno’s fantasy, it is not surprising that the BF is embarrassed to mention the existence of our section in Iran and its activities against the shah and in support of workers struggles. They have so far failed in their press, at least in Colombia, to mention the activities of the Iranian comrades.

2. Moreno charges that the United Secretariat will fight to allow capitalists into trade union meetings to argue for their position. He says that the United Secretariat majority will favor allowing the capitalists to use the trade union’s mimeograph machine. “Even if it sounds crazy, that is the program of the USFI,” writes Moreno. (p. 54) It does sound crazy, but it isn’t the program of the United Secretariat.

The Platform of the Bolshevik Faction

The Bolshevik Faction Declaration states that the debate over the SDDP is of “the same kind of transcendental theoretical and political significance” as the debate over reform or revolution in the Second International at the turn of the century, the debate with the reformists during the First World War, the debate between the Second and Third Internationals in the 1920s, the debate over socialism in one country, and the debate over defense of the Soviet Union in 1940!

What is really involved?

Rather than being (in Moreno’s superheated imagination) one of the most important debates of the century in the Marxist movement, his document is a desperate factional exaggeration to justify the existence of a formation that is not based on a clear alternative political platform to the world congress resolutions of the United Secretariat majority.

The first thing to note about the BF’s declaration and platform, outside of its extraordinary length, is the discrepancy between the period the material covers and the July 1978 date of the faction meeting which presumably adopted the platform.

The normal functioning of a tendency or faction is first to present a platform and then call on those in agreement to affiliate. The Bolshevik Tendency had an odd beginning from the start. It existed for a year without a platform. Then we were faced with a faction that came into existence in July 1978 but did not present a platform until some six months later. And when the BF finally presented its platform, supposedly adopted at the founding meeting which transformed the Bolshevik Tendency into a faction, we discover that the platform includes all kinds of references to events that took place well after the faction was formed!

For example, the BF platform speaks about the war in Kampuchea, the fall of the shah, the tendency fight in early 1979 in Mexico, Jack Barnes’s speech after the death of Joseph Hansen in 1979, and the split of the Peruvian PST in the fall of 1978.

More important is the content of the BF statement.

Fourth International Approaching Prostration

The central thesis of the BF declaration is that the International, instead of advancing after the rejection of the ultraleft line coming out of the Ninth and Tenth World Congresses and the dissolution of the contending factions, is rapidly degenerating—theoretically, politically, organizationally, and morally. The United Secretariat majority is leading those sections where its views predominate to total prostration.

What evidence is put forward for this extremely pessimistic analysis of the state of our movement? The declaration presents us with three main arguments.

First, it reviews the errors of the Ninth and Tenth World Congresses, utilizing long quotations from Joseph Hansen and from LTF resolutions. Although this section presents a generally accurate picture of the past errors, the point of it all is to establish the original sin of the perpetrators. A big mistake has been made. The kind of people who made such a mistake must be written off. They can't change.

Second, the declaration contains a long rambling section of organizational criticisms directed against various parties not controlled by the BF. While this part includes a few political criticisms, it concentrates on organizational charges against the LCR of France, the LCR of Spain, the PRT of Mexico, the PSR of Colombia, and the SWP of the United States. The so-called "facts" in this section are generally presented in a misleading fashion; some statistics are inaccurate; at times there are fabricated slanders against parties and individuals.

The BF points to various problems in the sections, and presents them as though it has made a great discovery, as if it had unearthed a hidden scandal. The Spanish LCR has financial problems. The LCR in France realized it was premature to put out a daily. The votes received in the last elections in several countries were small. At its last congress the French section had no tendency with an absolute majority. Horrors!

But have sections led by the BF never had financial problems? Have they always published their papers regularly? Do they always receive high votes? Of course, they never have problems of long internal political struggles because they have never tolerated minorities for long.

Sometimes the BF scandal-mongering verges on the ludicrous—for example, its charge that the Spanish LCR receives few votes in the elections was printed just before the Spanish LCR elected a whole series of candidates to municipal offices.

The purpose of these organizational criticisms is to discredit the majority of the United Secretariat. According to the BF declaration, sections that are not led by the BF are in crisis, while those led by the BF are rapidly advancing. This panorama is deceitful. Some sections led by the BF have grown; others, like that in Venezuela, have declined. The same is true for those parties led by supporters of the USFI majority. Spain is a good example. At the Ninth World Congress we had not a single member in Spain. By the Tenth we had about 500 divided into two organizations. Today we have a united party with a couple of thousand members. That has not exempted them from the BF's scurrilous attacks.

The BF platform includes slanders against individuals, attacks which have no place in our movement. Hugo

Blanco and the late Joseph Hansen are depicted as liars. The BF could not have picked two more dedicated, disciplined, and principled comrades as targets.

The declaration also covers up for the BF's expulsions of Hugo Blanco and Miguel Antonio Bernal.

Blanco was assigned by the United Secretariat to head up a unity commission in Peru. It was agreed by all in the United Secretariat that he would not be under the discipline of any faction. Blanco tried to convince the PST to enter into unity with the other Trotskyists. Because he would not first pledge "loyalty" to the PST over the other Trotskyist groups, he was declared "separated" from the PST and attacked publicly. The bourgeois press seized on these public attacks on Blanco to try to discredit Trotskyism.

Miguel Antonio Bernal is charged by the BF with having quit in Panama. The fact is that Bernal was secretly expelled by the BF-dominated Political Bureau of the Revolutionary Socialist League (LSR). Why? Bernal was speaking on a radio show. When asked if he belonged to a political party, he answered that since no parties were legal in Panama, he couldn't belong to any, but that he supported the LSR. That was a good, intelligent answer. But since Bernal was opposed to the BF leadership, the BF-led Political Bureau seized on this as a pretext to get rid of him. They said his radio statement was a statement of disloyalty and expelled him. They didn't bother to inform Bernal of his expulsion.

After a period of time, Bernal recognized that the Political Bureau had cut relations with him, that he was not being treated as a member, not even being informed of meetings. So he sent a letter resigning. But in reality he had been expelled. All other opponents of the BF in Panama were dropped by the BF leadership under one pretext or another. This is the type of method that enables the BF led-sections to claim that they are free of internal crises due to political struggles.

The BF declaration's attack on the PSR in Colombia includes a reference to two comrades, Concha and Amin, claiming they quit the Trotskyist movement. In fact I had the privilege of meeting these two "dropouts." Comrade Concha was kind enough to put me up at his home, and to help organize my stay in Cali. Comrade Amin took charge of my trip to Cartagena. Both of these leading comrades are actively building our movement. Most of the charges in the BF declaration are about as accurate as the lies about Comrades Amin and Concha.

If I were to answer all Moreno's charges I would have to write a document as long as the BF declaration. I'll only take up two more examples: the recent congress of the PRT in Mexico and the SWP's organizational norms.

The declaration condemns the PRT in Mexico for holding a congress this year. The BF claims the PRT should have refused the request of over a third of its central committee to hold a congress, and should instead have concentrated on electoral activity.

Why was the PRT congress held? Because the PRT Central Committee found it very difficult to decide on its tactics for the national elections. The majority proposed giving critical support to the Socialist Workers Party (PST), the Mexican Communist Party (PCM), and the Popular Socialist Party (PSP). The minority favored giving critical support to the Communist Party only. Part of the problem was they had never adequately discussed the nature of the other left parties in Mexico. Some comrades

felt the PSP and PST were not part of the workers movement. The central committee was divided fairly evenly over the political and tactical differences; in fact, one crucial vote was 17 to 16. The minority correctly pointed out that such a close division in the context of unresolved political questions should best be referred to a congress.

The majority had the political wisdom to recognize that a conference would help clarify the political differences and would give the party leadership sufficient authority to be able to command the support of the ranks for the line that was adopted.

The BF favored implementing the line of the slim majority. They would not have permitted the minority tendency rights; they did not want to hold a congress, even though the statutes of the PRT (which they have voted for at the founding congress) established the right of one-third of the central committee to call a congress.

Even though the divisions within the PRT and its central committee included the question of the class character of the PST and PSP, which had never been resolved, the BF favored proceeding with the tactic. It put tactical considerations ahead of the necessary political clarification. Fortunately, the BF's advice was rejected and a congress was held.

The BF presents this case to illustrate its slanderous characterization of the PRT as a "club" rather than a Leninist party.

The BF also claims that the USFI majority favors allowing a minority to call a congress any time it pleases. This is not the position of the majority of the United Secretariat. But the decision of the Mexican comrades to respect their statutes and hold a congress was correct.

The results in Mexico were positive for the organization. The congress established a majority position of critical support to the PCM, PST, and PSP. This decision was reached by the democratic participation of the rank and file and a full discussion. This procedure increased the authority of the leadership, because the leadership had shown respect for internal democracy, had taken the unity of the party seriously, and had shown the members correct party-building methods.

The BF refers to the SWP in the United States as a Social Democratic organization in which the members are not required to do anything except pay dues. According to the BF, SWP members do not have to attend meetings, or be politically active. In fact, the BF says that 60 to 70 percent of the members of the SWP do not attend their branch meetings. SWP members will all laugh when they read this.

This is a very strange criticism, because the SWP is well known in the world movement for its high level of organization and its cadre norms of functioning.

The BF's organizational criticisms show how much the BF exaggerates or falsifies information for factional reasons. Occasionally the BF does touch on real problems that sections face. The fact that problems do exist in no way justifies the sharp characterizations that the BF makes. A much more serious problem for our movement is the dishonest method of polemicizing that the BF uses.

Bolshevik Faction's Real Proof

The final evidence that the BF offers to prove its charge of centrism, the argument on which the BF contention

really stands, is a summary of Moreno's book, *The Revolutionary Dictatorship of the Proletariat*. This section takes up a substantial part of the faction declaration.

At the end of the BF declaration there are a few references to the USFI majority's world political resolution. But all of these criticisms are misplaced. They state, for instance, that the USFI document did not foresee revolutionary struggles in the semicolonial countries—as shown by the upsurges in Iran, Peru, and Nicaragua. We could add the importance of the events in Indochina too. But the resolution was written before these events fully unfolded, so it is understandable that they were only partially dealt with or left out. These new upsurges do indicate an important rise of struggles in the semicolonial world. This will be developed in the final edited version of the document.

Some of the other criticisms are exaggerations and misrepresentations of the world political resolution. For example, the BF says that the tasks outlined in the world political resolution are purely propagandistic.

If the BF thinks that there are some agitational tasks left out, the BF should state what they are. If these are the only kind of differences that the BF has, all that is required for rectification are specific additions or amendments. Only if the BF rejects the general line of the resolution would it be justified in voting against it. If the BF insists on voting against the world political resolution they are obligated to present a resolution with an alternative line. But the BF doesn't do so. This is very un-Bolshevik procedure for a self-styled Bolshevik Faction—and it shows how the BF is a factional formation without a clear political line.

Nicaragua

Toward the end of my tour in Colombia I noticed a marked shift in the arguments of the BF leaders at PST meetings. They seemed to shy away from defending the RDP or trying to show what is wrong in the resolutions proposed for the next world congress. Instead they sought to shift the whole debate onto the question of Nicaragua.

But they do not seem to want a rational political debate; instead they have launched emotional diatribes accusing United Secretariat leaders of being "traitors" to the Nicaraguan revolution.

This kind of debate indicates that the BF may be trying to prepare its ranks psychologically for a split. After all, would they really want to be in the same International with "traitors"? We hope they will draw back from these kinds of charges. This is not the way responsible comrades should act to help build the Fourth International together.

The Good and the Bad

During the life of the Leninist Trotskyist Faction there was a running internal debate over what the IMT represented. Joseph Hansen, as I have mentioned, saw the IMTers as revolutionaries who were making an important political error. Hansen fought to correct that error. Once that was accomplished it was no longer justified to maintain the LTF. The struggle, in Hansen's eyes, was not between eternal "good guys" and "bad guys." He saw the faction he helped form and lead—as one should regard all factions—as a temporary formation organized to achieve a specific purpose.

Inside the LTF Nahuel Moreno fought for another conception. Moreno considered the political errors of the IMT to be symptomatic of a much deeper problem. He argued that the IMTers should be characterized as petty-bourgeois centrists. To Moreno the essence of the struggle was not against a deviation toward guerrilla warfare or ultraleftism, but against a consolidated petty-bourgeois current. Against this petty-bourgeois current stood the two wings in the LTF: one, the hardened proletarian contingent led by Moreno; the other, a vacillating grouping led by Hansen that could not grasp the more deepgoing class nature of the struggle.

Inside the LTF Moreno failed to get agreement to become a public faction, to intervene into sections, and to carry out other activities as a parallel international. Moreno came under criticism from other members of the LTF who accused him of secretly trying to build his own current in their sections. Moreno finally felt driven to form his own current.

Moreno thought that once his hands were freed from the restraints of the LTF, he could rapidly prove to the rank and file of the international the superiority of his party-building methods and politics. So Moreno chose to split from the LTF and establish his own "tendency." Actually, it was a faction to begin with, a hardened, undisciplined faction.

Moreno used the differences over Portugal and Angola to justify this decision. But he completely misrepresented these differences, accusing the majority of the LTF leadership, and in particular the SWP, of positions we did not hold.

Dual Power in Portugal

A central point in this polemic, which is again stated in the BF declaration, is the claim that dual power existed in Portugal. The declaration quotes the SWP leadership as calling for "demands pointing toward workers governmental power" in Portugal and then later claims that the SWP and the LTF changed its position.

On this point they are confusing two terms. In Portugal workers did establish factory committees and neighborhood committees. But not dual power. Dual power exists when workers councils become generalized to the point that they represent a governmental alternative. No such situation developed in Portugal. The BF tries to evade this reality by using an odd concept. They claim "embryos" of dual power existed, and that all that needed to be done was to build them up. This concept is useless, because it is internally contradictory. Dual power means the generalization of the phenomena of workers power; it means an alternative power capable of challenging the ruling class on the governmental level. So what is an "embryo" of an alternative power?

In any case, the problem in Portugal was not a simple organizational task of nurturing "embryos" up to maturity. The problem was to center in on the political tasks that could really unite, organize, and mobilize the masses—that

is, "demands pointing toward workers governmental power," which always remained the line of the SWP and LTF.

The BF teaches its members that the Bolshevik Tendency was originally formed around the questions of Portugal and Angola. But the Bolshevik Faction has been careful not to allow its ranks to read Gus Horowitz's answers to them on Portugal and Angola.

The Dissolution of the Factions

When the IMT corrected its ultraleft errors on Latin America, Hansen along with the other SWP leaders advocated the dissolution of the LTF. But to Moreno the abandonment of the ultraleftist politics by the majority tendency was of secondary importance: It did not change their petty-bourgeois nature. It simply meant that they were shifting their revisionist politics from ultraleftism to rightist positions. In fact, the BF declaration states that the Europeans (IMTers) made a 180-degree turn, from leftism to adaptation to bourgeois-democratic prejudices, creating a new political deviation that should be characterized as "Eurotrotskyist."

The SWP of the United States is presented as having the same weakness, possibly to an even greater degree in Moreno's eyes, because the SWP is under reactionary pressure due to the fact that it has to function in the most powerful imperialist country.

To Moreno, the dissolution of the international factions reflected a deepening of the crisis of the International, not a step forward. The vacillating LTF sectors, led by the SWP, not only capitulated, but were in the vanguard of the new, deeper deviation. Moreno's vitriol turned against the SWP of the United States. At one point, as the BF declaration explains, Moreno considered entering into a bloc with the IMT in order to fight the SWP (an interesting admission of the unprincipled nature of his politics).

The trouble with Moreno's theory of the bad and the good, the petty-bourgeois centrists and the proletarian revolutionaries, is that it is not based on political reality. It is a factional invention to justify maintaining his own political formation, his parallel International as a permanent bloc, regardless of the name he may put on it.

This kind of permanent faction formation can easily make serious errors in principle and in action as it is driven to find political justifications for its existence. Such blocs are vulnerable to political and organizational adventurism as they seek to buttress their legitimacy with gimmicks.

The majority of the United Secretariat does not fall into a mirror error of the BF's false characterization of the majority. It recognizes that the BF remains a Trotskyist current and that its members are dedicated proletarian revolutionaries despite the grave errors being committed by the BF leaders.

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