

March 11, 1976

To the Leninist Trotskyist Faction Coordinators

Dear Comrades,

Barry Sheppard is in the process of preparing a report on the February meeting of the International Executive Committee. This will be published shortly in an SWP Internal Information Bulletin. In the meantime the IMT and LTF resolutions on Portugal, discussed and voted on at the IEC, will be published in Intercontinental Press.

An LTF Steering Committee statement on the recent split in the Liga Socialista in Mexico has been published in SWP Internal Information Bulletin No. 3 in 1976, along with other documents relating to the split.

Just prior to the IEC another split took place, this time in the Partido Revolucionario dos Trabalhadores (PRT) in Portugal. A number of comrades, including supporters of the LTF position in Portugal, were expelled by the leadership of the PRT which supports the line of the Argentine PST. A fact sheet on these expulsions is also being prepared.

Enclosed in this mailing are the following items:

1. A draft statement prepared by the PST leadership explaining their split from the LTF. Although addressed to the International Executive Committee, the document was not available at its February meeting. However, Comrade Moreno's remarks to the IEC followed the general lines of this statement. The document indicates it is the position of a number of parties. We know that at least one of the parties listed, the Liga Operaria of Brazil, has not discussed or approved the general line of the document.
2. The translation of a draft resolution recently approved by the Political Committee of the Liga Operaria of Brazil.
3. A resolution concerning the LTF position on Portugal adopted by the Central Committee of the Liga Socialista of Venezuela on December 21, 1975.
4. Two statements sent to various organizations in the world Trotskyist movement by Lutte Ouvrière, Spark, Combat Ouvrier and the African Union of Internationalist Communist Workers.

Bundles of SWP Internal Information Bulletins Nos. 1, 2, and 3 in 1976 are being sent to all branches. Bulletin No. 4 containing new material on the Portugal debate will be printed next week. It would be a good idea for the faction coordinators to call this material to the attention of comrades and urge them to read it. Additional copies of the bulletins can be ordered from the SWP national office.

Comradely,

Caroline Lund

LETTER FROM FORMER LTF MEMBERS TO THE INTERNATIONAL  
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The undersigned are meeting an obligation to explain to the Fourth International the reasons for which they have decided to vote against the LTF proposal for Portugal, why they no longer form part of the faction, and why they continue to vote against the majority position on the Portuguese Revolution. (outline)

To the International Executive Committee, February, 1976

The undersigned, in their own names and in the name of the Executive Committee of the Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores (Argentina), the Liga Socialista (Venezuela), the Liga Operaria (Brazil), the Partido Revolucionario dos Trabalhadores (Portugal), the Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores (Peru), the Liga Socialista (Mexico), [something in Paraguay, but blotted out--translator], and the Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores (Uruguay), undertake the obligation to inform you, and through you the entire Fourth International that they have decided to separate from the Leninist Trotskyist Faction because of disagreement with the line developed in the document, "Key Issues of the Portuguese Revolution," approved by this faction and published in Intercontinental Press No. 37, 1975 (published in the Internal Discussion Bulletin of the Argentine PST under the title, "Problemas Claves de la Revolucion Portuguesa," Internal Discussion Bulletin No. 4). The main reason for this difference is the refusal of the LTF compañeros, especially the leaders of the SWP, to agree with us that "the most important aspect of our activity must be to defend, develop and centralize these embryos of dual power. . ." and that ". . . the manifestations of these embryos have names known to the Portuguese masses. These are: workers and neighborhood commissions, business and building occupations, soldiers committees and assemblies. Our great task is to develop these organs and actions and try to centralize them." (Letter from Nahuel Moreno to Joe Hansen, July 17, 1975, PST Internal Discussion Bulletin No. 2, p. 17.)

Despite the fact that we constitute the large majority of the LTF, we have decided not to contest its name or its organization. This is because the faction has been, in the main, the fruit of the efforts, self-denial and sacrifice of the SWP leadership (sticking to formalities it is more correct to say, a group of SWP leaders). In recognition of this effort and in recognition of these compañeros' leading role --which has resulted in so much benefit to our International, we abstain from insisting on the formally "democratic" right that could be ours.

As is implicit in this recognition, we continue to uphold the same criticisms we made earlier of the majority faction, criticisms that lead us to vote against the "First Draft of the Theses for the February 1976 IEC Plenum,"

(PST Internal Discussion Bulletin No. 5). We see no alternative other than to call for a meeting of all leaders of the Fourth International who agree in principle with our criticisms of both documents in order to consider the propriety of constituting a faction or tendency based on a clear political-organizational program.

The ex-members of the LTF who have left it for the stated reasons consider it indispensable to point out the dangerous revisionist tendencies outlined in the document, "Key Issues of the Portuguese Revolution" and in some other writings by members of this faction. We do this to make it clear that we not only reject this document, in addition we send out our concerned warning against these tendencies.

I) The Strategy, or the Main Task in a Prerevolutionary or Revolutionary Period,

"Key Issues in the Portuguese Revolution" never indicates that the main task confronting revolutionaries in a period of generalized rise of the workers movement is to develop organs of workers and popular power, whether or not these organs already exist and whatever their characteristics and names if they do exist.

Certain political slogans or tactics are stressed as the main strategic task in contraposition to the above clear Leninist-Trotskyist line. It is insinuated that in a period like this those are the essential kinds of slogans as against "organizational" slogans. The organizational slogans (factory committees, soviets, workers militias) will come along as postscripts, as a consequence of the political slogans. The draft of "Key Issues in the Portuguese Revolution" shows this low regard for organizational slogans better than anything else. The only organizational task put forth here, and this in passing, for the Portuguese workers movement is the creation of unions, without even mentioning the defense and development of the factory committees.

Up to this moment the principled Trotskyist position has been just the opposite. In the first place, every time a process of revolutionary rise in the mass movement has opened, the creation of soviets has been posed as the main task. Thus, at the beginning of the revolutionary rise of the Chinese proletariat in the 1920s Trotsky said:

"The job of the soviets is not simply to call the masses to the insurrection, or to unleash the insurrection, but rather to lead the masses to the uprising, going through all the necessary stages. At the beginning the soviet does not convince the masses with the slogan for insurrection but through other more partial slogans. Later on, step by step, it leads the masses to this slogan without dispersing them along the way and preventing the separation of the vanguard from the

masses as a whole. Normally the soviet is built mainly on the basis of the strike struggle which has a revolutionary perspective ahead of it but is for the present limited to economic demands." (Trotsky, "El gran organizador de denotas," Buenos Aires, Ediciones Yunque, p. 262.)

"We are serious about this: the soviet slogan can and must be readied at the beginning of the first stages of mass revolutionary upsurge. But a real progression must be taken into account. The working masses must move toward the revolution and gather under its banner. The soviets are the organizational expression of the centripetal revolutionary development. This implies that during a period of downturn for the revolution when centrifugal tendencies appear among the masses, the soviet slogan is converted into an inert doctrine and, not much better, into the choice of the day for adventures. The Canton experience has demonstrated this in a clear and tragic manner." (op cit, p. 358.)

In Spain where there was not a single soviet nor a single factory committee, Trotsky systematically proposed the organization of soviets, by whatever name, from the first moment.

Nahuel Moreno, in his article "Revolucion y contrarevolucion en Portugal" (Supplement No. 1 to Revista de America, July-August 1975), cites some of Trotsky's calls for the development of organs of workers power (juntas), which was "undoubtedly the main task of the day" during all of 1931, as well as his insistence on the same thing following the victory of the popular front in April 1936 (pp. 63-64). Trotsky's preoccupation with the development of the action committees that sprang up in France during the 1936 strike wave is also pointed out in this article (p. 64).

On the other hand, to degrade this principled and essential line to a secondary plane is to ignore the profound transitional, revolutionary and political nature of these organizational slogans. The slogans "Labor Party," "Black Party" or "Chicano Party" in the USA are organizational slogans with a profound political and revolutionary content which is reaffirmed and not negated by the political tactics and slogans we raise in the course of the struggle to bring these organizations into being.

We do not understand why the North American and LTF compañeros who give fundamental importance to these strategic tasks of an organizational kind in the USA and never tire of publishing documents explaining their necessity, in turn refuse to raise the organizational-strategic tasks pre-eminently demanded by the prerevolutionary or revolutionary period in Portugal.

The Transitional Program says just the opposite to what the LTF compañeros say:

"The problem for sections of the Fourth International is to help the proletarian vanguard understand the general na-

ture and pace of our period and at the proper times provide the mass struggle with organizational measures that are more and more rewarding and combative." (Documents of the Fourth International, p. 192, Pathfinder).

## II) The Role of Bourgeois Democracy and its Bureaucratic and Reformist Appendices in the Revolutionary Process in Imperialist Countries

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According to what flows from the draft of "Key Issues of the Portuguese Revolution" and also from the writings of several SWP leaders, the essential program for the Portuguese revolution at this stage is the development of bourgeois democracy. Democracy so much bourgeois that this draft does not indicate that one axis of the Portuguese revolution was the revolutionary democratic struggle against the church, for the expropriation of its property and for its separation from the state. The agrarian revolution is also forgotten. Nor did it indicate the imperious need to defend such a fundamental transitional, not democratic conquest as the nationalization of more than 70% of the urban bourgeoisie's property.

The final draft has improved or overcome some of these political aberrations by incorporating these points. At first glance it would seem that they have changed the fundamental strategic axis, abandoning the democratic axis in favor of the workers and farmers government axis. But, as is demonstrated by the definitive version of "Key Issues of the Portuguese Revolution," these changes are no more than patches designed to improve the revisionist position of the LTF compañeros on bourgeois democracy.

A general theory about the relationship of bourgeois democracy to imperialism and the socialist revolution in a prerevolutionary or revolutionary period springs forth from behind both the draft and the definitive version of "Key Issues of the Portuguese Revolution" as well as from the writings of some of the SWP leaders. This theory is a new edition of Parvus' theory for the advanced imperialist countries.

We can summarize this theory in a schematic way thusly. In the imperialist countries bourgeois democracy is in an absolute contradiction with imperialism, a contradiction that deepens daily. Therefore, we can and we must carry out the workers revolution with a democratic and not a transitional program, although using the method of the Transitional Program; that is, the revolutionary mobilization of the working class. In Parvus' way of putting it: workers mobilization and revolution in order to win a democratic program.

In "Democracy and Revolution," compañero Novack says with characteristic clarity that the best defense of democracy is a powerful mass offensive for workers power and socialism and that this mass offensive "requires the application of a revolutionary program, perspective and strategy.

The pivot of this program is the confidence the working masses have in their own independent organizations and mobilizations to protect and extend democratic rights. Decaying capitalism attempts to wrench from the people even those freedoms won in previous struggles." (George Novack, "Democracy and Revolution," New York, Pathfinder Press, 1971, p. 217) (our emphasis).

The SWP compañeros confuse an historic tendency with the actual situation of the class struggle. Formal, political bourgeois democracy has not come into absolute contradiction with imperialism and is even further from that contradiction in a revolutionary period. Just the opposite, it continues to be an arm of the imperialist bourgeoisie, it is a part of the bourgeois dictatorship.

Bourgeois democracy would suddenly cease being a vital instrument of the bourgeoisie only if the working class were definitively defeated on a world scale by imperialism (that is, if it became a slave class and was no longer a working class). But in the meantime, as long as the class struggle exists, bourgeois democracy, along with the reformist parties, will continue to be a key piece of the imperialist counterrevolution. If the working class were to be historically defeated, the workers bureaucracy and bourgeois democracy would cease to be tools in the hands of imperialism.

This does not mean to say that we cannot nor should not make tactical use of the deep and significant relative contradictions that regularly occur between bourgeois democracy and imperialism. But these relative contradictions must not be raised to the level of absolute contradictions, even less to the level of a valid program for making the socialist revolution, as against the Transitional Program.

Neither does this mean that in our policy and slogans we should not take into account the "democratic" consciousness or mentality of the working class and the broad masses. We begin with this consciousness and the most pressing needs and go through their experiences with them, but with the aim of leading them to reject, overcome and liquidate bourgeois democracy in consciousness and in fact through the development of the class struggle.

One theoretical consequence of this conception of bourgeois democracy and its relationship to imperialism is directly revisionist: the reformist parties are no longer counterrevolutionary since no one can conceive of these parties without bourgeois democracy. We are not saying they now think these parties have become revolutionary but that, given this conception, they have ceased being counterrevolutionary. If we go very carefully through the two versions of "Key Issues of the Portuguese Revolution" as well as the other writings of the SWP compañeros we shall see that, by omission, there is a clear tendency toward making this theoretical assertion in regard to the Portuguese SP.

In the face of so much reformism the principled Leninist Trotskyist positions on these questions have to be reaffirmed once again.

1. Bourgeois democracy continues to be a tool of the bourgeoisie in the imperialist countries.

2. The class struggle is the decisive factor in deciding the tactical role of democratic slogans in the struggle at any given moment. We defend and develop democratic slogans when they go against the bourgeoisie; we denounce them and attack them when they go against the struggle of the working class. (For example, if during a strike the government invites us to a public debate and a popular vote to determine whether the strike should go on or not, we would accept or reject the democratic invitation depending on which was the best way to bring the strike to victory.)

3. Even when we make use of bourgeois democracy we must make clear to the working class and its vanguard that bourgeois democracy is an arm of the bourgeoisie.

This principled position is in opposition to the conceptions that are currently met with in the International. The majority holds that the revolutionary process will go on restricting bourgeois democracy until the workers revolution totally liquidates it.

The LTF holds to an opposite criterion: bourgeois democracy must go on broadening and extending itself until the workers revolution transforms it into a workers revolution [sic]. This last conception is even rounded off with the assertion that democracy can only be curtailed during a civil war.

On the contrary, we assert that democracy in general and bourgeois democracy in particular is curtailed or broadened in a prerevolutionary or revolutionary period in accord with the needs of the class struggle without waiting for the civil war or the revolution to either restrict or broaden it.

### III) The Constituent Assembly

First of all we want to make it clear that we consider it correct as tactical slogans to pose such points as defense of the Constituent Assembly (CA) against the attempts made by the MFA to dissolve it, and the demand that the mass parties, the CP and SP, form a workers and farmers government and break the pact with the MFA by taking advantage of the majority they hold in the CA. This is correct even though these slogans cannot be used for agitation nor for action and are exclusively propagandistic. These points in "Key Issues in the Portuguese Revolution" are correct, as is the demand for popular sovereignty and popular suffrage against a non-elected government.

We recognize that during one period we thought the CA was already dead because running on to the end of its term

with neither pain nor glory and without the Portuguese masses showing the slightest desire to defend it. Therefore, we proposed a new, revolutionary CA. Nevertheless, the facts have turned out differently: The CA we thought was dead decided to lengthen its mandated term although not as the direct result of any kind of mass mobilization but rather as the expression of what is for the moment the top priority counterrevolutionary plan: to drown the Portuguese revolution in the bourgeois parliamentary swamp.

In such a situation these slogans seem to us to be of great importance and they pose the need to complement them with the demand for a government elected by popular vote against the MFA government which no one elected.

Precisely because we do understand the tactical propriety and the great educational and propagandistic value of these slogans dealing with the CA and the workers and farmers government in general (and its particular variant, a SP-CP government based on the CA) we are able to avoid the snare of revisionist content given to these slogans by the LTF leaders. The general revisionist conceptions we singled out in the previous sections are more concretized with brilliant clarity.

The first error lies in not defining the class nature of the CA. The working class has its organs: unions, factory committees, soviets. It is necessary to emphasize that the CA is an organ, not of the working class, but of the bourgeoisie. The LTF gives us a formal, descriptive definition of the CA:

"The only politically representative national body elected by the workers and the masses. . . in which the workers parties have the absolute majority."

This is the classical revisionist method of disguising the class nature of institutions behind the formal facts, such as whether or not they are elected and the proportion of workers parties' representatives in them.

Later on, in their polemic with companeros Frank, Maitan and Mandel, the SWP companeros specifically deny the bourgeois character of the CA by saying that they "overlook the equal sign placed between 'bourgeois democracy' and 'constituent assembly' (by Frank, Maitan, and Mandel), although one would expect that comrades with as much time in the movement as they have should have known better." (Por una linea correcta en Portugal, Supplement No. 2, of Revista de America, p.32).

Lenin thought the contrary:

"The Soviet Republic is not only the highest form of democratic institution (compared with the ordinary bourgeois republic crowned with a CA), it is also the only form capable of guaranteeing the least painful transition." (Lenin, El renegado Kautsky, Ed. Cent., 1969, p. 93).

As far as we are concerned, failure to point out that the CA is the maximum bourgeois democratic organ is revisionism. This definition is the only thing that permits us to use the CA tactically in order to educate the workers about the bourgeois, not revolutionary, class character of such an institution. Here we see the other revisionist side of "Key Issues of the Portuguese Revolution." It does not point out that we intervene in and use the CA in order to unmask it so the workers will finally mobilize against it. We use universal suffrage the same way, to suppress it when the moment arrives.

". . . universal suffrage is an instrument of bourgeois domination and. . . only the dictatorship of the proletariat can liquidate this dominion." ("The National Assembly Slogan in China," Writings of Leon Trotsky, p. 167?)

#### IV) The Workers and Farmers Government

It is not necessary to repeat that we agree on the need to incorporate the slogan for the SP-CP to use their majority in the CA in order to install a "workers and farmers government." We fully agree with the LTF up to that point. But from here on we begin to have differences about the workers and farmers government. We believe the LTF has a revisionist position regarding this slogan. Let us see why.

As these companeros see the workers and farmers government in Portugal it has a series of essential characteristics which, as we see it, makes it a bourgeois government.

In the first place, what kind of workers and farmers government does "Key Issues in the Portuguese Revolution" propose when it does not pose the need for an anticapitalist program in order to break with the bourgeoisie? A mere SP-CP parliamentary combination that takes power without a revolutionary program cannot be called a "workers and farmers government." The closest things to programmatic points in "Key Issues in the Portuguese Revolution" are "the demand that the CA represent the interests of the working masses that elected it and the repudiation of the Pact-program [signed with the MFA] by the workers parties. . . ." (PST Internal Discussion Bulletin No. 2) The first is a generality lacking of significance. How, and with what concrete program is it going to represent the interests of the masses that elected it? The deputies--who do very little--perturbed by agitators who would not let them work in peace, voted in the CA for the State of Siege thinking that by doing so they were defending the interests of the working masses. The second point, repudiation of the Pact-program signed with the MFA, is a correct slogan, but it cannot in any way by itself be the anticapitalist program of a workers and farmers government. The proof of this lies in the fact that even though neither the SP nor the CP has formally repudiated the Pact-pro-

gram, the crisis and dissolution of the MFA itself is doing away with the Pact-program.

There is, therefore, only one conclusion possible: "Key Issues in the Portuguese Revolution" does not put forth any anticapitalist program for this supposed workers and farmers government. In opposition to such revisionism we maintain, along with Trotsky, that:

"The slogan, 'workers and farmers government' is acceptable to us in the meaning it had for the Bolsheviks in 1917. That is, as an antibourgeois and anticapitalist slogan; but in no case in the 'democratic' sense the epigones later gave it, making over what was the bridge to the socialist revolution into the main barrier in its path.

"We call upon all parties and organizations that support the workers and farmers and speak in their name to politically break with the bourgeoisie and take to the road of struggle for workers and farmers power. Along this road we promise them complete support against capitalist reaction. At the same time we develop an untiring agitation around the transitional slogans which, in our opinion, must constitute the program of the 'workers and farmers government'" (Transitional Program, in Documents of the Fourth International, 1933-40, p. 203) (our emphasis).

Do the authors of "Key Issues in the Portuguese Revolution" believe that the break with the Pact-program is the "transitional slogan" that constitutes the "program" of the SP-CP government?

In the second place, the dynamic of the workers and farmers government, should it appear, is incompatible with the CA since it signifies the last step before civil war. Why is it not said to the workers movement that the installation of this government will be resisted by the bourgeoisie with arms in hand? The SWP and LTF, having indicated that there is no serious crisis in the armed forces, have an even greater obligation: that is, to point out that the MFA will physically and mercilessly crush both the CA and the workers and farmers government it votes in if it is truly an anticapitalist government. Failure to say this to the mass movement is to give the impression that bourgeois organs like the CA and the armed forces can exist side by side with a workers and farmers government without immediate civil war; it is to give the slogan not only a revisionist coloration, but one that is hardly serious and merely propagandistic.

Finally, we say that the workers and farmers government proposed by "Key Issues in the Portuguese Revolution" has no need to prepare itself for civil war with the bourgeoisie for, at most, this organization is really the CA; that is, a bourgeois organ, since it can be formed without soviets, workers militias or other organs of workers power--the only organs capable of smashing the inevitable blood-and-fire resistance with which the bourgeoisie will frontally oppose

an anticapitalist government and program.

The draft of this document, prepared by the SWP, clearly states:

"Dual power does not even exist in Portugal. What have appeared are sporadic and isolated mass initiatives and forms of workers control which can point the way toward the kinds of mass working-class actions in fact capable of establishing dual power.

"Nevertheless, before this can happen key political struggles must be won. The fundamental one is to bring the workers to break with their subordination to the MFA and exercise their right to put a workers and farmers government in power.

"This struggle is at the moment centered on the sovereignty of the CA in which the workers parties have the absolute majority and which is the only national body up to now elected by the population." (PST Internal Discussion Bulletin No. 2).

To sum up: Before organs of workers power can be developed a key political struggle must be won, this is neither more nor less than the installation of a workers and farmers government which means an inevitable civil war.

The final edition of "Key Issues in the Portuguese Revolution" deletes the paragraph we cited, but of course it did not manage to eliminate the fact that this is the spirit of all the documents.

#### V) The Possibility of a Workers and Farmers Government

Although "Key Issues in the Portuguese Revolution" says the proposal for a SP-CP government is "a step to expose the inability of these parties to take this alternative," everything demonstrates that this is not the real thinking of the leading companeros of the SWP who drafted the document.

The real political possibility, not just theoretical-historical possibility of this kind of government in Portugal today is opened in the polemic with companeros Frank, Maitan, and Mandel.

"...we do not exclude the possibility that a government not controlled by the bourgeoisie, but which is also not a socialist regime, could come to power in Portugal. We think this possibility is remote but, from our point of view, we do not discard it.

"Lenin and Trotsky foresaw that such cases could occur under exceptional conditions. They characterized this kind of regimes as workers and farmers governments, a transitional form of government,

"The appearance of this government, independent of the

bourgeoisie, would open extraordinary opportunities for the construction of a revolutionary party that would rapidly lead the workers to install a workers government. If such a government arises, we are prepared to recognize it.

"Why is it then that comrades Frank, Maitan and Mandel do not mention this possibility since they give so much importance to the political weakness of the bourgeoisie and it is obvious that there is no mass revolutionary party?" (Foley, Hansen, Novack, "Por una linea correcta in Portugal," Supplement No. 2, Revista de America, p. 54)

If we make out clearly what this quote says, it means that the leading companeros of the SWP think the possibility exists that the SP could break with the bourgeoisie and take power in Portugal today since a mass socialist party does exist but there is no mass revolutionary party.

We want to make it clear that we do not deny the possibility of this perspective in a theoretical-historical sense, and taking place over several years. We do deny that this perspective is open for Portugal today. "Key Issues in the Portuguese Revolution" holds that "the tendency of the process points to the installation of a workers and farmers government and the organization of soviets on the basis of a workers state" (PST Internal Discussion Bulletin No. 4, p. 21).

This statement is politically revisionist for Portugal today both in what it says and in what it does not say.

The assertion that the tendency is toward installation of a "workers and farmers government" means that this is very possible, or at most it means the only possibility to make the revolution in Portugal, even though this is highly unlikely, is to manage that the SP and the CP break with the bourgeoisie and take power in order to establish an anti-capitalist program. This is revisionism because there is not a single chance that the SP and CP in Portugal today will break with the bourgeoisie however great the pressure of the masses. "Key Issues in the Portuguese Revolution" says this very thing in another section and we agree.

The omission in this sentence is much more serious. As the LTF sees it, "the tendency of the process" does not point toward the construction of a revolutionary party with mass influence that can make the revolution. This means that the mass upsurge might force the reformist parties to break with the bourgeoisie, but not that it might split the reformist parties themselves into several massive wings, some of which would orient toward Trotskyist positions; obliged to do so by the objective situation.

We believe exactly the opposite. The Trotskyist parties and groups can only come to have mass influence during a great revolutionary upsurge. Everything will help this come about. This is the tendency of the process and it is the only possibility open for the victory of the revolution and the development of our parties.

There is another contradiction between this sentence and the rest of the document, "Key Issues in the Portuguese Revolution." If the tendency of the process points not only toward a workers and farmers government, but also to the organization of soviets, how explain the political line of "Key Issues in the Portuguese Revolution" which has a workers and farmers government as its axis but does not mention, even in passing, the "organization of soviets" or similar variants? Is it perhaps that the workers and farmers government will come first and after that the soviets? If so, does this not mean that first comes the antechamber of the dictatorship of the proletariat (the workers and farmers government) and afterward the organs of this dictatorship? Finally, one question that sums up all the others: Must we or must we not provide a slogan and a policy to develop the tendency toward the "organization of soviets"?

Posing these questions and seeing the LTF's replies leads us to one conclusion: the SWP leadership has adopted the revisionist line of denying the soviet strategy during a pre-revolutionary or revolutionary period, as it has abandoned the construction of a revolutionary party with mass influence as the only certain possibility at this stage for the victory of the revolution in Portugal.

#### VI) A Dialogue that Demolishes a Political Line

Three very strong circumstances had to merge in order to oblige the three SWP companeros who polemicized with companeros Frank, Maitan and Mandel to make a 180-degree turn in their revisionist political line and slogans. These are (1) the polemic itself, (2) the tremendous pressure of more than three decades of defending, teaching and writing correct Trotskyist positions, and (3) the reality of the Portuguese revolution. Foley, Hansen, and Novack write:

"Our comrades would have directed themselves to the workers in the following way: 'We don't have the least confidence in the Constituent Assembly. Neither do we trust the leaders of the Socialist and Communist parties. But you don't agree with us. Alright. Then, why don't you demand of your leaders that they carry out the program they proclaim is to establish socialism in Portugal? The majority of the population has just expressed its desire for this in the most emphatic way. Why don't you demand that they go ahead and establish a workers and farmers government to replace the MFA regime? We will support you in your struggle for these demands.

"Nevertheless, we think that if you put them to the test you will agree with us that they are fakers who in reality are serving as political agents of the bourgeoisie.

"And don't you think it would be a good idea to broaden the factory committees and neighborhood commissions and the committees in the armed forces and coordinate them on a national scale in order to organize ourselves in

such a way as to exert the greatest possible pressure and to unite our forces in the struggle? And don't you agree it would be prudent to begin to organize defense units in view of the obvious intentions of the rightists to destroy all the conquests we have won up to now and to reinstall a totalitarian regime?" (Foley, Hansen, Novack, "Por una linea correcta in Portugal," Supplement No. 2, Revista de America, p. 31).

We can do no less than totally agree with the commentary they make in this dialogue. "Such a posture is completely principled." We would not have been quite so forceful in a real dialogue, neither would we have proposed "defense units" only to fight against the right. We would have followed up on the reasoning in order to raise the following: In case such a government is installed there will be civil war and we must be prepared to defend it by arming the workers. Continuing with this logic, we would have said that we have to do work in the army in order to destroy it because the army will fight with arms in hand against this government. That is, we would be on the alert against not only the right, but also and essentially against the bourgeois government and the armed forces. But these are tactical differences: the important thing is that we are totally and absolutely in agreement that this dialogue represents the only correct policy in Portugal.

But this dialogue goes against the line of "Key Issues in the Portuguese Revolution" in its draft form as well as in its definitive form, and it goes against everything the SWP compañeros have written.

The real objective, the principal strategy, the line of this dialogue is not to fight for the CA (in which they don't place "the least confidence"), nor is it for a "SP-CP government against the MFA because these parties are "fakers," "political agents of the bourgeoisie." Rather, this dialogue looks for the means to obtain the development of organizational forms for the workers and mass movements that will allow them to mobilize in a revolutionary way; and it starts at the present level of consciousness of the mass movement. In keeping with the language as well as the politics of the dialogue the explications as well as the slogans are organizational: "Extend factory and neighborhood committees, coordinate them on a national scale," as in "organize defense units."

We leave aside the fact that the existence of dual power in Portugal is accepted in this dialogue. Our line has always been just exactly the same as this: the great permanent, decisive and fundamental task in revolutionary Portugal today is: "extend the factory and neighborhood committees and the committees in the armed forces and coordinate them on a national scale" as well as, "organize defense units" and work in the armed forces in order to destroy them.

This dialogue, which fully conforms to our political line, could be wrong if the person using it does not agree that

it should be modified to the degree that the circumstances of the class struggle continue to change. We say this because we honestly believe that this dialogue is very useful propagandistically but is not to be used in practice immediately. The immediate reality will be great mobilizations around economic and work problems of the working class and, possibly, against the right which is raising its head. But they will not be for the CA or for a workers and farmers government.

If these great economic struggles and strikes against the hunger and unemployment plan of the government do not materialize we will still believe that the following kind of dialogue is required:

"We don't have the least confidence in the leadership of the SP, the CP, or Intersindical in the fight against the government's plan to actually lower wages and increase unemployment, because these leaders collaborate with the government in imposing the antiworker plan. But you don't agree with us. OK. Why don't you demand that your leaders defend the wages and give work to the unemployed? Why don't you demand an economic plan to overcome the crisis?"

From here on we would continue with the earlier dialogue: "Why don't you demand that they go ahead and establish a workers and farmers government," etc., ending by calling on them to raise the same organizational slogans, complemented by others like factory and union assemblies, picket and strike committees, Intersindical and workers commissions' congresses, etc.

As we see it, the themes continue to change, but the conclusion, the principal theme is always the same: "extend and develop" the already existing committees and found new ones. That is, the strategic objective is present at all times: extend and coordinate the existing organs of workers and popular power. What we begin the conversation with is tactical, the circumstances of the moment; what we end it with is strategic.

We call upon all companeros of the Leninist Trotskyist Faction who truly believe in the Trotskyist program and in this dialogue to reject the positions in the document, "Key Issues in the Portuguese Revolution," which has a political line directly opposite to both.

A VERY IMPORTANT NOTE: This is the first outline of the draft resolution. Therefore its circulation must be extremely limited.

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[The following is a draft resolution prepared by the political committee of the Liga Operaria, one of the Brazilian sympathizing organizations of the Fourth International.]

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### The Party's International Tasks

#### Introduction:

1. Despite the optimistic outlook of some bourgeois economists for 1976, we believe the tendency will be toward aggravation of the general crisis of capitalism. This phenomenon will not occur only in the economic sphere, it will be felt mainly in the political arena. In other words, we reaffirm that the rise of the mass movement on a world scale which began in 1968 has not yet come to an end. Just the opposite, it is becoming more profound and is more and more being extended to all corners of the earth.

The experiences of 1975 demonstrated that the rise of the masses continues on a world scale and that the economic crisis cannot be resolved. Based on this we can predict that existing prerevolutionary periods will continue (Portugal) and that others may possibly begin (as is the case in Spain). And we are talking not just about prerevolutionary periods, but about truly revolutionary ones also (as is the case in Angola).

Here we see one of the main characteristics of the world rise: it is uneven. On the one hand this world rise began to appear in almost all the countries of the world after 1968 (colonies, semi-colonies, imperialist countries and workers states). On the other hand it did not happen in a uniform way. That is to say, despite the rise semi-fascist dictatorships continue in force in some countries (Chile) and extremely right-wing Bonapartist governments (Brazil), etc. At the same time we see revolutionary upsurges in many countries (Vietnam, Cambodia, Angola) and in addition, the reentry of the revolution into Europe. Thus, the first conclusion we must draw is that the rise continues and the general crisis of capitalism continues, but this all happens unevenly.

2. Our second conclusion is that due to this same crisis of capitalism, the mass mobilizations on a world scale will take place in defense of their living standards and democratic freedoms. Of course, struggles for agrarian reform and national liberation cannot be excluded. But, to a greater or lesser degree the workers struggles on a world scale will tend to combine two main demands: for a decent standard of living, for democratic freedoms.

3. The Transitional Program that Trotsky proposed in 1938 has more importance now than ever before; not just as a merely intellectual or principled question, but in relation to reality itself. As the capitalist crisis deepens, only the methodology of the Transitional Program can

guarantee that the unevenness of the process of upsurge that has begun can be overcome. That is, only through the method proposed by the Transitional Program can we transform the just struggles for defense of living standards and democratic freedoms into anticapitalist and pro-socialist struggles.

Thus, we believe that although the workers struggles are not linked together in this initial phase of the world rise, they will tend to become linked together and will thus intensify the capitalist crisis even more and open up a new truly prerevolutionary period on a world scale. But for this to happen the rise of a world working class vanguard is more necessary than ever, a vanguard with no left or right deviations and with a class view of the revolutionary tasks to be carried out. We believe this vanguard can only come forth in connection with the Fourth International because of the Bolshevik tradition left it by Trotsky and which it has maintained up to today.

#### Portugal Continues to be the Axis

4. In agreement with the classic Marxists we believe the strategy for the world revolution always called for workers and socialist victories in the advanced countries (Europe and the USA) and that revolutionary victories in colonial countries are tactical victories. In other words, there is no guarantee for the revolution or for the building of socialism as long as these advanced countries are not under the dictatorship of the proletariat.

It is in this sense that we believe the Portuguese process continues to be the axis of the world revolution. The revolution comes to Europe through Portugal.

At this moment, when the revolutionaries throughout the world are looking at all the possibilities and are debating strategy and tactics for the seizure of power in Portugal, the Liga Operaria as a sympathizing organization of the Fourth International considers it extremely important to make some positive contributions.

First of all, we hold to the Marxist tradition of characterizing the situation of Portugal in order to avoid foolish and non-revolutionary mistakes which instead of helping the Portuguese comrades would only serve to confuse the companheiros and direct them from the tasks they have to carry out.

a) Above all else, Portugal is an imperialist country. A weak imperialism, full of contradictions, but imperi-

alist. For this reason the Portuguese process can in no way be compared to that of Algeria or Cuba (the first an ex-colony and the second a semi-colony at the time of their revolutions).

b) We also characterized the situation that opened following the defeat of Spínola's March 11 coup attempt as the beginning of a prerevolutionary period. That is, we have here a combination of the Portuguese economic crisis, the rise of the working masses, the radicalization of the middle class and the disorientation of the bourgeoisie.

c) However, this prerevolutionary situation is up against a popular front government in which the shadow of the imperialist bourgeois rules in partnership with the reformist workers parties. The main task of this CP-SP-bourgeois parties alliance (the petty bourgeoisie is present in this coalition through the MFA) is to prevent the unfolding of the revolutionary process. Its aim is to paralyze the process and it thus plays a clearly counterrevolutionary role.

As we see it this is still the state of things despite what we believe to have been an attempt at a Bonapartist coup November 25 (or semi-Bonapartist as Trotsky explained in the case of Von Pappen in Germany). This Bonapartist coup attempt was not successful but all indications leave no doubt that the reactionary forces have become more active and audacious. Military personnel and civilians linked with the left are being imprisoned, ultra-reactionary elements of the Salazar and Marcelo Caetano governments are being set free and there is talk of Spínola's possible return. (All this, it is clear, stems from the downturn and confusion through which the workers movement is passing.) But the mass movement has not yet been defeated.

5. This is where the importance of knowing how to combine the basic tasks of a prerevolutionary period with the tactical tasks of a conjuncturely defensive situation comes in. We see as the strategic problem for the entire period the need to create organs of dual power at the worker, military and peasant level, as well as on the neighborhood level. But within this prerevolutionary period there is at the moment a sub-period of downturn, a curtailment of democratic freedoms and we believe the basic task in Portugal is to start with specific and general struggles for democratic freedoms and defense of the living standard of the working class (not forgetting the importance of agrarian reform) and begin anew to develop the organs of dual power.

6. In 1976 the Portuguese bourgeoisie will attempt to reorganize and impose a Bonapartist government on the country. It is now trying to take the first steps toward the successful imposition of this bourgeois and imperialist solution. Despite the victories won by the mass movement in 1975 it is now on the defensive. Therefore the Fourth

International should help the Portuguese companheiros in their task of strengthening the workers movement through struggle for concrete demands so that it can accumulate the strength that will permit it to once again hold the bourgeois power in check.

The Portuguese revolution has not been lost. As we pointed out in the middle of last year in an international document, there are many problems to be overcome. But the obstacles could be definitively overcome if the revolutionaries were capable of developing the correct program and of audaciously carrying it out in practice.

#### 7. The Importance of Angola

Unfortunately, the Fourth International as a whole has not worked out a clear position on Angola. The line for this African country as presented in the journalistic IP articles and in the various papers of different sections is either completely wrong or simply ridiculous.

We find different kinds of errors in these articles. They run from calling for the unity of the three movements without realizing that two of them are openly controlled by imperialism, to refusing to support any of them, claiming that what we have in Angola is a fratricidal struggle.

The victory of the Angolan people in their anti-imperialist struggle for national liberation is of supreme importance for us Brazilians (and for the world revolution). To run away from this, to refuse to see that Angola today is another arena of class struggle is to throw the entire Trotskyist tradition and method out the window.

We think the cause of these incredible errors of omission lies in the failure to always try to characterize as well as possible each manifestation of reality and its social dynamic.

Thus, we see Angola as a colonial country going through a revolutionary period. In other words, what we are trying to explain is that this country entered a period of war following its struggle for national liberation. The FNLA and UNITA forces; the South African and Zaire mercenaries, directly represent imperialism. We say it is a revolutionary period because the objective situation of economic crisis and mass upsurge is combined with a subjective factor: the existence of a vanguard united around the MPLA and the existence of a peoples army which resulted from arming the working masses.

But, different from Portugal, there is no popular front here. There is no coalition government in Angola through which the imperialist bourgeoisie makes its presence felt. Of course Portugal is trying to maintain its privileges (just as are the other imperialist powers). But Portugal is not in the government, nor can it make its neo-colonial policy felt through the MPLA. The concessions offered to certain

imperialist sectors by the MPLA are erroneous tactical moves rather than the inherent policy of a popular front. In addition, phenomena similar to those in the Cuban events are to a certain degree repeated here. In Cuba, too, many monopolies were not immediately expropriated (Gulf is a major example in both countries). These phenomena exist because the leadership is empiricist and not Trotskyist. On the other hand, the Soviet bureaucracy plays an important role here, even trying to restrain the process in order to be in a better position to negotiate with imperialism.

Of course, we must maintain our political and party independence from the MPLA and criticize it for having a bourgeois nationalist program for reforms. But, just as Trotsky proposed for the Spanish revolution, as the Fourth International did in relation to Vietnam, we must struggle shoulder to shoulder, arms in hand, with the MPLA against the common enemy: imperialism and its lackeys.

c) We believe our task in Angola is to participate in the anti-imperialist war with the MPLA, promoting and strengthening dual power and the agrarian revolution. These two points are the key to the process that will permit the transformation of the colonial revolution into a socialist revolution. Without an agrarian revolution which would expropriate the large imperialist holdings, put an end to tribalism and create the conditions for primitive accumulation, the country will continue to be at the mercy of foreign investments and imperialism.

These tasks can only be accomplished by the armed masses.

Our major criticism of the MPLA is that it restricts its program to a bourgeois nationalist program and does not propose the expropriation of the imperialist industries, mines and plantations.

This is our main task as Trotskyists. To be clear as to who is the enemy, to fight against imperialism alongside the MPLA while taking every opportunity to struggle for the total expropriation of imperialism and for the agrarian revolution. This is the only way we can guarantee that Angola will not become another Algeria.

#### The Tasks of the Fourth International and the Construction of a Real Leninist Trotskyist Faction

8) In the past, Internationals have come into being along with great upsurges and have ended with the end of the upsurge. This is no accident, it is due to the fact that leaderships are only put to the test during the highest moments of the class struggle.

The Fourth International is an exception. It arose

from a defeat during the 1930s, from the greatest defeat the masses have ever suffered. But now with the new upsurge it will be put to the test. Portugal may well be the crucible in which it is either destroyed or truly forged into a real revolutionary working-class international.

Recognizing the importance of this historic moment and the need to give a united, concrete response to the Portuguese revolution, the Liga Operaria calls for the unity of the Fourth International. But we don't mean a weak unity, one without principles or program. We call for unity as we understand it, Bolshevik unity; programmatic unity and unity in action in the face of the Portuguese crisis.

#### Concretely:

The Liga Operaria believes that the historic task of the Fourth International as a whole is to fight for the strategy of creating organs of dual power in Portugal--the minority and majority should work out a common action program and put it into practice.

We must not spare any effort in our task which is to give concrete aid to the Portuguese comrades. The entire strength of the international, political as well as economic, must be utilized for carrying out this task.

9) But, inasmuch as the Fourth International does not have an authentic working class and revolutionary leadership the Liga Operaria considers the dissolution of the factions to be impractical.

Therefore, we believe that another meeting of the Leninist Trotskyist Faction as quickly as possible (within three months) is a matter of extreme importance. At this meeting we will propose:

a) that the Portuguese revolutionary process be characterized as a workers and socialist revolution in progress,

b) that the present stage of the Portuguese process be characterized as revolutionary;

c) that the tasks of revolutionaries there are to promote and develop dual power at the strategic level, and at the tactical level promote and develop the struggles for full retention of democratic freedoms.

d) In relation to Angola: that the situation be defined as revolutionary and the MPLA as a revolutionary national liberation movement; that our position on the civil war is militarily alongside the MPLA while at the same time maintaining our political and organizational independence, demanding and promoting the development of dual power and the expropriation of imperialism's industries and mines, as well as for the agrarian revolution.

e) Regarding the organizational tasks of the Liga Operaria, we consider it fundamentally necessary to structure the faction along truly Leninist and Trotskyist lines, that is, put an end to this federative, anti-democratic faction. We believe the faction should be centralized and democratic, with the delegates elected according to the number of members in each section and with centralized finances.

We strongly reject the way the present faction functions, where the voice of the smaller parties is never heard, where the congresses never have elected delegates but everyone who is able to come attends and anyone present has a vote.

10) Given the present functioning which unfortunately is neither Leninist nor Trotskyist, plus the latest document adopted at the August 1975 meeting (as if it

were a meeting of the LTF) -- a document which did not have the vote of the Liga Operaria, this plenipotenciary Congress proposes:

I. restructuring the LTF on the basis of the five above-listed proposals;

II. in case the August document is not rediscussed and its basic line remains in effect for the Portuguese process and the LTF maintains its present structure, the Liga Operaria considers it its revolutionary duty to break with the LTF and call for the formation of a new faction which can respond to the worldwide class struggle and give concrete aid to the building of an alternative leadership for the Fourth International.

Approved by the Political Committee  
February 1976.

Strictly Internal

[The following resolution was received in New York on February 20, 1976.]

Resolution of the Liga Socialista (Venezuela)  
Central Committee, December 21, 1975

Considering:

a) That we have been discussing Portugal in the party and that we have recently deepened the discussion on the basis of two documents, the first being the resolution on Portugal called "Key Problems in the Portuguese Revolution" which appeared in Intercontinental Press, the second being the letter from the Argentine PST Political Bureau called "To all Compañeros of the Leninist Trotskyist Faction";

b) That this [latter] document presents a series of differences with the document that came out in IP since it says that the document, "Key Problems, etc." does not reflect agreements reached at the last steering committee meeting which were unanimously adopted as the faction's resolution, and that these differences can be condensed into the following: "The central strategy for Portugal today is to see how we can push forward the development and centralization of the dual power embryos that have come forth and how we can help to create them in areas where they do not yet exist;"

c) That our party's delegate to the last meeting of the faction gave a completely different report about the results of that meeting than what appeared in IP (Key Problems, etc.), and he agrees with the Argentine PST Political Bureau document about the real agreements reached in the summer meeting regarding the question of the central strategy as being the development of dual power organs;

d) That a full leadership meeting of the Portuguese PRT came to the conclusion that what appeared in IP did not reflect the agreements reached in the last faction meeting;

e) That, for our part, we have not yet adopted an official resolution on this matter;

f) That this is a task this Central Committee meeting ought to complete:

We propose that the following be resolved:

The Central Committee meeting of December 21, 1975, unanimously takes the position of supporting the criticisms of the document appearing in Intercontinental Press, "Key Problems of the Portuguese Revolution," made by the Argentine PST Political Bureau in its letter, "To the Compañeros of the Leninist Trotskyist Faction." We take this position because we do not believe that the Definitive resolution in IP reflects the agreements and concurrences that were reached before the LTF meeting last summer and that were unanimously adopted as the LTF resolution on Portugal. In addition, because we think the main strategic task in any prerevolutionary or revolutionary situation is the development and centralization of organs of dual power.

Central Committee of the Liga Socialista (Venezuela)

COPY

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REBUILDING THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

December 15, 1975

Socialist Workers Party  
Dear Comrades,

Enclosed are copies of a statement about the current situation of the Fourth International, "Rebuilding the Fourth International" (published in *Class Struggle* #32, November, 1975). The statement was signed by Combat Ouvrier, Lutte Ouvrière, Spark, and the Union Africaine des Travailleurs Communistes Internationalistes.

As the statement indicates, we feel that, since the death of Trotsky in 1940, the FI has not been able to establish a leadership which enjoys the political confidence of the whole Trotskyist movement. The result has been that the FI fractured into many pieces. This tendency has speeded up in recent years. The FI must be rebuilt, and its leadership established.

We feel that this can be facilitated if there is an open confrontation of analyses between the various Trotskyist groups. We also feel that the rebuilding of the FI goes hand in hand with the testing out in practice of the political analyses of the various groups. That testing out will happen with the events, and with the intervention in those events by the various groups.

In the meantime, we think it is important for there to be an open exchange of views within the Trotskyist movement. We propose to discuss the FI itself and the causes of its failure, the questions of the Popular Democracies and the underdeveloped countries which have broken free from imperialism, and current events of importance, such as Portugal.

If you are interested in discussing this proposal more concretely, we would be happy to meet with you.

Fraternally,  
SPARK  
Baltimore  
Detroit

P. S. We will be sending copies of this document to all your branches shortly.

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REBUILDING THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

(published in *Class Struggle* #32, November 1975)

Of all the parties, organizations, groups, and tendencies that claim they represent the working class or socialism, the only movement taking specific action to create a revolutionary workers' International--following on from the

traditions of the past three Internationals--is the Trotskyist movement. At the same time it is the only movement existing on an international scale that calls for an independent proletarian organization and independent proletarian policies--judging from the basic texts of its program. And it is the only movement whose stated aim is the setting up of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

There is an obvious link between these two aspects. Organizations acting according to the prospect of proletarian revolution, in so far as their program is concerned at least, can only conceive of their activity in an international context. On the other hand, organizations that are against the independent organization of the proletariat, even if they claim allegiance to socialism, communism, or Marxism-Leninism, are necessarily against any idea of a revolutionary International.

The so-called "Maoist" groups, out of all the groups claiming to belong to the revolutionary extreme-left, are the only ones, apart from the Trotskyists, which are present in a large number of countries. But, not only are they inherently incapable of creating an international organization. They are sworn enemies of internationalism. Their populism, whose aim is to make the working class serve bourgeois interests, is by its very nature nationalistic. The international proletariat cannot count on groups of this type to contribute towards giving it an organization. In fact, it will inevitably find such groups against it--at least, if they ever amount to anything.

Of course, there are other groups, outside of the Trotskyist movement, that claim allegiance more or less explicitly to proletarian revolution and to the past three workers' Internationals. Generally speaking, they are various forms of the so-called "state capitalist" groups. These groups reject the basic program of the Trotskyist movement, either because of its analyses of the degeneration of the Soviet state and its view of the Stalinist movement, or, beyond these, over the question of the link with Bolshevism. These very heterogeneous groups have never been able to work out a specific political line or organize themselves on an international level. Some of them state the necessity of doing so. Others have given up the idea. And others simply make vague references to the Fourth International.

It is not impossible of course that some of these organizations could help in the construction of the revolutionary International. But the International could not be built around them, around the lack of program and eclecticism in this domain.

The Trotskyist movement refers back to the last revolutionary program that was still the fruit of the genuine ex-

perience of a vast revolutionary workers' movement. Namely, the Second and Third Internationals, within which Trotsky developed. This program, integrating into past experiences a coherent analysis of the Soviet's state degeneration, is the only possible starting-point for the rebuilding of an International capable of adding its own fund of experience onto what has been handed down from the working class movement in the past.

The Trotskyist movement does exist on an international scale, and there are even international organizations claiming they have taken on leadership of the movement. But the Fourth International has clearly failed so far in its attempt to make up for the bankruptcy of the Third, Thirty-seven years after its creation, it is still made up of small rival groups with no real following.

The absence of a genuine International, that is, of a world revolutionary party solidly implanted in the working class, even if only in a certain number of countries, is glaringly obvious. The "historical crisis of leaderships of the proletariat" has not been overcome since Trotsky wrote the Transitional Program. It is only possible to seriously discuss the tasks for revolutionaries in the future with those who take this fact as their starting-point. This situation is largely due to objective factors. The imperialist countries have found a certain stability over the past three decades, thus adding to reformist illusions within the working class in the West. Imperialism's relative stability has consolidated the Soviet bureaucracy. And the bureaucracy has paid imperialism in return through the stabilizing role played by the Stalinist movement. In the absence of proletarian leadership, the movements of revolt in the Third World countries have all been led into the impasse of nationalism. They have been unable to seriously threaten the stability of the imperialist countries.

The case of the Third World countries is in fact a reminder that there is no watertight division between objective factors and subjective ones, that is, factors depending on revolutionary organizations' ability to confront the tasks of the moment. Since the war, the Trotskyist movement has been unable to create, in any of the Third World countries affected by the wave of national liberation struggles, an organization capable of challenging nationalist organizations for the leadership of the movement.

Was it objectively possible for the Trotskyist movement, during the last three decades, to construct a powerful Fourth International firmly rooted in the proletariat that was Trotsky's objective? Perhaps not. However, it would only be possible to weigh up the role of objective factors if the Trotskyist movement had been able to measure up to circumstances. In fact, what finally makes up the failure of the last three decades is that, after Trotsky's death, the Trotskyist movement has not been able to create an active, competent and effective international leadership--even within the bounds of the present degree of development of

the movement and its possibilities. The only answer to the first question, apart from an academic one, could be given by the success or failure of such a leadership.

Today, given the present degree of development of the Trotskyist movement, the problem is still that of the lack of an international organization coordinating the Trotskyist movement, and the lack of a competent international leadership recognized by the world Trotskyist movement.

The Trotskyist movement is in pieces. There is not one but several international bodies which lay claim to the leadership of the Trotskyist trend. The main one is undoubtedly the United Secretariat, judging by the number of organizations recognizing it. But a large number of national sections of this body have split, following the line of division of the two main factions of the United Secretariat. Apart from the United Secretariat there are the "Posadist" Fourth International, an International Committee formed around the English Revolutionary Workers' Party, an Organizational Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International to which the AJS-OCI Organization in France belongs, the International League for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International which came out of a split of the AJS-OCI, without counting other groups. Moreover, there are a certain number of Trotskyist organizations which do not identify themselves with any of the existing international organizations. Some of these organizations never belonged to any of the international bodies as they exist at present. Others have left these international bodies because they considered that their political disagreements were too important to remain in any of them. And others were excluded because, for these international bodies, exclusion is often a way of settling political disagreements.

This fragmentation of international bodies is actually carried over internally into each of these bodies. Their superficial unity, the unity they present to the outside, usually hides relationships which are in no way based on the mutual confidence of the groups or their confidence toward the international leadership. Yet without such relations, established through a genuine common activity on the basis of a program that is genuinely accepted by all, there can be no international organization. There is only a conglomeration of national organizations. Without a willingness to come to such an agreement, without a common activity, it is not possible to choose an international leadership which has earned its authority not through articles of a statute, but by winning and demonstrating its competence.

A superficial unanimity and a purely formal centralism can cover up the real problem only to those who are not very demanding. But we have serious misgivings about the quality of the relations between groups belonging to the same international grouping. We just have to look at the

speed with which sometimes minor differences of opinion lead to splits instead of disappearing within the international organisms. The same goes for the way in which these splits immediately bring an hostility preventing any form of collaboration.

Let us give a current illustration of this type of relations--one which is unfortunately far from being original. It concerns the Organizational Committee for the Rebuilding of the Fourth International (AJS-OCI) and the LIRQUI which is a split from the former. The former has come to the point of accusing the latter of being in the pay of the KGB and the CIA, and the latter puts most of its energies into defending itself from the former's charges. And this is going on after almost ten years of collaboration between the two within the same international organization. Yet this organization claimed to be a democratic-centralist one, an international leadership in fact. Such relations today are not just coincidental. They stem from the fact that their earlier show of unity was artificial and sterile. And this is not a case apart.

Bureaucratic centralism, that is to say, in which there is no real sense of trust between members, and the scattering into organizations committed to a sterile war between one another, are two aspects of the one phenomenon. This is the phenomenon we must analyse and, above all, overcome. For this is what prevents international organisms from developing on an international level, and from fulfilling their role, which is to cope with the tasks of the day.

Does this mean that the Trotskyist movement not only can but must do without a real international leadership, that is, one which is actually capable of leading, and which is truly international, centralized and democratic? Of course not!

But it means that a leadership cannot just be proclaimed, and even less so, can it proclaim itself. A democratic-centralist organization is forged and built up by starting from what we have, from what the Trotskyist movement actually is. This includes its achievements, but also its weaknesses, and takes into account the current lack of trust characteristic of relations between groups. Making believe that things exist which do not really is no way of building a centralized international organization. It is the best way of never getting there. Let us leave aside those groups which have solved their problems once and for all by refusing the others any right to stand for Trotskyism, and which quite simply declare that the Trotskyist movement is not scattered because they are the only Trotskyists. Most organizations have to admit that the dispersion of the Trotskyist movement is a problem in itself, and at the same time also raises the problem of an international leadership. There are more and more Trotskyist groups which do not belong to any of the international organisms and which criticize the poli-

tics, practices, and methods of the latter. These organisms can be criticized on all these points. But apart from the fact that these criticisms are not necessarily developed from a more correct point of view than that of the organizations to which they are addressed, in themselves they do not enable us to get out of the present blind alley. Moreover, the groups outside the international organisms cannot be said to be original from this point of view. . . the various international organisms are very good at criticizing one another. To group together on an international level by simply excluding the others would only add another sect to the already existing sects.

As we see it, the differences of opinion between the various components of the Trotskyist movement are not serious enough for them to be unable to cooperate in an international organization. This organization should enable them to confront their point of view honestly on all of the major questions which divide the Trotskyist movement. This would include such questions as: the analysis of the national liberation movements in the underdeveloped countries, the analysis of the class nature of the People's Democracies, of Cuba, of China, and also the analysis of the causes of the failure of the Fourth International after Trotsky's death and, of course, current political events.

The aim is not to attribute the viewpoint of one group with a vague international endorsement. Nor is it to put out documents based on compromises which are usually a poor cover-up of differences in opinion.

One can only put forward a common viewpoint, especially when it concerns a political program for the world revolutionary struggle of our time--as a result of an honest confrontation of different opinions. Furthermore, it can only be the result of the confirmation of the various programs through political struggles. What is more important, is that a program that would be adopted by the movement as a whole can only be linked to an international leadership recognized by this movement.

What we can do is engage in this confrontation straight away, and try to isolate the points of agreement and disagreement. We must clarify them as far as possible. But we do not think that these disagreements are an obstacle to working together and we certainly do not have to hide them to do so.

We must go beyond such a confrontation if we wish it to be a step towards the creation of a centralized international organization. It must also be a place where we can examine the political and organizational assistance that the various groups can give to each other. This assumes an international organic structure. But it must correspond to the needs and the political and organizational capacities of the groups which make it up. The rights and the responsibilities of all must be agreed upon, and there must be no victimization. These mutual rights and responsibili-

ties agreed upon by the various groups would grow with the increasing trust the groups would show one another. At the same time a common discipline would emerge.

There is no miracle solution for establishing an international organization which at the early stages could serve as a veritable leadership for the Trotskyist movement as a whole which, as the various groups that make it up get a base in the working class, could become a veritable International. But one thing is certain: the crisis in the leadership of the Trotskyist movement not only concerns but is hurting the movement as a whole. We must resolve it. We must not only have the desire to give ourselves the means of doing so. The fact that an international leadership has been inexistent since the collapse of the Third is heavy with danger for the future of the proletariat and society as a whole. The solution to this leadership crisis is not within the reach of the Trotskyist movement such as it is today. But the movement is preventing itself from facing up to its present responsibilities by not trying to cooperate despite its internal divisions.

Today we should be able to create Trotskyist organizations in every country in the world, especially in the

underdeveloped countries where the present calm will give way to future storms. It would be fatally serious to once again leave these countries at the disposal of petty-bourgeois nationalism.

Not only is it also possible but absolutely indispensable to create organizations working towards the Eastern European countries, but especially towards the Soviet Union. Each of these tasks cannot be achieved separately by each Trotskyist organization, or by each international organism such as they are. But it is possible for the movement as a whole.

What is happening today in Portugal reminds us that historical events sometimes come on very quickly. They do not give the Trotskyist groups the time to evade their responsibilities.

November, 1975

SPARK (United States)  
LUTTE OUVRIERE (France)  
COMBAT OUVRIER (Antilles)  
UATCI (African Union of International Communist Workers) (Africa)

## PUTTING AN END TO THE CRUMBLING OF THE WORLD TROTSKYIST MOVEMENT

(translation)

Paris, February 16, 1976

United Secretariat of the  
Fourth International

Dear Comrades,

Our group, together with Spark (USA), Combat Ouvrier (Antilles), and UATCI (Africa), is addressing the document "Putting an End to the Crumbling of the Trotskyist Movement" to the entire Trotskyist movement.

In the name of the four organizations that signed the document, we would like to ask you to forward it, along with the cover letter, to the organizations that belong to or sympathize with the United Secretariat.

Thanking you in advance, we send our internationalist greetings.

Lutte Ouvrière

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## PUTTING AN END TO THE CRUMBLING OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

Nearly forty years after the founding of the Fourth International, the Trotskyist movement is the only one--on an international scale--to refer to the necessity of an independent proletarian political line and organization and to set as its goal the establishment of the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat, on the level of its basic programmatic formulations.

There are other currents which make more or less explicit references to proletarian revolution--in particular the so-called "state capitalist" groups and their various offshoots. But they never structured themselves on an international scale and have in fact even abandoned the idea. They were never able to elaborate a political line of their own. Most of them define themselves with respect to the Trotskyist movement, out of which the majority of them come.

As for the so-called "Maoist" groups, though they exist in almost every country and though they even have a notable influence in a number of under-developed countries, they represent (that is, when they represent anything at all) populist currents, the aim of which is quite openly to put the working class in the tow of bourgeois interests. When these organizations are able to develop, their explicit abandonment of the proletarian camp causes them to become organizations representing interests other than those of the proletariat.

The most important assets of the international Trotskyist movement are by far the two following facts: First, it

has maintained, at least in its programmatic references, the political continuity of the revolutionary movement, successively embodied in the International Workingmen's Association of Marx and Engels, in the Second International until World War I, in the Communist International of the 1919-1923 period, and ultimately in the Left Opposition and the Fourth International founded by Leon Trotsky. Secondly, it was the only movement to maintain its tradition during a difficult period, against classical reformism, against Stalinism and against the different varieties of "Third-Worldism" despite their Marxist cover.

Thanks to this maintenance of political continuity, today, after decades during which the revolutionary movement had no real influence on the working class movement, new generations can be trained and educated as proletarian revolutionaries.

However, it must be admitted that the Trotskyist movement has not been able to give itself a living, competent and efficient international leadership, recognized as such by all the forces of the Trotskyist movement.

The emergency of an International, of a world party of the revolution, recognized as a leadership by important fractions of the proletariat itself of course largely surpasses the mere problem of the will or the competence of proletarian revolutionary organizations. The emergence of an International is not dependent only upon the ability of the organizations to measure up to the tasks of the hour on the ideological and practical levels.

Nevertheless, the responsibility of the organizations that make up the Trotskyist movement is great, in the sense that today there does not even exist an international leadership corresponding to the present possibilities of the movement and to its development. The inability to maintain the organizational unity of the movement and the inability to train an international leadership recognized by all the Trotskyist groups are of course two aspects of the same problem.

The scattering of the Trotskyist movement is shown by the number of rival international leaderships, each of which has a variable audience; by the existence of a great number of Trotskyist organizations belonging to none of the existing international bodies; and by the type of relationships existing within each of these international bodies, which are often formal or even fictitious relationships.

No responsible Trotskyist organization, which really wants the Trotskyist movement to play the role that it should, can accept this division, this scattering of groups which is not justified by any programmatic view.

Of course, part of the existing disagreements between Trotskyist groups rest on questions of vital importance.

But it is precisely only inside a Trotskyist movement capable of doing away with sectarianism and ostracism and of allowing a large-scale confrontation of ideas, that the different analyses can be valuably discussed.

Such a confrontation, on the present situation of the Trotskyist movement, on the analysis of the causes of its scattering and on a critical balance-sheet of its evolution since Trotsky's death, appears clearly as a vital and urgent necessity.

No proclamation, address, or unilateral appeal will ever be able to solve a problem concerning the whole of the Trotskyist movement.

It is indispensable that an international framework for such a confrontation be set up. This proposition is not at all incompatible with working toward an International based on the rules of democratic centralism. On the contrary, to try and put an end to the scattered state of the Trotskyist movement is the best way to work toward the building of a democratic and centralized international organization.

Will such an organization be created around one of the existing international organizations? Will it be the fruit of a larger restructuring, and on other bases? The proposed confrontation will have to deal with these questions among others, because there are great differences of opinion as to this problem between the organizations which are members of international bodies and those which are not.

However, the starting point of this discussion must be the undeniable fact that an international organization having a political authority over the whole of the Trotskyist movement does not exist. This remains an aim which must be reached by the organizations existing today. Our task is to build a democratic centralized international organization starting with the presently scattered groups.

The democratic centralism of the international organization to be built will not be suspended in mid-air. It cannot be simply the result of correct statutes. It implies a basic agreement on the program. It also implies a mutual political trust on the part of the groups making up the international organization as well as the trust of all groups and of all their militants toward the leadership.

This trust between groups and this trust toward the leadership of the other groups do not exist at the present time. Unless one group is able to lead significant struggles of the proletariat in its own country and to prove through action that it deserves the political trust of the other groups, the sectarianism which is characteristic of the relations between Trotskyist organizations today will forever preclude the possibility of doing away with the groups' respective distrust.

The only other way to overcome this distrust is through a loyal confrontation of the points of view and through a

common activity. These should be started right away in all possible fields and can be extended afterwards to encompass all the activities of the groups concerned.

In the face of the present sad situation of a scattered Trotskyist movement whose sectarianism presents the first steps toward a solution to be undertaken, the undersigned organizations have taken the initiative to address themselves to the whole of the Trotskyist movement in order to set up an international framework wherein could be discussed the ways and means of creating an international forum within which all the different trends of the Trotskyist movement could coexist.

The framework proposed by the undersigned is not to become a new international body in competition with those already existing.

Neither is it to become a mere discussion group, though it will have to play this role to the fullest, by allowing the participants to outline their points of agreement and disagreement, thus contributing to the clarification needed by the Trotskyist movement.

The undersigned are conscious that the honest confrontation of points of view is just a necessary pre-condition for the establishment of a political program for the world revolutionary struggle of our epoch. Beyond this, the positions of each will have to undergo the test of actual political struggles. The existence of a program adopted by the whole of the movement implies the existence of an international leadership recognized as such by the movement.

The undersigned organizations consider that along with the discussion of the important problems of the Trotskyist movement, the proposed framework must examine the political and organizational help that the various groups can give to each other.

It will be up to the participating groups to determine the degree of collaboration they wish to establish, according to their own needs and to their own political and organizational capacities.

If, beyond the actual differences, the participating organizations deeply want to work toward a closer and closer collaboration; if they feel a concern for the political and organizational problems of the other groups; if they do all they can in order that--beyond the relationships between leaderships--closer and closer ties be established through the exchange of militants, the circulation of discussion material, etc., then, the possibility will exist for the establishment of relationship based on trust which in the future will form one basis of an ever-growing common discipline; then, leaders accepted by all will be

Paris, January 21, 1976

SPARK (United States)      LUTTE OUVRIERE (France)  
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Internationalist Communist  
Workers) (Africa)