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July 8, 1977

To Members of the LTF Steering Committee

Dear Comrades,

In addition to formally calling a meeting of the LTF Steering Committee for August in North America (see letter from John Benson elsewhere in this mailing), the meeting of the LTF Coordinating Committee held around the April 30-May 2 United Secretariat meeting took up our response to the "Declaration of the International Majority Tendency" (included in this mailing). The Coordinating Committee, by majority vote, adopted the position contained in Barry Sheppard's report to the April plenum of the National Committee of the Socialist Workers Party (U.S.) (included in this mailing). This included a proposal to the IMT leadership that both the IMT and the LTF stop further discussions within each faction on their respective European resolutions, and that discussions be held in the United Secretariat to explore the possibility of writing a new common document on Europe.

Comradely,

Barry Sheppard

DECLARATION OF  
THE INTERNATIONAL MAJORITY TENDENCY

The changes that have occurred both in the world situation and within the Fourth International require that the International Majority Tendency (IMT) redefine its political platform. The following statement represents a definition in this direction. This platform may be rounded out if necessary in light of the results of the discussion that will take place in the leading bodies of the International preparatory to the Eleventh World Congress on the draft general political resolution, the resolution on the Indochinese revolution, and the future draft resolution on Latin America.

1. The evolution of the world situation during the past several years has been marked by a new deterioration of the relationship of forces for imperialism, a deepening of the favorable conditions for the rise of world socialist revolution. The defeat of American imperialism in Vietnam and the reunification of Vietnam into a new workers state; the defeat of Portuguese colonialism in Angola, Mozambique, and Guinea-Bissau and the outcome of the Angolan civil war, which further extended the crisis of the system of imperialist domination toward southern Africa and Portugal, the first generalized recession of the international capitalist economy since the second world war and the grave crisis of political leadership of international imperialism which has coincided with it; the conjunction of this economic crisis with the rise of workers struggles and a generalized social crisis in a number of countries of southern Europe, which has led or will lead these countries to the brink of revolutionary crisis (Portugal 1975) or of prerevolutionary situation (Spain, Italy, France) -- such are the factors that have especially contributed to this evolution. Generally speaking, the general instability of the system is much more pronounced than it was during the 1950s and 1960s, even though there are notable differences from country to country, and even though American imperialism on the one hand and West German imperialism on the other have been much less shaken than most of their partners/competitors.

The import and objective consequences of the emergence of imperialist relays in the form of bourgeoisies in semi-industrialized countries commanding capital wealth and formidable military strength (Brazil, Iran, South Korea) must not be underestimated. Nevertheless, their capacity for counterrevolutionary action is undermined by explosive social contradictions in their own countries.

It may thus be concluded that if there have not been more victories for the socialist revolution during this phase, it is not primarily due to the intrinsic strength of the capitalist system, its

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reserves, and its ability to maneuver (factors which, of course, are involved to varying degrees in explaining world evolution), but more than ever to the crisis of proletarian leadership, to the disorienting, demobilizing, and divisive role of the traditional leaderships of the workers movement: Social Democratic, Stalinist, CPs of Stalinist origin, various trade-union bureaucracies, and to the "peaceful coexistence" policy of the Soviet and Chinese bureaucracies. It is these leaderships whose policies have once again wasted excellent opportunities for revolutionary "breakthroughs," particularly in Chile and Portugal, where the proletariat had exhibited remarkable combativity and revolutionary energy. In the present phase these leaderships are trying to repeat the same counterrevolutionary operations in Spain and Italy, and they will repeat these attempts in France in the future.

The new wave of the crisis of Stalinism in the USSR and Eastern Europe and the crisis of Maoism in China, parallel to the accentuated crisis of the capitalist system, indicate that the forces working toward a political revolution in the bureaucratized workers states are also developing, albeit at a pace which remains slow and in political forms which are not very advanced. There is, however, growing interaction among the manifestations of this crisis (particularly the repression in the USSR and the "people's democracies"), the development of consciousness within the workers movement in the capitalist countries of the phenomena of bureaucratization of the workers states, the political evolution of the CPs of Western Europe and elsewhere (Japan, Mexico, etc.), and the development of new opposition tendencies within these states, oppositions more oriented toward the working class and the international workers movement.

2. The trend toward the shift of the center of gravity of the world revolution to the imperialist countries (already stressed in the documents adopted at the Ninth and Tenth World Congresses) has intensified further during the past three years. It is combined with the greater weight of urban and proletarian struggles in the semicolonial and dependent countries themselves, at least in the most developed of them. The remarkable resistance of the Argentine proletariat to the military junta, the shift of the center of gravity of the Arab revolution from the Palestinian resistance to the Egyptian proletariat, and the explosions in the proletarian townships of South Africa constitute the most spectacular confirmations of this trend, which is also stimulated by advances in industrialization and urbanization in a whole series of semicolonial and dependent countries. What is involved,

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then, is a new stage in the dialectic of the world revolution, one which in no way implies a weakening of the possibilities for revolution in these countries.

This entire evolution culminates in the trend toward a more or less combined revolutionary upsurge in southern Europe (Spain, Italy, France, Portugal). Because of the increased social weight, higher level of organization, and degree of combativity of the proletariat of these four countries, and because of the gains in experience and capacity for self-organization that have been made in the past few years, this revolutionary crisis already promises to be one of the most serious in the whole history of the capitalist system. It will last for an entire period. Since this is the first time that the world's major revolutionary crisis will occur in countries in which the Fourth International commands organizational strength and a real capacity for intervention, the International's future development will depend in large measure on the successes or failures of its intervention in these revolutions.

For a series of both historical and structural and conjunctural reasons, the outcome of these revolutionary upsurges will depend jointly on the proletariats of these countries undergoing genuine experiences of a period of dual power -- during which the superiority of proletarian democracy over bourgeois democracy will be assimilated by the majority of the workers -- and on the transformation, in this context, of revolutionary Marxist organizations already rooted in the class into genuine revolutionary parties fighting to win the majority of the proletariat to their program and project of the conquest of power by workers councils.

The struggle for the realization of the transitional program as a whole, the struggle for the generalization of organs of self-organization of the working class, and the struggle to build mass revolutionary parties are but three aspects of one and the same reality: the transformation of the proletariat from a class still under the hegemony of the reformist leaderships into a class capable of successfully taking its fate into its own hands in order to reorganize the entire society on a socialist basis.

Within the workers movement, the major obstacle to the socialist victory remains the class collaborationist policy of the CPs, SPs, and trade-union bureaucracies, whatever particular forms it may take at one or another stage, in one or another country. The form of electoral or governmental alliances with significant bourgeois parties (the policy of the popular front) is only one of

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these possible forms. It must be vigorously denounced, but only as one variant of a more general orientation and political project, otherwise the workers could be disoriented if suddenly confronted with other variants of the same project of collaboration with the institutions of the bourgeois state and the employers. Is it necessary to recall that three of the cases in which policies of betrayal of the interests of the proletariat are now being applied in Europe by parties which hold a majority within the class are instances of "bourgeois workers" governments without representatives of bourgeois parties (Britain, Portugal) and support for a purely bourgeois government "from the outside" (Italy)? Our major attack must be directed against the basis of the betrayal (maintenance and consolidation of the bourgeois state apparatus, efforts to patch up the capitalist economy at the expense of the workers, while respecting the rules of the profit economy) and must place the denunciation of the alliance with the bourgeois parties in this more general framework.

3. But while betrayal of the interests of the proletariat and the proletarian revolution by the leaderships of the SPs, CPs, and trade-union bureaucracies has been a constant feature of the workers movement for half a century (for sixty years in the case of the Social Democracy) and remains the major threat to the rising revolution in southern Europe, a new factor must be underscored which seriously modifies the present situation compared to that of the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s. The grip of the traditional bureaucratic leaderships over the working class as a whole has weakened appreciably. The relationship of forces within the organized workers movement (particularly in the factories and trade unions) between these bureaucracies and the forces that escape their control at least partially and periodically has improved considerably for the latter. Granted, the traditional leaderships retain broad majorities within the class and still hold political hegemony. There has thus been no qualitative change in the situation. But the quantitative changes that have occurred are of such scope that they seriously improve revolutionary Marxists' chances to prevent prerevolutionary struggles from being stifled by the traditional leaderships.

In this conjuncture, marked by the depth of the crisis of the political, social, and economic system, the modification of the relationship of forces within the workers movement does not at all rule out phases during which the reformists and neoreformists, because of their preponderant weight within the class, may even gain an increased audience for their overall political projects. This makes a policy of united front on the part of our organizations more necessary and timely, a

policy which must be concretized particularly by proposals for united action around the major needs of the masses at each given stage. The application of such a united front policy, even during such phases, is made possible by the modifications in the relationship of forces previously underlined. This means that the temporarily greater credibility of the reformist political projects does not at all imply that they will succeed as they have in the past in imposing respect for all the implications of their class collaborationist policy on the workers. On the contrary, it suggests that there will be extensive instances of the reformists' being outflanked, instances for which our organizations must be prepared.

The IMT has been calling attention to these changes and their consequences since the pre-Tenth World Congress period. There were many misunderstandings and false counterpositions in the subsequent discussion, which provoked errors in the practice of sections. In order to overcome these problems, let us clarify a number of points:

a) What is involved in the emergence of a mass vanguard is a social phenomenon and not an assemblage of the so-called far left organizations. This social vanguard began to mature during the mid-1960s and has played an important role in the explosions of 1968-69 in France and Italy, in the Portuguese events of 1974-75, and in the reconstruction of the workers movement and successive waves of struggle in Spain, a country in which, because of the lack of legal structures of mass organization, this vanguard encompasses the essential portion of the workers cadres recognized by the class at the factory and neighborhood level at the present stage.

b) Precisely because of its social character, the broadening of this mass workers vanguard is also expressed in a process of differentiation within the traditional parties (a part of this vanguard began to emerge within the Socialist and Communist youth organizations, as well as within the SPs and CPs), in possible splits and left trade-union currents.

c) This vanguard's lack of programmatic and political coherence, like the partial character of its break with the projects upheld by the bureaucratic leaderships, does not at all negate the reality and importance of this phenomenon: at key moments in political, social, and economic life, hundreds of thousands of workers refuse to follow the line of their traditional leaderships. Such is the balance-sheet of Portugal in 1975, Spain at the end of 1976 and the beginning of 1977, Italy

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since Berlinguer agreed to support Andreotti's austerity policy. The same phenomenon will occur again in the future, on a grand scale in France and perhaps Britain, just as it has already occurred on a more limited scale in Denmark, Greece, Argentina, Chile, and elsewhere. (The pace and scope with which it will spread to other countries will depend primarily on the pace and scope of the new rise of workers struggles.)

In fighting against the consolidation of the state and army of the bourgeoisie and against the projects of austerity and step by step liquidation of the major gains of the working class of the years 1974-75, the broad vanguard of the Portuguese proletariat (not grouplets, but hundreds of thousands of workers and poor peasants) were defending the interests of the entire class, the interests of the Portuguese revolution. The weakness of the Trotskyists (who were but a handful as of April 25, 1974) resulted in the political leadership of this social vanguard falling into the hands of centrists and ultraleftists, which did not enable control of the majority of the working class to be wrested from Soares and Cunhal and facilitated the maneuvers of these traitors in maintaining the proletariat divided and bound to the project of reconstituting a capitalist Portugal.

Likewise in Italy, because of the weakness of our section compared with three centrist organizations which hold hegemony in the far left, the enormous potential of hundreds of thousands of workers in the big factories who in practice refused to follow the traitorous policy of Berlinguer and the tens of thousands who rejected it was not transformed into a political springboard for shaking the hold of the bureaucrats over the members and voters of the Italian CP.

We must fight with all our might to prevent this from happening again in Spain and France, and to make sure that positive experiences in these countries, combined with a growth of our sections, can have repercussions in Portugal, Italy, and possibly other countries of Europe, where a similar evolution may occur sometime after it does in the most unstable imperialist countries.

This requires constant political and ideological battle against the confusionism and political deviations of the ultraleftist and centrist formations, combined with a policy of united front which lends credibility to our orientation toward replacing, in practice, the traditional bureaucratic leadership of the working class with a new alternative leadership.

Understanding the uneven advance of the class consciousness of the proletariat, we try to grasp the reality of the workers movement in all its complexity and motion. We understand that it

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is possible for the electoral weight of the SP and CP to increase at the same time that their control over significant portions of the working class may be loosened in day to day struggles and mobilizations. The combination of our policy of united front toward the mass organizations, our efforts to stimulate the self-organization of the class (elected strike committees, general assemblies of the strikers and general trade-union assemblies in the factories, neighborhood committees, women's committees, etc.), and our fight to qualitatively broaden our political influence within the broad vanguard corresponds both to the precise stage of recomposition of the workers movement the class struggle has reached in the countries mentioned above and to the needs of the whole working class.

On the other hand, any policy such as that upheld by the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction (LTF) and the Bolshevik Tendency (BT),<sup>(1)</sup> which blurs over the contradictory features of this stage of the recomposition of the workers movement, denies the social phenomenon of the broad vanguard, reduces the workers movement to the traditional organizations, and deduces the weight of various currents solely from electoral results, may well find itself out of step with explosive struggles. In practice it leads to combining a policy of dogmatic and sterile denunciation of the traitorous leaderships with tailending these same leaderships in great struggles. It even threatens to become counterposed in practice to struggles that clearly express the interests of the entire class (such as the struggle against the various austerity policies or attempts to establish soviet-type organs during revolutionary crises), under the pretext that these struggles are most often begun by the action of "minority" sectors.

4. The minority faction of the Tenth World Congress has divided on several occasions in face of these principal features of the new rise of world revolution: during the 1976 IEC plenum some Latin American groups broke from this tendency; a crisis broke out in the Spanish LC over the situation in Spain. The minority's line during the Tenth World Congress had not prepared it politically for these events. Its balance-sheet is one of striking failure. In face of each successive revolutionary crisis since the Tenth World Congress the LTF has made wrong prognoses and analyses and has proposed a line of action which would have been a political disaster for our movement had it won a majority in the International.

Contrary to all evidence and any serious analysis of the social and political conditions in South Vietnam, the LTF obstinately persisted, right up through the collapse of the Thieu regime,



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in interpreting the NLF's signing of the Paris accords as implying the consolidation of capitalism in South Vietnam. In this the LTF based itself on a purely literal interpretation of the "program" of the Vietnamese CP, obstinately denying the reality of the line of action of this party, which, although through opportunist and bureaucratic methods which we must criticize and denounce, systematically oriented itself toward the liquidation of the regime of the landlords and the bourgeoisie, toward rejection of any policy of coalition based on maintaining the system of private property, toward the creation of a workers state, albeit bureaucratically deformed from the outset.

Contrary to all evidence and to the analysis of the social and political forces involved, and once again right through the catastrophe represented for its orientation by the open intervention of the South African army on the side of UNITA-FNLA and the deployment of the military forces of the Cuban revolution on the side of the MPLA, the LTF continued to place the three organizations engaged in the Angolan civil war on the same footing, going so far as to deny the character of this civil war as a clash between formations representing differing social forces and instead presenting it as an "inter-tribal conflict" or a conflict between "nationalities in formation." This led the LTF to the brink of an attitude of neutrality in a war between imperialism and a national liberation movement, which brought them to an ambiguous position on the brink of demanding the simultaneous withdrawal of all foreign troops, that is, not publicly clarifying the different attitude which revolutionary Marxists had to take toward imperialist mercenaries and South African troops on the one hand and the troops of the Cuban workers state on the other hand.

Contrary to all evidence and to a serious Marxist analysis of the social and political forces involved, the LTF presented the systematic and deliberate offensive of Mario Soares (unanimously supported by the Portuguese bourgeoisie, the high command of the Portuguese army, and imperialism) against the revolutionary gains of the proletariat, poor peasants, and soldiers in 1975, an offensive whose main purpose was the reconsolidation of the bourgeois state apparatus and repressive apparatus which had widely disintegrated under the impact of the revolutionary upsurge of 1975, as a "defense of democratic rights by the Social Democracy against a military dictatorship." It is sufficient to examine subsequent events to perceive the gross error of analysis made by the minority and the disastrous political conclusions drawn from it, which it attempts to camouflage today under the embarrassed formula, "the army changed its position and wound up preferring Soares to Cunhal."

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To this day the LTF has drawn no lessons from its refusal to apply the traditional Trotskyist line of centering action during a situation that is becoming revolutionary on the extension, generalization, coordination, and centralization of the various organs of a soviet or pre-soviet type which emerged on a broad scale during the Portuguese revolution, even if in varying forms and with varying degrees of representativeness.

Finally, in the revolutionary crisis ripening in Spain, for opportunist reasons the LTF covered up the apparently "doctrinaire" but actually ultra-opportunist maneuvers of the leadership of the LC, especially on the trade-union question, a decisive one in Spain today. In effect, the LC, motivated by blind Stalinophobia (going so far as to consider the Workers Commissions as "anti-trade-union" and as "the major force responsible for trade-union division"), openly opted for trade-union division and supported the demagogy of the Social Democratic bureaucracy, to the point of stating that it favored the breakup of the Coordinación Sindical of the Workers Commissions, UGT, and USO, and asserting that trade-union unity boiled down to "UGT-CNT unity." There is no reason to be surprised that the leader of the LC who was the major theoretician of such an adventurist position has already openly abandoned the positions of Trotskyism and Leninism.

If such positions had been identified with the Fourth International, the Trotskyists would have appeared as dividers of the working class. This was able to be avoided only thanks to the audience of the LCR and the healthy reaction of the working class rank and file of the LC (of which the portion organized in the "Workers Tendency" has been expelled from the LC and has joined the LCR).

We find a common method in all these false positions: underestimation of revolutionary possibilities in countries on the brink of revolutionary crisis or already immersed in such a crisis; overestimation of reformist control over mass movements under such conditions; inability to shift rapidly from tactics and slogans appropriate to "normal" situations to the tactics and slogans required by situations of prerevolutionary or revolutionary crisis; sterile propagandism instead of a line of intervention in real struggles, which can only seriously inhibit the possibilities of building the party at an accelerated pace when struggles of great scope occur; rigid formalism in the approach to key problems of political and social struggle (the political forces in play are judged essentially on the basis of their writings and not their objective role in the class struggle); a beginning of revisionism of Marxism on the problems of the state (particularly the institutions of

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the bourgeois democratic state and the role of the proletarian state power in the overthrow of capitalism) and of bourgeois and petty-bourgeois nationalism among the oppressed nationalities (to which an unequivocal progressive role is attributed without taking account of the influence this ideology exerts in retarding the constitution of the proletariat as a class organized separately from the bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie, including on the political level).

It is natural that this faction blew apart under the combined effects of the experience of the Angolan and Portuguese revolutions on the one hand and the political failure of the LTF in the four cases cited above on the other hand. It has divided into two organized groups: the BT, which includes the majority of its forces in Latin America, and the LTF, which, in addition to the important sector of North America and Australia, includes a few nuclei in Latin America, Europe, and Asia. It is significant that an important part of the Central Committee of the Spanish LC, the only significant organization supporting the LTF in Europe, has also broken with the LTF.

Such is the verdict which events have rapidly pronounced on a faction that claimed to be "straightening out" the International and defending "orthodox Trotskyism."

As for the BT, it split off from the LTF only belatedly. It has offered no credible account of the reasons for which it remained so long associated with a faction that evolved toward the disastrous positions on Vietnam, Angola, Portugal, and Spain outlined above. While the BT has since declared itself generally in agreement with the positions of the IMT on Angola, and while it has adopted positions midway between those of the IMT and those of the LTF on the key importance of the struggle for the emergence, generalization, and centralization of soviet-type organs of self-organization of the toiling masses in a situation moving from prerevolutionary to revolutionary, its basic methodology remains opportunist and tailendist.

It is founded on systematic confusion between the mass movement and the bureaucratic apparatus of the organizations that hold the majority within the working class, constantly underestimating the possibility of the apparatus being outflanked by the movement, often making concessions to the orientations of the apparatus under the pretext of gaining the ear of the masses. The line of the Argentine PST during the year preceding the military coup, the line of the Uruguayan PRT during the period of the Frente Amplio and at the beginning of the Bordaberry coup, the line of the Portuguese PRT toward the Soares apparatus, and the line upheld by the BT for Spain and

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Italy can all be reduced to this common denominator. The BT, like the LTF, also identifies defense of democratic rights of the masses with defense of the institutions of the bourgeois-parliamentary state.

In addition, the BT is characterized by ultrafactional behavior, virtually openly theorizing the priority of building the faction over building the party and the International and overstepping the organizational norms that must regulate any Leninist organization as soon as political differences are aggravated somewhat.

5. Between the Tenth and Eleventh World Congresses the International has gone through a period of growth, often modest, sometimes spectacular (above all in Spain, Mexico, and Colombia, and through the appearance and stabilization of its first daily, in France) and extension of the scope of its geographic base. In essence, this growth results from the favorable modification of the relationship of forces, both between the classes and within the working class and the organized workers movement. The capacity of the International and its major sections to seize these opportunities, however, is a function of the correct political orientation of the general political resolution passed by the Tenth World Congress. In this sense, it may be said that the political line adopted at the Tenth World Congress has not been an obstacle but on the contrary a stimulant to building the International.

In addition, the majority of the leadership that came out of the Tenth World Congress has demonstrated its maturity by adhering against hell and high water -- and in face of genuine provocations such as the expulsion of the IT comrades from the SWP and the formation by the BT of a quasi-public faction in the Mexican PRT -- to a resolutely unitary conception, defending the principle of maintaining the unity of the International. This conception is not based on "opportunist concessions" on anyone's part, but on a correct analysis of the character of the differences, one which has been confirmed by events.

The differences that have arisen in the Fourth International turn around the analysis of some of the major focuses of the world class struggle. The discussion has touched on a number of theoretical questions of great importance, on which the minorities have exhibited dangerous revisionist tendencies on several occasions.

But despite the scope of this discussion, the gravity of the errors of analysis and political

positions adopted by the minorities, and the beginning of theoretical revision which has been exhibited on some questions, the IMT reaffirms that all the components of our International have their place in it, that none of them has degenerated, nor do any base their orientation on a revision of the Trotskyist program. The IMT consequently defines its objectives in terms of a discussion within the Fourth International. The aim of the IMT is to assure, through this discussion, a new political coherence of the whole of our movement, and not simply to win a majority, thus contributing to calling a halt to the political course now being followed by the minorities.

The capacity of the IMT to make its self-criticism on the Latin American document of the Ninth World Congress, a document which incontestably played an important role in precipitating the tendency struggle within the movement but which cannot principally account for this struggle, especially in light of the events in Portugal, Angola, and Spain, represents additional proof of the maturity of the International leadership.

Nevertheless, the balance-sheet of the International since the Tenth World Congress is not solely one of progress and success, though these are real. There have also been deficiencies and failures which must be stressed:

a) While the International center has been strengthened in accordance with the decisions voted at the Tenth World Congress, and while the appearance of INPRECCR in four languages for the first time gives the International leadership an instrument for making its current political elaboration known to a significant portion of the members and sympathizers of the Fourth International, the center remains much too weak in cadres and material resources to be able to respond to all the requirements of an organization that has appreciably increased in numerical strength, implantation in the class, and geographical breadth. Important functions such as the coordination of workers work in Europe, the coordination of women's work, support to Arab work, and support to the comrades in Asia have not been carried out or have been carried out very inadequately.

b) There has been a serious delay in political elaboration, particularly on the balance-sheet of the revolution and counterrevolution in Latin America and on the new oppositions in the USSR and Eastern Europe.

c) There was insufficient reaction from the leadership of the International to incorrect, "vanguardist" interpretations of the European document, the consequence of which has been that

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the necessary readjustments in orientation in countries like France or Spain have had to be made primarily on the initiative of the leaderships of sections, and inevitably belatedly. More generally, the overabundance of tasks facing the still too limited center has prevented adequate and regular discussion of the tactical problems of the European sections by the leadership of the International.

d) There was insufficient demonstrations of solidarity with the Palestinian resistance and the Lebanese left during the civil war in this country.

e) There has been a politically unjustified interruption in the regular publication of a theoretical review of the Fourth International in several languages as well as in the regular publication of the internal bulletins in the French language.

f) There is insufficient coordination in the realm of publications, an area in which there has been considerable expansion.

g) There have been hesitations, a lack of clarity, belated definition of definite criteria, and an excessively long delay in initiatives on the question of regroupments.

Correcting these errors and radically overcoming these weaknesses will be an important task for the new leadership of the International that comes out of the Eleventh World Congress. These are the essential preconditions for maintaining and accelerating the growth of the International after the Eleventh World Congress.

6. The tendency struggle within the International has created, especially since the Tenth World Congress, an abnormal organizational situation in which the elementary norms of democratic centralism have been violated. Thus, infractions of discipline have been committed in the application of the positions taken by the World Congress and the plenums of the IEC on the fate of the Indochinese revolution after the Paris accords, the Portuguese revolution, and the national liberation struggle in Angola. This abnormal situation has triggered an extremely dangerous dynamic, inasmuch as this violation is beginning to be theorized and systematized at the level of principles.

The idea of an International based on democratic centralism has been defended since 1914 by internationalist Marxists, since 1919 by all communists, and between 1933 and 1940, with determination, by Trotsky and the Trotskyists. This is not at all a question of a "separate organizational chapter" of revolutionary Marxist theory, something which has nothing to do with the program and would somehow express the "particular national experiences" of the workers

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movement depending on whether it is accepted warmly, reluctantly, or only with lip service.

The idea of an International based on democratic centralism is an integral part of our political program. It is the logical and inevitable complement of the theory of imperialism and the theory of the permanent revolution. Any systematic rejection of this idea (whether in theory or solely in practice) inevitably reveals deviations and leads to the practice, if not the theory, of "national" communism and socialism in one country. "Parallel with Trotsky's irreconcilability in defending the internationalist principles of the movement was his adamant insistence upon the necessity and primacy of the international organization. 'Only an international organization can be the bearer of an international ideology.' The organizational form flows from and must correspond to the party's platform." (John G. Wright, "Trotsky's Struggle for the Fourth International," in Fourth International, August 1946.)

Granted, the international application of democratic centralism differs from its national application. The International does not impose national leaderships or national tactics on sections against the will of the majority of the members, not because the International leadership "lacks authority" or "has not proven itself," but because to act in such a way is ineffective, that is, contrary to the interests of party building and the proletarian revolution (a leadership commanding the authority of a Lenin or a Trotsky should be even more resolute in not applying such mechanical discipline, for it would have much more serious consequences since it might be more easily accepted at the outset).

The objective basis for this difference in the application of democratic centralism in the national and international spheres lies in the fact that the conquest of state power by the proletariat is still essentially carried out on the national level, that the national party is an instrument that aims primarily at this. But this very definition of the problem demonstrates its full complexity. On the one hand the internationalization of the class struggle means that the proletariat is increasingly confronted by the intervention of the international bourgeoisie before, during, and immediately after the seizure of power (as the example of Portugal once again confirms). On the other hand, the international extension of the revolution is an indispensable condition not only for building socialism but also for an effective struggle against the bureaucratic deformations of workers power.

The existence of an international organization with an international structure and discipline

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thus corresponds both to the needs of the proletarian revolution and to the interests of the world proletariat in our epoch; it is not just a stylistic turn of phrase which we owe to our "tradition." The uneven and combined character of the process of world revolution is reflected in the combination of national revolutionary organizations and an International which must be a genuine world party and not a simple addition of sections, a simple body of "collaboration" and mutual consultation among national parties.

That is why on all programmatic and international questions the votes of the Congresses are binding on the national sections. Otherwise, the precise article of the statutes that asserts that those decisions which the Congress can make must be carried out by all sections no longer has any meaning. It would have to be modified along these lines: "The decisions of the World Congresses must be applied only by those sections that agree with them." We await with interest to see whether either of the existing minorities will propose such a modification of the statutes. As for us, we stick to the present text, and we will wage a vigorous campaign to see that it is actually applied. Indispensable discipline in action obviously does not mean that discussion (public or otherwise) of positions that have been adopted is suppressed.

Equally unprincipled is the assertion of the minorities that discipline is necessarily relaxed and factions become public in practice when serious political differences exist. This is the argument Stalinists, Maoists, centrists, and indeed all opponents of Bolshevism use in order to claim that the right of tendencies and toleration of factions inevitably lead to splits. We reject this argument as contrary to positive experiences, such as that of the Bolsheviks during Lenin's time, the Communist International between 1919 and 1923, and the Fourth International during the past ten years. Our ability to combine a very hard tendency struggle with the maintenance of the unity of the movement as a world organization indicates that democratic centralism can be effective and productive. Nevertheless, two series of experiences on this matter must be seriously criticized and rejected as contrary to Leninist principles.

On the one hand, the transformation of minority factions into de facto public factions in practice publishing their own international faction organs outside the control of the International leadership, creating their own international faction apparatus functioning outside the normal leadership bodies of the International, and organizing their own international expenditures, which



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widely exceed the resources placed at the disposal of the movement as a whole and are not distributed according to priorities determined by the leadership bodies.

On the other hand, the brutal expulsion of minority tendencies under inadmissible pretexts and through clearly bureaucratic methods, such as the expulsion of the IT by the SWP, the expulsion first of the BT and then of the Workers Tendency by the Spanish LC, or threats of purge of the Mexican LS by the majority leadership of that organization at the last congress held before it split.

In contrast to these repeated violations of democratic centralism by the minorities, the balance-sheet of the IMT is much more positive. Neither in the International nor in any section led by the IMT has there been any expulsion of any minority. We do not deny that errors in the application of democratic centralism have also been committed by the IMT, in cases such as the splits in Australia and Canada, for example, or that these errors have not always been swiftly enough corrected by a collective effort of the tendency. We simply want to stress that the major responsibility for all the errors in the realm of organizational principles lies in the atmosphere of defiance of international democratic centralism created by the behavior of the minorities.

The IMT makes the struggle for an International based on democratic centralism, on a single organization in each country, on the normal execution of their statutory duties by all sections, on the normal functioning of the leadership bodies, and on the radical and definitive halt to the practices of public factions an essential point in its fight before and during the Eleventh World Congress. The Tenth World Congress made the mistake of not recognizing the strongest organization adhering to the FI in each country as the official section (such as the PST in Argentina and the LCR in Spain, etc.). We will fight at the Eleventh World Congress for the implementation of universal criteria, as outlined in this paragraph, for the recognition of a single section in each country. The struggle against any attempt to transform the Fourth International into a federation of factions and/or national organizations is a struggle to safeguard the programmatic integrity of the Fourth International. It is a struggle for its survival. History has been implacable against all attempts to create national "Trotskyist" sects. They are condemned to degenerate, organizationally as well as politically. Moreover, any unprincipled practice in the sphere of international organization sooner or later has repercussions in the sphere of national organizations as well. The fight to defend the Fourth International as a democratic-centralist organization is an integral part

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of the struggle for the transitional program and for the victory of the international socialist revolution.

7. Tendencies and a faction, with permanent contours, have existed in the International for eight years now. This is an abnormal situation in a democratic organization like ours. It is time to return to a mode of functioning more in conformity with the traditions of Bolshevism.

The IMT will henceforth act as an "ideological" tendency based on:

- a) the present statement;
- b) the general line of the European document presented to the Eleventh World Congress, to which the IMT is preparing a series of amendments;
- c) the general line of the document of self-criticism on Latin America;
- d) defense of the conception of international democratic centralism such as it is developed in the entirety of the statutes of the International and made explicit in point 6 of the present statement, along with a proposal that a document on this question be discussed and voted on at the Eleventh World Congress. If necessary, if no agreement can be reached in the United Secretariat in this regard, the IMT will submit a tendency document on this subject to the pre-World Congress discussion.

As indicated in the preamble to this statement, other documents may possibly be added to this platform, depending on the development of the political discussion in the leadership bodies.

The fact that the IMT will act only as an "ideological" tendency implies that it will not prejudge the positions taken by the entire International on questions other than those contained in its platform by raising them first within the tendency. The discussion within the tendency will thus be limited to the questions on which the disagreements within the Fourth International have already been clearly revealed. At the present stage, the IMT defines these questions as those contained in its platform. At the present stage, discussion within the tendency will hence be limited to these questions, as well as problems directly linked to the struggle to have them adopted in the sections and at the World Congress. The discussion will be extended to other questions only if proposals are made to possibly include them in the tendency platform.

It follows that the only condition for adherence to the IMT is agreement with the documents of its platform. On other questions the members of the tendency are free to adopt the positions of

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their choice, to write documents on these questions if they consider it necessary, within the statutory framework that regulates the discussion organized in their section and in the International. These documents will not be discussed in the tendency unless they are submitted for inclusion in the tendency platform.

Thus, the members of the IMT are not bound by any discipline in the pre-World Congress discussion, apart from the duty to fight for adoption of the line of the documents selected as the tendency platform. As for the questions related to the struggle for this line, including those of tactical votes, discussions in this regard will take place within the tendency. But since these questions involve elements of judgment other than the political positions of the tendency, the results of these discussions will have only moral weight on the members of the tendency.

The IMT -- as it has already committed itself on several occasions in the past -- has brought all its weight to bear for representatives of the two minorities to command full and complete representation in the leadership bodies of the International, representation that even exceeds their proportional numerical weight in the ranks of the International. They must be still more associated with all the political and organizational decisions, both at the stage of their initial elaboration and at the stage of their execution, not in parallel ad hoc consultations, but within the regularly constituted and elected leadership bodies. All the responsibilities that devolve on them, both in the political and practical contribution they can make to the building of the International as a function of their capacities and of the weight of the real sector of the movement which they represent, must be attributed to them. The political and principled basis of this orientation lies in a correct application of democratic centralism, as well as in the conviction that the dynamic of the political differences is not on the rise, that the minorities are capable of correcting some of the serious errors they have committed, and that any obstinacy on their part in maintaining a factional attitude would be an unprincipled policy for which they would pay that much more dearly since the majority of the International shall have applied a correct policy toward them.

But at the same time the IMT confirms, before the entire International, that it will consider that the LTF and the BT are continuing to function as factions engaging in practices contrary to the statutes and to Leninist principles of organization, regardless of any intention or written or oral assertion, so long as their behavior in practice remains that which has been criticized in

**The final pages of this document were not available for scanning.**

A Reply to the International Majority  
Tendency Declaration

By Barry Sheppard

[The general line of the following report was adopted by the National Committee of the Socialist Workers Party on April 17, 1977.]

At our January plenum we outlined our response to the "Self-Criticism on Latin America" by the International Majority Tendency Steering Committee [see "The Meaning of the IMT Steering Committee's Self-Criticism on Latin America," by Jack Barnes, International Internal Discussion Bulletin (IIDB), Volume XIV, No. 5, May 1977]. This included our proposal that the factional structures of both the IMT and LTF should be dissolved. At the February meeting of the United Secretariat we outlined our views for all the comrades present. The IMT Steering Committee met at the end of February, and adopted a "Declaration of the International Majority Tendency," which can be considered a first response to our proposal.

The IMT declaration is a contradictory document. I will first take up a certain number of positive steps forward contained in it.

We note that the IMT has accepted our proposal to place Latin America on the agenda of the next world congress and to explore, through discussions on the leading bodies of the international, the possibility of writing a common document on Latin America. The goal of writing such a common document is made more realizable by the decision of the IMT not to include as part of their platform the three documents on Argentina, Bolivia, and armed struggle adopted by the last world congress (1974). The new IMT platform includes only the "Self-Criticism" on this point. This strengthens the "Self-Criticism" and opens the way to a majority agreement to rescind the documents on Latin America passed by both the 1969 and 1974 world congresses.

The IMT declaration states that the 1974 world congress made a mistake in not recognizing the PST in Argentina as the section. This is an important step forward, since the treatment accorded the PST by the IMT was one of the examples of the factionalism of the majority leadership that developed after the 1969 world congress, and had been a source of considerable organizational tension.

The declaration also says that the IMT made errors in the splits that occurred in Australia and Canada. This clarification should help the process of fusion of Fourth Internationalist forces in those countries.

The declaration criticizes the threats of a purge made by the majority of the Mexican Liga Socialista (LS--Socialist League) at the LS convention of December 1975, which should

help the rapid fusion of the Mexican Trotskyist forces. This represents a welcome reversal on the part of the IMT [see "The February 1976 Plenum of the International Executive Committee of the Fourth International," by Barry Sheppard, SWP Internal Information Bulletin (IIB), No. 6 in 1976, April 1976].

The declaration affirms that minorities in the international should be integrated in "all the political and organizational decisions, both at the stage of their initial elaboration and at the stage of their execution...." This contrasts with the way the IMT acted in regard to Portugal, for example in 1975 when it excluded participation by LTF members in the work of helping the Portuguese comrades. If the intention expressed in the declaration is carried out, it would mean a reversal of the factional methods utilized in the center by the IMT following the 1974 world congress. Some progress in practice along these lines has occurred since the agreements reached at the October 1976 United Secretariat meeting. [See "Report on October 16-17, 1976, Meeting of the United Secretariat," by Jack Barnes and Joseph Hansen, SWP IIB No. 15 in 1976, December 1976.]

The declaration also admits that there has been a politically unjustified interruption in the regular publication of the internal bulletins in French. Overcoming this by the IMT leaders of the French section is a prerequisite for holding a democratic discussion in preparation for the next world congress.

#### The 'New Mass Vanguard'

The most important step forward in the IMT declaration, however, is political, and concerns the conception of the "new mass vanguard." First of all, the declaration indicates that there had been "vanguardist" interpretations of the European resolution submitted by the IMT and adopted at the last world congress. Further, it indicates that such interpretations were made by the French LCR and the Spanish LCR, whose leaderships have made recent corrections in spite of the failure of the international leadership to yet do so.

The declaration "clarifies" a number of points concerning the "new mass vanguard," lack of understanding of which led to "errors in the practice of sections." This clarification includes the definition of the "mass vanguard" as a "social phenomenon and not an assemblage of the so-called far left organizations." This vanguard includes more advanced workers and youth in the Social Democratic and Stalinist parties and youth organizations. The "reality and importance of this phenomenon" has been evident when large numbers of workers have refused to follow the line of their traditional leaderships in certain important situations, even though they have not fully broken with those leaderships, and

even though this vanguard does not have programmatic and political coherence. Further, it is necessary for the Fourth International to politically fight the ultraleft and centrist organizations for influence over these vanguard workers. The declaration says: "This requires constant political and ideological battle against the confusionism and political deviations of the ultraleftist and centrist formations, combined with a policy of united front..." toward the Social Democrats and Stalinists.

This rectification by the IMT goes a long way toward reducing the differences we had with them on this question since we gave the United Secretariat report on the Youth Radicalization to the 1969 world congress. We have pointed to the importance of the existence of a social layer of radicalizing youth and young workers which the IMT was attempting to grapple with under the heading of "new mass vanguard." Our differences developed over what to do about it. We said the IMT did not differentiate between this social layer and the ultraleft and centrist groups of the "far left." It projected a strategy of attempting to coalesce the "far left" groups by organizing national political campaigns around the "concerns" of the "vanguard" and thereby create an "adequate instrument" that could outflank the traditional organizations. This concept would lead to adaptation to the ultralefts and centrists, we said, and to underestimation of the continuing obstacle that the Social Democracy and the Stalinists represent and their continuing attraction to newly radicalized young workers.

On the basis of the corrections made by the IMT in this declaration, we believe that we should propose that there be a common discussion in the leadership bodies of the international to see if it is possible to write a common resolution on Europe, or on the imperialist countries. That is, we think we should stop the process of both the IMT and the LTF discussing these questions of strategy within each faction in order to prepare counterposed documents, and begin a common discussion, the goal of which is to write a common resolution, if possible.

### Steps Backward

Along with these steps forward, there are key aspects of the IMT declaration which constitute surprising steps backward.

Among the documents listed as the basis of the re-defined IMT is one that is yet to be written on democratic centralism. Apparently, it will be along the lines of the highly factional and one-sided conception of democratic centralism contained in the declaration. While it states that a discussion on democratic centralism will take place first in the United Secretariat, to adopt an unwritten

document as part of the IMT platform cuts across previous agreements that an open discussion would be held on the question of democratic centralism in the leading bodies without previous factional lineups on the question. The declaration is designed to do exactly the opposite. By raising a series of accusations against the LTF and the SWP to the effect that they have and continue to violate "elementary norms of democratic centralism," and by committing the IMT to a series of positions on the question before the discussion in the United Secretariat, the declaration precludes the kind of discussion on this question that had been previously agreed to. Once one of the factions adopts as a plank of its platform a resolution on democratic centralism, discussion on it will tend to occur along factional lines.

Similarly, there had been agreement to discuss the world political situation on a nonfactional basis in the leadership bodies, with the goal of writing a common document on this question. The declaration itself refers to this in its first paragraph. But then the declaration, which is part of the new platform of the IMT, proceeds to take political positions on a whole series of questions. These range from the assertion that the center of gravity of the Arab revolution has shifted from the Palestinian resistance to the Egyptian proletariat, to the assertion that the Vietnamese Communist Party "systematically oriented itself toward the liquidation of the regime of the landlords and the bourgeoisie." A general analysis of the world situation is included. Again, the declaration lines up the IMT on a whole series of political positions before there has been a discussion in the United Secretariat. This is just what we must get away from--discussing and adopting positions on the new questions and documents in the factions and not in the elected leadership bodies first.

The IMT says that the purpose of its declaration is to "redefine" its political platform. It no longer stands on a single one of the documents which defined it in the past. In place of the documents which formerly defined the IMT, it now stands on four new ones. One is the new declaration we are discussing. The second is the European resolution previously submitted by the IMT for the next world congress--a resolution that is to be substantially amended. The third is the "Self-Criticism on Latin America." And the fourth is a document on democratic centralism which has not yet been written.

This method is not correct. A faction should not be based on a group of people who were in agreement on superseded positions of the past, or who are "like-minded," or have the same "method." New questions should not be approached as if the old factional alignments will automatically apply. When changes in the platform of a faction are of such a substantial nature as the "Self-Criticism on Latin America,"



it is better to dissolve that faction, probe the areas of agreement the new position could open up, and only if necessary should a new faction or tendency be constituted, and then only after a thorough exploration of the current political positions of all concerned and without a preconception that new lineups, if any, will occur along the old faction lines.

#### Political Charges Against the LTF

The declaration contains a series of political charges against the LTF. I will list some of them. One is that the LTF pictured the counterrevolutionary policy of the leadership of the Portuguese Socialist Party "as a 'defense of democratic rights by the Social Democracy against a military dictatorship.'"

In relation to Angola, the LTF went "to the brink of an attitude of neutrality in a war between imperialism and a national liberation movement, which brought them to an ambiguous position on the brink of demanding the simultaneous withdrawal of all foreign troops, that is, not publicly clarifying the different attitude which revolutionary Marxists had to take toward imperialist mercenaries and South African troops on the one hand and the troops of the Cuban workers state on the other hand."

The declaration charges the LTF with having "covered up the apparently 'doctrinaire' but actually ultra-opportunist maneuvers of the leadership of the LC [Liga Comunista--Communist League of Spain]...."

The IMT discerns a "common method" of the LTF: "underestimation of revolutionary possibilities in countries on the brink of revolutionary crisis or already immersed in such a crisis; overestimation of reformist control over mass movements under such conditions; inability to shift rapidly from tactics and slogans appropriate to 'normal' situations to the tactics and slogans required by situations of prerevolutionary or revolutionary crisis; sterile propaganda instead of a line of intervention in real struggles, which can only seriously inhibit the possibilities of building the party at an accelerated pace when struggles of great scope occur; rigid formalism in the approach to key problems of political and social struggle (the political forces in play are judged essentially on the basis of their writings and not their objective role in the class struggle); a beginning of revisionism of Marxism on the problems of the state (particularly the institutions of the bourgeois democratic state and the role of the proletarian state power in the overthrow of capitalism) and of bourgeois and petty-bourgeois nationalism among the oppressed nationalities (to which an unequivocal progressive role is attributed without taking account of the influence this ideology exerts in re-

tarding the constitution of the proletariat as a class organized separately from the bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie, including on the political level)."

After all that, it is hardly shocking to learn that the LTF "identifies defense of democratic rights of the masses with defense of the institutions of the bourgeois-parliamentary state."

The picture the IMT paints of the LTF is of a sectarian tendency which is utterly worthless in any revolutionary crisis, and which has adopted outright reformist positions on key questions to boot. Small wonder that the IMT says that it would have been a "political disaster for our movement had it [the LTF] won a majority in the International."

#### The IMT Is a Faction

Moreover, the LTF has violated the "elementary norms of democratic centralism" and is continuing to engage in "practices contrary to the statutes and to Leninist principles of organization." It broke discipline concerning "the fate of the Indochinese revolution after the Paris accords, the Portuguese revolution, and the national liberation struggle in Angola." It has transformed itself into a de facto public faction, which publishes its own faction organ. The SWP leadership carried out a "brutal" expulsion through "bureaucratic methods" under "inadmissible pretexts" of the Internationalist Tendency [IT], an expulsion which was a "genuine provocation." Although the IMT also made some errors in applying democratic centralism, "the major responsibility for all [yes, all] the errors in the realm of organizational principles lies in the atmosphere of defiance of international democratic centralism created by the behavior of the minorities."

The declaration states that the IMT will fight against these organizational practices of the LTF.

In order to understand the IMT position, let us assume that the charges leveled by the IMT at the LTF are true. Then the LTF is a faction that has degenerated politically and which carries out repeated and continuous violations of democratic centralism. Such a faction cannot be fought by an ideological tendency. You need a counterfaction to do that. The IMT declaration is a justification for maintaining the IMT as a faction, organized to fight the political degeneration and organizational practices of the LTF.

This is underscored by the declaration, which states the IMT will fight against the LTF as long as the LTF continues to act as was criticized in "paragraphs 8 and 9 of point 6 of the present resolution," that is, as long

as the LTF violates democratic centralism as judged by the IMT.

Thus the IMT declaration on the face of it contradicts the assertion included in the statement that the IMT is becoming an "ideological tendency." That the IMT intends to continue functioning in a factional manner is also indicated by the fact that it says that it will hold discussions on "tactics" concerning the struggle for the positions of the IMT, which include the positions and charges contained in the declaration, although "the results of these discussions will have only moral weight on the members of the tendency." Thus the IMT will continue to hold its own separate discussions apart from discussions in the leadership bodies, and will exercise "moral weight" on its members to line up even on what are admittedly tactical items.

We have to say that the IMT declaration amounts to a rejection of our proposal that the factional structures be dismantled in preparation for the next world congress.

#### The IMT Proposal

A word should be said about the final point in the IMT declaration, which is apparently the IMT's counter-proposal to us: "At the Eleventh World Congress, the IMT will also urge all tendencies and factions to dissolve after this Congress and allow the leadership democratically elected by the Congress to test the application of the line adopted by the Congress. Ideological tendencies may be reconstituted, if it is politically justified, during the period preparatory to the Twelfth World Congress (or when events whose objective importance for the fate of the revolution and the International is undeniable provoke serious differences within the movement, and in accordance with the discussion organized in the International by its leadership bodies)."

Taken with the declaration as a whole, this apparently means that the IMT intends to hold together as a faction at least up to the next world congress, and after that, too, if "all tendencies" do not dissolve at that time. This runs directly counter to the objective needs of the international. Responsible leaders on all sides should seriously probe the extent to which it is possible to overcome the divisions of the past, especially in light of the organizational agreements reached at the October 1976 United Secretariat meeting and the narrowing of political differences indicated in the IMT "Self-Criticism on Latin America." To facilitate this process, we have to break up the factional structures, stop holding preliminary discussions on new events and documents in the factions, and allow these initial discussions to first be held in the

leadership bodies of the international, and seriously work to achieve common positions. Whatever differences emerged would presumably not follow the old factional lineups. It is our opinion that if we follow this course, we could achieve common positions on a number of documents at least that would command the support of a large majority of the international.

Second, although the IMT declaration states it will "urge" tendencies and factions to dissolve after the next world congress, we have to put this point in the context of the practice of sections that are led by IMT supporters, such as the French section, which has in the past formally required tendencies to dissolve after congresses. It is true that after a congress or a convention the movement normally shifts gears, to implement the decisions, and the internal discussion is closed for the time being except insofar as is decided by the leadership bodies. But this in no way implies a ban on the continued existence of tendencies or factions, which have the right to exist under the norms of democratic centralism.

#### The Charges Are False

I am not here going to make a point-by-point rebuttal of the political and organizational charges the IMT declaration levels against the LTF and the SWP, but just take up a few of them as well as discuss the method used.

First, comrades will note that the declaration purports to quote from LTF positions. I'm sure comrades also noted that no sources were given for these quotations. That is because the positions attributed to the LTF by utilizing quotation marks are falsifications, as any objective searching for the "quotes" of the LTF documents will demonstrate.

For example, the IMT declaration charges that the LTF portrayed the counterrevolutionary role of the Portuguese Socialist Party leadership in the summer of 1975 as a "defense of democratic rights by the Social Democracy against a military dictatorship." This is a falsification and does not represent the positions of the LTF.

The attempt by the IMT declaration to present the debate over Portugal in this fashion obscures the very real differences we had. These include differences over the República case and defense of the democratic rights of the SP when these were under attack from the Gonçalves government; differences over the importance of the fight for democratic rights, in Leninist revolutionary strategy in general and in the Portuguese revolution in particular; differences over the nature of the Armed Forces Movement; whether we should call for a CP-SP government; whether we should have defended the Constituent Assembly against at-

tempts by the capitalist government to disband it in the summer of 1975; how to promote the development of real soviets, united front organs of struggle of the working class; what attitude to take toward the fake "soviets" set up by the "far left"; what attitude to take toward the "far left" front called the FUR; etc.

Some charges made by the IMT, such as that we identify "defense of democratic rights of the masses with defense of the institutions of the bourgeois-parliamentary state" are plainly absurd. If this charge were true, the LTF should be expelled from the international as reformist.

Concerning Angola: The IMT charges that the LTF was on "the brink of an attitude of neutrality" between imperialism and a national liberation movement and between imperialism and the workers states. It's hard to defend yourself from that kind of charge, of course. The accuser need not, and in fact does not, present any proof. I could charge Ernest Mandel with having been "on the brink" of holding up a Belgian pastry shop at 6:30 p.m. last Friday night. He didn't actually do it, but no matter, that's not my charge. I know his predilection for Belgian pastries, and well, I just think he was "on the brink" of doing it. Let him try to prove he wasn't.

The position of the LTF in this regard was clearly stated in the LTF document on Angola, in its very first point: "1. With the invasion mounted by South Africa and the utilization of mercenaries financed primarily by the CIA, imperialist intervention in the Angolan civil war reached a high point at the end of 1975 and beginning of 1976. For revolutionary Marxists and supporters of democratic rights, it was an elementary duty to offer material support to the military struggle against this intervention, and to organize an international campaign under the general slogans of 'Hands Off Angola!' 'South Africa Out of Angola!' and, in view of the threat from American imperialism because of Havana's aid to the MPLA, 'Defend Cuba!'" [See "Resolution on Angola, Draft Resolution of the LTF," IIDB, Volume XIII, No. 8, December 1976.]

Again, this false charge obscures real differences we had over the nature of the MPLA and of the Angolan civil war. Insofar as these differences remain, we should debate them, not throw wild accusations that have no foundation and only divert attention from the real issues.

In what document does the LTF say that bourgeois nationalism among the oppressed nationalities is unequivocally progressive? How has this alleged position been expressed in practice? Has the LTF supported the ideologies

of bourgeois nationalist formations or parties, or said they were progressive in the neocolonial countries? In India, Pakistan, Latin America, Iran, China, Egypt?

Where have we supported petty-bourgeois nationalist ideologies or assigned them an unequivocally progressive role? Did we perhaps say this of the ideology of the MPLA in Angola? Or about the program of the Vietnamese Communist Party?

The IMT declaration charges that the LTF is guilty of "a beginning of revisionism of Marxism on the problems of the state (particularly the institutions of the bourgeois democratic state and the role of the proletarian state power in the overthrow of capitalism)...." What the phrase "the role of the proletarian state power in the overthrow of capitalism" apparently refers to is our position concerning the establishment of workers states in China, Cuba, and Vietnam. We will only note here that our position on the theory of these transformations is the same as the one held in common in our movement at the time of the 1963 reunification of the Fourth International. [See the appendices to "The Meaning of the IMT Steering Committee's Self-Criticism on Latin America," by Jack Barnes, IIDB, Volume XIV, No. 5, May 1977.]

As to the charge that the LTF "covered up the apparently doctrinaire but actually ultra-opportunist maneuvers of the leadership of the [Spanish] LC, especially on the trade union question,..." the LTF has never taken a position on the trade-union question in Spain. The IMT declaration itself is a hodgepodge of self-contradictions on this point--it refers to the Workers Tendency's differences with the LC leadership on this point, but the leaders of the Workers Tendency are in the LTF! It also says that the "leader of the LC who was the major theoretician of such an adventurist position has already openly abandoned the positions of Trotskyism and Leninism."

But the authors of the IMT declaration forgot to add that this same comrade, Comrade Roberto, broke with the LTF and is an opponent of it, a fact which these authors knew since I had reported it to a meeting of the United Secretariat.

### The Principled Nature of the LTF

The authors of the IMT declaration seem to regard it as a great victory for the IMT that Comrade Roberto and "an important part of the Central Committee of the Spanish LC" have broken with the LTF. At the same time, it tries to impute that the erroneous political positions of these comrades are a result of--the LTF. The same attitude is expressed in regard to the break from the LTF carried out

by Comrade Moreno and the other comrades who later formed the Bolshevik Tendency [BT]. The declaration indulges in a kind of gloating over these instances.

The IMT comrades should take a more sober look at the situation. Would it have been correct for the LTF to think it was a great victory when Comrade Santucho and the Argentine PRT broke with the IMT--and left the Fourth International?

It is time the IMT comrades began to realize that Comrade Moreno's break with the LTF began with a secret attempt to destroy comrades in Mexico who supported the LTF and with splitting one of the Mexican sympathizing groups. This procedure was repeated in Portugal. These incidents signaled a factional marauding campaign against the international as a whole on the part of the Bolshevik Tendency.

In reality, the breaks from the LTF initiated by Comrade Roberto on the one hand and by Comrade Moreno on the other underscore the principled nature of the LTF. The LTF is not a gang of "like-minded" people but a principled faction based on documents presented to the international as a whole. On the basis of political disagreement with those documents some former members of the LTF in Spain broke away, as did the comrades who have formed the Bolshevik Tendency. In addition, those comrades who were directly involved in violations of the elementary norms of our organization in the split of the Mexican Socialist League were expelled from the LTF for their conduct. Adherence to the organizational norms of Leninism is part of the LTF platform.

#### The Organizational Charges Are False

The declaration lumps together what it calls "the brutal expulsion of minority tendencies under inadmissible pretexts and through clearly bureaucratic methods, such as the expulsion of the IT by the SWP, the expulsion first of the BT and then of the Workers Tendency by the Spanish LC, or threats of purge of the Mexican LS by the majority leadership of that organization at the last congress held before it split."

The charge concerning the Internationalist Tendency in the SWP is preposterous. We published the full and complete record of the IT affair, and all comrades can read in this record, in the secret documents of the IT itself, that the IT had rejected the SWP as degenerate, had organized itself as a disloyal faction, systematically broke with SWP discipline, and finally set itself up as a separate organization with its own separate discipline and intervention in the class struggle, carrying out a temporary entry tactic in the SWP until it could convince

the rest of the IMT of the correctness of its split course. The IMT charges are designed merely to cover up the IMT's own complicity with this split operation.

The declaration doesn't even point out that subsequent to the split of the IT, every one of those former IT members who rejected the split course and reapplied for membership in the SWP have been accepted into membership.

It is my personal opinion that the leadership of the Spanish LC made mistakes regarding both the supporters of the Bolshevik Tendency in the IC, and with the Workers Tendency. But the IMT declaration does not point out that the split of the BT from the LC was in large measure due to a splitting operation launched by the Bolshevik Tendency itself against the LC.

The case of the split in the Mexican IS is entirely different. [See "World Movement Report," by Mary-Alice Waters, IIDB, Volume XIV, No. 2, April 1977.] Throwing together these very different cases blurs over the real splitting operation that the Bolshevik Tendency has launched within the international as a whole, and disarms the international in face of this operation. It is an attempt to justify the wrong position the IMT took on the splits in Mexico and in Portugal at the February 1976 International Executive Committee meeting.

#### 'Democratic Centralism'

The declaration raises another important question in its treatment of democratic centralism. It states that "on all programmatic and international questions the votes of the Congresses are binding on the national sections." The problem comes in the interpretation the IMT apparently gives to this, since the declaration charges that the LTF violated discipline in regard to the "fate of the Indochinese revolution after the Paris accords, the Portuguese revolution, and the national liberation struggle in Angola."

This could only mean that at least in these cases it was a breach of democratic centralism for the newspapers and magazines of sections and sympathizing groups to publicly present the positions of those sections and sympathizing groups, as decided by democratic discussion and vote of their conventions and elected leaderships. If this is a violation of democratic centralism, then the IMT is introducing an extremely dangerous and unacceptable innovation.

Such a conception would mean that on all the major questions of world politics, the sections would not be free to decide what their positions are, but would have to wait for word from the international center. This would not only paralyze the sections' work in their own countries, it would mean that the sections could formulate policy for



themselves on only a very narrow range of questions. It would prevent the formation of leaderships in the sections capable of developing their own positions on key questions, and take away the responsibility of the leadership and membership for deciding their positions and defending those positions in their own countries. Such leaderships and memberships would become completely dependent on the international leadership for their views. Parties based on that concept could never lead revolutions in their own countries. Therefore such a concept cuts across the central task of the international: to help forge genuine and self-confident leaderships in the national arenas where revolutions occur. The concept, if it were to be adopted, would destroy the Fourth International as a revolutionary organization and turn it into a literary circle with a few bright people in the center handing down a line to be parroted in the press of ineffectual sections.

This conception is a step backward from what many IMT comrades have said. Comrade Jones, for example, speaking at our last convention, stated that only the international, of course, through its leading bodies, and by majority vote, establishes the line of the international, and that the sections have a duty to make that line known. But the press of each section must reflect the democratic decisions of that section. This was the way the Third International under Lenin and Trotsky functioned and the way the Fourth International functioned from the beginning.

The charge that the LTF has a public faction organ apparently refers to Intercontinental Press. IP, as comrades know, is not an organ of the SWP or of the Fourth International. But as the listing of editor and contributing editors indicates (they were selected before the factional struggle began), IP presents the views of the international as a whole. Therefore in no sense can IP be considered to reflect the views of one faction only. But on this question we are faced with a Catch-22 situation. The comrades who are leaders of the IMT have refused to write for IP. Yet they charge that it doesn't represent their views sufficiently and therefore is a public faction organ. When the editor pleads with them to write directly for IP so that their views are better expressed in IP, they refuse. So their views are expressed elsewhere, including in obscure or bourgeois publications. Often the IP staff finds them accidentally and translates them. Again the IP is charged with being a faction organ....

To top it off, the IMT declaration states that as long as this public faction organ exists, they must be organized to fight it.

#### When Did the Factionalism Begin?

The declaration says, "The capacity of the IMT to

make its self-criticism on the Latin American document of the Ninth World Congress, a document which incontestably played an important role in precipitating the tendency struggle within the movement but which cannot principally account for this struggle, especially in light of the events in Portugal, Angola, and Spain, represents additional proof of the maturity of the International leadership."

We can agree that the self-criticism on Latin America is a demonstration of positive qualities in the IMT leadership, even if it was more than half a decade late. (The IMT leadership does not equal the leadership of the international, however.) But the attempt by the IMT to say that the faction struggle did not primarily stem from the wrong line on Latin America adopted at the 1969 world congress departs from the historic facts. The faction struggle originated and became quite sharp long before the Portuguese and Angolan events (let alone Spain, where we have yet to even probe if there are differences and whether they are deep!). The factionalism began right after the 1969 world congress, or more accurately, at the congress itself, and it was begun by the majority in order to carry out its line in Latin America. [See "The Meaning of the IMT Steering Committee's Self-Criticism on Latin America," by Jack Barnes, IIDB, Volume XIV, No. 5, May 1977.]

#### The IMT Declaration Is an Obstacle

The IMT declaration is out of harmony with the objective needs of the international, and with recent developments. It is out of harmony with the antifactional statements of several members of the IMT Steering Committee repeatedly made in the last year and a half.

The IMT comrades have agreed, for example, to probe the possibility of writing at least some common documents. But why even try to do that if you believe that we are sectarian sterile propagandists in any prerevolutionary or revolutionary situations?

IMT comrades in Canada, Australia, Spain, and Mexico favor fusion to help heal splits in those countries. With people who support bourgeois parliamentarism? Who go to the brink of neutrality in a fight between imperialism and a national liberation movement?

Do the IMT comrades in Canada believe that the LTF leaders of the Canadian section support bourgeois nationalism in Québec? Apparently not, since there do not appear to be substantial differences on that score.

Despite the factional nature of the IMT declaration, the SWP leadership believes we must continue to press for the dissolution of the factional structures, and continue

to press for open discussions in the leadership bodies of the international to reduce and clarify the remaining political differences in preparation for the next world congress. In light of the political and organizational developments of recent months, we consider that to be the only responsible course to pursue. In this regard, we ask the comrades of the IMT to reconsider their declaration.

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