

January 23, 1978

To the Political Committee

Dear Comrades,

Attached for your information are the following items:

1. January 11, 1978 letter from Hansen to the United Secretariat.
2. Translation of Report by Greco to the Central Committee of the Colombian PST, December 12, 1977.
3. Correspondence between Mikado and Frankel.
4. Translation from Rouge article, January 16, 1978.

Gus

New York, New York

January 14, 1978

United Secretariat

Dear Comrades,

I received a copy of the December 15, 1977, letter sent to you by Comrade Julio Rojas A. in which he refers to sending you a tape of Comrade Greco's "intervention" on developments in the Fourth International and an alleged commitment by me to send the Colombian PST a tape of a meeting held by the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction at Oberlin.

Here is what actually happened:

Comrade Jean-Pierre, as part of the delegation designated by the United Secretariat, gave an informational report to the Central Committee of the Colombian PST on various developments in the Fourth International, including the dissolution of the LTF and the International Majority Tendency.

I followed with some observations on the same topic. In addition, I commented on certain internal matters of the Colombian PST that had been placed on the agenda.

Comrade Greco then gave a "counterreport" in behalf of the Executive Committee of the Colombian PST. The main axis of his counterreport was that the LTF and the IMT had not dissolved but had formed an "unprincipled bloc" directed against the Bolshevik Tendency and the Colombian PST.

Comrade Jean-Pierre and I jointly asked the chair to make available a copy of this counterreport.

Comrade Greco intervened to ask me if I would--in return for a copy of the tape of his remarks--provide a taped copy of the proceedings of the meeting at Oberlin at which the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction was dissolved.

I replied that I could not speak for a dissolved tendency. However, I did suggest that if and when the Bolshevik Tendency dissolved they might make a tape of their dissolution meeting, thus putting themselves in better position to offer to trade it for a tape of the final meeting of the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction.

I also pointed out that the documents of the meeting at which the LTF had dissolved had already been made available to the international.

The chair promised that the text of Comrade Greco's counterreport would be provided along with the text of other documents presented at the gathering. Comrade Jean-Pierre and I naturally accepted this assurance at once.

It is possible that I misunderstood which LTF meeting at Oberlin Comrade Greco was referring to. But this changes nothing in substance. Along with Comrades Jaime and Jean-Pierre, I attended the Central Committee meeting of the Colombian PST in the capacity of a reporter designated by the United Secretariat and not as a former leader of the dissolved LTF.

I should add that in the meetings of the LTF the procedure was to destroy any tapes as soon as transcriptions had been made of material earmarked for publication. Thus I could not and did not make any promise of the kind indicated in Comrade Julio's letter.

Comradely yours,

Joseph Hansen
Joseph Hansen

cc: Julio

Report by Greco to the Central Committee of
the Colombian PST, December 12, 1977

[Because of deficiencies in the tape recording, Comrade Greco filled in the gaps on the basis of his notes. Parentheses have been used to indicate these corrections.]**

(We were hoping) that the representatives of the leadership of our international, who were going to participate in the Central Committee meeting of the Colombian PST, would offer us an analysis of the status of the class struggle in the world, explain the political lines applied by our international in the key countries of the class struggle and draw a balance sheet on these political lines. And our first...well, it wasn't a surprise, but rather a confirmation of the situation in the Fourth International, is that neither of the two comrades who spoke in the name of the United Secretariat were capable of giving us a report telling us: The class struggle is like this, we applied such and such a political line, and we obtained such and such results. They made an organizational report on the Fourth International. They explained to us that the tendencies dissolved themselves; that there was a better climate for discussion; that in this context a problem existed: The Bolshevik Tendency, which is not dissolving. To all intents and purposes, then, the biggest obstacle to normalizing the situation in the international is our Bolshevik Tendency. Together with this, Comrade Jean-Pierre painted the picture of a situation in which, as the Fourth International is growing and improving internally, the Bolshevik Tendency is entering into a process of crisis. He virtually gave us a deluxe burial, because he said that we were already finished, that the Bolshevik Tendency practically had no reason for existing.

Our report on the situation in the international and the situation of our tendency is absolutely the opposite. It is not accidental, because impressionism in the political arena has been the permanent method of the ex-IMT. Comrade Jean-Pierre did not say what occurred in the international since '69 up to now. He listed some elements of what had occurred in the last month or in the last two months. He did not say that in 1969 our tendency was reduced to a handful of militants in Argentina and a smaller handful of militants in Uruguay. He did not say that in this entire period our tendency has spread out to practically all the central countries of Latin America and has extended to Europe. He did not talk about the numerical growth of our tendency. He did not say--and this is an important thing to be noted by people who claimed to be the world's greatest experts in underground work--that the Argentine PST is the only party in the Fourth International that could survive in a situation such as exists in my country, grow in this situation, and give an example to everyone, not only Trotskyists, but the workers parties and the workers movement on a world scale. None of this was mentioned by Comrade Jean-Pierre. Comrade Jean-Pierre came here to tell us that the Bolshevik Tendency is in a crisis because Comrade Antonio broke from it, because the Lucas group left it, because the Portuguese PRT entered into a crisis, and there is a problem in the Colombian PST.

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[This explanation was listed as a footnote in the Spanish original.]

This in one aspect of his report. We could discuss some of these cases. In some of them agreement could be reached with Comrade Jean-Pierre because we also have the custom of being objective. Actually, the Portuguese PRT is in a state of crisis; according to our interpretation, not because of the policies of our tendency but because in two critical moments they were incapable of implementing the policy of our tendency: when it was suggested that they enter the Portuguese SP and when the attempt at an electoral campaign failed. We would disagree, on the other hand, with the report on Spain. We think that the work of the comrades of our tendency in Spain is quite good.

An Unprincipled Front

But in any case, the dynamic of the tendencies and currents cannot be analyzed solely as a summation of national realities. And what we must point out in any analysis of the situation of our international is the political lines, the application of these lines. All the comrades must wonder, why was the report of the two comrades of the United Secretariat purely organizational? Do you know why it was purely organizational, comrades? Because all the documents of the Fourth International were declared "historical," except one: Socialist Democracy and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat. That means that the IMT's document for Europe (which was going to arm our sections in Europe) no longer exists. The documents of the Tenth Congress no longer exist. Question: What is the political line of our Fourth International? There isn't any. To be able to dissolve the tendencies, it was necessary not only to liquidate the positions that these tendencies held and continue to hold in an unprincipled front, but in addition leave our international if it were just born, with one hand behind and the other in front, stripped of a political line. I would like the comrades of the United Secretariat to first inform us as to which documents govern the policies of the leadership of the Fourth International. Those of the Tenth?

Jean-Pierre--Your information is absolutely false. What documents have been withdrawn? The documents of the Ninth World Congress and parts of the documents of the Tenth on Latin America, and that's all. Just that which is referred to in the Self-Criticism and the logical consequences of the Self-Criticism. But they are not withdrawn. It is the world congress which is going to take this up. When the world congress takes it up, a different text will be presented.

Greco--Does the document of the Tenth World Congress stand in relation to Europe?

Jean-Pierre--For the time being, up until the next world congress, yes.

Greco--The information that we had, comrades, was this. But then we're going to take advantage of the fact that documents exist and explain in the light of these documents the dissolution of the tendencies. Afterwards, we will verify which information was the most correct.

To dissolve the tendencies in an international, and to unify around the leadership bodies, you have to meet a pre-requisite so that this dissolution is principled and this later unification is likewise principled. And this pre-requisite is that no fundamental differences exist between those who are carrying out this action of dissolution of tendencies and the unification in a new...we characterize it as a "bloc."

The Dissolution of the Tendencies

What occurred in our international was the categorical and resounding failure of the LTF which was reduced to its minimum expression, and which opted to dissolve itself when in practice it was already dissolved--as Comrade Jean-Pierre himself said to me on previous occasions. The loss of everything that was the LTF in Latin America. The loss of almost everything that was the LTF in Europe...On this annihilation of the LTF, the subsequent dissolution was based. It was a dissolution of what was already dissolved. And this dissolution was the result of the political line used by the LTF in Portugal, of the political line posed by the LTF for Spain, of the political line posed by the LTF in Angola.

The dissolution of the IMT, which also is a manifestation of a crisis, not of a physical disappearance as in the case of the LTF, but of a prolonged crisis which lasted eight or nine years, which went through the guerrilla variant, went through the adventurous actions of the mass vanguard in Europe, which went through the catastrophe of Portugal, and which terminated in the Spanish FUT. The crisis of the two political lines incapable of orienting the sections, incapable of orienting the international, is what produced its dissolution.

The problem is to dissolve...for what? Giving us sweet talk, the comrades will tell us: to work through the organisms of the international, because in this international no plot exists. We are Marxists: subjective considerations are of no importance to us, what is important is the interpretation of the practical reality as it is given. And the practical reality as it is given is the unity of these two ex-currents of ex-tendencies against the Bolshevik Tendency with the program of democratic centralism understood in a revisionist manner. This is the reality of our international.

What Unites this Bloc?

Let's study this bloc a little, which was thrown together. Who are in this bloc? Comrade Jean-Pierre, when he comes to any country, when he speaks as a leader tells you: Comrade, I'm of the opinion that the SWP, particularly Comrades Hansen and Barnes, in addition to Novack, has a (revisionist concept of the question of democracy. But Comrade Jean-Pierre is together with the SWP, Novack, Hansen, and Barnes in this bloc.

(The SWP and the IMT have stood at opposite poles in face of the Angolan and African revolution in general, one of the most important points) of the world revolution. However, the SWP and the ex-IMT are united. The African revolution has not been able to divide this holy alliance.

In Europe we're going to take up some examples. The SWP is of the opinion that the French LCR committed an error in principle in voting for the Union of the Left, because the Union of the Left is a popular front. The French LCR is of the opinion that neither is the Union of the Left a popular front nor did they commit any error in principle. But the French LCR and the SWP are united in this bloc.

In Spain. Comrade Hansen says: The fundamental reason for the dissolution of the LTF is that it finished with the problem of the guerrilla war. And he forgets that the LTF itself characterized this same method as having extended to Europe around the broad mass vanguard. In Spain only a few months ago, the Spanish LCR carried out the most fabulous vanguardist policy that has ever been seen, when it made this monstrous Frente Unico de los Trabajadores with the whole swamp, with the whole ultraleft, with the whole Spanish centrist formations.

(In this Comrade Jean-Pierre was correct: The European document of the Tenth World Congress has been declared not "historical," but the policy which the Spanish LCR applied was the policy of this document. Actually this document is still followed in practice. But the SWP and Comrade Hansen, who less than four years ago formed a tendency to combat this document and this policy, are now in an unprincipled bloc with the authors of this document and the Spanish LCR, which continues to apply this policy.

(In Portugal, the IMT considered that the central task in the prerevolutionary period was the construction of organs of dual power. The SWP and the LTF held that this was not so. But today both are united in an unprincipled bloc.

(Comrade Hansen in his report to the International Executive Committee in February 1975 said that our tendency was going to move toward unification with the IMT. And he characterized this hypothetical unification as a political crime. What happened was a unification, not of our tendency, but of the LTF with the IMT, and the characterization of "political crime" has been forgotten for the sake of an unprincipled bloc.

(But let's see how this unprincipled bloc is also manifested here in Colombia.

(Comrade Ricardo Sánchez pounded Barnes, attacking his report Europe vs. America and the Crisis of Stalinism. He found in these statements reasons for constituting the Bolshevik Tendency. Today this material still remains pertinent, and nonetheless Ricardo Sánchez

is in an unprincipled bloc together with Barnes, calling for the tendencies to dissolve.

(Comrade Jean-Pierre has told us repeated times that Ricardo Sánchez did absolutely nothing while he was in Europe. But now Comrade Jean-Pierre is together with Ricardo Sánchez in an unprincipled bloc.

(Comrade Jaime Galarza is completely against--and he voted against it in the United Secretariat--the entrance of Fausto Amador into the international. Comrades Hansen and Jean-Pierre are in favor of it. But these three comrades are together in an unprincipled bloc.

(I believe that these elements give us a preliminary insight into what is involved politically in this bloc: an unprincipled agreement between currents and sectors that do not agree politically on key questions of the class struggle. And, in view of the fact that this bloc guides our international, I believe also that we have a clear description of the political crisis in which our world party is submerged.)

The Organizational Political Crisis

As to the organizational question, I do not want to carry on a war of figures. We are accustomed to European impressionism. And I do not say this out of nationalism, but because unfortunately the education of the European Trotskyists all comes from the same source, the IMT.

The situation of the main sections in Europe: the French LCR,-- Jean-Pierre himself said it--: "crisis of political leadership." The situation of the IMT and the LCR: At the next to the last congress it constituted an overwhelming crushing majority within the LCR; at the last congress, 45 percent of the LCR stood against the IMT. But Comrade Jean-Pierre says: The crisis is positive. Why positive? Do you know who came out against the IMT? They were the self-management currents--which discovered that in the party you have to have self-management, not centralism--the ecological currents, the abortionist currents...an enormous quantity of this motley crew, which here in Colombia is denominated the "coffee-house crowd," if I'm not mistaken "swamp" also. That's 45 percent of the French Revolutionary Communist League. But to finish with the comparison--Comrade Jean-Pierre just told us here that 75 percent were union members. I turn to Rouge. In the campaign that Rouge is making, it is put this way: "Rouge in danger of death," and that we all hope it will not die because it is a great conquest of the international--a French worker writes telling them: Look, comrades, I have always contributed, I am a member of the CP, I sympathize with you, but I have always contributed and I have supported you, I had hopes in your party, here's my contribution so that Rouge can appear, but this is the last time I'm going to do it. For two reasons: One, because I have seen your party launch a campaign and

abandon it in a couple of days; two, I have never seen your leaders or your members in the plants selling your newspaper, etc. But, aside from this, if what the worker says were not enough, what the leadership of the LCR replied should be: Comrade, you are right. We have not succeeded in overcoming a student attitude. This is signed. We continue to hold a student attitude. But it is ten years since May '68! Ten years are too much to continue holding a student attitude! This is one of the two biggest sections in Europe! The Fourth must explain why ten years after '68 we continue to hold a student attitude and why we are in a crisis of political leadership in France.

On Spain, we have already been given astronomical figures, comrades. What we know is the following: the 7000 militants of the Spanish LCR got 30,000 votes in the elections, or 40,000. Forty thousand divided by 7000 gives an average of five or six votes per head, which signifies that there is a problem here: Either these 7000 members are inactive, or these 7000 activists do not exist.

Beginning of a Moral Crisis

Unfortunately, to these elements of a political crisis, of a political-organizational crisis, elements of a moral crisis have begun to appear in our international, which worries us a great deal. Since you do not know about them, I am unfortunately going to have to go into this at some length.

Beginning with Comrade Mandel and the famous matter of the Viejo Topo magazine and his openly pro-CP Eurocommunist declarations. Were they made by him, or were they not made by him? We have the proof that they were made by him. Comrade Mandel later rectified his line, but there is a categorical moral fact: Comrade Mandel denied that these declarations were his, and, at the request of the Yankee comrades, the United Secretariat made an ardent defense of Comrade Mandel in a motion saying: Why does the factional Bolshevik Tendency believe that Comrade Mandel could have made these declarations? But Comrade Mandel made them, we have the tape recording. He said everything that appeared in the Viejo Topo. The problem here is not that he rectified his line, very good that he rectified it. But Comrade Mandel lied, and the United Secretariat lied to the whole international. First moral item.

Second moral item: the famous and scandalous case of Comrade Josefina and her friends in Mexico, comrades, which has been proved, documented. We have the tape recordings. Declarations made by them, saying: Comrades I had a meeting with the Mexican police behind the back of the organs of my party, I never informed the organs of my party; and, in addition, since the police told me that Comrade Ricardo Hernández was a policeman, I carried out a campaign so that Comrade Hernández would not be elected to the Executive Committee of my party. They said it; we did not say a word. These comrades, are, were, the top leaders of the LTF in Latin America and were unconditionally defended by the SWP and by the leadership of the Fourth International. That means: first, you can lie in the Fourth International. Second precedent, in the Fourth International any leader can privately contact the police without informing his party, on the basis of these contacts

mount a campaign against another comrade, and this leader does not merit any disciplinary action. Now, these comrades are in the leadership of the Mexican PRT, against the vote of our comrades.

Third worrisome case from the moral angle. Worrisome but a little laughable. The other great leader of the LTF in Latin America is Comrade Otto MacKenzie (Oh, I forgot: Comrade Cristina writes for Intercontinental Press; Comrade Otto MacKenzie also writes now for Intercontinental Press). Comrade Otto MacKenzie in his work in this country was to be an inspector for the Labor Department and make rulings against workers. Third precedent: The international accepts as leaders comrades who exercise public functions of the bourgeois state against the working class.

Fourth element, which came up in today's meeting and which was categorical, concrete, on the part of Comrade Hansen. Did you listen closely to what he said on why we should not discipline Socorro? Socorro should not be disciplined because she is our presidential candidate. And he told us that he had never seen anything like this in the history of the Fourth. I don't know, in the history of the Fourth, if a presidential candidate was ever disciplined. But I know something about the history of the Third. And I know categorically that it is a moral question, a question of principle, that the comrades who carry out functions of a parliamentary type or are high in the leadership of the trade unions, the party keeps a thousand, two thousand, three thousand times closer watch on them than on the leading comrades of the party as a whole. The entire struggle against parliamentary cretinism occurred around this principled, moral issue: When a candidate, a type who holds a post in an association, or a high trade-union leader, breaks a millimeter, a millimeter! with the party regime, that person has to be disciplined ten, twenty, thirty times more forcefully than any other comrade in the party. When Lenin struggled against parliamentary cretinism and other variants, he was emphatic about this. And Comrade Hansen tells us that we do not understand what democratic centralism is; and he has established--it is taped--a new norm for the international: the candidates--and naturally if they are elected and seated in the congress--can do anything they wish against the party, because they must not be touched. This is the point that has been reached today in the moral decay of the leadership of our international.

And a point remains, in which we do not know why none of the comrades of the United Secretariat have taken a stand. Comrades of the United Secretariat: What about the publishing house? There is a Trotskyist publishing house that has been attacked by a bourgeois. The first thing, before saying anything, you had to stop here and say: unconditional defense of the Trotskyist publishing house. But the comrades do not care a fig about this. And by chance this bourgeois is allied with a sector, or is a friend of a sector, which is able to attack the Bolshevik Tendency: that this bourgeois liquidates a Trotskyist publishing house appears to be of no importance to the comrades of the United Secretariat. I hope I am mistaken. This is an appeal to the comrades of the United Secretariat to define their position on the publishing house.

The Unprincipled Bloc and The Bolshevik Party Regime

And thus with this panorama of the Fourth International, we can finally understand why the central discussion is about the organizational regime. It is a characteristic of all unprincipled fronts that have existed in the workers movement. It was a characteristic of the Bakuninists against Marx, who said that the Marxist regime was dictatorial; that of the antidefensists against Cannon; that of the group of Sneevliet, Nin and Co. against Trotsky, that of the August Bloc of the year 1912 against Lenin. The characteristic of all these fronts in the absence of principles, of politics, is this: Let's attack the internal regime, Let's attack its centralist, disciplined, Bolshevik characteristics. And that is what is being expressed here, with complete clarity, with pristine clarity.

Why does it have to be a struggle against the internal Bolshevik regime? Because without such an attack, they cannot exist. People who hold diametrically opposite views on the key problems of the working class cannot exist under a Bolshevik internal regime. They cannot exist. Jaime Galarza, who is against Fausto Amador entering, cannot exist with Jean-Pierre, who is in favor of Fausto Amador entering. We need loose parties, in which all the tendencies express themselves in a free way, because it is the only way we can glue together this tremendous agglomeration of shadings, currents, "nonexisting" factions, in which everyone thinks, does, says, and acts as he wishes. This is what is important because--watch out!--in the name of this, which is already being elevated to a permanent category which is: in all the national parties you can have any kind of tendencies and you can do anything--which is what the comrades of the United Secretariat came here to tell us--after which they demand that the Bolshevik Tendency observe centralism within the Fourth International. We are going to be centralists in the Fourth, but the comrades are already recommending: no measures against anyone even though they carry on public propaganda against the party.

The worst is that they appeal to tradition. Comrade Hansen told us: you learned nothing. But yes, comrade, we learned a great deal from the SWP. We have always considered it to be our teacher. Do you know why? Because it ruthlessly expelled every factionalist. And not just one, three, or four. More than a hundred comrades of the IMT were thrown out of the SWP. Of course, the SWP said: We did not expel them, they were outside; they said: since they carried out public work and distributed publications different from those of the party, these comrades were outside the party, making another party, therefore they are no longer within our party. Fine. If Comrade Hansen came here to teach us what we did learn from them, he ought to say: Don't expel them, consider them outside the party, that they are a different party. But he did not come here to say that. He came to say: Let them stay inside. I do not recall the SWP vacillating a minute in expelling more than 100 comrades of the IMT. A position that we support unconditionally.

This is the method that Comrade Hansen taught us, it is the method that the SWP taught us, and it is the method that we are rescuing from the decadency of the leadership of our international.

The Fausto Amador Case
And Its Possible Political Consequences

I wish to deal for a moment--so that you can see the tragic consequence that can arise for the international--with the case I mentioned in passing: the case of Mr. Fausto Amador Arrieta. Mr. Fausto Amador Arrieta is an individual who was a member of the Frente Sandinista de Liberación, of which the main leader was his brother. This individual, at a certain moment under the dictatorship of Somoza, appeared before the dailies, in front of the television in Nicaragua, and said, among other things, that he had been visiting Cuba and was totally disillusioned with what was going on in Cuba, that he thought that if the combatants of the Frente Sandinista de Liberación did what he had done--that is, lay down their arms--their lives could be guaranteed, and he actually recommended that they lay down their arms against Somoza. This means that he is not a terribly desirable person. The Frente Sandinista accused him of being a traitor, some say they wanted to execute him--we do not know this for sure--his own brother completely broke off relations with him. This individual is now a member of the Costa Rican OST. Not long ago Comrade Jean-Pierre asked me: I was in Costa Rica; I am alarmed; Comrades of the Bolshevik Tendency in Costa Rica do not support the electoral campaign of the OST, which is exactly like the one being carried on by the Colombian PST. And my reply to Comrade Jean-Pierre was as follows: There is no reason to worry about the comrades of the Costa Rican PRT refusing to support the party of Fausto Amador Arrieta. In the eyes of Central American public opinion, Fausto Amador Arrieta is the greatest traitor that exists. And this traitor is now within the Fourth International.

Why do I say this? Not to insist on the moral problem, but to see the incalculable political consequences. I would like to see how the leadership of the Fourth International is going to answer, what they choose to do in face of the following...Do you know the name they give in Europe to what Fausto Amador did? Collaborationism. That is what the collaborators with the Nazis did. It was called collaborationism. We have to ask: Why did the Fourth International, why did this unprincipled bloc which is directing the Fourth International, instead of listening to the fighters of the Frente Sandinista--who are far leftists, guerrilla fighters, not Marxists, petty-bourgeois populists, petty-bourgeois nationalists...but who struggle against Somoza, which is good, who want to struggle against Somoza--why instead of listening to them, do they listen to Fausto Amador, a collaborationist with Somoza? This is what the Fourth International is going to have to explain in Central America. If a very probable combination of circumstances occurs: that Somoza fails; that the Frente Sandinista emerges

as a movement of great prestige because of its antidictatorial struggle--although it might be only a democratic struggle--against one of the worst dictatorships in Latin America, a prestige similar or superior to that of the Uruguayan Tupamaros; that the Frente Sandinista might say: I would like the Fourth International to explain why Fausto Amador Arrieta is in its ranks...and, gentlemen, at that moment Trotskyism will be finished in Central America. It will be finished because no other explanation is possible except to tell them: Look, inasmuch as Jack Barnes said in his report that if as a member of the LTF, Fausto Amador was not accepted his case could blow the policy of dissolving the tendencies sky high--textually: Can blow this whole policy sky high--then the IMT which was against it, said: Good, we accept it. And that is why he is inside the international.

OK. This is the bloc we have to confront. There is no plot here: the unity is organic, the unity is normal; it is a law of dialectical materialism that unites them. I do not know if they think that way or not; that is totally secondary for us as Marxists. Whether they meant to plan it or not is totally secondary. This talk about "plots" is beneath us as Marxists. The problem is: what objective phenomenon is occurring in the Fourth? It is the objective phenomenon of an agglomeration of sectors in political decomposition, in organizational decomposition, and the sad beginning of moral decomposition.

The Repercussions in Colombia

How is this expressed within the Colombian party? I also listened with attention to jot down anything in the report of the famous tendency that has appeared, and I was left with my pencil raised. Because I expected that as Trotskyists they were going to say: Let's form a tendency because the electoral line is catastrophic, because we are going to carry out a policy of class-collaborationism or an ultraleft policy, because we differ completely with the policy of this party. But no, the tendency thinks the policy of this party is perfect. They have not made a criticism of the policy of this party. It could be something else: let's form a tendency because the electoral line is superstructural, or because the line of the support committees is mad and can lead the party to catastrophe. But no, they are in agreement also with the line on the support committees. They were also in agreement with having succeeded in bringing together other socialist currents into a front. They are in agreement with the entire political line. Differences are going to appear--don't worry--after a time. But they did not say anything about this. They said: Let's constitute a tendency because we are against the regime.

Then there was profound unity. It was a good thing to have had the two reports one after the other. That meant total unity on an international scale, without a plot, perhaps without a single meeting, perhaps without even talking about it. That is the unity, that is the bloc. This is what, as Marxists, we have to try to understand, because it is a profound problem and because it leads actually to the characterization that our tendency must make of the international situation and what policy we are going to follow in face of it.

In the first place, the first concrete, categorical reply: The situation in the international demands and requires a tighter closing of ranks by our tendency. We are struggling against an extremely dangerous phenomenon, much like that in which the liquidators attacked Lenin in 1908-1912, a front which included everybody, even Trotsky. Altogether here with a single objective: We are against an illegal party. This was the great discussion. All the liquidators were saying: We are against this Lenin who is a beast, just how are we going to make an illegal party. And Lenin said: I will confront along with my Bolsheviks this whole group; it is a liquidationist bloc; I will struggle for an illegal party. And the struggle today is the same one. Either you fight for a Bolshevik party or you are out to get a POUMist party, which means trying to get a party amounting to a summation of factions, a summation of tendencies. It is the same struggle.

The Absence of a Proletarian and Bolshevik Tradition

There is a characteristic that Trotsky always assigned to the petty bourgeoisie, that they do not want to make class characterizations. The Argentine PST and later the Bolshevik Tendency, have been attacked in many ways. The preferred charge now is factionalism. But, if we are Marxists, every political phenomenon has its social explanation. If we are factionalists, if we do not understand the situation in the Fourth and thousands of disasters throughout the world are ascribable to us, then you have to explain which class, which class sector is putting pressure on us, is penetrating our ranks, leading us into bringing about so many disasters for Trotskyism, and we have never succeeded in getting a categorical reply from the international. To the contrary, complete unity: here no class characterizations are made. This is what Trotsky said: Not to make class characterizations is petty bourgeois, because in a factional struggle the first thing you have to do is define from the Marxist point of view which classes are expressed in this factional struggle. We who claim to be orthodox Trotskyists, do have a class interpretation of this phenomenon. And the phenomenon is the student-type leaderships of our movement.

Comrade Jean-Pierre said that it was a great disaster for our Tendency to have to recognize that now we are not in position to present ourselves as an alternative leadership for the Fourth International. And we think to the contrary that everything is advancing. Because we are discovering the roots of one of the problems of our Tendency, the generalized problem of the international and also these small split-offs that have occurred and those that are going to occur--because splits in the tendency are going to continue to occur--as can be seen at bottom in the Colombian phenomenon. Do you know why we cannot, despite the rise, build two or three parties of 1500 or 2000 members in Europe? Because we do not have cadres with a tradition. And do you know why there are no cadres with a tradition in Europe? Because the IMT educated them. All our cadres, our own European cadres, have been educated in what was--do you remember?--the old Bloque Socialista. The bloc of the cafes, Ricardo's bloc, this socialist bloc. OK, unfortunately this was the only school which our European cadres had. Thus it is going to take two, three, perhaps

more years for the comrades to understand what the Colombian PST is coming to understand more and more, and which the great majority of the party understands with complete clarity: politics is not what is carried on in the cafes, the leaders are not those who debate the best nor those who write the best theoretical articles; the leaders are those who take part in the class struggle and those who construct a party in the class struggle. It is going to take time for the European comrades to understand this, and actually there are no Argentinians, nor hordes of Argentinians, nor thousands of Argentinians, who could replace a national leadership. Nor are there going to be thousands of Colombians, which the PST is beginning to be in position to provide.

That means that we will have to wait for a process of maturation. In this process of maturation we are going to see not only little splits like those we have had; perhaps we'll have bigger splits; there are comrades who fall by the wayside. There are comrades who, precisely because of their class character, put their personal prestige above the necessities of the party. There are comrades who cannot accept a criticism. There are comrades who have to be the main figure--or the star--otherwise they will break with the party. And then we are going to lose these comrades. It is a process that is occurring here and which has occurred in other sectors of the world. But within the dynamic of consolidation of development of our tendency.

Thus comrades, to wind up. The attack that is going to be made will be harsh; Comrade Hansen has already announced it. We are going to be pictured before the whole international as factionalists, as splitters, as those who do not respect the centralism of the international, as if we should--we're not going to do it--let all kinds of tendencies form in the national parties. This is the attack that is coming. It is an attack that is going to last for a long time. Unfortunately, at this time there is no country in the world that has reached a critical stage in the class struggle. We are going to see what happens to this bloc. We do not know if this bloc is going to break into a thousand pieces in face of the impact of the class struggle should a new Portugal arise or if (as is very probable in our opinion) the rise shifts to Latin America. Perhaps no, if the bloc consolidates in face of the impact of the class struggle it is terribly dangerous. This would mean that the fate of the international would be sealed if the bloc is still in the leadership. And we do not know what is going to occur with this bloc, but it has this great advantage: Now we cannot say: Let's discuss Angola, let's discuss this or that country; now there is no critical prerevolutionary situation in the world.

The Situation of the Class Struggle

We think that in Europe very sharp prerevolutionary situations are unlikely to appear in any country in the immediate period ahead. From the political angle, there are very big control mechanisms which in a practical way are neutralizing the European rise. The rise will continue, it is strong. In Portugal something like a partial retreat has begun: hence the fall of Soares. But in general it appears to us that the control organizations are so monstrous and so well mounted and have had so many years of experience that although the rise will continue, it is going to take time to bring down these mechanisms and put Europe or some country in Europe in a situation of prerevolutionary crisis. We believe that the case of Portugal was to a certain degree exceptional because it was combined with the colonial revolution in Africa.

Let's see, at the same time--and it would be good had the comrades of the United Secretariat taken the floor on this in order to give us their opinion, but they have not said anything--the rise tends to again shift to Latin America. There are important signs of its rise in Latin America; a very deep crisis, latent but close to exploding in Central America; in Brazil; in Peru.

And we see the Argentine question, which gives us the impression that the Argentine proletariat can be converted into the vanguard of the world proletariat. That is to say, it has not been defeated by the dictatorship, it has mounted resistance strikes which recently almost culminated in a general strike, provoking the first important retreat of the Videla dictatorship. Thus we see a tendency for the rise to shift toward our continent.

The Tasks of the Bolshevik Tendency

In Argentina there is a saying that goes: "The racetrack tells which are the horses." That is, you see the horses in the racetrack, those that are the fastest and those that are the slowest. We say the same. We will see whether our tendency is mistaken. It will be demonstrated whether with the rise we break up, we dissolve ourselves. Up to now the contrary has occurred: In those countries of the world where there has been a rise, it has been our tendency that has advanced and it has been the others that have retreated. This is categorical. We think that the same process will continue.

Likewise in the coming months each and every one of you is going to be systematically bombarded by a campaign on our internal regime. There is going to be a tremendous propaganda offensive. Measures are not going to be taken; I, too, am of the same opinion: organizational measures are not going to be undertaken. And this, comrades, poses a great task for our party leadership: We have to train all the cadres of the party as cadres of the Tendency.

You know that there is a danger, what Jean-Pierre said: That we destroy cadres: OK, for me the greatest massacre in the destruction of cadres that I can recall was the massacre committed by the IMT and comrade Jean-Pierre in voting in favor of guerrilla warfare in Latin America. Thus, comrades, our errors can actually destroy cadres, we can be unjust, we can be mistaken, we are inexperienced, provincial, with a narrow local outlook, not integrated in depth in the leadership of the Fourth International. What Jean-Pierre said is correct--he did not say that this isolation arose from 25 years of isolation imposed upon us by the IMT systematically excluding us from the Fourth; but this is past history, still it is history. And we run the risk of committing errors.

How could we not commit them? First: in this struggle, comrades, by proletarianizing our party. That is to say making our party enter the workers movement, getting the comrades to test themselves in the workers movement, and going so far as to apply (Comrade Hansen said that in the history of the Fourth he had never seen such atrocities) ...so far as to apply the recommendations of Trotsky when he said to a sector--let us say--youthful, petty bourgeois, within the SWP; these comrades have to carry out hard physical labor in the provinces, and have to win five workers in three months; if they cannot win five workers in three months, they have to drop to the level of sympathizers and be given three months more. If they do not gain five workers in three months, they should be expelled. But this was written by Trotsky, of whom comrade Hansen was a disciple. And he comes to tell us that he has never seen atrocities like ours in the international, caramba! The problem is that the SWP in its time did not go all the way in applying such measures, but another problem is that these were Trotsky's indications in struggling against the penetration into our party of these rotten, semilumpen, coffee-house student types, who permanently try to join up.

Thus, the first measure: in order to carry on this battle--which is not only national, but very international--proletarianizing our party. Second measure: not to accept a single attack against the internal regime of the party. Not a single one! The harder the attack against the internal regime, the more we have to educate the international to which the Bolshevik Tendency directs itself that there are no privileges for candidates, there are no privileges for incorrigible factionalists, there are no privileges for those who defend the fight to form a public faction. We must provide the international with a demonstration. The majority, at least the European majority is not going to understand this for a while. Because of this I say that it is not going to be easy. I do believe that in Latin America we are going to understand this much better.

Thus this is the summary of the situation, It is not that our tendency does not have an analysis; it has one: it is the one we have posed. It is not that we do not have a policy. The policy is: form more and more cadres around the political positions and organizational methods of our Tendency; prepare these cadres against an unprincipled bloc of petty-bourgeois characteristics which is now in command in our international; and, beginning from that, with this force, wait. Wait for what? The class struggle. The more we strengthen the Tendency the more this development will be reproduced in the Fourth which Jean-Pierre had to recognize. With a rise in the class struggle our Tendency went from a small handful in Argentina to an entire world current. A new blow of the class struggle and we will see what happens in our international! []

[RETYPE LETTER]

Jerusalem
December 27, 1977

Dave Frankel
New York

Dear Dave,

I read the last letter you sent to Lea and I was surprised to see the remarks you made about the article I wrote for Inprecor. I don't think that in this article there is the slightest allusion to pressures from US imperialism on the Israeli state. On the contrary, as far as I remember, it is clearly expressed that there is no sign at all that indeed there will be such pressures.

But I don't deny that there is one point which may bring you to make such an assessment, and in my next article in Inprecor I will try to make it even clearer. In brief: in my opinion Israeli interests and American interests are not the same. For Israel the occupation of the West Bank, Gaza and maybe the Golan Heights, are a political, ideological and economical necessity; it is not the case for US imperialism, which is not directly interested in the Israeli occupation. On the contrary, it is in the interest of the USA to have stability in the Middle East, and such a stability ask [call for?] an Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank, and a "solution" to the Palestinian question.

We have therefore a contradiction between the direct interests of Israel and its boss. The only question is how to resolve this contradiction. The question of occupation is so important for Israel, that only high pressures from the US may provoke a change in Israeli positions. But such pressures may only weaken the Zionist state. This is the reason I tend to agree with you that there will be no pressures, and not because there is no conflict of interests between Washington and Tel Aviv.

That's all. Things are going relatively good. The fusion will unfortunately be postponed, the Spark comrades being unable to work on our rhythm on all questions linked to fusion documents, and disagreeing with the conception we have of the fused organization, which in our opinion will be in the continuity of the old RCL, with its program, name etc. But we believe that if the Spark comrades really want a fusion they have to understand our position on this matter.

Comradely,
s/Mikado

Dave Frankel

New York

January 18, 1978

Mikado
Jerusalem

Dear Mikado,

Thanks for your note replying to my letter. I had a different impression from reading the In-precor article than the one that you apparently intended to convey. In any case, I read your second article, and I was happy to see that we are in fact in agreement on the lack of U.S. pressure on Israel.

On the question of U.S. and Israeli interests: I agree that there is not an exact identity. The Zionist regime is adventuristic and is always pushing things to a point where Washington, which has global problems to consider, has to try to restrain it. This sometimes leads to frictions between the two governments, as when Israel was prevented from destroying the Egyptian Third Army Corps in the 1973 war.

But if we agree--as I know we do--that any imperialist settlement aimed at stabilizing the Middle East must include absolute Israeli military superiority in the region, what does that imply?

Isn't basic Israeli control of the Golan Heights and the West Bank, and military safeguards in the Sinai, part of this military picture? When the Israeli generals say what if the October war had been launched from a position where the Syrians were already on the Golan, and the Jordanian army was already in the West Bank, they point to a real problem.

Both the U.S. and Israeli ruling classes know very well that whatever agreements they manage to get signed in the current negotiations, there will

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be new wars in the future. They plan on that, and it is reflected in what they are willing to let go of today.

Here is where the question of Israeli expansionism comes in. Its source is less the pressure of Zionist fanatics than the objective need, as seen by the most responsible representatives of the Israeli regime, to guarantee Israeli military strength under current and future conditions. From this point of view, the Israeli state is impelled to expand.

It is true that Washington has no direct ideological or economic interest in whether Israel holds this or that chunk of territory. But to the extent that control over much of the currently occupied territories is important to Israeli military and economic strength, then to that extent it is also U.S. policy to ensure some form of basic Israeli control over the West Bank and Golan.

This is what Carter is trying to implement. He is not seeking withdrawal of Israeli domination over the occupied territories. On the contrary, his purpose is to find a formula for the capitulation of the Arab regimes, ~~for~~ some kind of formula--even one that can be presented in the guise of partial Israeli "withdrawal" over many years and "limited self-rule"--that would leave basic Israeli ~~and~~ military and economic control intact.

I think this question has some political importance, because it's easy to formulate the thing in such a way that we let Washington off the hook. Political responsibility for Israeli expansionism and for all the atrocities of the Zionist regime should be laid at Washington's door as well as on the Zionists.

Hello to all the comrades.

Comradely,

Dave

[TRANSLATION]

from
Warshawski article

Rouge, Jan. 16, 1973

...."That is why more and more is heard about American pressures on the Israeli government to make the necessary concessions for ^{a limited} ~~an~~ agreement ~~with~~ fairly soon with Egypt. To the extent that the pressures ~~is~~ that are being alluded to more and more ^{are} ~~is~~ limited to the question of Sinai and to some purely verbal declarations about the West Bank, then this possibility cannot be excluded, even if President Carter and his administrations have been very discrete up to now.

" But ~~that~~ ^{are} ~~is~~ absolutely excluded ~~is~~ more substantial pressures, particularly on the Palestinian question, which would challenge the very stability of the Zionist state.

Washington has never done that, and if Sadat is counting on this, he ~~is~~ ^R has already lost his gamble, and might as well resign, as he has threatened to do ^{on} ~~at~~ several ^{occassions} ~~times~~ recently. "