

# INTERNATIONAL INFORMATION BULLETIN

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**SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY**

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## INTRODUCTORY NOTE TO THE LETTER SIGNED DOMINGO

I should like to make clear that the following letter was written by me at a time when I was still in ignorance of certain decisions made by the Argentine comrades. Particularly, I believed at the time that a document presented as a document of the Leninist Tendency represented the point of view of the majority of the PRT; I learned subsequently that it expressed some personal appreciations and that at no time had the organization voted for it. Furthermore,

the line applied by the PRT since October-November 1970 corresponds, in substance, to the suggestions that I expressed, as I was able to verify later. In this sense, a certain number of remarks in the letter must be considered to be outmoded. In addition, for my later political appreciations, I call attention to my article published some weeks ago in *Rouge, Intercontinental Press*, and other organs of our movement.

May 28, 1971

L. M.

### INTERNATIONAL INFORMATION

#### *Uruguayan Committee (Fourth International)*

#### *The Crisis of the Trotskyist Movement in Argentina*

When a delegate from the leadership of the International visited Argentina in 1967, the situation seemed promising from several standpoints—the base that had been achieved in the major cities of the country, links with certain working-class and popular sectors, influence in some universities, the number of activists, the existence of a team of full-timers, a technical apparatus, and so forth. From the discussions that took place at the time, moreover, it seemed legitimate to conclude that there was substantial agreement between the International and the Argentinian comrades in evaluating the OLAS conference and the implications flowing from this. It is true that signs of a certain malaise had already appeared and that at the leadership level there were evident frictions. However, this was explained by the Argentinian comrades as the result on the one hand of an insufficient integration of elements coming from diverse origins and on the other of some personal habits and attitudes which would have to be overcome without giving rise to greater conflicts. In any case no one questioned the basic solidity of the organization. Unfortunately, the estimations made in 1967, as well as subsequent ones up until the world congress and the 1969 IEC plenum proved to be false. Shortly after the visit of the delegate from the International a struggle erupted in the leadership and in very rapid order a grave split developed. The world congress decided to recognize the majority tendency (*El Combatiente*) as the Argentinian section, granting the *La Verdad* minority tendency the status of a sympathizing organization. Since that time the *La Verdad* group, disregarding the responsible attitude the congress took in striving to keep the discussion on a political level and adopting a solution that permitted the dissident minority to remain within the framework of the international Trotskyist movement, has indulged in unacceptable factional maneuvers, provoking a deterioration in its relations with the International.<sup>1</sup> At the beginning of this year, the Argentinian section experienced additional serious splits after a deep-going differentiation into three opposing tendencies—the Tendencia Proletaria, the Tendencia Comunista, and the Tendencia Leninista. The tendency recognized by all as representing a clear majority held the Fifth Congress of the party and stated that it considered itself the Argentinian section of the International. But above and beyond the formal problems, which will be

resolved by the International in accordance with its statutory norms, the fact is that our forces remain seriously divided in Argentina—all the more so because the Tendencia Comunista and the Tendencia Leninista at least are far from homogenous politically and the majority that held the congress expressed conceptions and orientations which are going to provoke discussion in Argentina itself, and the International obviously will have something to say on this.

For our part we consider the situation extremely grave and judge that a discussion on this problem must be developed between now and the world congress in the context of the more general Latin-American discussion in progress in the International. By means of this letter we are attempting to suggest the lines of this discussion, at the same time putting forward some opinions. We may make some errors, among other things because we do not have all the facts. But we cannot accept the alternative of letting things slide any longer. Everyone must assume his responsibility and there must be a complete clarification of the situation. Some might think that in a situation like the one existing today in Argentina, action is required and not discussion. In principle this is correct. But in this given context, it is a dangerous illusion to think that the difficulties can be overcome solely through action. Unless there is a clarification on the revolutionary strategy needed in this stage, on the methods to be used, and on priorities, we will run the risk of suffering grave setbacks, or in the best of possibilities of building on sand.

The crisis of the organization that began in 1968 was so dramatic that it is an absolute necessity to analyze the causes. And this analysis requires going back into the past.

#### *Wrong Conceptions*

It must be remembered first of all that the group that played the preponderant role in building the PRT had a very peculiar role in the vicissitudes of the international Trotskyist movement since the war. The third World Congress in 1951 decided not to recognize it as a section of the International (this was a unanimous decision) fundamentally because of its sectarian attitude toward Peronism. After the 1953 split, this group lined up with the Interna-

tional Committee but without really integrating itself into it. As a result it developed rather independently of the principal currents in the Trotskyist movement (in the meantime it made a 180 degree turn on the question of Peronism, adopting an entry tactic toward this movement, which, moreover, took the form of tail-ending and complete opportunism). This was also reflected in the fact that it did not enter the International at the Reunification Congress, but later as the result of special negotiations within the framework of the general reunification agreements. One of the most important consequences of this situation was that the Argentinian comrades developed conceptions differing distinctly from those of the International on crucial questions.

At the last world congress, the representatives of the *La Verdad* tendency raised a commotion over certain chapters in the pamphlet *El único camino* [The Only Road] published by three comrades of the Argentinian majority. In these chapters there was an eclectic appreciation of the relationship between Trotskyism, Maoism, and Castroism. But ideas of the same type were put forward first in the documents of the united organization and by Moreno himself. As regards Maoism, it is sufficient to note here the features contained in the document of the Third Congress of *Palabra Obrera* (1963), as the organization was called at that time, and Nahuel Moreno's essay on the Chinese revolution published in the volume *50 Years of the World Revolution 1917-1967*.<sup>2</sup> Such positions would have been rejected in any other section of the International.

But Moreno and his group did not limit themselves to expressing their own false positions on Maoism. In his pamphlet *La Revolución Latinoamericana* (1962) Moreno went to the point of correcting the theory of the permanent revolution and even to claiming that the role of vanguard could be played in certain circumstances by the urban middle class.<sup>3</sup> According to the same author, Trotskyism — like Marxism — had a "European character," had not studied the phenomena of the colonial revolution, had left out of its transitional program "agrarian and national tasks, as well as guerrilla warfare." From this flowed the task that Moreno proposed to carry out, that is to synthesize the correct general theory and program (Trotskyism) with the correct specific theory and program (Maoism or Castroism).

It is evident that such confusion could not continue without grave implications for the education of the activists and cadres, as well as for the political orientation of the organization. The pamphlet *El único camino* was proof that even those who broke politically with Moreno were not ready to seriously study the problems that arose and persisted in an eclectic position. Still today we see that the majority comrades hold an attitude toward Maoism which, at the least, gives rise to mistakes. We do not at all dispute the need for studying the lessons of the armed struggle in China and Mao's conceptions on the matter. But first of all we must be familiar also with the contributions of Leon Trotsky and of our movement. There is no need to use Mao to point up general principles which are by no means the property of Maoism. In the second place, and above all, we must be clear on what the Mao group represents in China and on the international scale. If the differences between us and Maoism are not clear, if we fail to understand why Maoism cannot develop a revo-

lutionary strategy valid for Latin America — as the Argentinian comrades admit — and why the Chinese hold a sectarian attitude toward other currents in the workers movement (the Argentinian comrades have gotten their own direct experience in this field), the movement will not be armed for the battles awaiting us and conditions will be created for new frictions and new ruptures.

We would add that these theories of our Argentinian movement go hand in hand with a weak methodology in which eclecticism, empiricism, and dogmatic schematism combine and alternate. Hence their spectacular oscillations, their complete turnabouts, their surprising opportunist adaptations, their continual preoccupation with discovering categories with very little scientific basis and at least dubious practical utility. This is the source also of quite peculiar terminology which in a certain sense is unique in our international movement.

#### *Attitude Toward the International*

The attitude of the Argentinian Trotskyists toward the International could not help but be marked by the specific vicissitudes we have already mentioned. In essence, the Argentinian movement has never been fully integrated into the International; it has not participated in working out common theoretical and political positions. Even after the unification, the organization remained ignorant of the fundamental positions of the International. A significant episode of this. The statements of the delegate who visited Argentina in 1967 were followed with surprise by the majority of the comrades because they had completely false information and impressions about the nature of the International, its line, and its leadership. (The leading group in the Argentinian party deliberately represented the leadership of the International as a team of abstract intellectuals, or still worse as tacticians interested primarily in maneuvering with the different sections and tendencies.)

In fact, even the material that was sent had been monopolized by the top circle and was known to only a few persons.

Later on, before and after the last world congress, communication with the section became more frequent. But the Argentinian party continued to have a poor knowledge of the conceptions and activity of the International. The leaders did not seem very interested in distributing our literature and they sent insufficient information to the center, which later turned out to be very unrealistic. Moreover, some sections of the organization had the tendency to see the International much more as a network of useful contacts than a revolutionary organization functioning as a world party.

Finally we would like to underline the fact that the Argentinian organization, in conformity with the traditions of the country, was much more solidly structured than other Latin-American organizations. However, in our opinion, the percentage of full timers, above all in certain periods, was excessive with respect to the total number of activists. A very weighty apparatus developed which was not justified by the real functions to be carried out and at the same time represented a crushing financial burden for the organization. Sound functioning of the party was impeded, moreover, by personal quarrels and accusations which were initiated and later withdrawn with

a surprising nonchalance, frequently in connection with factional struggles.

The question arises why we have not discussed the problems of the Argentinian section in the past. By hindsight we can conclude that we should have stimulated a discussion and complete clarification long before now. We note, however, that it was difficult for us to intervene in the period immediately following the entry of the Argentinian organization into the International in the aftermath of the reunification and that we relied on a process of progressive assimilation. Moreover, when the last world congress was held, we were faced with the necessity of making a choice. We reaffirmed some basic organizational principles. But on the more properly political plane, clarification could be achieved only within the framework of the general Latin-American discussion.

### *The 1970 Crisis*

The year 1969 marked a serious effort on the part of the organization to create the minimum conditions for carrying out the policy adopted at the Fourth Congress, which corresponded to the overall conception approved by the world congress majority. But—as appears from the discussion documents of the PRT itself—the organizational achievements necessary for such a portentous undertaking were absolutely insufficient. On the other hand, the political development of the country, which moreover confirmed that the PRT's analysis had been far more correct than that of *La Verdad*, revealed potentialities and variants which the party did not comprehend in time and in all their implications. For this reason, in October 1969 the Central Committee voted a resolution setting an arbitrary and unrealistic schedule for unleashing the struggle, and projected tactics that failed to consider or minimized the changes that had taken place. It proved impossible to apply the decisions of the Central Committee. The repression that struck the organization at one of its strong points also contributed to this. And precisely this failure was the source of the new crisis which led a few months later to serious ruptures.

Unfortunately, we have only part of the elements necessary—we must repeat—to judge the positions of the different tendencies. We have only a partial knowledge of the positions adopted at the congress held by the majority tendency, which has defined itself as the Leninist tendency. Therefore, we do not presume to ask the International to arbitrate politically at this time. (From the organizational standpoint we must, obviously, apply our basic criteria which require recognizing the rights of a majority, if it places itself within the general framework of Trotskyism and the discipline of the world congresses.) But in view of the gravity of the situation, we consider it necessary to intervene in the discussion among the Argentinian Trotskyists, raising a certain number of questions and especially indicating the points on which clarification is essential in our Argentinian movement.

First, clarification is imperative with regard to Maoism and in general the Communist tendencies linked to Peking. When certain Argentinian comrades think that even the bureaucratic leaders of the Albanian party have their place in the mass revolutionary International, we have to draw the conclusion that they do not have the least notion of the bureaucratic structure in a whole series

of workers states or of the real role of certain leaderships. It is time our comrades undertook such a study, taking into consideration first of all what the International has produced on the question. For our part, we must recognize that we have not made the necessary effort to facilitate participation by the Latin-American comrades in working out common positions. In this sense, we are also responsible for some of the theoretical and political aberrations. But regardless of the responsibility, the problem remains, and it is an urgent one. All those who seek an all-inclusive solution combining Trotsky, Mao Tse-tung, Enver Hoxa, and Kim Il Sung are, at best, victims of an illusion and are preparing the way for other crises and other ruptures. The Trotskyist and Maoist currents stand in opposition on a world scale and it is absurd to try to base yourself on both at the same time.

Also on the international plane, it is imperative that the Argentinian section correct its estimation of the evolution in the developed capitalist countries. The Fourth International cannot be seriously accused of overlooking or minimizing the crucial portent of the revolution in the colonial or neocolonial countries. Both our documents and our actions stand as proof that we understood the historic role of this revolution in the context of the world revolution and that we saw the existence of an inexhaustible revolutionary potential in Asia, Latin America, and Africa. But at the same time our International stood out by rejecting all theories of the third-world type which more or less explicitly suggested that the role of the proletariat in the advanced countries—that is, of most of the industrial workers in the world—was exhausted. It was also distinguished by its rejection of any attitude implying that the activity of revolutionists in West Europe or North America should be limited to the task of supporting the struggles of other peoples. This moreover is why the Fourth International was able to understand better than any other current the significance of May 1968 in France and the new rise of the working class in Europe. This is why we were able, consequently, to intervene with spectacular results, giving an unprecedented impetus to our movement on a Europe-wide scale. We were surprised to hear Argentinian comrades express the opinion that our estimation of May 1968 was exaggerated and that it was a mistake to count too much on Europe. This is an old refrain which reflects nothing more than the intrinsic weaknesses of those who use it.

Coming to Argentinian questions, definitive clarification is needed on the character of this country's revolution. We are convinced that in order to facilitate mobilizing the broadest layers of the masses, the movement must formulate slogans corresponding to nationalist and anti-imperialist sentiments. But it must make no concession to the idea of an anti-imperialist or anti-oligarchical revolution. The Argentinian revolution will be anti-imperialist and anticapitalist simultaneously *from its earliest phases*.

As regards characterizing the mass movements, it is worthwhile to draw attention to the need for always avoiding two shoals. On the one hand, we must not give way to glorifying the mass movement during a revolutionary upsurge. On the other hand, we must avoid the sectarian error of judging a movement exclusively by the character of its leadership, or lack of leadership, coming to minimize

the importance of an upsurge because of the absence of a revolutionary party playing the leading role.

### *The Argentinian Situation Today*

As we have written in a discussion document published in the *International Internal Bulletin*, it is our estimation that the Argentinian section made a serious adventurist error in adopting the Central Committee resolution of October 1969. The comrades of the Leninist Tendency—who can claim in the abstract to be the most consistent—wanted to establish a continuity between this resolution and the previous decisions of the party. They forgot, however, the context of the 1967 discussions in which a delegate from the International participated. They forgot as well the conditions on which the line formulated in this period was based. First of all, in Bolivia there was the guerrilla war led by Che Guevara. And this factor in itself was decisive, because we did not conceive of the struggle in a purely Argentinian context, although we rejected the opportunist position that would reduce the role of Argentinian revolutionists to political and logistical support of the Bolivian activists. In the second place, the situation in the North was explosive, that is, it was markedly more advanced than the country as a whole. Finally, the party had rather large forces and no serious competitors in the sphere of the revolutionary left. It is evident that at least two of these conditions do not exist now. Moreover, even as regards the situation in the North, it must not be forgotten that the political effects of economic and social decay are not all favorable to preparing the ground for a revolutionary struggle. For these reasons maintaining the 1967 outlook as a short-term perspective is an error that can bring very grave setbacks and actual breakup of the organization.

The orientation of the present majority seems all the more dubious in as much as these comrades—to judge from their tendency document—underestimate the scope of the Córdoba and Rosario movements. This underestimation is the basis of their perspective of rural guerrilla warfare in the near future.

We are perfectly aware that asserting the vital importance of the movements in the cities—above all, when the people who stress this are the same ones who in the 1968 polemic denied the possibility of an upsurge in the near future—may conceal a tendency to become mired in the routine of tail-ending work in the bureaucratized unions, or on the fringes of these unions. Neither do we share certain estimations of the Communist Tendency on the necessity of making the start of guerrilla warfare conditional on winning political hegemony over 20-30 percent of the industrial proletariat. This conception is obviously mechanical: its practical effect would be to put everything off indefinitely, and this precisely at a stage when armed struggle has already begun in various forms. This said, however, we consider that in the present phase work must be concentrated in the big industrial cities, developing an essentially urban armed struggle linked to the struggles of the masses, their needs, and their political understanding. All this implies the need for tactical slogans derived from the concrete situations and closely tied to transitional demands. It goes without saying that in their intervention revolutionists can never lose sight of the general political

context and fail to seize every proper occasion to promote an understanding in the most advanced working-class strata of the perspective of armed struggle and the need to begin right away making practical preparations for this eventuality. But this essential precondition for a revolutionary battle cannot be met by mere stereotyped repetition of general slogans. In a country like Argentina, a clear attitude toward the unions is a prerequisite of all mass work. The approach of the Moreno tendency is clear; it dovetails, moreover, with a tradition of opportunistic adaptation. For this group the struggle is waged primarily in the area of demands and situated within the framework of the existing unions. Its objective is essentially to give impetus to the leaderships by means of pressure from the rank and file. We do not deny that such a policy can have its justification. That is, at certain times it can be acceptable on tactical grounds. But what we consider radically wrong is making this the fundamental axis of activity for revolutionists. In this area, it is necessary to collaborate with trade-union tendencies and groups that have broken with the bureaucrats bought and paid for by the government—in the first place with the tendencies represented in the Ongaro CGT, even if they are very weak. On the other hand, the initiative must be taken in creating organizational forms that, in the event of mobilizations such as those in Córdoba and Rosario, could become effective instruments of struggle even at the level of armed actions. In any case, a detailed discussion is necessary on this series of problems. In fact, it is impossible to really link ourselves with the masses in preparing for and launching an armed struggle unless we are able to do something in the area of their most urgent needs, to defend those fighting in the front line against the bosses and the government. It is not enough to stage spectacular blows that arouse the sympathy of the people. The discussions in progress among the Brazilian revolutionists offer us an eloquent indication on this score.

We said that three years ago the PRT loomed as the largest organization on the far left. In this context, there was a tendency to underestimate the problem of relations with other revolutionary currents and what is worse to conceive of the relationship between the party, mass organizations, and revolutionary army in a rigid way. In this regard a discussion is all the more needed in as much as the PRT has experienced the vicissitudes we noted, other groups have taken the initiative in armed actions, and—at the same time as the above-mentioned tendencies—the PRT has not been exempt from failings of the opposite type. It has shown tendencies to blur its conceptions and organizational character with the aim of facilitating regroupment with other forces. This observation holds true especially for its relations with revolutionary organizations in other Latin-American countries. We are in favor of a revolutionary united front, which could even involve organizational links. But our sections must participate in fronts as Trotskyist organizations of the Fourth International, without any camouflage and without creating the slightest confusion between their relations with such organizations and with the International, which is a world party.

These are the problems that we would like to see submitted to the fullest and frankest discussion in our Argentinian movement. We hope that we ourselves will have the opportunity to participate in this discussion, stating our

criticisms and suggestions more precisely.

Domingo  
November 24, 1970

FOOTNOTES

1. The *La Verdad* group held its national congress without giving advance notice to the International, without sending the documents adopted, or information on the

debates. What is worse: a representative of the International minority was invited to attend the congress and in fact participated in it.

2. The SWP comrades found themselves forced to explicitly dissociate themselves from the analyses in this essay.

3. In our report to the congress preceding the reunification, we explicitly criticized this formulation.

CORRECTION OF TRANSLATION

Throughout the above letter it is necessary to replace we by I (with the exception of page 5, beginning with

"The question arises . . ." etc., up to ". . . discussion").  
June 5, 1971  
L. M.

**LETTER FROM THE POLITICAL COMMITTEE  
OF THE SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY TO THE UNITED SECRETARIAT**

New York, N. Y. 10014  
May 12, 1971

Political Bureau  
La Verdad

Dear Comrades,

Enclosed for your information is a copy of a letter from the Political Committee of the Socialist Workers Party to the United Secretariat.

The decision to send the letter, and to provide you with a copy for your information, was made at a meeting of the Political Committee held yesterday.

Comradely yours,  
s/Jack Barnes  
Organization Secretary

New York, N. Y. 10014  
May 11, 1971

Dear Ernest,

Enclosed is a letter to the United Secretariat that the Political Committee of the Socialist Workers Party voted to send at its May 11, 1971, meeting. The letter is self-explanatory.

The Political Committee also voted to send a copy of the letter to the Political Bureau of the *La Verdad* group for its information. A copy of that letter is likewise enclosed.

Comradely yours,  
s/Jack Barnes  
Organization Secretary

New York, N. Y.  
May 11, 1971

To the United Secretariat  
of the Fourth International

Dear Comrades,

At the March 20-21 meeting of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International, Comrade Pedro reported on a recent trip he had made to Latin America. Among other things, he reported that a mimeographed bulletin containing a lengthy letter signed by "Domingo" was being circulated among the sections there.

The bulletin appeared to have official sponsorship. It was called *INFORMACION INTERNACIONAL* (International Information) and the body publishing it listed itself as the "Comite uruguayo (IV Internacional)" [Uruguayan Committee (Fourth International)]. The letter, dated November 24, 1970, and entitled "La crisis del movimiento trotskista en Argentina" ("The Crisis of the Trotskyist Movement in Argentina"), purported to be a balance sheet of the tendencies in our movement in that country as of that date.

Upon returning from Europe, Comrade Pedro reported to us that at the meeting of the United Secretariat Comrade Livio Maitan said that he had written the letter, using

"Domingo" as a pen name. The other members of the United Secretariat, according to Comrade Pedro, disclaimed any knowledge of the existence of such a letter.

The minutes of the March 20-21 meeting of the United Secretariat did not include anything about this—neither Comrade Pedro's report on this point and his questions about it, nor Comrade Maitan's statement as to the authorship of the letter, nor any indication as to the comments of the others present.

All of this was so surprising to us that we asked Comrade Hansen to place it on the agenda at the next meeting of the United Secretariat on April 17-18.

According to Comrade Hansen, at that meeting Comrade Maitan again acknowledged being the author of the letter.

The other members of the United Secretariat said that they had no knowledge of the letter before Comrade Pedro's report, and that they still had not seen it. None of them knew what the "Comite uruguayo (IV Internacional)" was or whom it represented. Comrade Maitan insisted that the letter he had written was "private," that it had been circulated without his consent or knowledge, and that to circulate a private letter without the permission of the author was a mistake. He did not volunteer any information as to the identity of the recipient of his letter.

Other members of the United Secretariat, without yet knowing the content of the letter, defended the right of leaders of the world Trotskyist movement to engage in private correspondence and to have that privacy respected.

The only action taken by the United Secretariat was to pass the following motion: "That copies of that letter be made available to the United Secretariat."

After discussing this entire development, we reached the following conclusions:

1. We do not question the right of any leader, or for that matter, any member of the world Trotskyist movement to engage in private correspondence. However, in our opinion, that issue is not involved in this instance.

2. Comrade Maitan, we understand, is the head of the Latin American Commission and therefore intimately involved in all the relations between the United Secretariat and the sections and sympathizing groups of the Fourth International in Latin America. Copies of all of his correspondence written in that official capacity with the sections and sympathizing groups in that area, along with their replies, should therefore be available to members of the United Secretariat whenever they wish to read them.

3. The letter in question is not—in the proper meaning of the term—a private letter, as can be seen at once upon reading it. The signer of the letter uses the term "we" throughout and speaks as if he were expressing the collective and considered opinion of the Latin American Commission, if not the United Secretariat as a whole.

For example, the author writes: "For our part, we consider the situation extremely grave and judge that a discussion on this problem must be developed between now and the world congress . . . By means of this letter we are attempting to suggest the lines of this discussion, at the same time putting forward some opinions. We may make some errors . . . But we cannot accept the alterna-



tive of letting things slide any longer."

Another example: ". . . the *La Verdad* group, disregarding the responsible attitude the congress took in striving to keep the discussion on a political level and adopting a solution that permitted the dissident minority to remain within the framework of the international Trotskyist movement, has indulged in unacceptable factional maneuvers, provoking a deterioration in its relations with the International."

The evidence cited for this condemnation—which purports to express the judgment of no less than the "International"—carries the same implication of emanating from the Latin American Commission, if not the United Secretariat as a whole: "The *La Verdad* group held its national congress without giving advance notice to the International, without sending the documents adopted, or information on the debates. What is worse: a representative of the International minority was invited to attend the congress and in fact participated in it."

The alleged "representative of the International minority" was in actuality a member of the Socialist Workers Party who was in Argentina by coincidence at the time the underground congress was held. He reported the entire matter to the United Secretariat at its meeting of September 19-20, 1970, a meeting attended by Comrade Maitan. This was two months before Comrade Maitan wrote his letter.

4. The fact that the United Secretariat was not consulted in either the decision to draw up and send such a letter or in formulating it has implications that will surely not escape experienced comrades in the International. Either the United Secretariat was not carrying out its responsibilities in overseeing the work of the Latin American Commission, or Comrade Maitan operated behind the back of the United Secretariat, without informing it of a most important action on his part that could gravely affect the internal situation not only in Latin America but in the world Trotskyist movement as a whole.

5. The fact that even a month after this matter was reported, the United Secretariat continued to remain ignorant of the content of a letter that had been mimeographed and widely circulated in Latin America makes matters still worse. Was Comrade Maitan deliberately trying to keep the United Secretariat from knowing the content of the letter even at this late date? Or was the United Secretariat uninterested in pursuing the matter further, even after its attention had been called to the existence of the letter at its previous session?

6. The chief target of Comrade Maitan's letter is Comrade Nahuel Moreno of the *La Verdad* group. In attacking him, Comrade Maitan goes back to 1951; that is, eleven years before the Reunification Congress; and he also raises doubts concerning the relation of the Argentinian comrades with the International Committee before the reunification and at the time of the reunification. This is a very serious matter, in our opinion, for Comrade Maitan has thereby injected differences into the international pre-congress discussion that were considered superseded at the time of the reunification. By doing this, he indicates that he holds doubts about the reunification itself.

7. The main objective of the letter is transparent. It seeks to advance political grounds for maintaining the recognition of the *El Combatiente* group as the Argentinian section in place of the numerical grounds used at the last world congress. The author thereby fans factional fires to the injury of the discussion preparatory to the next world congress, not the least injury being the one done to his own contributions to that discussion by the revelation that they are accompanied by narrow factional objectives of his own.

8. The attitude displayed by the author of the letter toward the *La Verdad* grouping and Comrade Moreno is not of recent origin, as is shown by the content of the letter itself. "The question arises," says the author, "why we have not discussed the problems of the Argentinian section in the past. . . . We note . . . that it was difficult for us to intervene in the period immediately following the entry of the Argentinian organization into the International in the aftermath of the reunification and that we relied on a process of progressive assimilation."

A declaration of that nature indicates that Comrade Maitan (and whoever else he is referring to when he says "us" and "we") held reservations about the reunification in 1963 and that he (in agreement with those he refers to by "we") has acted since then in accordance with these reservations. It is impossible not to wonder about the role played by Comrade Maitan in the split that occurred in the Argentinian section prior to the last world congress. The circulation of this particular letter—which only came to our attention by accident—inevitably suggests that perhaps other similar actions have been undertaken in the same sub rosa way.

9. In view of these considerations, we suggest that it would be in order for the majority of the United Secretariat to issue a statement: (a) making it absolutely clear that the impression created by the content of the letter that the author was speaking in behalf of the Latin American Commission and the United Secretariat has no correspondence with the truth; (b) specifically dissociating the United Secretariat in its majority from the views expressed in the letter, particularly the factional attack on the *La Verdad* group and Comrade Moreno; (c) informing the movement what the "Comite uruguayo (IV Internacional)" actually represents, and—if this still remains unknown to the members of the United Secretariat—indicating that an investigation will be undertaken to ascertain the facts.

10. We suggest further that the letter written by Comrade Maitan, which has already been circulated among the sections in Latin America, be made available to the membership of the world Trotskyist movement as a whole by publishing it in the Internal Bulletin of the Fourth International, together with the suggested clarifying statement by the majority of the United Secretariat and this letter expressing our opinion.

Comradely yours,  
Political Committee  
Socialist Workers Party

*STATEMENT OF THE UNITED SECRETARIAT  
CONCERNING THE MAY 11, 1971, LETTER  
OF THE POLITICAL COMMITTEE OF THE SWP*

After considering the May 11, 1971, letter addressed to it by the Political Committee of the SWP, the United Secretariat makes the following statement:

1. The letter signed Domingo is a private letter sent by a member of the US in his own name, and not in the name of a body of the International. The author will reply to the criticisms which the letter of the Political Committee of the SWP addresses to him.

2. The US holds that the content of the letter signed Domingo does not go beyond the normal limits of a personal letter devoted to differences under wide discussion within our movement.

3. The US cites the procedure followed at the Ninth World Congress concerning the recognition of the Argentine section. The organization today called the PRT represents the Argentine section recognized in consequence

of the unification that occurred at the Reunification Congress (Seventh World Congress). Within that organization, a split occurred between the eighth and ninth world congresses, the "La Verdad" group, as a minority within the PRT not agreeing to submit to the decisions of a congress of the section that was convoked in a normal way. Under these conditions, no justification whatsoever in correspondence with the statutes could be submitted to the Ninth World Congress to disaffiliate the PRT as the Argentine section without thereby sanctioning a gross violation of democratic centralism.

Carried: 7 for  
2 against  
1 abstention

The letter of the PC of the SWP poses some grave problems and merits a very clear reply. Here are the points that I want to underline:

1. The letter written by Domingo does not involve the responsibility of either the US or the Latin American Commission (the comrades who read my articles know that I often utilize the expression "nous"—in Italian "noi"—which the translators of the IP normally and correctly translate as "I"). I consider that in the International every comrade has the right to write such documents without their necessarily being circulated in the whole movement.

As to the content of the letter, the comrades will find there both the ideas that I advanced in my September 1970 discussion document and, to a large degree, some ideas that I expressed at the last Plenum of the IEC. It is thus ridiculous to insinuate that I may have acted behind the back of the Secretariat or of the International.

I have no objection to the letter signed Domingo being circulated for the international discussion (with some explanatory lines on my part).

2. The gravest and most scandalous accusation in the SWP letter concerns my possible reservations on the reunification. I could limit myself to quite simply rejecting that accusation which smacks of factional sophistry. But, above all to those comrades who were not in the International at the time and who, altogether, represent the crushing majority of our movement, I will recall that, the same as the other members of the majority I was favorable to a reunification with all those who accepted the basic conditions on which the agreement was realized. That is why—against the minority led by Pablo—we maintained that, in principle, even Healy and Lambert could enter the International if they accepted the reunification platform. We were, with all the more reason, for the entry of the Argentine organization and on this terrain, too, we polemicized against Pablo. After the 1963 congress, it was I personally who was given the charge of traveling to Latin America to complete the reunification and who reached an agreement with the Argentine organization led at the time by Moreno, even if this had as a consequence the estrangement—with hardly an exception—of the comrades who had collaborated with us after the split with the Posadists.

Did I have reservations as to the line of this organization? Obviously yes. If I did not advance them at the time, this was precisely because what was essential was to assure the reunification and not open up debates that would have inevitably aroused misunderstandings. But I had and I have the right to hold reservations or to make criticisms—the reunification, as a matter of fact, involved both the right of organizations and comrades who did not agree with the political documents adopted by the congresses to enter the International (that is why the minority led by Pablo was accepted) and the right of everyone to criticize the orientation of this or that section. The comrades of the present minority have, moreover, exercised this right, for example, with regard to the English comrades, of whom some were with the International Secretariat before the reunification, without anyone accusing them because of that of bringing the reunification into question.

I will add that criticism of the positions of Moreno is not at all a peculiarity of Livio Maitan. The comrades of the SWP, at least part of them, have expressed not a few criticisms in the past and at times exactly on the same subjects. At the time of my first trip to Latin America after 1963, it was above all against the objections advanced by comrades of organizations that had belonged to the International Committee that I had to defend the right of the Argentine organization to enter into the reunited organization. Even now the most severe proposals emanate from that side. Finally the split of 1968 occurred among Argentine comrades who had *all* belonged to the International Committee before 1963. That is why neither the reunification nor, a fortiori, the split of 1953 have anything at all to do with the current situation in our Argentine movement.

As to the insinuation that I possibly played a role in the split of 1968, this is quite simply inadmissible. If the comrades of the PC of the SWP have any items, it is their duty to so inform the International; if it is only an insinuation, they must understand that by such procedures they can only do harm to the fruitful development of the political discussion that must represent the fundamental requisite for everyone.

3. The La Verdad group has no right to complain about my attitude toward them. It was not I who chose to split the party; it was I, on the contrary, who suggested a solution—accepted at the world congress by the Argentine delegate—that assured La Verdad the status of a sympathizing section. In addition, I always sought to avoid having the discussion shift from the political terrain to the terrain of personal accusations and quarrels over rules of good conduct—I am prepared to give every useful explanation in the matter, both at the world congress and in other bodies of the International.

As to the political appreciations, it is not at all a question of searching for scapegoats. It is a question of understanding the genesis of certain ideas that have circulated in Argentina and above all of avoiding arbitrarily picturing so-called orthodox Trotskyists as opposed to camouflaged "Maoists" or "Castroists." Already at the world congress, when Moreno was beating the drums about the "Red Book" signed by three Argentina comrades, by claiming that the pages that he was reading from explained the split, I replied that for more than a year Moreno had offered radically different explanations for the same split and that certain of the appreciations of Maoism contained in the Red Book had been shared by him. On this terrain, too, there was nothing new in the Domingo letter.

It goes without saying that if the comrades of the minority want a political discussion on all the problems of our movement in Argentina as of right now, I am ready to accept it for my part. Nevertheless, I consider that at this stage it is preferable to place the axis of the discussion on the problems that are posed more generally in Latin America.

4. The comrades of the PC, who engage in the most distasteful insinuations with regard to me, claim that they should be taken at their word when they affirm that a member of the minority found himself in Argentina by chance at the time of a congress of La Verdad. Let us

admit that things actually happened that way—this does not thereby diminish the responsibility of the La Verdad group which did not send any communiqué to the US either before or after this congress. The facts are sufficiently clear and there is no need for me to insist on them.

Nevertheless, one point merits being brought out. A comrade representing the minority can certainly make trips; and I think that above all before the world congress it would be very positive if the comrades of both the majority and the minority participated at the congresses of the sections that are discussing the proposed documents and electing delegations. But all of this must be organized under the responsibility of the international leadership—the particular initiatives of a section or of a comrade could be suspected of being factional enterprises. That is why the discussion on trips such as the trips already made by Comrade P. should be held *before* and not *after*—this is moreover the rule for any important trip of no matter what member of the international leadership, which assures the minority the possibility of expressing its point of view and of asking for all the information it wishes.

5. I cannot know, naturally, at this moment in what form the Argentine question will be posed at the world congress—no decision has been taken up to now. But a clarification is called for with regard to method, since the letter of the SWP raises the question.

At the last world congress, the question was to ascertain who represented the majority in Argentina at the time of the split in 1968—it was only on that basis that the continuity of the section could be established and assured. If, in dealing with a split, the International should decide the statutory question by basing itself on the political orientations, this would involve an obvious danger of doing violence to the rights of national majorities that might be in disagreement with the majority of the International.

This did not prevent anyone even at the congress, after the recognition of the majority as representing the section (this did not at all involve the recognition of a new section), from presenting the view that the said majority

had advanced concepts incompatible with Trotskyism. He would have had the right and the duty to propose its expulsion and possible replacement by another tendency or organization. In this case, the discussion would have taken place, it is obvious, on an essentially political level.

No one posed such a question at the Ninth Congress. In principle, every delegate has the right to do so at the coming congress, by demanding the expulsion of the section and its possible replacement. To utilize the technique of understatement, I will say that it is not I who would do that (if my section elects me at the time of its national congress).

May 28, 1971

Livio Maitan

P.S. Two supplementary questions: (a) I do not know for what reasons and under what circumstances—I suppose it was a question of security measures—the document signed Domingo was circulated under the sponsorship of the Uruguayan Committee of the Fourth International. But, so far as the substance is concerned, I recall that a group of comrades have operated in Uruguay for a certain number of years, which should not be a surprise to anyone, since a comrade attended in their name—as a fraternal delegate—at the Ninth World Congress. If my memory is correct, they at times utilized the name Uruguayan Committee of the Fourth International. Several months ago, the PRT(U), politically linked to La Verdad, asked to establish relations with the International. No official section exists in Uruguay.

(b) The decision of the PC of the SWP to send La Verdad, which is not a section, a letter of a very delicate nature is in itself debatable. But what is inadmissible is that the comrades took the initiative to spread even outside the statutory framework of the International that I utilized the pseudonym of Domingo. Here is another example of the cavalier manner in which questions of security are treated in our movement—and I want to make very clear that this remark is not addressed solely to the comrades of the PC of the SWP.