

# **International Information Bulletin**

**Discussion on Latin America  
(1968-1971)**

**\$1.50**

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## DRAFT RESOLUTION ON LATIN AMERICA

### I

#### Economic Tendencies and Increased Imperialist Exploitation

(1) Above and beyond the national and regional peculiarities and conjunctural ups and downs, the economic tendencies operating at present in Latin America remain pretty much the same as in the past, the most negative features tending generally to become worse. The situation can be summarized as follows: In no country has there been an economic expansion which would meet the needs of real development and counterbalance the rate of population increase. Industrialization, even when it extends into new sectors, remains limited and partial. Investment is inadequate and in no case offers a basis for more balanced development and absorption of the unemployed and underemployed. The national debt is still a source of financial crises and budgetary difficulties. The draining off of profits from the Latin American economy (by American, but also, in part, European and Japanese imperialism) is continuing and increasing, as is the general unfavorable evolution in terms of trade. Agricultural production is deteriorating and proving in any case more and more inadequate with respect to the needs of consumption, which is growing, if only as a result of the increased population. The weight in the economy of low-profit or unprofitable sectors, far from decreasing, has risen still more. In most of these countries inflation remains a chronic or very frequent phenomenon.

(2) A relatively new tendency which has increased in recent years is a movement of foreign investment into modern, dynamic industrial sectors not directly linked to the processing of raw materials. This has resulted in two things. First of all, it has created economic sectors exclusively controlled from the start by imperialist corporations in lines traditionally reserved to the so-called national bourgeoisie. Secondly, it has produced a grave and imminent threat to national industries which though relatively developed cannot meet the competition of a much more dynamic technology and far more efficient organizational and managerial techniques, and which moreover need capital not available locally. This means that while continuing to bear the crushing burden of all the traditional forms of economic domination and exploitation, Latin America now finds even its most modern sectors facing the same sort of threat the European countries face (absorption, elimination owing to American competition, etc.). The consequence can only be new economic distortions and greater imperialist exploitation. This means that an economic develop-

ment in any way capable of solving this continent's tragic social problems is totally ruled out. This is all the more true because the Latin American bourgeoisies have proved incapable of carrying out even very modest attempts to develop regional "common markets," and at a time when it is becoming more and more clear that the dimensions of the present national states are too narrow to permit a real take off for modern industry.

### II

#### Dynamics and Role of the Social Classes

(3) The economic and social processes, more especially in the past fifteen years, have culminated in important changes in the relative composition of the ruling classes. The most striking element has been the decline in the economic and political weight of the traditional layers of the big landlords, especially those less directly linked with the commercial and financial bourgeois layers. The more specifically urban ruling strata, linked to the new industrial sectors, to big business and to financial capital, have increasingly played the fundamental role, seeking to translate this economic and social reality into new formulas of political rule (for example, the Frei experiment in Chile, to a lesser extent that of Belaúnde in Peru).

However, the relative reenforcement of the industrial bourgeoisie in nowise means that a vigorous social class has developed able to play an effective leading role and to act independently. The economic consolidation of this class, its existence, is tightly bound up with the operations and interests of Yankee imperialism; or, in far fewer cases, to European imperialism. In the best of cases, it is more precisely joint ventures of foreign and native capital that is involved in which the native capitalists most often play a completely subordinate role and have no possibility of acting on their own. Thus, it would be absolutely incorrect to project the perspective of an increased role for the national bourgeoisie as a historical class capable of any kind of consistent struggle to free itself from imperialist tutelage (the bankruptcy of the Belaúnde experiment is significant in this regard, since Peru is one of the countries where there has unquestionably been a certain amount of industrial development).

(4) As a result of the well known phenomena of the last fifteen to twenty years, and especially with the growing urbanization, the new petty bourgeois strata -- white collar workers in various



government bureaus, trade, and the services, the liberal professions, etc. -- have gained strength. These are the strata where the ideological influence of imperialism is the strongest (relative success of propaganda for the model of the consumer society, for the American Way of Life, etc.), where it is most difficult to mobilize against imperialism, and where the government parties recruit their electoral clientele (for example, part of Frei's support in Chile, of Leoni's in Venezuela, of the old coalition parties in Peru). However, the position of these strata is quite precarious, either because they live off risky enterprises or get their incomes (at least in part) more from assorted expedients skirting the law than from the "normal" functioning of the economic machine. They are at the mercy of this or that clique or group in power, being the first in any case to pay the price for recessions, attacks of inflation, and changes in the ruling cliques. They have no perspective for any real security or substantial social advancement for their children (who swell the ranks of the students engaging in "confrontations"). This new petty bourgeoisie, then, can temporarily aid the political operations of the ruling classes and imperialism; but, in the last analysis, it is no social cement for the system; and, in critical situations, it can be swept by sudden flames of revolt.

(5) The peasantry represents a decreasing percentage of the total population and its specific economic weight is declining more markedly and more rapidly than its quantitative weight. Nevertheless, in absolute terms it still constitutes the majority and often the overwhelming majority of the population. It is still the social class which suffers the worst exploitation and oppression and which, in the existing economic and social context, has the least perspective.

The causes of the peasants' discontent and anger are manifold -- the traditional land hunger, the choking off of subsistence agriculture, conflict with the state administration which extorts taxes and appears most often as an instrument of repression in the service of the exploiters, disillusionment arising from the fraudulent nature of the official "agrarian reforms," fear of a comeback by the landlords in the countries where they have had to renounce certain privileges, difficulties arising from price and market problems especially for small independent farmers, unfavorable repercussions from prices on the world market, etc. But the outcome is always the same. Far from improving, the lot of the peasants remains tragic and is even getting worse. Hence the persistent impetus to struggle and revolt. This is all the more true because the peasants are less and less isolated from the international political and ideo-

logical currents; have assimilated the lesson of the Cuban revolution, whose fortunes they continually follow; have learned a great deal from the guerrilla experience and are not cut off from the student revolutionary movements, whose influence reaches them through a thousand different channels.

(6) The working class has not undergone any quantitative growth, despite the development of industrial production in certain countries. This is due to the fact that certain industrial advances have gone hand in hand with a crisis in the traditional sectors and have been based on technological innovations and rationalizations which involve a contraction rather than an expansion in manpower employed. Aside from completely exceptional cases, the tendency is by no means for the standard of living to rise but rather to stagnate and most often decline (in some cases, for example, Uruguay, to a dramatic degree). For both objective reasons (unemployment, underemployment, etc.) and subjective reasons (their subordination to the government, their bureaucratization, the control of pro-Soviet Communist parties, etc.), the trade union organizations are increasingly incapable of meeting this situation, even of exercising effective pressure within the framework of the system. Most often it is primarily the mechanism of inflation that depresses the workers' standard of living, cancelling out the wage gains that are occasionally made. Furthermore, from the social standpoint, the workers are usually the ones who often suffer the effects of the rural exodus, inasmuch as their very modest wages must provide the subsistence for groups of relatives and friends swollen by newcomers from the countryside (in exceptional cases, as for example in Bolivia during the crisis in the mines, the inverse phenomenon develops, namely, a partial return of workers to their villages of origin). Finally, the proletarian populace has not experienced any improvement in housing, living conditions, medical care, transportation, etc., or the possibility to assure a normal education for their children.

For all these reasons, the working class is absolutely not, and has no consciousness of being, even a relatively privileged layer -- as superficial theoreticians claim. Exploited and oppressed in manifold forms by the capitalist and imperialist system, they have not ceased in reality to be an explosive force, a motor force of the revolution. Powerful strikes in defiance of military dictatorships (for example, in Brazil), mobilizations accompanied by clashes with the repressive forces (Uruguay, Chile, Bolivia, etc.), linkups between nuclei of workers and the student movement (Mexico, Brazil) constitute, moreover, significant symptoms of a

proletarian resurgence at the present time. If the broadest layers of the working class are still immobilized or neutralized and if the workers have not been able to play a substantial role in the revolutionary actions of recent years in certain countries, this is by no means a result of any degeneration or intrinsic weakness of the proletariat as a revolutionary force. It is the result of well defined concrete factors, such as the momentary prostration resulting from severe defeats and repressions; the pernicious role of the trade union bureaucracies which are more and more integrated into the government structure, especially in certain important countries, the no less negative role of opportunist political leaderships enjoying prestige sometimes rubbed off from an international Communist tradition, the weight of unemployment which has continued to increase in recent years, and the danger of reprisals in the event of struggles or strikes -- which is a danger the workers are ready to face only if they see a real perspective for political change.

(7) As a result of the persistence, or even accentuation of the rural exodus, the concentrations of plebian masses on the periphery of the big cities are still growing. These masses can find no real openings in the basic economic structure and remain condemned to a poverty stricken and precarious existence (sometimes a meager wage must suffice for a whole group, sometimes they live literally from hand to mouth, most often they apply their "initiative" in the most diverse ways, from peddling and occasional services to theft and prostitution). The assignment of a part of this disinherited population to the service sector is an outright statistical obfuscation. Far from being a symptom of progress and modernization, the expansion of the "services" is only an additional expression of the economic and social decay, involving the extension of nonproductive activities and of strata with the most precarious and pathetic kind of income. For this reason the masses grouped around the big cities still represent an explosive potential which could be fully tapped in critical situations by the revolutionary forces. This potential, moreover, has already partially expressed itself several times in the course of the last ten years and in abrupt and violent mobilizations (for example, in Caracas, Rio de Janeiro, Santiago de Chile). More particularly, because of its essentially peasant origin and proletarian composition, this plebian element offers precious opportunities for concrete linkups between the working class and the peasantry and for the circulation of revolutionary ideas.

(8) The revolutionary student movement shook several Latin American countries simultaneously with the student upsurge sweeping Western Europe and the United States. Common objective causes

and subjective factors are unquestionably at the root of this upsurge which fits into the more general framework of the international revolt of the young generation. The common feature uniting all these struggles is the irresistible impulse generated by the ever deeper and more dramatic crisis shaking imperialism as a world system (which is concretized most specifically in Latin America in the influence of the Cuban revolution). It would be an error, however, to make too close an identification or analogy, forgetting in particular that:

(a) Students in the colonial and semicolonial countries have traditionally played a progressive and even revolutionary role since the beginning of the anti-imperialist struggles and they also played this role in powerful mobilizations for university reform in the twenties.

(b) The phenomenon of the population explosion in the universities and schools which is at the base of the crisis in the European countries has not assumed the same proportions. In certain cases, the university population has even diminished.

This does not imply any underestimation of the revolutionary role the student strata can play on a continental scale in Latin America. In any case the role of the students will be much more substantial than in the past and must no longer be conceived as simply a supporting force or source of cadres for the revolutionary organizations. The student movement must be understood as a political and social force capable of stimulating or deepening revolutionary crises by its intervention. This is true for the following reasons:

(a) The dynamics of the student mass movement is assuming an entirely different character than in the past because it no longer expresses the demands of strata of the national bourgeoisie for independence and autonomy. The student movement, whatever its point of departure, is becoming a consistently anti-imperialist and anticapitalist movement (reflecting, among other things, a change in the social composition of the student population with the access to education of broad petty bourgeois and even popular strata).

(b) The international and continental context has radically altered, opening new perspectives with regard to the radicalization and mobilization of petty bourgeois forces.

(c) The cadres and activists of the student movement have not suffered all the demoralization from the bad experiences of the old organizations and their leaderships and are not tied by any umbilical cord to the traditions of the workers

movement or the traditional national-revolutionary movement.

### III

#### Political Situation and Perspectives

(9) The essential features of the political development can be summed up schematically as follows:

(a) Bankruptcy or profound crisis of the regimes which were presented as pilot models of the "democratic reformism" boosted with the propaganda send-off of the so-called Alliance for Progress (the fall of the Belaúnde regime in Peru following the bankruptcy of the most "progressive" wing of the national bourgeoisie, impasse of the Frei regime in Chile, deep erosion of the Venezuelan regime, which is incapable even of performing its repressive functions effectively).

(b) The collapse of the political equilibrium in those countries which for both historical and conjunctural reasons have known rather long periods of relative stability, and which represent exceptions with regard to the conditions prevailing on the continent as a whole (Uruguay and Mexico).

(c) A universal tendency toward the establishment of open or hypocritically camouflaged military regimes.

(d) A crisis of the military regimes themselves which are proving incapable of offering any solutions of the least durability to the crucial problems and as a result can maintain themselves only by the harshest repression (Bolivia, Brazil, etc.).

These conditions and tendencies as a whole, which in the last analysis reflect the economic and social tendencies mentioned above, create not only a continentwide structural instability but more precisely a prerevolutionary situation which is taking the form of both a more or less rapid ripening of profound social and political explosions (Brazil, Mexico, Chile), the outbreak of real revolutionary crises (Uruguay), and the emergence of a state of civil war in certain countries (Guatemala and partially Bolivia). The year 1968, in particular, was marked by a new revolutionary upsurge expressed in the mass mobilizations in Mexico and Brazil, the July-August crisis in Uruguay, the breakup of the regime and renewal of struggle in Bolivia a few months after the grave defeat of the guerrilla group led by Che, and the first symptoms of a revival of working class nuclei in countries which have undergone years of stagnation (for example, Argentina).

(10) In view also of the international context (involving primarily the

Cuban revolution's continuing to play its historic role\*), the general perspective must be one of increasing and mounting social and political tensions tending toward the outbreak of revolutionary situations.

In the economic sphere, a major improvement and hence a reversal of the trend would only be possible, for example, under the following conditions: a substantial rise in agricultural production, industrial development capable of absorbing large masses of the unemployed or underemployed population; the creation of new jobs for the youths leaving the universities and schools generally; a favorable trend in the prices of certain products on the world market; the defense and expansion of outlets compromised or threatened, among other things, by the Common Market and the arrangements between the Common Market and certain African countries; and the development, if only very incompletely, of Latin American common markets. These are clearly unrealizable conditions in the present context, and thus the situation is hopeless for any economic solution, with all the inevitable implications this entails in the political field. In this context, then, the ruling classes will have no chance of forming coalitions or blocs on any even relatively stable base. In particular, this is so because none of the strata of these classes -- including the "new" national bourgeoisie -- can get any real popular support either in the cities or in the countryside; because, as difficulties mount, internecine struggles within these classes will inevitably multiply; and because American imperialism's margin for maneuver -- most of all in the economic sphere but also in the political -- is tending to shrink constantly.

This does not exclude possible oscillations in the most disparate leaderships, including new ephemeral pseudo-reformist attempts, political gambles, and even variants within the framework of military regimes (groups of officers are continually playing at "Nasserism" in

\* It is not the purpose of this document to analyze the inner development of the Cuban revolution. However, it is obvious that the survival of the Cuban revolution and its maintaining its present role are dependent in the long run on an extension of the revolution in Latin America. The threat of imperialist military action against Cuba still exists and the crushing of the revolutionary regime would have very grave repercussions throughout Latin America. The danger of bureaucratization is not excluded. Objective factors favor such a development despite the conscious antibureaucratic campaign by a leadership which over a decade has given many proofs of its capacity.

several countries and the immediate import of military coups is not always the same in every given situation). But this will change nothing in the general, deep seated tendency: in a situation of chronic crisis and prerevolutionary tensions, the ruling classes will inevitably be impelled to adopt brutal repressive measures and utilize despotic and terrorist political regimes. Since these classes often are not very solid as social forces and cannot realistically contemplate solving their problems with popularly based reactionary regimes on the fascist model, military regimes remain by far the most likely recourse.

This is all the more so because the military strives to constitute a relatively coherent force united by common caste interests and characterized by a discipline absent from other social formations, thus able to function effectively as an instrument of leadership and political organization and even to outline an ideology of its own (which does not exclude the existence of perceptibly different currents among the military, reflecting in the last analysis different places in the hierarchy and different shares in the booty).

To the extent that the native conservative forces reveal their inherent impotence more directly and prove incapable of preventing the collapse of the system, American imperialism will finally be compelled to intervene militarily, either in direct form or in the guise of one of its "national" allies.

Thus not only in a historical sense but in a more direct and immediate one, Latin America has entered a period of revolutionary explosions and conflicts, of armed struggle on different levels against the native ruling classes and imperialism, and of prolonged civil war on a continental scale.

#### IV

##### Criteria and Lines of a Revolutionary Strategy

(11) The fundamental dynamics of the Latin American revolution is the dynamics of permanent revolution, in the sense that the revolution is developing into a socialist revolution without intermediary stages or dividing lines. This does not mean that the revolution could not begin as a democratic anti-imperialist revolution in regard to its objectives and the consciousness of the masses participating in it. But such a possibility does not affect the inherent logic of the process with all its inevitable implications for the lineup and role of the social classes. Because a workers state already exists in Latin America, in an eminently revolutionary world context; because the broadest masses are

constantly impelled by powerful objective factors to struggle against the capitalist system as such and have made great advances in their social and political consciousness; and because the imperialists, after the Cuban experience, have clearly recognized the dynamics of the confrontation that is developing, the perspective of the permanent revolution is no longer only a historical tendency but a reality in this stage of the class struggle. The age of permanent revolution, in a direct and immediate sense, has already begun in Latin America. The fact that this conclusion is shared by the leadership of the first Latin American socialist revolution is a historic step forward. This leadership by its attitudes, its actions and generalizations has contributed in a decisive way to the maturing of a new vanguard.

(12) The first conclusion that follows from this analysis is that any perspective of collaborating with the "national" bourgeoisie or certain of its so-called progressive sectors must be rejected. Parallel to this, all equivocal conceptions or formulas on the nature of the revolution such as "national democracy," "people's democracy," or "anti-imperialist and antifeudal" revolution, which have been irretrievably refuted both positively and negatively by vital revolutionary experiences, must be rejected. In this area, too, what was true in general in the past is assuming a more concrete and immediate importance when, faced with the Cuban workers state, the bourgeoisie cannot help but align itself on the side of imperialism (leaving aside possible temporary diplomatic maneuvers) and is proving itself absolutely incapable of achieving a program of even the most modest democratic reforms. New or relatively new tendencies in industrial development (see points 2 and 3) do not justify any change in the basic evaluation. The national bourgeois strata linked to modern industry arise or develop by intertwining themselves completely within the imperialist structures and in strictest dependence on them. They are intrinsically incapable of the least independent action in either the economic or political fields.

(13) In a revolution proceeding according to the logic of the permanent revolution and in a worldwide and Latin American context, which necessarily forces a split between the fundamental classes from the outset, the leading role in achieving revolutionary democratic objectives belongs to the working class, which, by its place in the process of production, is the basic force antagonistic not only to imperialism but to native capital. This does not imply any underestimation of the role of the peasantry, especially of the poorest peasant strata and radicalized

petty bourgeois layers. In fact, in most of the countries the most probable variant is that for a rather long period the peasants will have to bear the main weight of the struggle and the revolutionary petty bourgeoisie in considerable measure will provide the cadres of the movement. This means that the leading role of the proletariat can be exercised under diverse forms: either by the wage workers (industrial workers, miners or agricultural workers) participating at the head of revolutionary struggles, which will doubtless be the case in only a minority of Latin American countries; or indirectly, the leadership of these struggles being in the hands of organizations, tendencies, or cadres issuing from the workers movement; or in the historic sense of the term, by means of the program and theories issuing from Marxism. The completion of the revolution into a socialist revolution is in any case inconceivable without the mobilization and very broad participation of the proletariat.

(14) The problem now posed in Latin America is not primarily that of determining which are the driving forces of the revolution, a problem which for revolutionary Marxists has been resolved at the theoretical level. The working class, still representing a small percentage of the population in most of these countries, obviously cannot play its role without the fundamental and irreplaceable support of the peasant revolt. The events of 1968, moreover, have further clarified the role which radicalized petty bourgeois strata and the masses of student youth can play (among other things, they can serve as a medium for concrete interaction between the cities and the countryside, between the urban vanguard and the vanguard forming in the villages). Gigantic forces composed of millions of men and women in fact exist and can be mobilized in revolutionary struggle now or in the next stage. The real problem is to determine and to apply a strategy based on premises of general scope while being at the same time adjusted to specific and conjunctural needs, which could take advantage of all the existing potential, coordinate the different sectors, and strike the adversary effectively without running the danger of the movement being crushed. In the immediate future, the revolutionary vanguard must be aware of the grave danger inherent in the present situation, characterized, particularly in several countries, by a crying contradiction between the objective potential and the subjective will to struggle of broad strata on the one hand and on the other by the persistent weakness of the organized vanguard, even sectors which have played an effective role in major episodes of the most recent years. The danger lies more precisely in the possibility either of spontaneous explosions without a leadership and without clear perspectives, or premature and adventurist moves by

nuclei of courageous militants. In both cases, the result would be a quick and murderous repression which would decimate the vanguard and throw the movement back.

(15) The rich experiences in guerrilla warfare -- with its successes, its vital role in upsetting the political equilibrium, and even its grave defeats -- as well as the experiences with great mass movements, especially in 1968, which have revalidated urban struggles, against the generalizations of superficial theoreticians, but which have at the same time confirmed their limitations and their blind alleys, make it possible now to delineate more clearly an overall strategy, avoiding the sterile antithesis between conceptions based on the absolute primacy of mass work, which consider guerrilla warfare to be only a completely secondary point of support, and simplistic conceptions, according to which guerrilla warfare alone can unfailingly unleash a revolutionary process and assure its victorious development.

There is no universally valid formula which can be applied to surmount difficulties and contradictions which have real objective roots; even the adoption of correct basic guidelines offers no automatic guarantee against making mistakes in applying them. In other words, no generalization is sufficient to resolve the problems facing the revolutionary movement unless it is constantly tested and enriched by concrete analyses. The failure of certain guerrilla experiments (in Peru, for example) came about, in large measure, more from errors in assessing the situation, the trends, and the relationship of forces among the masses than from errors in conception.

In Latin America, the polemic between the advocates of the "democratic" and "peaceful" road and the advocates of the revolutionary road has been entirely outmoded; the first hypothesis does not have the least objective justification and can be defended only by naive and unrepentant utopians or by ossified bureaucrats who have lost all revolutionary perspective and inspiration and whose sole concern is to cover up their conservative, routinist practices with theoretical obfuscation. The problem which is posed is that of the concrete forms of the revolutionary road; it is necessary to guard against simplistic schemas on the one hand, but on the other, no concession whatever must be made to ideas according to which the armed confrontation, conceived as the culmination of a progressive rise and broadening of the mass movement, can in principle be reduced to a minimum.

The fundamental perspective, the only realistic perspective for Latin America is that of an armed struggle which may last for long years. This is why the tech-

nical preparation cannot be conceived merely as one of the aspects of the revolutionary work, but as the fundamental aspect on a continental scale, and one of the fundamental aspects in countries where the minimum conditions have not yet been met. It must not be forgotten that the armed struggle itself cannot succeed, in the last analysis, except on the basis of a correct political line, and that the application of such a revolutionary strategy requires first assembling a minimum of organized and politically homogeneous forces.

(16) The great mass mobilizations of 1968 were extraordinarily important because they expressed the depth and explosive nature of the contradictions of Latin American society and its structures; because they swept away with one blow all the "theorizing" on the inherent corruption of the urban milieu and a fortiori all the lucubrations on the incapacity of the worker masses and the urban masses in general to play a dynamic revolutionary role; because they gave a powerful stimulus to the maturing of thousands of new cadres who will be instrumental in the victory of the revolutionary struggles which are being prepared. Nonetheless, revolutionary Marxists cannot conclude from this that the "classical" variant calling for a progressive rise and broadening of the mass movement and its structuring and re-enforcement through traditional organizational forms before it reaches the armed struggle has been revalidated. In the international context, after all the experiences of the last decade and in face of an increasingly brutal repression by the native ruling classes and imperialism, such a variant is not the most probable. In reality, the adversary is in nowise ready to allow a mass revolutionary movement to organize more or less legally or normally, not only because in the given economic and social conditions a general mobilization even for economic goals would threaten disastrous consequences for the system, but also and above all because the men in power no longer underestimate the dynamics of mass movements, even when they start off with limited objectives. The experience of Bolivia, where all forms of normal organizational activity are continually stamped out, as well as the experience of Peru, where repression continues rampant, especially in the countryside, are absolutely clear. The same holds for Mexico where the ruling class, reverting to its most barbaric traditions, did not hesitate to stage a full fledged massacre of the students (the Brazilian regimes official and "semiofficial" counterattack followed the same logic).

The exceptional variant of an explosive crisis involving the breaking up or paralysis of the state apparatus and a mass mobilization so impetuous that it could prevent or neutralize recourse to repression as a decisive measure, cannot

be categorically excluded, but a strategy on a continental scale cannot be based on exceptional phenomena, and in such a case imperialism would very likely intervene militarily (as happened already in the case of Santo Domingo).

(17) Even in the case of countries where large mobilizations and class conflicts in the cities may occur first, civil war will take manifold forms of armed struggle, in which the principal axis for a whole period will be rural guerrilla warfare, the term having primarily a geographical-military meaning and not necessarily implying an exclusively peasant composition of the fighting detachments (or even necessarily preponderantly peasant composition). In this sense, armed struggle in Latin America means fundamentally guerrilla warfare.

The strict selection of this central axis must be complemented by a very precise understanding that there will inevitably be a whole gamut of variants and that the different factors at work will combine in different forms according to the different countries and conjunctural situations. The two extreme possibilities can be indicated almost symbolically by taking on the one hand the case of a country like Uruguay where the armed struggle will be essentially urban and where the regime could have already been overthrown on the basis of a powerful urban mass movement if it had been technically and politically armed with such a perspective, and on the other hand by taking the case of a country of overwhelmingly peasant composition, without large urban concentrations, where the guerrilla war will be almost exclusively rural and peasant until the very eve of the enemy's final defeat. A variant that merits particular study is that of very large countries where armed struggle could result in the occupation of whole regions, geographically and socially favorable to this, for a prolonged period without bringing on the disintegration of the central power. In such cases the conception of mobile columns would not necessarily be contradictory to that of liberated zones.

(18) Under the perspective of a prolonged civil war with rural guerrilla warfare as its principal axis, even in the most difficult phases of severe repression and temporary prostration, the problem of liaison between the guerrillas and the masses will be a vital one.

In a situation of prerevolutionary crisis such as Latin America is now experiencing on a continental scale, guerrilla warfare can in fact stimulate a revolutionary dynamic, even if at the start the attempt may seem to have come from abroad or to be unilateral (which was the case with Che's Bolivian guerrilla



movement). But in any case it must be realized that without the active sympathy, the protection, and the solidarity of certain sectors of the masses, the chance for consolidating and strengthening the guerrilla nuclei diminish to the extreme and the political repercussions which the armed action is striving to provoke dwindle. Secondly, a major problem which no clear-sighted revolutionary leadership can sidestep is how to utilize all the explosive social potential (which for structural reasons cannot be channeled into the framework of the actions and initiatives proper to revolutionary minorities) during the whole struggle and not just at the culminating moment of the overthrow of the system.

Hence the necessity to:

(a) Take advantage of every opportunity not only to increase the number of rural guerrilla nuclei but also to promote forms of armed struggle specially adapted to certain zones (for example, the mining zones in Bolivia) and to undertake actions in the big cities aimed both at striking the nerve centers (key points in the economy and transport, etc.) and at punishing the hangmen of the regime as well as achieving propagandistic and psychological successes (the experience of the European resistance to Nazism would be helpful in this regard).

(b) Advance a program not just of immediate economic and political demands but also transitional demands able to mobilize and raise the political consciousness of the worker, petty bourgeois, and plebeian masses as well as the student masses and thus create growing tensions threatening the system (this would also make it more difficult for the governments to concentrate their repressive forces exclusively in the zones of armed struggle). An orientation and mobilization based on a transitional program conceived in accordance with the logic of an anticapitalist struggle would, moreover, help certain revolutionary organizations to overcome the difficulties arising from the fact that while having been formed for revolutionary combat and armed struggle, these organizations have been unable for conjunctural reasons to put their ideas into practice. They thus run the risk in practice of combining abstract revolutionary propaganda with mobilizations for immediate goals which do not involve a revolutionary dynamic, even if pursued by extraparliamentary and extralegal means. The determination of the themes of a transitional program for each given stage is clearly the task of revolutionists in the various countries.

(19) Such a conception of the revolutionary strategy of armed struggle and guerrilla war refutes not only the simplistic "guerrillist" idealizations (which re-

flect a lack of patience with regard to organized action and a hope of substituting improvisations for the whole, often onerous, labor of preparation and organization), but also the spontaneist theses which challenge the role of the party (most often on the basis of an arbitrary interpretation of and generalization on the Cuban revolution). Spontaneism, substituting abstract notions for concrete historical analysis, draws the conclusion, from the absolutely necessary critique of specific parties which bear a heavy responsibility for the manifold failures and prolonged prostration of the workers movement, that parties in general must be rejected as instruments of revolutionary struggle. From their very nature, such conceptions are incapable of providing an answer to the essential problem of the liaisons between the guerrillas, the armed struggle and the mass movement and the political development of the latter. Unfortunate experiences have been, in the last analysis, brought about or facilitated either by false or illusory solutions to this problem or a mystical confidence in the automatic nature of certain processes.

While it is necessary to reject the schematic and paralyzing conception according to which everything hinges on the preliminary existence of a genuine party with all its traditional structures (and the Cuban experience has unquestionably shown that under certain conditions it is possible for the political organization to develop and reenforce itself as the armed struggle unfolds), the two following fundamental facts must, however, never be long sight of:

(a) The existence and functioning of a revolutionary party, far from being an outworn schema of outmoded Marxists, corresponds to the concrete and ineluctable needs of the development of the armed struggle itself (this, among other things, is the lesson of Hugo Blanco's experience in Peru).

(b) The revolutionists must struggle for the most favorable variant: acting in such a way that when the armed struggle begins, if there is not already a genuine party, completely structured, with a large mass influence (a very unrealistic perspective in almost all of the Latin American countries) in existence, there is at least solid nuclei of a political organization, coordinated on a national scale. This means more particularly in the countries where the armed struggle is not on the agenda at present, not to choose the road of spontaneist or putschist temptations inexorably doomed to failure, but to take advantage of the breathing space.

Situation of the Revolutionary Workers  
Movement and the General Lines  
of Orientation

(20) The Cuban revolution, the conflicts in the international Communist movement, particularly the Chinese polemics, and the experiences of the struggle in recent years have produced profound upsets, new relationships of forces, splits, and multiple realignments in the Latin American revolutionary workers movement. The overall picture can be outlined as follows:

(a) The Cuban revolution continues to represent the fundamental pole of attraction, and on the level of ideological and political influence the Castroist current remains by far the strongest. However, this tendency has not developed any important degree of organization and in fact the OLAS likewise has not succeeded either in finding a solution to the problem of crystallizing and consolidating organized new vanguards.

(b) The traditional workers organizations have been undergoing an irreversible erosion and are being ceaselessly shaken by grave crises. In certain socialist parties (Chile, Uruguay), the Castroist influence is very strong. And this is true also for most of the Communist parties, especially those which have not yet suffered left splits and are compelled to engage in centrist maneuvers in order to capitalize, if only partially, on the prestige of the Cuban revolution (e.g., the attitude of the current represented by Arismendi and certain attitudes even of the Chilean CP).

(c) The revolutionary nationalist movements which played a key role for a whole period have definitively exhausted themselves; and where they retain a measure of influence (APRA in Peru, AD in Venezuela), this goes hand in hand with an outright reactionary policy. This does not exclude the possibility that tendencies or groups issuing from these movements can survive and still play a certain role, on condition, however, that they break completely with the old organizational structures and integrate themselves into the revolutionary left on the basis primarily of defense of the Cuban revolution (this possibility exists, for example, for left Peronist nuclei, Brazilian left nationalist currents, and groups in the PRIN and even in the left MNR in Bolivia). The problem of relations of the revolutionary organizations with such groups, moreover, is an aspect of the more general problem of the relations between the revolutionary vanguards and petty bourgeois sectors capable of being drawn into the struggle against imperialism and national capitalism.

(d) The revolt of the Catholic vanguard has now assumed considerable scope (Camillo Torres has become the symbol of a continentwide current). The importance of this rests fundamentally in the fact that it is an additional expression of the way the social and political crisis is tearing the ideological fabric of the system, driving toward the revolutionary pole plebeian and petty bourgeois strata who have been tied essentially by ideological bonds.

(e) The revolutionary left is going through a feverish phase of splits and restructuration with a whole gamut of results, going from the important advances in vanguard regroupment in Brazil (especially the formation of the POC) to the still very difficult situation of the Peruvian revolutionary organizations (where the Vanguardia Revolucionaria, which was hit much less hard by repression than the FLR, the MIR, and the ELN, has gained strength relatively), from new experiments on a centrist or left centrist basis (for example, the Argentinian student organization which came out of a split from the CP) to other experiences following a much more revolutionary direction (the Chilean MIR in particular). The birth and development of revolutionary groups and organizations have been stimulated by the example of the Cuban revolution, the continentwide pre-revolutionary situation, the anti-imperialist struggle in Asia and more particularly Vietnam, and, recently, by the repercussions of the international wave of student revolt. The temporary difficulties, the lack of experience, the inevitable failures, and the contradictory impulses coming from the international workers movement are causing a fragmentation which reflects in part the historic divisions in the working class movement and results in new variants and combinations which in certain cases represent a new level in the reorganization of the revolutionary movement (for example, the experiences of the POC and PCR in Brazil, the Castroist and pro-Chinese movements in Santo Domingo, the united Guatemalan guerrilla front).

While the revolutionary left starts off from a common acceptance of the general conception of armed struggle, a basic division repeatedly recurs over the characterization of the Latin American revolution, with certain tendencies still questioning its outright anticapitalist character, advancing the old formulas of anti-imperialist, antifeudal, people's revolution, etc., and thus leaving open the perspective of collaboration with layers of the "national" bourgeoisie (see in this regard the theses of the orthodox pro-Chinese organizations and the formulations of Douglas Bravo, etc.). A second cleavage emerges around conceptions advanced under the opposing form of a people's war



(most often based on the Asian experiences). Finally, differences arise continually over the analysis and assessment of gains and setbacks as well as over determining the tempos and forms of actions in preparation.

In conclusion, the problems of regrouping the revolutionary forces and giving structure to the new vanguards is far from resolved despite powerful objective stimuli, enormous advances in subjective revolutionary development, and the massive irruption onto the scene of the young generation. The necessary solutions can be envisaged, in the last analysis, only on a continental scale, but without leaving aside the manifold particularities and without any consoling illusions such as the automatic nature of the processes or the possibility that audacious subjective actions are sufficient by themselves (repeated experiences have shown that even the formation of a guerrilla nucleus is not automatically a positive solution, moreover the painful ups and downs of the Venezuelan guerrilla movement prove how many difficulties arise in the course of the armed struggle).

(21) The work of revolutionary Marxists in regrouping and organizing the vanguard must bear in mind the following very general criteria:

(a) Integration into the historic revolutionary current represented by the Cuban revolution and the OLAS, which involves, regardless of the forms, working as an integral part of the OLAS.

(b) Rejection of any a priori exclusionary attitude toward any revolutionary tendency, which, while not excluding criticism and polemics, implies the possibility of common revolutionary fronts making it possible to regroup forces and to collaborate in both the anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist struggle and the struggle against the conservative and bureaucratic tendencies of the workers and peasants

movement.

(c) Elaboration of a revolutionary strategy, based on the continental experience and the general principles outlined elsewhere in this document, corresponding to the concrete needs and potential of each country or group of countries at a given stage. This also implies the need for a political program under which broad social layers can be mobilized with the aim of continually deepening the contradictions of the existing regimes at all levels; in other words, a program which, without ignoring immediate economic and political demands (the importance of which was confirmed, for example, by the events of the summer of 1968 in Mexico), would stress objectives and slogans of a transitional nature, able to mobilize the masses at their present level of consciousness in a struggle, the dynamics of which would necessarily collide with the system as a whole.

It is the job of the various national revolutionary Marxist organizations to translate this general orientation into concrete formulas and guidelines. They must, in any case, understand that they cannot measure up to the height of their tasks in the dramatic stage which is opening, if they prove incapable of building more solid organizational structures on the basis of substantial political homogeneity, of adopting methods of work corresponding to the necessities of a struggle conducted under conditions of repression and strict clandestinity, of combining detailed empirical analyses and tactical flexibility with firmness in criteria and general conceptions (the prerequisite for avoiding any impressionism and hasty generalizations), of assuring much more than in past years international and continental coordination by more genuine integration in the International, including the level of its centers of leadership and theoretical work.

November 1968

AN INSUFFICIENT DOCUMENT

By Livio Maitan

Rome, May 15, 1968

If urgent tasks had not prevented me from undertaking the job during the next weeks, I would have liked to explain in detail the reasons that led me to abstain at the time the U.S. adopted the first draft for discussion at the world congress ["The New Rise of the World Revolution"]. Unfortunately I must limit myself to the substance of it by reproducing the text of a letter which I sent to the U.S. on May 15.\*

First of all some remarks of a methodological nature. We were in agreement that it was necessary to prepare some theses, whereas the draft does not have that character (except, to a large degree, the first chapter, which, moreover, is by far the most satisfactory. Even abstracting from the lapses in editing, which are very bad, on which I am not calling as much attention as appears to me to be called for, we are confronted with a descriptive document, in which conjunctural appreciations are very frequent and which from this fact give it rather the nature of a general resolution. I do not have any objection to the congress adopting such a document in addition, but we need something else now. I thus suggest reaffirming the decision to adopt theses aimed essentially at arming or rearming the movement on certain major questions which are posed at this convulsive stage of the world situation.

Within this framework, I believe it would be useful to base our generalizations not on general appreciations but on analyses of certain typical cases, or typical in representing a tendency (for example, the experience of recent years in Czechoslovakia, the Syrian experience, the guerrilla struggle in Thailand).

I will take this up in the different chapters. I will indicate my opinion on certain problems, at times by following more or less what is said in the draft.

(I) It was clear to us from the beginning what were the causes and the limits of certain defeats suffered by the colonial revolution, particularly beginning in 1964. It was not a matter of a structural evolution unfavorable to the revolutionary tendencies (nowhere in the world has there been any stabilization whatsoever of the economic and social structures of the colonial and semicolonial countries), but of the interaction of the two following fundamental factors:

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\* It should be noted that in my letter the numbering of the chapters does not correspond to the numbering in the final document, which added Chapter II on France.

(a) The crisis of the imperialist system and the maturing of the revolutionary forces on a world scale operated in such a way that the growing over into a socialist revolution became more and more a problem of the immediate future, a concrete imperious necessity. This pointed to inevitable dramatic confrontations, in which the outcome was determined essentially by the lapse in the subjective factor (which only in certain cases can be explained as owing to reasons pertaining primarily to the economic and social structure).

(b) The victory of a socialist revolution in Cuba and the disintegration of the colonial system in Africa were a major lesson for American imperialism, which adopted a line that took the offensive much more than in the preceding decade, demonstrating its determination to exploit to the fullest extent its enormous military potential and its political and economic weight. The new economic expansion in the U.S., while not the most direct cause of the imperialist counter-offensive -- as some people have held -- was unquestionably one of the essential conditions for unleashing this counter-offensive and for its partial successes.

The war in Vietnam was, from all the evidence, the culmination of this more aggressive policy of imperialism. It cannot be denied that in the first phase it permitted imperialism to score considerable gains, above all preventing the Vietnamese revolution from gaining a complete victory on a national scale, which would have been perfectly possible in the immediate future in the absence of foreign military intervention. The Indonesian affair was also, at least in part, a by-product of this same intervention.

But as the test of strength became prolonged and deepened and the Vietnamese organized their extraordinary reply, the war became a verification of the overall relation of forces. The imperialists ran into an outcome that was exactly the opposite of what they wanted; namely, they revealed for the whole world to see their incapacity to liquidate the Vietnamese revolution, despite the timorous and wait-and-see attitude of the USSR, and, in fact, China also, thereby suffering a historic setback. At the same time the limits of the receding of the colonial revolution in 1964-67 was confirmed by the clearer and clearer fact that the regimes set up by counterrevolutionary coups (particularly Brazil and Indonesia) proved absolutely incapable of achieving any economic and political stabilization that was at all

durable, having to once again confront the threat of considerable mass movements and active nuclei of guerrillas.

After a certain respite, the crisis of imperialism has once again become aggravated and the most probably tendency unquestionably is that of further aggravation:

(a) The unfavorable relation of forces on a world scale, revealed particularly by the last phases of the Vietnamese conflict, will continue.

(b) It has been proved once again that "reformist" solutions of the problems of the so-called underdeveloped countries are objectively impossible.

(c) The interimperialist contradictions are becoming sharper and sharper on the economic level (crisis of the monetary system, etc.).

(d) The economic power of the United States itself is running into more and more substantial limits (crisis of the dollar, etc.).

(e) Last but not least, a radical change has already developed -- and is going to develop more profoundly in the future -- with regard to the domestic situation in the United States, which for twenty years has represented an essential element of the power of imperialism.

If all of this is true, if the fundamental perspective is that of a coming aggravation of the crisis of imperialism even within the near future, then it must be emphasized that a possible solution -- through a partial compromise or through a prolonged truce -- of the Vietnamese conflict would, upon the whole, have a secondary importance (except, perhaps, in the event of a compromise very unfavorable to the Vietnamese, a hypothesis which seems to me completely unlikely). Revolutionary struggles would continue in any case on a broad scale, particularly in Asia, other explosions would occur and other conflicts would break out and there would probably be other points where things came to a head, replacing Vietnam in this regard.

(II) A whole part of this chapter, "The End of the Long Imperialist Boom," seems useless to me because it only repeats -- in a very cursory way, moreover -- what we have already said in several more rounded documents (it is from here on, moreover, where the tone and rapid comment of an article becomes predominant). I think it is necessary to center the analysis on the central points; namely, the aggravation of the interimperialist competition, the new explosion of financial and industrial concentrations which mark the growing internationalism of capital and the monetary and financial crisis. It is

correct, in my opinion, to stress the importance of the greater synchronization of the cycle in the different capitalist countries and in this respect richer and more concrete elements must be brought into the analysis.

On the other hand I do not think it would be useful to insist on '29 as the essential point of departure. It is quite improbable that such a dramatic blowup will occur within the near future, if we consider only the strictly economic aspect. But it would be a mistake to forget for a single instant that the world context today is incomparably more critical, more revolutionary, and thus even economic phenomena more limited in themselves could have much more explosive social and political repercussions. (To mention only one aspect, would the working class of the advanced capitalist countries, including that of the United States, be inclined accept at the present time, after the improvement it has experienced in its standard of living for fifteen to twenty years, even a part of the sacrifices imposed during certain periods in the thirties? It appears to me absolutely improbable...)

There is another problem which the document mentions in passing and which ought, instead, to be treated a little more amply. This is the question of the outlets which imperialism can obtain through economic agreements with the workers states. It is essential to indicate the real meaning and trend of agreements of this nature. Politically there is no doubt that the agreements already reached, for example, between the USSR and Fiat, have been advantageously exploited by the bourgeoisie (this goes still more for the agreements concluded by the bureaucracy with the oligarchical Latin American governments). But, in the final analysis, the other aspect of the problem is more important, because it is a question of verifying whether this could constitute a new safety valve for the imperialist economy in its difficulties (if only a safety valve of limited efficacy). On this level, I agree with the opinion expressed in the draft, but it should be insisted on a bit more. In addition, it should be stressed that the international context makes such operations more difficult and uncertain.

(III) The chapter, "The New Stage in the Crisis of the Bureaucratic Regimes," etc., does not correspond to our present needs in analysis nor to the demand to give a clear response to some questions that are being posed at this stage among broad layers of the revolutionary left. The stress in the draft is rather on refuting the "optimistic" interpretations of the economic reforms.

But in the circles of interest to us the prevailing criticisms are "ultra-left," stimulated among other things by

the massive propaganda of the Chinese. For us then it is a question of:

(a) Critically examining the analyses that claim that the democratic reforms imply the restoration of capitalism or a serious drift in that direction.

(b) Stating as correctly as possible the consequences of the "reformist" course on the structure and internal differentiations in the bureaucracy and on its ideological evolution.

With regard more particularly to Yugoslavia, it is time to draw a balance sheet that is not based on merely recalling the analyses of the fifties (a valuable contribution in this respect was offered in the article which appeared in the QI in November 1966). Personally, I do not believe that Yugoslavia has reverted to a capitalist state; but the problem actually posed is: It is necessary particularly to indicate the meaning and significance, among other things, of the following phenomena:

(a) The substantial development of a capitalist accumulation in the countryside.

(b) The presence of foreign capital to a not insignificant degree in the industrial sector as well as in the tertiary sector.

(c) The suppression or close to it of the monopoly in foreign trade.

(d) The growth of the petty bourgeois layers who draw their income from tertiary economic activities strictly dependent on support from abroad.

By precise and serious analytical replies on all these questions -- which are of concern, I insist, not only to the "grouplets" of state caps or the remnants of Bordiguism but to very broad sectors of the revolutionary youth -- we will be able at the same time to score points on the methodological level, refuting all kinds of impressionistic concepts and any more or less "new" theory based on an abstract utilization of economic categories independently of concrete social categories.

As for China, there will be a separate document on the big internal crisis and I do not propose that it be taken up likewise in the general theses. But there is an aspect concerning the influence which China and the Maoist current are exercising in the world situation and in the revolutionary workers movement which should be examined here. I believe that we should not forget or brush aside what we were the first to stress; namely, that the evolution of the Chinese leadership and its polemic against the Soviet leadership and the majority of the Communist par-

ties could not fail to have absolutely important consequences. This aspect has been rather neglected by us in our most recent phase in which we were often occupied in polemicizing, correctly, against the apologetic interpretations of the "cultural revolution." But, despite the attitude of the Chinese in the Vietnamese affair, despite their responsibility in Indonesia, despite the lamentable bankruptcy of almost all the orthodox Maoist groups, we must not lose sight of:

(a) That the international line of the Chinese remains objectively more progressive than the Soviet line and there is no ground for equating them.

(b) That China is aiding and stimulating some sweeping guerrilla movements in several Asian countries.

(c) That the Chinese criticism has had an incontestable effect in the revolutionary ripening of broad layers of the new revolutionary left in the advanced capitalist countries.

(d) That despite certain traits of the "cultural revolution," the attitudes and conceptions of the Chinese leaders continue to operate objectively in a direction diametrically opposed to that of Stalinism. (The comrades will obviously understand that I am utilizing the term Stalinism here in the more specific sense of the word and not as a synonym for bureaucratic concepts and praxis in general).

(IV) ("Resumption of the Colonial Revolution," etc.) With regard to this chapter, I will limit myself to stressing:

(a) That in a document of this kind conjunctural appreciations on the possible outcome of negotiations over Vietnam should not be introduced.

(b) That the part on Latin America should be left aside until the special document is ready.

(c) That the part on the Arab revolution is absolutely insufficient, and particularly the appreciation on Syria, insofar as it is outlined, is too limited. (I hold, in contrast, as I mentioned above that the evolution of this country merits a separate analysis.)

(d) That the part on Africa, which contains inexactitudes, moreover, should be developed on the basis of what was achieved in the document at the previous congress.

(e) That it is correct and imperative to call attention to the capital importance of the Indian revolution, but the paragraphs of the draft are far from being satisfactory.

(V) ("On the Imperialist Countries, the Crisis of the Workers Movement," etc.) The document should be centered more clearly on the following questions and ideas:

(a) We are in a phase of major crisis for the Social Democracy in Europe as a whole. If one recalls the objective and even subjective role which the Social Democracy has played in the past decade as a stabilizing force owing to its influence on the working class in most of the capitalist countries of Europe, its decline and the serious diminution of its grip appear as an important factor of social and political disequilibrium.

(b) The explosion of the student movement on a mass base never before seen in the advanced capitalist countries (the roots and threads of which should be explained broadly) has shaken the political equilibrium of countries like France, Italy, and Germany and created grave difficulties for the traditional bureaucratized parties and unions. We have entered in reality into a new phase of the historical crisis of the workers bureaucracies.

(c) If one considers the cumulative effects of the economic tendencies outlined in the draft, of the major crisis of the Social Democracy and to a more limited but not less significant degree up to now by the CP bureaucracies, of the explosion of the student youth and the more and more marked appearance of militant layers of the workers youth (the latter phenomena not remaining without effect on the layers of workers in general), if one recalls the almost generally recognized profound erosion suffered by the postwar bourgeois democracy and the Gaullist regime itself, and if, of course, one does not forget for a single instant the fundamental features of the world situation, it follows that we are moving in a series of European countries towards growing economic, social and political disequilibrium and toward major confrontations even within the relatively near future. The prognoses on the possible outcome of such confrontations can naturally vary from one country to another and there is no doubt that within certain countries at least (England, Belgium, for example) the perspectives at the present time do not warrant any optimism. But it is necessary above all to ascertain whether the fundamental tendency which I am indicating really exists, and, in case of a positive answer, to draw all the consequences.

(d) If the hypothesis advanced in the preceding point is well founded, the tactical rearming of our European movement is not only a necessary task but also an urgent one. We will discuss this question within the framework of the debate on the draft concerning the tactical orientation, but I will say right now that the

line expressed in the report at the last IEC requires substantial rectification. The orientation which we have followed, more or less in all the countries of western Europe, beginning in 1952, is visibly outmoded and it is necessary to indicate as soon as possible for each country, the lines and new forms of our activity.

(IV) ("The Construction of a New Revolutionary Leadership") It is correct to begin, as the document does, with two essential facts:

(1) In a general objective sense, the situation has never been so favorable for the construction of new revolutionary Marxist leaderships.

(2) Despite this, we are running into multiple difficulties.

I believe, however, that Walter bypasses a little certain crucial problems. My remarks, thus, are partly in agreement with the document and partly independent of it.

(a) It is necessary without doubt to reiterate our reply to concepts of the Marcuse, Sweezy, etc., type. But it is necessary to round it out a little better, by recalling more rigorously certain basic methodological criteria while at the same time providing more specific analytical elements. With regard to the subject of the united front, I admit that I do not understand the usefulness of advancing it here in this form. If the draft is directed against spontaneist deformations which are being propagated here and there in our ranks, I am in agreement on the need to take up the question, but the axis must be considerably different because of the fact that the source of the deformation does not reside most often in an opportunist conception of the united front (on the contrary, the united front is criticized most often from a sectarian angle among broad revolutionary layers), but in a passive adaptation to pressures exerted by new mass movements.

(b) In order to explain where, in my opinion, the gravest difficulty ahead of us now lies (I will speak here of the new difficulties in the dynamic sectors, leaving aside all the traditional difficulties which, while in decline still weigh heavily), here are some quite empirical examples. In Italy, our organization ran into difficulties beginning from the time when the vanguard movement of the new generation acquired the breadth of a mass movement, and it recently happened that people who agreed with the general concepts of Trotskyism and with our fundamental analyses on Italy, did not accept the invitation to join up with our ranks because, in their opinion, revolutionary Marxism has now become a common heritage

of broad revolutionary layers and the existence of a specific Trotskyist organization is no longer necessary. In certain countries of Latin America, some militants freely maintain that Castroism has accepted, in practice, concepts of the Latin American revolution and the world revolution which the Fourth International has traditionally promulgated. They appreciate our activity and are ready, if necessary, to collaborate with us, but just the same they do not consider it necessary or useful to join our movement (such attitudes exist, for example, in the Chilean MIR). In the United States, I heard the comrades affirm -- I suppose with good grounds -- that the SWP used to have a considerably greater number of black militants than today.

I do not believe that the essential cause of our difficulties in recruitment and gain in influence in sectors such as those I have just mentioned lies in our subjective deficiencies. There was an unquestionable delay in the Italian section in understanding the dynamics of the student movement, but the fundamental orientation was correct, the organization was active and rather dynamic, and, in any case, our errors were never at any time graver than the errors of other competing tendencies. As for the SWP, the honor due it on the Afro-American question is absolutely unassailable and I consider that in truth the interpretations and the orientations that our American friends have expressed on this capital question -- in the beginning with the help of Trotsky -- from the thirties, represents one of the most notable theoretical and political heritages of our movement as a whole.

The explanation must be sought in the following direction: on the one hand certain present movements which are being unleashed, by their very scope go beyond the present possibilities of our restricted organizations; on the other hand -- and above all -- these new movements, which are breaking through or passing over every "traditional" organizational framework and in which the militants often display a tendency to consider us, too, as part of the "traditional" left, exercise a powerful attraction in circles where formerly we were alone or almost alone in speaking a revolutionary language. In other words: to the degree that the weight of the ideological factor in the choice of political alignment decreases (in the cases indicated from the very fact that a series of ideas have become, more or less, common property), it is understandable that some layers of militants and cadres prefer, at least at this stage, to merely join mass movements rather than become linked organizationally with the Fourth International or national Trotskyist organizations.

I am not at all ignoring or under-

estimating other factors operating in the same direction. I am convinced that the subjective weaknesses and inevitable inexperience of new layers contribute to the indicated tendencies, and, it goes without saying, I hold that we must not make any theoretical concession to spontaneist concepts. But the actual situation, a difficulty that is real, a serious problem that is posed, must be recognized.

(c) Under what conditions will we be able to overcome these difficulties and exploit to the fullest at a later stage the enormous objective possibilities existing for the revolutionary movement?

Our capacity for political analysis and overall theoretical generalization -- which is based in the final analysis on our international organizational structure -- will be a major trump card in the future, too, naturally on condition that we prove capable of constantly renewing and enriching our patrimony. More particularly, our role will be appreciated at its true value by the new movements if we are in position to express in time and better than any other current their real needs and to outline solutions to the problems which they raise. It goes without saying -- in addition -- that we must continue to apply in the most supple way our basic criticisms through integration in the real movements and avoid any kind of political sectarianism or organizational fetishism. We should not forget what we must do now in many countries with people who are ultrasensitive on this subject.

But it is only by successes or revolutionary struggles at the head of a mass movement in one or several countries that we will be able to surmount our difficulties and present contradictions. What is expected from us from now on is that we demonstrate in practice the historical value of our movement and we will be judged essentially on this basis. This can appear, at bottom, to be an elementary truth, but it is a question of inspiring our whole activity with this recognition. It is a question more precisely of determining in what countries we have the best chance of a breakthrough and subordinating everything to the elementary necessity for a success in these countries, and even, if necessary, in a single country. The rest will come later.

There are, in fact, several countries where we at present have possibilities for an important breakthrough (youth movement in France, antiwar movement and youth movement in the United States, South Africa with a certain time) and we must unquestionably make an effort in the direction of India, but we must place everything above all on a sector of Latin America and you know very well which one. We must exploit the preparatory period of

the congress to convince the entire movement to operate in practice, every day, with this perspective. Permit me to express myself a little paradoxically: it

is necessary to understand and to explain that at the present stage the International will be built around Bolivia.

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August 20, 1968

It is evident that parts of my letter have been outmoded by events, but I consider that certain ideas remain valid. Taking into account, in addition, the final editing of the draft, I would like to add the following:

(a) The chapter on the May revolution in France is obviously weak -- this is due in large measure to the time when it was written -- and I propose that the discussion not be limited to the draft, but take into consideration all the contributions which the different sections and different comrades have made on this subject. I likewise hold the characterization of the May events as a "revolutionary upsurge" to be faulty. In reality, France underwent a genuinely revolutionary crisis with the objective possibility of taking power and afterward there was an ebb in which it is necessary to evaluate precisely its extent and possible duration (I do not wish to examine this problem here, but it must not be conjured away through a term which, at the same time, minimizes and simplifies things). I will add that, for my part, I do not like formulations such as we find on page 7 of the French text ("se rapprocheront beaucoup plus de la norme classique des révolutions prolétariennes") ["will draw much closer to the classical norm of proletarian revolutions"] which on the one hand does not offer any help at all to understanding the real processes, and on the other provides arguments for those who seize on anything to "demonstrate" our so-called dogmatism.

(b) In the chapter on the workers states, the remarks which I made and which I still consider valid were only partly taken into consideration. In particular, I consider certain formulations on page 21 to be highly debatable from the methodological point of view. For example, the formulation: "La faillite idéologique de la bureaucratie s'exprime également dans la crise croissante au sein du 'camp' socialiste et due mouvement communiste international" ["The bureaucracy's ideological bankruptcy is manifested also in the growing crisis in the 'socialist camp' and the international Communist movement."] is at least unfortunate, the same as the formulation: "La faillite idéologique de la bureaucratie se double d'une crise politique intense." ["Thus, the bureaucracy's ideological bankruptcy goes hand in hand with an intense political crisis."] The

impression must not be given that we think the essential cause is the "ideological bankruptcy." The contrary is true: the "ideological bankruptcy" is nothing but the outcome of objective contradictions which the bureaucracy is incapable, in the long run, of surmounting and which also prevent it from assuring either an international coordination of socialist construction or projecting a revolutionary strategy corresponding to the objective needs of our epoch.

(c) With regard to the chapter on the colonial revolution, I remain convinced that it would have been preferable to avoid introducing paragraphs on Latin America without the special document having been prepared. What was written, in any case, is quite insufficient and involves a certain number of loose formulations, which could give rise to misunderstandings. As for the paragraphs on the Arab revolution, I question the opportuneness of indicating very clearly the perspective of a Pan-Arab revolutionary party (such, at least is the impression that can be given by the text). I do not deny that such a perspective would be the most desirable variant, but I doubt that it is realizable within a reasonable period. I think that it is necessary to deal with this subject in a more supple way.

(d) Finally, I believe that in this document or in another one, the world congress ought to stress very clearly the organizational implications of the analyses which we have sketched out and which point, fundamentally, to the conclusion that we are on the eve of new confrontations on a world scale or in numerous regions of the world. I am, in particular, convinced that we will be obliged to adopt forms of illegal activity, even in countries where we have enjoyed relative legality for a rather long period. Our foes have undergone some important experiences -- from their point of view -- they are resolved to defend themselves by all means and they have learned to track down even the "splinter" groups, the new vanguard. Our movement, which still remains very weak organizationally, must take all the necessary measures in time to avoid lengthening the already very long list of victims of the repression. We need courageous and devoted militants; but, even more, militants in condition to fight as long as possible.

Livio Maitan



ASSESSMENT OF THE DRAFT RESOLUTION ON LATIN AMERICA

By Joseph Hansen

The draft resolution on Latin America submitted by the United Secretariat for the consideration of the delegates at the next world congress of the Fourth International falls broadly into two parts. About one half of the document consists of a summary of the economic, social, and political conditions in Latin America that point to the perspective of socialist revolution. The second half or so proposes a general tactic applicable on a continental scale to assure success in the struggle for this perspective; namely, the technical preparation of and engagement in rural guerrilla war for a prolonged period. Included in the second part, in passing, are polemics in support of the proposed continentwide tactic.

Nothing essentially new is advanced in the economic summary. The economic tendencies "remain pretty much as in the past." Under capitalism only stagnation and further decline lie ahead, with the imperialist grip becoming ever tighter and costlier.

Similarly in the role of the social classes, the processes of "the past fifteen years" have seen a decline in the weight of the landlords, while the increased weight of the urban ruling strata has been offset by the crippling operations of U.S. imperialism. The national bourgeoisie is incapable of offering any historical perspective.

As for the "new petty-bourgeois strata" that have appeared in the "last fifteen to twenty years," these constitute the strongest ideological base for imperialism, although they are subject to being swept into the vortex of revolution.

The peasantry is declining in relative size but still remains the majority, has the least perspective, and is charged with discontent and anger. The peasants display a persistent inclination to engage in struggle and revolt; have learned revolutionary lessons; and have ties with the revolutionary students in the cities.

The working class is not a relatively privileged layer. The workers do not view themselves as being privileged, and "have not ceased in reality to be an explosive force, a motor force of the revolution." They, like the peasants, have ties with the revolutionary students. They have engaged in powerful strikes "in defiance of the military dictatorships" and there are "significant symptoms of a proletarian resurgence at the present time."

The plebian masses in the cities, who have immigrated from the rural areas, represent another "explosive potential" which has already partially expressed itself several times in "the last ten years."

The revolutionary student movement has turned out to be so powerful that it has already shaken several Latin-American countries. Despite its limitations, the student movement is capable of "stimulating or deepening revolutionary crises."

In the political arena, the "democratic" regimes have ended in bankruptcy. The relative political stability of countries like Uruguay and Mexico is gone. Military regimes are on the rise; but they, too, are in continual crisis.

Thus Latin America is characterized by "structural instability" on a continental scale, by "more precisely a pre-revolutionary situation which is taking the form of both a more or less rapid ripening of profound social and political explosions...the outbreak of real revolutionary crises...and the emergence of a state of civil war in certain countries..."

Hence the general conclusion to be drawn, in the light of the international context and the continued existence of Cuba, is that the perspective is one of "mounting social and political tensions tending toward the outbreak of revolutionary situations."

The document emphasizes that there is no way out economically for the ruling classes and imperialism in Latin America; "the situation is hopeless for any economic solution, with all the inevitable implications this entails in the political field."

This means internecine struggles within the ruling class as the difficulties mount while the margin for maneuver left open to American imperialism constantly shrinks.

From this it must be concluded that not only in a broad historical sense, "but in a more direct and immediate one," Latin America has entered a period of "revolutionary explosions and conflicts."

Allowing for a possible degree of exaggeration as, for example, in the estimate of the general political level of the peasantry on a continental scale ("the peasants...have assimilated the lesson of the Cuban revolution"), the general con-



clusions outlined in the resolution are shared by probably all of the revolutionary tendencies and even by the more objective specialists in the imperialist camp. From the viewpoint of the Trotskyist movement there is every reason for the greatest optimism about the perspectives in Latin America.

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But it is precisely here that a disappointing note is struck. The document indicates considerable reservations as to the possibility of a major victory anywhere in Latin America in the near future. These reservations are not developed. They are merely indicated in arguing for the general tactic of technical preparation of and engagement in rural guerrilla war for a prolonged period.

Thus the following assertion appears in point 16:

"The exceptional variant of an explosive crisis involving the breaking up or paralysis of the state apparatus and a mass mobilization so impetuous that it could prevent or neutralize recourse to repression as a decisive measure, cannot be categorically excluded, but a strategy on a continental scale cannot be based on exceptional phenomena, and in such a case imperialism would very likely intervene militarily (as happened already in the case of Santo Domingo)."

In the context of the analysis of the general economic, social and political situation, this paragraph is hard to explain. It has been specified that on a continental scale "a prerevolutionary situation" is shaping up, with the ripening of "profound social and political explosions" and the "outbreak of real revolutionary crises." Nevertheless, we are told that a crisis explosive enough to paralyze a state apparatus or a mass mobilization of truly impetuous character, while it cannot be excluded, is an "exceptional variant."

If the variant is actually exceptional, there must be definite reasons for it. Either the economic situation is not hopeless for the Latin-American ruling class, or they are not as decrepit as indicated, or the masses are not as revolutionary-minded as painted, or the candidates for revolutionary leadership are not likely to measure up to the political challenge involved.

The alternative would seem to be that either the general analysis is defective or the resolution takes a pessimistic view of the possibilities of constructing a revolutionary leadership.

The resolution does not go into this. With its reference to Santo Domingo, the paragraph ends on a note reminiscent of

the days before the Cuban revolution when even some revolutionists were of the opinion that if a revolution happened to break out and win power in one of the smaller countries of Latin America it would quickly be crushed by U.S. imperialism. The revolutionary experience in Santo Domingo, where an urban explosion precipitated the biggest crisis which U.S. imperialism has had to face up to now concurrent with the Vietnam war, would seem to deserve better appreciation in a resolution summing up the major developments in Latin America for the past decade and projecting possibilities for the future.

It should be mentioned in passing that it is difficult to follow the logic of saying that U.S. imperialism will "likely intervene militarily" in the event of a major explosive crisis as in the case of Santo Domingo while saying nothing about the continual intervention of the CIA and Pentagon in the conflicts with rural guerrilla forces. The fact that the military challenge offered by the guerrillas has been successfully met by U.S. imperialism and its agents in the past nine years by a relatively modest outlay in arms, advisers, and participants (and minimum overhead political cost) as compared with the outlay and political cost of a military invasion on the scale of the Santo Domingo operation (or the Bay of Pigs) can hardly be considered a reason for ignoring it, unless the view is held that intervention by U.S. imperialism at this level is, because of the small forces involved, really unimportant in the continental strategy of technical preparation of and engagement in rural guerrilla war for a prolonged period.

The same depreciation of what is possible practically in Latin America would also appear to be involved in the argument in point 15 in which the resolution warns revolutionists to be on guard "against simplistic schemas," but also warns that on the other hand "no concession whatever must be made to ideas according to which the armed confrontation, conceived as the culmination of a progressive rise and broadening of the mass movement, can in principle be reduced to a minimum."

The warning seems to be not to count on any progressive rise and broadening of the mass movement that would culminate with such force as to paralyze and shatter the central power.

The underlying doubts about what is really possible in Latin America emerge still more clearly in point 16 where the resolution refers to the great mass mobilizations of 1968 in such urban centers as Mexico City. Directed at the false theorizing of those who doubt the capacities of the working class and the urban masses to play a dynamic revolutionary role, the

argument is qualified as follows:

"Nonetheless, revolutionary Marxists cannot conclude from this that the 'classical' variant calling for a progressive rise and broadening of the mass movement and its structuring and reenforcement through traditional organizational forms before it reaches the armed struggle has been revalidated. In the international context, after all the experiences of the last decade and in face of an increasingly brutal repression by the native ruling classes and imperialism, such a variant is not the most probable."

This affirmation stands in contradiction to the principal conclusion of the first part of the main resolution, "The New Rise of the World Revolution," drafted for the forthcoming world congress. That document states: "This new revolutionary rise means that essentially proletarian forces and vanguard political currents carrying on the traditions of revolutionary Marxism and workers democracy will be in the thick of the fight, that their methods of intervening, of action, and organization will draw much closer to the classical norm of proletarian revolutions."

Quite clearly, on this point the draft resolution on the world situation is at variance with the draft resolution on Latin America. In deciding which of these opposing positions to adopt, it is to be hoped that the delegates will decide that the perspectives in Latin America are not qualitatively different from those in the world as a whole. The conclusion of the main resolution follows logically from the general analysis of the world situation -- the revolutionary pattern is giving evidence of drawing closer to the "classical norm." What is out of line is the conclusion of the document on Latin America that "such a variant is not the most probable" in that part of the world.

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Naturally, arguments that may be advanced in favor of the latter view should be heard and weighed with the greatest attention; and, if they turn out to be persuasive, then the main resolution should be altered accordingly.

In the draft resolution on Latin America only one argument is advanced on this question. It is limited to happenings in Latin America and does not refer to the conclusions drawn in the main resolution. However, the argument could be advanced with regard to situations in a number of other areas, including the countries in the imperialist sector. Here is the argument: "In reality, the adversary is in nowise ready to allow a mass revolutionary movement to organize more or less legally or normally, not only because in

the given economic and social conditions a general mobilization even for economic goals would threaten disastrous consequences for the system, but also and above all because the men in power no longer underestimate the dynamics of mass movements, even when they start off with limited objectives."

In essence the argument is not new. Not since the first appearances of the proletariat as an independent political force has the adversary taken a permissive attitude toward revolutionary formations, including small ones. The Fourth International has had a rich experience in this. Underestimation by the adversary of the potential of revolutionary groups or mass mobilizations is truly an "exceptional variant." Our movement has always proceeded on the assumption that the adversary sees his class interests clearly and appreciates the dangers besetting them perhaps better than anyone else, even though at a certain point he may be struck by paralysis of the will and may close his eyes to what is happening. The lesson drawn by the Bolsheviks on this, and repeated by Trotsky, is that revolutionists in face of the most savage repression have no choice but to continue their patient political and organizational work -- in the underground or in exile.

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The proposals on strategy and tactics in the draft resolution should be considered in relation to the contradiction between the appreciation of the truly enormous explosiveness of the situation and the doubts as to the real possibilities for a successful revolution in Latin America along the lines of the Russian revolution in 1917.

"The problem now posed in Latin America," it is stated in point 14, "is not primarily that of determining which are the driving forces of the revolution, a problem which for revolutionary Marxists has been resolved at the theoretical level." The driving forces consist of the working class, backed by a peasant revolt, and aided by its allies among the petty bourgeoisie and the student youth. Nor is the primary problem one of the size of the forces. "Gigantic forces composed of millions of men and women in fact exist and can be mobilized in revolutionary struggle now or in the next stage." We reach the nub of the question. The "real problem" is to work out a strategy that can succeed, bearing in mind the "crying contradiction between the objective potential and the subjective will to struggle of broad strata on the one hand and on the other by the persistent weakness of the organized vanguard..."

This is a restatement, in terms of the Latin-American situation today of the

key question posed on a broader scale thirty years ago in the Transitional Program: "The strategic task of the next period -- a pre-revolutionary period of agitation, propaganda and organization -- consists in overcoming the contradiction between the maturity of the objective revolutionary conditions and the immaturity of the proletariat and its vanguard (the confusion and disappointment of the older generation; the inexperience of the younger generation)."

How is this crying contradiction to be resolved? A fruitful approach for a resolution on Latin America that seeks to make an advance in this respect might be to examine concretely the reasons for "the persistent weakness of the organized vanguard." This would mean considering the experiences in each country -- what actually happened, for instance, in the various guerrilla struggles, what policies were followed, what actions were undertaken, and how these were related (or not related) to the specific economic, social, and political situations in which they occurred and which they sought to affect. The examination should not be limited to the record of the anti-Trotskyist tendencies active in these struggles. The course followed by the Trotskyist groups or parties in each of these countries should likewise be presented and evaluated, particularly as to how they contributed to (or hampered) carrying out the task of building a revolutionary Marxist combat party. As an example of what is required, the excellent beginning made by Hugo Blanco in evaluating the experiences of his group can be cited.

The lessons should be considered in accordance with the method used by Trotsky in the Transitional Program so as to derive slogans and organizational forms and political lines of attack against the adversary geared to the concrete situation in each country in a way to facilitate bringing the immense power of the masses in the urban centers to bear in the revolutionary process. The Fourth International as a whole could profitably participate in this as it did in working out the original Transitional Program and its first applications.

Such an approach, which would be in accordance with the "classical" methodological procedure of our movement, would lower the risk of reaching views that conflict with the broad conclusions of the general analysis of the Latin-American situation and the world situation.

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Instead of drawing a balance sheet in this way, the draft resolution simply proposes a continental tactic or strategy of technical preparation of and engagement in rural guerrilla war for a prolonged

period.

The proposal is advanced almost casually. We hardly notice it until, in point 15 where armed struggle is posed as the fundamental perspective in Latin America, we read: "This is why the technical preparation cannot be conceived merely as one of the aspects of the revolutionary work, but as the fundamental aspect on a continental scale, and one of the fundamental aspects in countries where the minimum conditions have not yet been met." Looking back to see how the entire Trotskyist movement in Latin America became committed to the "technical preparation" of armed struggle as the "fundamental aspect" of revolutionary activities for years to come, even in countries where the conditions are not yet ripe, we notice that it occurred in what looked like an attack against any universal formula.

The second paragraph of point 15 begins with the correct observation that there is "no universally valid formula which can be applied to surmount difficulties and contradictions which have real objective roots..." It is mentioned that "certain guerrilla experiments" failed, as in Peru, but the failures, it is asserted, "came about, in large measure, more from errors in assessing the situation, the trends, and the relationship of forces among the masses than from errors in conception." In short, the conception was correct and remains correct. It is universally valid. By the time we reach point 18, it is taken as so firmly based that it can be mentioned almost parenthetically: "Under the perspective of a prolonged civil war with rural guerrilla warfare as its principal axis..." With the correctness of the conception assumed to have been established, the document concerns itself with aspects of applying it concretely, with possible variations, and so on.

The possibility that there might be a connection between the errors that led to failures in "certain guerrilla experiments," errors which were of a political nature as the sentence indicates, and the conception itself is not even mentioned. But if the possibility so much as existed that the errors in practice might be related to an error in theory then the conception and its application should have been subjected to rigorous analysis before accepting it.

Not even the origin of the conception is indicated. So far as the resolution is concerned, it could be taken to have originated from within the Trotskyist movement. This is not so, of course. Isn't it all the more incumbent on those responsible for drafting a resolution that proposes a universal formula of this kind to indicate its origin and to evaluate its possibilities and its limitations, partic-

ularly as they have been disclosed by life? The failure of the draft resolution to trace the origin and ups and downs of the proposed tactic -- both its theory and its practice -- is a serious flaw. The oversight appears strange in view of the scope of the resolution which seeks to assess the major trends in the Latin-American situation for the past ten to twenty years. And it appears all the stranger in view of the fact that the resolution proposes that this tactic should constitute the major orientation of the Trotskyist movement in all of Latin America for a long time to come...in fact, up to the final victory which it is hoped it will assure.

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The truth of it is that the resolution is a rather faithful reflection of the publicly expressed views of the Cuban leadership on this question. It goes so far in conforming with their position as to postulate that guerrilla war can stimulate a revolutionary dynamic "even if at the start the attempt may seem to have come from abroad or to be unilateral (which was the case with Che's Bolivian guerrilla movement)." Such a statement should be highly qualified, otherwise it can feed the propaganda that guerrillas cause revolutionary situations, not to mention its use as justification for adventures doomed to certain defeat.

The proposed tactic can hardly be weighed properly without referring to its relation to the success of the Cuban revolution and to the way, since then, it has been extrapolated by the Cuban leadership in Latin America and elsewhere. The resolution fails to do this in even the most summary fashion.

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The following considerations may prove useful as a point of departure for probing this question:

(1) Guerrilla war in Latin America was not the invention of the Cubans. It has existed in the continent as a living tradition with a venerable history.

(2) One of the most unexpected features of the Cuban revolution was that this tactic could prove sufficient to win. Our conclusion at the time was that this testified much more to the weakness of imperialism and the national bourgeois structure than to the discovery of something superior to a Leninist combat party.

(3) More than a mere guerrilla band was involved in the Cuban struggle. The July 26 Movement had an extensive organization. Its petty-bourgeois program enabled it to secure financial assistance in a big way from Cuban bourgeois circles. It was also able to operate quite freely

in the United States where it was actively supported by a large Cuban colony.

(4) The July 26 Movement proceeded to a considerable extent like a party based on a single issue -- armed struggle against the Batista dictatorship. Its appeal cut across class lines.

(5) The key leaders of this movement were of such high caliber that when the revolution reached the crossing point to socialism, they plunged ahead, splitting their own movement, and transcending the program they began with.

(6) In transcending their original program and declaring for socialism, they also transcended the tactic through which they had won. Just as every succeeding revolution in Latin America must take as its model socialist Cuba instead of the July 26 Movement as it was first formed, so in tactics it is compelled, if success is to be assured, to make an advance, developing means capable of achieving the mass mobilizations required to win a socialist revolution. This means putting politics in command. Technique, tactics, even armed struggle, must be subordinated to political consciousness, to political direction, to a clear political program. The key problem, consequently, is to build a combat party capable of seeing this and doing it.

(7) The Cuban leaders, although the logic of their own revolution calls for it, have not proceeded along this line up to now. The reasons for this are plain. Dependent on aid from the Soviet Union, aid which was absolutely essential to the survival of the Cuban revolution, they were confronted with the problem of the Kremlin's policy of "peaceful coexistence" with imperialism and in particular its rabid opposition to Trotskyism. The course followed by the Cubans shows that they decided that if errors were to be made, they should be made on the side of caution so as not to jeopardize the flow of material aid. This explains why the Cuban Stalinists were not reproved for their gross attacks on Trotskyism and why Castro himself could make the kind of attack he did at the Tricontinental Conference in January, 1966. It explains, too, why the Cubans took such an ambiguous attitude during the May-June, 1968 events in France and why to this day they refrain from publicizing the role of the Trotskyists in the French upsurge. And it explains why Castro -- with very important reservations, it is true -- came out on the side of the invaders of Czechoslovakia. In short, the Cubans have not yet settled accounts with Stalinism. Until they have done so, it is misleading to say without qualification, as the resolution does in point 11: "This leadership by its attitudes, its actions and generalizations has contributed in a decisive way to the ma-

turing of a new vanguard."

(8) There is an immense anomaly in this failure to settle accounts with Stalinism, inasmuch as the Castro team won their victory in Cuba in face of the default of the Blas Rocas and their active opposition. One of the main lessons of the Cuban revolution is that it is now possible to outflank the Stalinists from the left.

(9) Instead of fostering an extension of this course elsewhere in Latin America, the Castro team sought to utilize the existing Communist parties. On the surface, it appeared feasible to repeat the political formula of the Cuban revolution -- but with a different combination of political tendencies from those assembled in the July 26 Movement in the struggle against the Batista dictatorship. The formula was to suppress the political differences with the Stalinists and form a combination on the single issue of armed struggle against the indigenous dictatorships and their imperialist backers. The basic idea was once again to make politics secondary to technique, to subordinate political strategy to the tactic of rural guerrilla war.

The results were hardly brilliant. No sector of the opposing camp was taken in by the camouflage. The lack of political clarity could only serve to sow confusion in the ranks of the revolutionists. Still worse, greater forces were now required to win; i.e., the masses in the urban centers. But the tactic itself was not designed to raise their political understanding, to organize and mobilize them. It banked on winning by pitting very small contingents in skirmishes remote from the cities. Moreover, the political confusion in the camp of the revolutionists involved a decisive issue in the new stage of the Latin-American revolution -- the role of Stalinism. Lack of clarity on this led to some very costly defeats.

The Cubans have made progress in overcoming this limitation but only through very painful experiences. It is the beginning of political wisdom to insist that revolutions in Latin America, or elsewhere in the world where similar conditions exist, cannot be won along a "peaceful" or "democratic" road, or under the leadership of an alleged progressive sector of the national bourgeoisie. The issue, once considered in the radical movement to be a hallmark of "Trotskyism," proved to be of key importance in bringing the Cubans to understand that Stalinism and organizations dominated by Stalinists are not reliable instruments of revolution. But by confining the dispute with the Stalinists almost exclusively to the issue of armed struggle, and limiting it even further to the question of rural guerrilla war, the Cubans gave precious political

ground to their opponents by default. Thus the Stalinist betrayers of the revolutionary struggle in Venezuela were able to advance telling arguments on why the workers need a revolutionary party. For the Venezuelan Stalinists, who cited Lenin in a completely abstract way, this was only a smoke screen; but the Cubans were not able to answer them effectively and this could not fail to influence at least some good revolutionary-minded militants. In the same way, the Cubans failed to offer an adequate challenge to the Stalinists in the urban centers, making it easier for them to retain a rather large following which they, of course, are now seeking to use in their wheeling and dealing in the bourgeois electoral arena.

The Cubans likewise conceded the field of theory to the Stalinists under the hardly laudable guise of ridiculing the "theorists" as against men of action, who don't need to learn about revolution in books inasmuch as they are practicing it with guns.

The Cubans even made the mistake of posing the issue in terms of a conflict between the men in the mountains and the bureaucrats in the city over who should have final command. Arguments were adduced concerning the technical difficulties of urban guerrilla war, the helplessness of the masses, the corrupting influence of the city, the difficulties and dangers of maintaining liaison, to explain why leadership should be in the hands of the men in the rural areas. The political issue underlying this obscure debate was very simple: should the struggle be led by men committed to a revolutionary struggle for socialism or by men committed to Moscow's treacherous foreign policy of "peaceful coexistence" with imperialism? This was the key question no matter where the leadership was located under the exigencies of the struggle. But this issue, which should have been brought to the fore in order to clarify the dispute and to fight for a majority on the basis of it, was left in obscurity by the Cubans. The Stalinists took full advantage of the ineptness of the Cubans, or their hesitation at speaking out because of possible economic pressure from Moscow, to further obscure and bury the question.

The result of these mistakes was that even in such a favorable situation as the one in Venezuela, with the prestige of the Cuban revolution behind them, and the not immaterial advantages of state power, the Cubans ended up in their factional struggle with the Stalinists in a small minority.

(10) Immediately after the Cuban victory, the Trotskyist movement held that one of the most important tasks facing the revolution there was construction of a revolutionary Marxist party. This has

been borne out in the most decisive way by events and ought to be pointed out in the draft resolution on Latin America.

(11) The key task facing the vanguard in Latin America, as elsewhere, still remains the construction of a revolutionary Marxist party. This takes priority over all questions of tactics and strategy in the sense that these must be directed to achieving this end as the decisive link in the revolutionary process. It is not enough to say, as the resolution does in point 19, that "The existence and functioning of a revolutionary party, far from being an outworn schema of outmoded Marxists, corresponds to the concrete and ineluctable needs of the development of the armed struggle itself..."

The party is not a means to the armed struggle, as this sentence seems to say; the armed struggle is a means to bring the proletariat to power under the leadership of the party. Construction of the party must be viewed and presented as the central task, the main orientation, the almost exclusive preoccupation of the vanguard. And the explosiveness of the situation in Latin America does not lessen the need; it intensifies it.

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In light of this, it is disorienting to present the party as an adjunct to the development of armed struggle. But this is what the draft resolution appears to do in the following aspects:

(1) In recruiting a minimum number of militants. Point 15 states, "It must not be forgotten that the...application of such a strategy requires first assembling a minimum of organized and politically homogeneous forces."

(2) In helping to solve the problem of liaison between the guerrillas and the masses. Point 18 suggests that the solution lies through special tactical applications of guerrilla war and through the development of immediate and transitional demands, the latter helping to mobilize and raise the political consciousness of the masses as well as create growing tensions that "also make it more difficult for the governments to concentrate their repressive forces exclusively in the zones of armed struggle." Either these political tasks are performed by the party, or the guerrillas themselves do it. In either case, these party tasks are conceived in the light of how they affect the achievement of guerrilla war and not vice versa.

(3) In helping to direct groups, temporarily unoccupied with revolutionary work, into fruitful fields. As point 18 suggests, a transitional program can be utilized to help "certain revolutionary or-

ganizations" which, while "having been formed for revolutionary combat and armed struggle...have been unable for conjunctural reasons to put their ideas into practice."

(4) In providing revolutionists with something to do in countries "where the armed struggle is not on the agenda at present." As indicated in point 19, they should "take advantage of the breathing space" to struggle "for the most favorable variant," seeking to build at least a solid nucleus on a national scale if a genuine, completely structured party with large mass influence is not already in existence (which the resolution considers to be "a very unrealistic perspective in almost all of the Latin-American countries").

In the four points above, the formulations in the resolution, taken in conjunction with the proposed tactical orientation, could give the impression that our movement does not conceive the party as the key link in mobilizing the masses for the conquest of power but simply as a useful instrument in the tactic of engaging in rural guerrilla war and as a constructive way to fill in time while waiting for an opportune moment to plunge into the really revolutionary work of armed struggle. If this impression is correct, then the draft resolution on Latin America would appear to be in conflict with the projected main resolution of the coming world congress which ends with the following reaffirmation of the basic position of our movement:

"The Fourth International has shown that even with still very weak forces important results can be attained in building an International. By doggedly continuing to build their own parties and their own International, revolutionary Marxists feel that at the same time they are making the most effective contribution to creating the mass revolutionary Marxist International which is indispensable in bringing the enormous revolutionary potential that has now appeared to realization as victories."

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Section V of the draft resolution on Latin America, "Situation of the Revolutionary Workers Movement and the General Lines of Orientation," seeks to indicate the attitude to be taken toward other currents in the broad revolutionary movement on the basis of the general tactical formula of technical preparation of and engagement in rural guerrilla war for a prolonged period. The final paragraph indicates that it is "the job of the various national revolutionary Marxist organizations to translate this general orientation into concrete formulas and guidelines." However, having laid down a gen-

eral tactical prescription for the entire continent, the draft resolution in reality has in advance fixed the tactics to be followed by all national sections, leaving up to them only the job of implementing the tactical formula on the local scene.

The tendency to lay down a blanket tactical prescription is so marked that the draft resolution even specifies in point 21 that "integration" into the "historic revolutionary current represented by the Cuban revolution and the OLAS [and not by the Fourth International?]" involves, regardless of the forms, working as an integral part of the OLAS."

As against this, the main resolution for the world congress states (in section VII): "The Cuban leadership's left turn between the Tricontinental Congress [conference] and the OLAS Conference created the possibility for a united front of all tendencies in the Latin-American revolutionary movement which agree with the general line of OLAS. The revolutionary Marxist forces have been able to take advantage of this possibility to broaden their field of action in countries like Argentina, Bolivia, Peru, Chile, and Guatemala."

The main resolution speaks of the "possibility" for a "united front," of the "possibility" for revolutionary Marxists to "broaden their field of action." The draft resolution on Latin America specifies: "working as an integral part of the OLAS." The main resolution leaves open the tactical question; the subsidiary resolution closes the question.

The impression given by this is that just as the main orientation advanced in the draft resolution on Latin America appears to be an adaptation to the orientation of the Cubans at their present level of development, so the prescription of working as an "integral part" of the OLAS appears to be an adaptation to the organizational level they have reached.

To make an organizational adaptation of this kind could have very serious consequences for the Latin-American sections of the Trotskyist movement, whose problem is precisely the one indicated in the main resolution -- to doggedly continue "to build their own parties and their own International." In what way becoming an "integral part" of the OLAS would help in building "their own parties and their own International" is hard to say. All the more so in view of the fact that the draft resolution itself notes in point 20 that the Castroist tendency "has not developed any important degree of organization and in fact the OLAS likewise has not succeeded either in finding a solution to the problem of crystallizing and consolidating organized new vanguards."

In the absence of a series of political and organizational prerequisites, to make the kind of sweeping organizational commitment proposed by the draft resolution is unsound. It would be wiser, one would think, to leave the field of relations with OLAS open, simply indicating as the main resolution does, the possibility of united fronts and a wider field of common action, a position that accords with the reality.

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The inversion in the document by which tactics and technique are placed above political strategy leads to a deficiency in an area where the draft resolution could possibly have offered some very helpful suggestions for the coming period. In the two final paragraphs of section V, for instance, after stating that elaboration of the continental strategy "outlined elsewhere in this document" must be done in correspondence with "the concrete needs and potential of each country or group of countries at a given stage," the document states that this "also implies the need for a political program" of a transitional nature. The document does not deal with this need in a concrete way at all. The next sentence states that it is up to "the various national revolutionary Marxist organizations to translate this general orientation into concrete formulas and guidelines." It is true that there is some ambiguity here as to whether this refers to the continental strategy of preparing for and engaging in rural guerrilla war, to the problem of a transitional political program, or to a combination of the two. In point 18, however, this is made clear: "The determination of the themes of a transitional program for each given stage is clearly the task of revolutionists in the various countries."

The draft resolution on Latin America thus contributes exactly nothing, not even a suggestion, on the themes of a transitional political program for the immensely explosive situation facing our movement there.

Of course, it is the task of revolutionists in the various countries to work out the themes of a transitional program for each stage. But it is still more their task to work out the tactics for each stage. Since tactics are dealt with in the draft resolution, are in fact its main preoccupation, the question arises as to why it is silent as to possible transitional themes for the coming period. It would have been completely in the tradition and spirit of the Transitional Program adopted by the Fourth International in 1938 to have considered the question.

The answer appears to lie in the



nature of the concept at the heart of the draft resolution. Once it has been decided that "the principal axis for a whole period will be rural guerrilla warfare, the term having primarily a geographical-military meaning," the question of transitional steps is narrowed to the extreme, becoming reduced even in the area of armed struggle. Even worse, the central concept of the Transitional Program drafted by Trotsky on the utilization of transitional slogans and transitional measures (including the field of armed struggle) to mobilize the masses and construct a combat party is hard to fit in with this "principal axis" if it can be fitted in at all.

The reasons for this are not difficult to discern. Trotsky's Transitional Program conceives the socialist revolution as carried forward by mass mobilizations, in the process of which a competent revolutionary leadership, organized in a combat party, is forged. The concept of rural guerrilla war as the principal axis for a prolonged period projects a small, heroic elite carrying the battle in the absence of the masses and in areas remote from the cities. Thus if the concept of rural guerrilla war for a prolonged period is adopted as the principal axis of revolutionary work, then the problem of mobilizing the urban masses becomes somewhat irrelevant, and along with it most of the Transitional Program.

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This probably explains, too, why the resolution pays so little attention to the developments among the youth in the urban centers in 1968, particularly the explosion that occurred in a capital as important as Mexico City. The meaning of the events there deserves the most careful analysis, especially with regard to their significance for transitional themes immediately applicable in Mexico but also worth studying for their possible bearing on similar or potentially similar struggles elsewhere in Latin America.

The May-June events in France clearly influenced the student masses and their allies in Mexico City, as the Mexican comrades have pointed out in their illuminating articles. Something of much deeper significance was also visible.

We have regarded the Cuban leaders as the first contingent of a new generation of revolutionists free from the crippling influence of the Stalinist movement. This was the main thing we hailed in the Cubans when they toppled the capitalist structure in Cuba. Arriving at revolutionary conclusions on the basis of their own thinking and their own experience, they were the harbingers of a great new development.

We are now witnessing a new phase of

this process on a world scale. It became unmistakable several years ago with the appearance in the United States of the widespread and militant opposition among the youth to the war in Vietnam and the response this received internationally among the youth. That the youth themselves have tended to link this with the Cuban revolution and its leaders has been shown by many of the slogans they have advanced and the high regard in which they hold Fidel and especially Che.

The May-June events in France were clinching proof of the importance of this development and its broad scope. After this came further confirmation from Mexico City. In fact today there are few areas in the capitalist world that are unable to provide their share of evidence.

There is absolutely no escaping the conclusion that for the Fourth International the crucial question it faces is its capacity to sink roots politically and organizationally in this sector. This holds on an international scale, including Latin America, perhaps Latin America above all if the draft resolution is correct in its estimate that a prerevolutionary situation exists there on a continental scale.

So far as the strategy of our movement is concerned, the main characteristics of this thrust of the youth in a revolutionary direction are (1) its occurrence in urban centers, (2) its involvement of considerable masses, (3) its tendency to try to link up with the workers or other sectors of the masses and to draw them into action.

It thus follows that the problem of developing transitional slogans and measures to attract these forces to the Fourth International is an acute one. What does the draft resolution on Latin America contribute to help solve this problem in that sector of the world? The answer is, nothing.

If anything, it diverts attention from the key problem now facing the Fourth International. For in place of making a concrete contribution on such political questions as how to draw the masses of revolutionary-minded urban youth closer to the Trotskyist movement and how through them to come closer to the masses of urban workers, the draft resolution advances instead the idea of preparation of and engagement in rural guerrilla war for a prolonged period "primarily in the geographical-military meaning" of the term.

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Another point to consider is whether the central concept in the draft resolution on Latin America, namely, giving a "geographical-military" orientation priority over political strategy, can be log-



ically confined to just one continent.

The Cubans have hardly viewed it that way, and certainly the tendencies immediately under their influence do not view it that way. They incline rather strongly to view it as an internationally valid orientation, except -- perhaps -- in the imperialist sector, about which they have little to say; and the sector of the degenerated or deformed workers states about which they have nothing at all to say so far as the struggle for a political revolution is concerned. It would be very difficult to find convincing arguments to persuade these currents that in the colonial world as a whole the tactic of preparation of and engagement in rural guerrilla war for a prolonged period is valid only for Latin America.

In fact logic speaks for an opposite conclusion. If the draft resolution on Latin America were to be passed in its present form by the coming world congress, our movement would be hard put to explain why the orientation decided on as good for Latin America was considered to be bad for the rest of the colonial and semicolonial world. It would certainly be contended that such a position is inconsistent and that such a sharp geographical demarcation cannot reasonably be made.

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Still another consideration must be weighed. Under the title of "An Insufficient Document," Comrade Livio Maitan submitted for the international pre-congress discussion a letter which he wrote to the members of the United Secretariat on May 15, 1968, offering some criticisms of the first draft of the main resolution. He raised an important question in his letter which may have a bearing on the reason why the draft resolution on Latin America projects the orientation it does. Comrade Maitan points to the theoretical achievements and the theoretical strength of the Trotskyist movement. Then he turns to its organizational weakness and the problem of overcoming it:

"But it is only by successes or revolutionary struggles at the head of a mass movement in one or several countries that we will be able to surmount our difficulties and present contradictions. What is expected from us from now on is that we demonstrate in practice the historical value of our movement and we will be judged essentially on this basis. This can appear, at bottom, to be an elementary truth, but it is a question of inspiring our whole activity with this recognition. It is a question more precisely of determining in what countries we have the best chance of a breakthrough and subordinating everything to the elementary necessity for a success in these countries, and even, if necessary, in a single country. The rest

will come later.

"There are, in fact, several countries where we at present have possibilities for an important breakthrough (youth movement in France, antiwar movement and youth movement in the United States, South Africa with a certain time) and we must unquestionably make an effort in the direction of India, but we must place everything above all on a sector of Latin America and you know very well which one. We must exploit the preparatory period of the congress to convince the entire movement to operate in practice, every day, with this perspective. Permit me to express myself a little paradoxically: it is necessary to understand and to explain that at the present stage the International will be built around Bolivia."

Comrade Maitan wrote this a few days after the battle of the barricades in Paris but before the mass mobilization in France had assumed such proportions as to create a revolutionary situation in which the Trotskyist youth succeeded in developing their initial openings into positions of key importance. That is why he says nothing about the meaning of the successes of the Trotskyist movement in France nor what this as well as the May-June events signified for the future of the Fourth International and the world revolution as a whole. "Parts" of his letter, he admits in his August 20 postscript, were "outmoded by events." Other parts, it should be added were outmoded by changes in the first draft of the main resolution. Yet Comrade Maitan still thought that certain of his ideas remained valid. Leaving aside the points which he believes were not fully taken into consideration in reworking the main resolution and some other more or less secondary items, it would seem that the chief point on which his views remained unchanged by the events in France (and Mexico City) was the view expressed in the two paragraphs quoted above. Moreover, he considered this to be so important that he submitted his letter as part of the preparatory discussion for the coming world congress.

Comrade Maitan appears to believe that the fate of the Fourth International now hinges on a "breakthrough"; that if this breakthrough can be obtained, the "rest will come later"; that it is possible that such a breakthrough can be achieved in several places, the most promising at the moment being Bolivia. Hence, he comes to a far-reaching conclusion: We "must place everything above all on a sector of Latin America..." The preparatory period of the congress must be utilized to convince "the entire movement to operate in practice, every day, with this perspective." (Emphasis added.)

It would seem undeniable that the orientation proposed in the draft resolu-

tion on Latin America of preparation of and engagement in rural guerrilla war for a prolonged period on a continental scale fits in completely logically with the view advanced by Comrade Maitan above. If we have interpreted correctly what he is saying, he contends that the entire Fourth International must now stake everything on securing and forwarding the material means to sustain rural guerrilla war in a selected country in Latin America. And if this is to be done effectively, the entire Fourth International must subordinate everything else to this task, including possible openings in other countries making different demands and requiring different tactics.

In short, the draft resolution on Latin America appears to have been drawn up on the basis of a quite different concept of the key problem facing the Fourth International and the orientation and tasks required to solve it than the concept expressed in the main resolution with its requisite orientation and tasks for the coming period. How the implicit contradiction between the two resolutions would be resolved in practice if both were adopted without either of them being substantially changed is hard to foresee.

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If we have misinterpreted Comrade Maitan's letter and read into it something which he does not hold, he will, of course, correct us. With this in mind, we venture to say that the essence of his position appears to us to be stated in the following sentence in his letter: "What is expected from us from now on is that we demonstrate in practice the historical value of our movement and we will be judged essentially on this basis." By "demonstrate in practice" he means that the Fourth International must achieve a "breakthrough" in the near future in "one or several countries."

There can be no question of the revolutionary sincerity of Comrade Maitan or his concern for the success of the Fourth International. His efforts to contribute with all his considerable abilities to achieving an organizational breakthrough is wholly in the tradition of our movement. Nevertheless, as we see it, he puts the question of the practical test of the historical validity of the Trotskyist movement in too narrow a framework. If we were to apply this same criterion to the First, Second, or Third International, it would have to be concluded that all of them failed to meet the test of history. Yet this is not the case, as we well know. The function of the International is to represent the long-range interests of the proletariat. The final judgment of the successive internationals will come, after the class struggle is won, when it is estimated what they contributed to overthrowing capitalism and establishing socialism

on a global scale. It is the function of the Fourth International to keep its sights fixed on this target and to measure the outcome of all the battles in the light of how they slow down or speed up final victory in the class war.

Looking at the function of the Fourth International in this way, it is a mistake to assume that it has a gun at its head, that it must produce an immediate "breakthrough," that it is under compulsion to comb the world for possibilities of meeting the demand in a hurry.

There is a very real danger under the impulse of such considerations that the movement can become overcommitted in an organizational way at a preselected point; and, by the very investment in this choice, become caught up in false hopes there while becoming partially blind to a very real opening in a completely unexpected area. The exact spots of revolutionary breakthroughs, historic experience has shown, are notoriously difficult to predict.

Several other unfavorable factors come into play when leaders of the International feel under compulsion to produce an immediate organizational success of major proportions. A tendency develops to underestimate the importance of small gains and successes which can quite realistically be achieved. In certain situations these can add up rather rapidly to give political prestige and weight to a section of the movement. Disregarded because they are obviously not large or individually impressive compared to what one feels under compulsion to produce, the section can stagnate and never get beyond the most primitive of beginnings organizationally.

A compulsion of this kind also makes it more difficult to make a timely retreat when it is called for. The stupidities this can lead to are illustrated by the headline in a recent issue of Granma: "Retreat: A Word Eradicated from the Dictionary." The journalist who composed that headline forgot, for some reason, that retreat has not been eradicated from tactics and strategy in either war or politics.

Similarly the movement can become trapped in a commitment much beyond its organizational resources. When the inevitable accounting comes, the result can be demoralization of the cadres, who feel cheated of even the modest successes that might have been achieved had a more realistic course been followed.

This would be one of the grave dangers facing the Fourth International if it were to commit the whole movement to concentrating on the gamble of a breakthrough in a selected country by means of prepara-

tion of and engagement in rural guerrilla war for a prolonged period. The disproportion between the material resources available to the Fourth International and what is required to mount such a venture is very great. The Fourth International has access neither to sources of heavy financial support like those at the disposal of the July 26 Movement nor the means available to a leadership holding state power. The risk of a major defeat for the Fourth International would be correspondingly high; the chances for a breakthrough by means of this tactic correspondingly low. It should be added that if the Fourth International did have such resources it would be well advised to employ them along other lines much more likely to bring an early success in the current world situation.

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In order to avoid any possible misunderstanding, we stress the following points:

(1) It is completely correct, and, in fact, highly productive to mobilize the entire international Trotskyist movement around single situations or single issues. Three examples can be cited from recent experience: (a) The international campaign in behalf of Hugo Blanco. (b) The attempt to coordinate antiwar demonstrations on an international scale. (c) The help secured for the French comrades in the May-June events.

What is to be particularly noted in these three instances was the way the campaigns helped the national sections which engaged in them.

(2) The same holds for mobilizing aid for a national section under heavy repression. Financial aid, in particular, must be sought to help sustain the key cadres and keep them functioning. Any number of instances of this could be cited from the history of the Fourth International. It is a perennial problem but also a perennial opportunity to build and reinforce the ties of international soli-

arity that bind the movement together.

(3) A section of the Fourth International may find that at a certain stage of the revolutionary process in its country, it is necessary and productive to engage in guerrilla war, as a specific form of armed struggle. The proviso is that it be conceived as a tactic entailed by political considerations, not as a new-found formula guaranteeing quick or certain success, and that it be within the means available to the section. This holds, it should be added, not only for Latin America but for similar areas elsewhere.

Finally, in view of the differences that have emerged over the relative place of guerrilla war as a tactic, it would be well to examine the question more specifically in relation to the Transitional Program. Our movement has already recognized that in certain countries, under certain circumstances, guerrilla war can play a positive role. However, it has not analyzed the negative consequences of guerrilla war if it is attempted in countries, or under circumstances, where it is out of place. Experience would now seem to testify rather heavily for the conclusion that while the appearance of guerrillas can signify a sharp rise in the class struggle, it can also mark a phase of decline, in which case it must be judged as a sign of despair and desperation, one of the symptoms of defeat.

As a consciously applied tactic, guerrilla war would seem to come under the sections of the Transitional Program dealing with the arming of the proletariat and the linkup between the proletariat and the peasantry.

A critical study of the varied experience with guerrilla war in a whole series of countries would be extremely useful to put this tactic in better perspective, to relate it properly to political strategy, and to counteract the rather widespread tendency to elevate it into a universal formula and even a panacea.

## RETURN TO THE ROAD OF TROTSKYISM

By Peng Shu-tse

### I.

#### Guerrilla Warfare and the Transitional Program -- Castroism or Trotskyism

In February 1968, at a meeting of the IEC, the strategy and tactics of guerrilla warfare in Latin America were formally proposed for discussion in preparation for a World Congress resolution. At this meeting I made a sharp criticism of guerrilla warfare as a revolutionary strategy for the backward countries and pointed out that such a strategy was in direct contradiction to the Transitional Program of the Fourth International. Nevertheless, I was in a minority of one at this meeting.

Since the above mentioned IEC meeting, the proguerrilla-war tendency has become even stronger and more resolute. Guerrilla warfare is no longer confined just to Latin America, but is now projected for many countries of Asia, the Middle East and Africa as is evident from the draft resolution, "The New Rise of the World Revolution." The section of this resolution entitled "Problems of the Resurgent Colonial Revolution" outlines the general perspective of guerrilla warfare for such countries as Laos, Thailand, Burma, and Indonesia in Southeast Asia, as well as numerous countries in both the Middle East and Africa. Nor are Greece and Spain, two European countries, excluded from this same perspective. In other words, this resolution clearly projects guerrilla warfare as the revolutionary strategy for almost all the backward -- and even some semibackward -- countries, hence, the Transitional Program for these backward countries has either been discarded or completely forgotten.

Neither in the many articles appearing in our international press advocating and supporting guerrilla warfare (by comrades Maitan, Moscoso, etc.) nor in the draft resolution mentioned above has the Transitional Program been openly and frankly declared to be no longer of any use. At the same time, however, one cannot find any mention of the Transitional Program for the backward countries. That is to say, the comrades have consciously or unconsciously discarded the Transitional Program and have replaced it with the strategy of guerrilla warfare. Even the resolution, "The New Rise of the World Revolution," never calls attention to the decisive significance of the Transitional Program for the backward countries. The Transitional Program is only referred to once. In relation to certain shortcomings of the Cuban line, the resolution says that "still lacking is a revolutionary Marxist appreciation of the need for a transitional program for the city masses..." (P. 29) That the author limited the transitional

program to "the city masses" proves that he either does not understand the decisive significance of the Transitional Program for the backward countries or has forgotten it. The Transitional Program is not limited to just the city masses. "The central task of the colonial and semi-colonial countries is the agrarian revolution, i.e., liquidation of feudal heritages, and national independence, i.e., the overthrow of the imperialist yoke." (The Transitional Program.)

The above poses a very fundamental question for the comrades of the Fourth International: Should we continue to carry out the traditional and fundamental programmatic line of the International -- the Transitional Program -- or should we adapt the new strategy of guerrilla warfare?

To answer the above question we should first define the nature of guerrilla warfare. As is evident, the present "theory" of guerrilla warfare is taken from the Cuban experience. Comrade Moscoso, the leader of the Bolivian section, wrote, "In the prevailing conditions in Latin America, the results achieved by the guerrillas in Cuba can be realized in any country. Therefore, I say that guerrilla warfare is incontrovertibly the road which revolutionaries must take to liberate their peoples from capitalist and imperialist exploitation." ("Lessons of the Cuban Revolution" by Hugo González Moscoso, International Socialist Review, March-April 1968, p. 11.) The ideas of Comrade Moscoso are a direct reflection of the ideas contained in the OLAS General Declaration. (See International Socialist Review, November-December 1967.)

What then is the Cuban experience? As everybody knows, Castro and several others, after having trained as guerrillas in Mexico, stole surreptitiously to Cuba and launched a guerrilla struggle in the countryside. After many months of struggle, the guerrilla movement increased its power throughout the country, finally driving out Batista and taking over the government. The agrarian revolution, national independence, and the nationalization of the property of both foreign and native capitalists were then eventually and empirically achieved. This seemingly simple and "short-cut" road to revolution has attracted many people to the idea of duplicating the Cuban experience in their own country. Castro himself advocates the Cuban experience as the model to be followed. "We are absolutely convinced that, in the long run, there is only one solution, as expressed in the Resolution: guerrilla warfare in Latin America." (Fidel Castro, "Speech to OLAS Conference,"

Despite Castro's and others' absolute conviction in guerrilla warfare, one must, nevertheless, pose the following question: Can the experience of the Cuban revolution be repeated throughout Latin America, or, as Comrade Moscoco maintained, can "the results achieved by the guerrillas in Cuba...be realized in any country"? In my opinion, one must answer this question in the negative.

First one must understand that the victory of the Cuban guerrilla struggle is mainly due to the failure of American imperialism to intervene. Since the victory of the Cuban revolution, however, and especially since Cuba has become a workers' state, American imperialism has fundamentally changed its policy. It has not only helped all the reactionary governments in Latin America against the people, but has also directly intervened in the affairs of these governments and has even sent troops to suppress revolutionary movements, as in the Dominican Republic. In those countries where guerrilla warfare broke out, American imperialism was responsible for arming and training special forces to deal with these movements, and the tragic defeat of Guevara is only proof of this change in policy by American imperialism and its effectiveness. The decline and defeats of other guerrilla movements as in Venezuela, Guatemala, Colombia, Peru, etc. are also the result of American imperialism's direct intervention. These facts should be taken into serious consideration by all those who advocate and support the strategy of guerrilla warfare, and from them clear and unavoidable lessons should be learned.

If one evaluates the strategy of guerrilla warfare from the fundamental and historical principles of Marxism, Leninism, and Trotskyism, this "new" strategy is even more thoroughly exposed. According to Lenin a revolution must base itself upon the worker and peasant masses, and the first task is the building of a revolutionary party which prepares the masses for the revolution. In the event of a revolutionary situation the party then takes as its fundamental task the preparing of the masses for the armed seizure of power. If on the other hand a revolutionary situation does not exist, any organization for immediate armed struggle can only lead to a disastrous defeat. This was, in fact, the strategy and result of Stalin's adventurous policies which he imposed upon the Chinese CP after the defeat of the second Chinese revolution. As is well known, Trotsky very seriously attacked Stalin for his adventurous policies at the time as can be seen in many articles, especially in "The Chinese Question after the Sixth Congress." (Problems of the Chinese Revolution, Trotsky.)

At present in Latin America, on the whole, there not only does not exist any revolutionary situation, but many countries have suffered serious setbacks in the development of the revolutionary process -- Brazil, Bolivia, Argentina, etc. To propose the strategy of guerrilla warfare under these conditions is to propose an adventurous policy similar to Stalin's after the second Chinese revolution, and such a strategy can only lead to similar disastrous results.

To avoid the disastrous results of the guerrilla warfare strategy and to prepare the victory of the revolution in Latin America, it is necessary to project a transitional program which should contain, among others, demands for: agrarian reform; national independence; freedom of press, speech, assembly, strike, etc.; and a "Constituent Assembly with full powers, elected by universal, equal, direct and secret suffrage." (Problems of the Chinese Revolution, p. 189.) It is only through such a transitional program that we can reorganize and mobilize the masses against the military and oligarchic dictatorships and American imperialism. Only through such an organization of the masses can we approach the necessary armed struggle for power.

Perhaps some comrades will object to the above strategy by saying, as they have already said, that "there is no possibility of a reformist period of legal struggles...." "Therefore the perspective opened for the Bolivian people is one of direct struggle... This struggle can only be undertaken by armed means -- by guerrilla warfare in the countryside, the mines, and the cities.... All others [perspectives] are utopian and can only lead to the defeat of the masses...." ("New Revolutionary Ferment in Bolivia," Intercontinental Press, Vol. 6, No. 22, p. 546.) Such a position is, however, only a repetition of the position taken by the Chinese CP under Stalin's leadership in the 30's. Trotsky characterized the CCP's policies at that time as being adventurous and without perspective, and history has more than proved Trotsky's criticism correct. "Following the inevitable collapse of the Canton uprising, the Comintern took the road of guerrilla warfare and peasant soviets with complete passivity on the part of the industrial proletariat. Landing thus in a blind alley, the Comintern took advantage of the Sino-Japanese War to liquidate 'Soviet China' with a stroke of the pen, subordinating not only the peasant 'Red Army' but also the so-called 'Communist' Party to the identical Kuomintang, i.e., the bourgeoisie." (The Transitional Program.) The world revolution has paid a most heavy price for the experience of Stalin's adventurism. We must understand this experience and its lessons not only for Bolivia, but also for Latin America and the world as a whole.

Some of the comrades might ask, "But

didn't the Chinese CP conquer power later on in 1949 with the strategy of guerrilla warfare?" The taking of power in 1949 by the CCP, however, was in no way a result of the guerrilla war strategy itself, but rather, a result of the exceptional historical circumstances created as a result of the Japanese invasion of China and World War II. First of all the Soviet Union's occupation of Manchuria, the most industrialized part of China, dealt a heavy blow to the forces of Chiang Kai-shek, and the modern weapons which the Red Army obtained from disarming the Japanese were used to arm the Fourth Army of the CCP commanded by Lin Piao. Most important also was the inability of U.S. imperialism to intervene. U.S. imperialism even cut off aid to Chiang Kai-shek's regime many months before its defeat. (This is, in fact, one of the major reasons for the defeat.) (On how the CCP was able to take power, I have explained in detail in my "Report on the Chinese Situation," published in Feb. 1952, by the SWP in the International Information Bulletin.)

Neither can Vietnam be used to justify the strategy of guerrilla warfare. In fact, what is involved in the Vietnamese struggle is not a guerrilla war, but in reality, a limited war between American imperialism and the workers' states. In spite of the insufficient amount of aid given to the Vietnamese by the workers' states, especially by the Soviet Union and China, it has only been this aid which has permitted the Vietnamese to continue their struggle. Neither is Vietnam's geographical position a negligible factor, in that it allows the Vietnamese to receive directly from the workers' states the all-important aid. The geographical position, however, of such countries as Indonesia, Malaysia, Bolivia, etc., poses insurmountable obstacles in this regard. To call for the creation of "two, three, or many Vietnams" is utopian. Such a slogan cannot only not be realized in reality, but it completely obscures the origins and nature of the present conflict in Vietnam.

To avoid any possible confusion between our criticism of guerrilla warfare and that of the Stalinists in Latin America, we should briefly point out that we do not reject guerrilla warfare as do the Stalinists in order to justify a peaceful road to socialism or to justify a bloc with the liberal national bourgeoisie, but rather, we reject guerrilla warfare as an adventurist strategy which is opposed to our traditional program.

We do not reject guerrilla warfare as a tactic, but rather as a strategy. Definitely, when the situation in any country matures to the point that we must immediately prepare the masses for armed insurrection to seize power, guerrilla warfare by the peasants might be a most use-

ful tactic.

Nobody can reject revising the Transitional Program in principle. As Marxists we do not regard our program as a dogma. If there is a new reality which can be proven both theoretically and factually by the comrades, then without question, we must make all the necessary changes in the Transitional Program to adapt it to the new reality. But, we are and must be against any unprincipled revision of -- and especially any underhanded attempt to revise -- our traditionally accepted program. If the comrades think that part (or even all) of the Transitional Program is no longer valid or should be replaced by something else, then they should openly and frankly present their ideas to the International to be discussed and then accepted or rejected by the International.

Since the victory of the Cuban revolution, Castroism has had an influence upon certain radical elements, not only in Latin America, but also elsewhere throughout the world. The influence of Castroism has even made its way into the Fourth International. The adoption of the strategy of guerrilla warfare by sections in Latin America and even by the International leadership is a direct reflection of the Castroist influence upon the International. This situation raises the logical question of the relationship and differences between Castroism and Trotskyism. While our movement has given much praise to the Cuban leadership, it has never made any serious criticism of this leadership. Castro, on the other hand, has maliciously attacked and slandered Trotskyism (at the 1966 Tricontinental Conference).

Trotskyism is not only the direct continuation of Marxism, but also the inheritor of the traditions of Bolshevism. In addition, Trotskyism represents the development of the theory of the permanent revolution, as well as a Marxist analysis of the phenomenon of a degenerated workers' state. Comrade Trotsky was also the first to concretely analyze the phenomenon of fascism and to draw the necessary conclusions from the serious defeats suffered by the world working-class movement in the 1920's and '30's. All of this is concretized and summarized in the basic programmatic document of our movement -- the Transitional Program.

Castroism, on the other hand, has made no theoretical contribution to Marxism. Castro's program is merely one of action based upon his own experiences in the Cuban revolution, i.e., guerrilla warfare. It is clear that Castro does not understand some of the basic tenets of Marxism or some of the most important lessons and experiences of the world working-class movement, such as the Bolshevik revolution, the struggle between Trotsky and

Stalin, etc. This lack of understanding is expressed practically in Castro's politics by the lack of any democratic-centralist party in Cuba itself, by the lack of any democratic government in Cuba based upon workers' and peasants' soviets, by the support of a guerrilla war strategy in Latin America, etc. We, of course, support the Cuban workers' state against imperialism like other workers' states, and we can on certain specific issues even give critical support to the Cuban leadership against this or that tendency, such as, giving critical support to their attack on Moscow's line of peaceful coexistence and the peaceful road to socialism. On the other hand, we must thoroughly criticize all the Cuban leadership's weaknesses. We must criticize such things as their support of the guerrilla war strategy, pointing out that this is not an alternative strategy to the peaceful-road-to-socialism strategy advocated by the Stalinists, but that objectively in the long run, the strategy of guerrilla warfare will only help the opportunism of the Stalinists as well as American imperialism.

## II.

### Toward the Working Class

In the past period the International, on the whole, has found itself working in and recruiting from primarily petty-bourgeois strata, especially the student movement. To a great degree, of course, this area of work was determined by the objective conditions; nevertheless, our past work in and orientation to the working class had not been what it should have been. Therefore, the reorientation toward and integration into the working class is the most urgent task facing our movement today.

Perhaps some of the comrades would object to the call for such a reorientation of our movement, by saying that our orientation toward the working class has always been understood if not explicitly stated. But the concrete reality of our movement will not support such an objection. We have only to look at the sections in the most industrialized countries of the world, as in Western Europe, to discover that in none of these sections do we have any real basis in the working class. The comrades in these sections come mainly from outside the working class and still remain outside the working class. If such a situation is permitted to continue for any length of time, these sections cannot but degenerate.

Of course, our past work in such areas as the student movement has brought us many valuable cadres as well as allowed us to expand our influence by participating in and leading important struggles. But we must realize, that a movement such as the student movement is not and cannot

be a constant or stable phenomenon, and that this movement does not constitute (and cannot even be considered as) a basis for building a revolutionary (mass) party. The only basis on which we can consider building a revolutionary (mass) party is the working class. The student movement must be considered secondary and subordinate to this orientation.

Our orientation toward the working class must, above all, be concretely based on our work in the trade unions. The trade unions not only represent tens of millions of organized workers, but also one of the fundamental elements of the actual class struggle. The most unfortunate reality is, however, that in the past period the trade unions have not only been dominated by but completely controlled by the different reformist and even pro-imperialist leaderships. One cannot propose any real perspective of building a mass revolutionary party which can take the road to power, without first having struggled against and to a "certain" degree discredited the present leaderships in the trade unions. "It is impossible to capture political power (and the attempt to capture it should not be made) until this struggle [against the opportunist leaderships of the trade unions] has reached a certain stage." ("Left-Wing Communism, an Infantile Disorder, Lenin, Chapter VI.)

The central and most important part of the struggle against the present reformist leaderships can only be carried out by consistent work in the trade unions themselves. Of course, this work is very difficult and will pose for our movement its most difficult (as well as most important) tactical problems and considerations. But regardless of how difficult this work may be made for us by the bourgeoisie and the bureaucratic trade union leaderships, "we must be able to withstand all this, to agree to any sacrifice, and even -- if need be -- to resort to all sorts of stratagems, artifices, illegal methods, to evasions and subterfuges, only so as to get into the trade unions, to remain in them, and to carry on Communist work within them at all costs." (Ibid.)

Therefore, it is mandatory that the coming World Congress take this question into serious consideration and propose a concrete orientation to and plan for work in the trade unions and the working class as a whole. Only with such a concrete plan of orientation toward the working class can we envisage the construction of a mass revolutionary party capable of taking power. There is no other road.

## III.

### What We Should Learn from the Algerian Events

Boumedienne's coup d'état in June



1965 not only marked the turning point in the revolutionary movement in Algeria, but also marked a setback for the revolutionary movement throughout the Middle East and Africa as a whole. This coup also represented a heavy blow for the Fourth International and its political position, not only because of the direct involvement and participation in the Algerian events on the part of several sections -- France, Algeria, etc. -- but also because one of the International's leaders, Michel Pablo, participated in Ben Bella's government. As a result, we must accept as much of the responsibility as anybody for the serious setback. For this reason, it is mandatory that we examine this setback and our own responsibility for it, in order to draw certain conclusions and lessons from the Algerian events. It was for the above reason that I asked the Second Congress after reunification (Dec. 1965) to discuss formally the Algerian events. But no formal discussion took place. Again at a meeting of the IEC in February 1968, I proposed the Algerian events be officially placed on the agenda of the coming World Congress and a formal position taken. At this meeting both comrades Livio Maitan and Sirio Di Giuliomaria objected to the proposal, although the majority at the meeting accepted it. Nevertheless, the objection by comrades Livio and Sirio to such an important discussion represents a most serious weakness of not wanting to discuss the mistakes committed by the International leadership. We must remind the comrades that the attitude toward our own mistakes (especially those on the magnitude of the Algerian events) is one of the fundamental tests of a revolutionary party. As Lenin pointed out, even "a little mistake can always be turned into a monstrous one if it is persisted in, if profound reasons are given for it, and if it is driven to its 'logical conclusion.'" (Ibid., Chapter V.)

The most important lessons should be drawn from the International's mistakes in relation to the Algerian events. One of the most important mistakes was the failure of the International to seriously criticize Ben Bella's government as well as the failure to propose any revolutionary program for the Algerian masses in order to advance their struggle. On the contrary, the International and the International leadership in their many articles, gave much praise to the FLN leadership, especially to Ben Bella and even Boumédiène.

In the pre-reunification discussion in the International Committee, I made a criticism of the sectarian position held by the SLL leadership on the Evian agreement, in which I outlined a basic program for all revolutionaries concerned with Algeria. "To resolve this contradiction, [between continued French economic and military interests and Algerian indepen-

dence] all revolutionaries in Algeria should unite behind the hard-won political independence as the starting point for a Marxist program to mobilize all the working masses and poor peasants for further struggle. The program should include, in my opinion, the withdrawal of all French military forces, the cancellation of all French economic concessions in Algeria, a thorough agrarian reform, the nationalization of all the basic means of production, democratic rights for workers and peasants and the establishment of workers', farmers', and soldiers' councils and a workers' and farmers' government. All revolutionaries in Algeria should engage in the struggle to realize this program so as to bring Algeria into the path of socialism. This should be the line we ought to take in Algeria. This should also be the norm for criticizing all measures taken by the Ben Bella government and also the platform on which to rally all revolutionaries in Algeria to form a Marxist party to carry on the struggle." ("Where is Healy Taking the Socialist Labour League? -- A Dangerous Sectarian Tendency," SWP International Information Bulletin, May 1963 -- I, p. 18.)

The mistakes committed by the International, as mentioned above, represent an adaptation to a petty-bourgeois leadership. Such an adaptation is not accidental or without precedent. The International, in the past, has displayed a tendency to adapt to reformist bureaucrats and the radical petty bourgeoisie. The International's past position on the so-called self-reform of the bureaucratic leaderships in the workers' states and of certain Communist parties, the International's opportunist attitude toward Tito in the late 40's and early 50's, as well as toward Mao's regime -- which continues even today -- the International's tail-ending Bevan in England in the 50's, and its past and present uncritical position toward Castro and the Cuban regime, is only a part of the historical precedent for the International's opportunist adaptation to the Ben Bella government.

Such adaptationism has nothing whatsoever to do with Marxism. The historical record of Marx's, Engels', Lenin's, and Trotsky's militant struggles against all petty-bourgeois leaderships in the working-class movement is clear enough. One only needs to point to Marx's serious criticisms of such people as Blanqui and Lassalle. If, however, these militants were active today, it is hard to believe that the International would take a similar critical stance. Or one can point to Trotsky's scathing criticism of the centrist POUM for a more recent example. One cannot doubt the general revolutionary character of people like Blanqui or leaders of the POUM like Nin, but this did not change their objective political rôle or keep Marxists from seriously criticiz-



ing their political position. On the contrary, such people were all the more criticized in order to try to win them or their followers to a revolutionary Marxist position.

Recognizing our mistakes on the Algerian events, openly admitting them, and correcting them, is even more important in light of the International's record of many similar mistakes in the past. We must draw important lessons from the Algerian experience and apply these lessons to our present attitude toward the NLF in Vietnam, Castro, Mao, etc. In this way the lessons of the Algerian experience can (and must) play a most important rôle in the building of a revolutionary International.

#### Conclusion

Replacing the Transitional Program with the strategy of guerrilla warfare, neglecting the most serious work in the working class and its traditional class-struggle organizations, i.e., the trade unions, and continuing to adapt ourselves to different petty-bourgeois currents and leaderships, cannot only not build an International, but will lead our movement into a blind alley. The above represents

a deviation from Trotskyism, and it is the most urgent task and duty of the coming World Congress to consider seriously these questions by taking a formal stand on them in order to return to the road of Trotskyism.

March 5, 1969

P.S. The comrades will please understand that the above document was delayed as much as possible in the hope of receiving the pertinent draft resolutions for the coming congress. But alas, it was not possible to delay any longer, and therefore, the above document was written with only the draft resolution, "The New Rise of the World Revolution," at hand. In the last few days, we have received the draft resolution on Latin America. Time does not permit us to deal specifically with this draft resolution, nevertheless, it does not necessitate any change in the above criticisms. On the contrary, this draft resolution makes the above criticisms -- especially on guerrilla warfare -- all the more pointed. We also regret not having been able to utilize for the above document the other draft resolutions on China, Western Europe, Algeria, etc., which, to date, still remain unavailable.

March 12, 1969

THE POSITION OF THE MEXICAN DELEGATION TO THE NINTH CONGRESS  
OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL ON THE UNITED SECRETARIAT  
RESOLUTION ON LATIN AMERICA

The Draft Resolution on Latin America which the United Secretariat has presented for discussion preparatory to the Ninth Congress gives principal consideration, in its political aspect, to the concrete problems related to armed guerrilla struggle. This type of struggle is on the order of the day in several countries on this continent -- Guatemala, Bolivia, Brazil, Peru, Venezuela, etc. However, the United Secretariat document completely overlooks the acute problems faced by revolutionary Marxist organizations where the stage of the movement calls for the most elementary organizational and political preparation.

As the draft resolution clearly recognizes, the debate over peaceful and violent roads to revolution in Latin America is concluded. Following the victory of the Cuban revolution, the debate on this question was one of the bases for the recruitment of a great number of members to the revolutionary Marxist organizations (comprising, in this context, the Castroist, Trotskyist, and, to a certain extent, Maoist organizations -- that is, only some of those who joined the Maoist tendency were revolutionary Marxists). Many organizations did not limit themselves to theoretical discussion of this question. The guerrilla forces and various armed groups which arose in the cities in Guatemala, Venezuela, Peru, Bolivia, etc. put into practice the conclusions drawn from the experiences of the Cuban revolution and of many years of struggle in the other countries of the continent.

We might add that this period of ferment and assimilation of new political lessons, which the impact of the Cuban revolution produced in the revolutionary circles that sprang up under its inspiration, lasted until 1967, specifically until the tragic conclusion of Che's guerrilla experiment. During that period, the most enlightened section of the vanguard carefully weighed the experiences of the Latin-American struggle since 1960, and began to develop analyses and to undertake a critical reevaluation of what had really been accomplished. The successes, which were rather limited, and the failures, much more frequent, had led to different situations in various countries. In Guatemala, Venezuela, Peru, Bolivia, Brazil, and Argentina, events had occurred which were crucial for the understanding of the revolutionary tendencies on the continent. Throughout the entire revolutionary movement there was a profound thirst for theoretical explanation and analysis of those convulsive years. The appearance of Debray's famous book in 1966, the heated polemic which it aroused, and the speed

with which it was forgotten -- despite the sensational adventures of its author -- attested to this eagerness to find a theoretical and political guide. And this analytical fervor highlighted all the changes which had occurred in the revolutionary movement in Latin America since the victory of the Cuban revolution. Such analysis was sought, not out of any academic obsession, but with the aim of providing a better focus for militant revolutionary action.

Che's political testament advanced an elementary truth on a continent-wide basis, a truth which must be the first premise of all revolutionary action subsequent to the Cuban revolution -- the necessity of a socialist revolution. Previously, this principle was expressed only by the Trotskyist groups or parties and by the Movimiento Revolucionario 13 de Noviembre [November 13 Revolutionary Movement] in Guatemala. Although the two declarations of Havana had posed the necessity of a socialist revolution implicitly, they did not spell it out with the clarity of Che's formulation. This basic confirmation of the revolutionary Marxist program did not fail to cause surprise in many revolutionary circles which had followed the Cuban experience very attentively. This was so because of the excessive importance that the Castroists throughout the continent attributed to the concrete problems related to armed struggle, above all armed struggle in the countryside. The theoretical and political weakness of many of the organizations which had arisen under the stimulus of the Cuban revolution began to be perceived. This weakness, moreover, was expressed in a real case of organizational rickets in all aspects except those strictly pertaining to armed struggle. Thus, before OLAS, the main beneficiaries of the wave of radicalism that surged across the continent after 1960 were, paradoxically, the Communist parties, the classical bureaucratized parties which the Castroists so despised.

When Che went to Bolivia, his immense revolutionary prestige, the drama of his struggle, the extraordinary lessons of his experiment, and the assiduous preparation of his guerrilla movement made an indelible impression on Latin-American vanguard circles. The failure of the Bolivian guerrilla movement in 1967 emphasized the urgent necessity of taking a full balance sheet of the armed struggle in the countryside, of the relationships between this struggle and the struggle in the cities, of its links with the revolutionary parties, and of the importance of a revolutionary program. In his Bolivian experiment and in his theory, Che pro-

jected most of all the fundamental strategy that the revolutionary movement in Latin America should follow -- the creation of one, two, many Vietnams. All the tactical errors, all the organizational failings, all the gross errors of political judgement (the most outstanding of which was an incredibly naïve estimation of the pro-Soviet Bolivian CP, which betrayed and isolated Che and bears a large part of the responsibility for the failure of his guerrilla movement) that Che and his companions showed were counterbalanced by the potent factor of the strategy on which the whole experiment was based. The fundamental political and programmatic clarity of Che's guerrilla experiment more than excused all its deficiencies. In Bolivia Guevara was advancing, even if in a partial and limited way, the victory of the fundamental strategy of our times -- opening up new fronts of struggle on the order of Vietnam, or raising the crisis of imperialism to a higher level. No one can say that when Che died a hero's death in Bolivia he failed from this strategic point of view. Although the Yankee intervention which this action stimulated in Bolivia did not go beyond the stage of sending "advisors" and "Green Berets," it is obvious that he spurred the subjective forces of the revolution on this continent to a higher level. In a historical context, his failure was only a tactical one. The fundamental changes in Latin-American politics throughout the continent and, in fact, in world politics during 1968, cannot be explained in large part without taking into consideration Che's action in Bolivia.

Che's campaign closed the critical period that began in 1960. At the same time, his strategic conception was to climax all the revolutionary political experiences in Latin America. Above all, it explained the event which was the other great landmark, along with his Bolivian guerrilla experiment, of revolutionary political experience on the continent -- the Yankee invasion of the Dominican Republic. It was clear in 1967 that what Che was trying to achieve in Bolivia was aimed at provoking massive Yankee military intervention in that country. But he knew that the geographical and political conditions in that country would give this intervention a virulence which it did not have in the parallel case in the Dominican Republic. We stress that if Che suffered a tactical defeat in Bolivia, his example, his lesson, and his strategy were absorbed by the most principled revolutionists on the continent. This became clearly apparent in the year following his death. In 1968, the political life of the continent unquestionably entered into a new stage characterized by the beginning mobilization of the urban masses.

The fundamental weakness of the draft resolution on Latin America lies in

the fact that it centers its attention on the Latin-American reality prior to 1968. This incapacity to take account, theoretically and politically, of the coming repercussions on this continent of the "new rise of the world revolution" that characterized 1968 must be corrected if we are to have an adequate guide to action in the new period that opened up in this watershed year. In this new upsurge that began sensationally with the 1968 Tet offensive and showed the heights that it might reach in the "May revolution" in France, Latin America made its contribution with the mass mobilization of forces in Mexico City -- where passivity or near passivity had reigned for almost a decade -- as well as in Uruguay and Brazil. Also, as the draft resolution correctly states, we must expect the beginning of a revival by the very important sector of the masses on this continent represented by the working class of Argentina. But crises are on the horizon in other countries -- Peru, Colombia, Venezuela, etc. The resolution approved by the congress as the political guide for revolutionary Marxists in Latin America must consider fully the period which is opening up in which the activity of these revolutionists will be decisive.

Of course, the draft resolution accepts a fundamental theoretical and political premise of the permanent revolution -- the key role of the working class and the urban masses in winning the victory of the socialist revolution, the only possible revolution in Latin America. But in the stage that opened up in 1968, we must not only recognize this basic truth but translate it into the language of day-to-day politics, of slogans, of organizational forms, of urban insurrectionary struggle (i.e., the form taken by the armed struggle of the masses in the cities), of preparation for people's war when massive military intervention by Yankee imperialism takes place. One of the most important aspects which Che's action in Bolivia highlighted was the importance of the role of the working class and the urban masses -- students, teachers, office employees, etc. -- in bringing about a generalized crisis of the system. If this is true for a country where the social and political weight of these sectors is not very great, what would happen in the large countries of the continent where their specific weight is decisive? In these countries, the stage which has begun is not completely separate from the preceding one. That is, it is very probable that there will be an interpenetration of both forms of revolutionary action. In fact, this has already happened in Venezuela, Guatemala, Bolivia, Brazil, and -- in part -- Mexico, where a "local" guerrilla movement arose in the state of Guerrero, one of the most turbulent states in the country. But what is also clear is that in such phases of the new stage, the role that revolutionists play in the urban

mass movements will be decisive. Even a guerrilla movement as backward in relation to its Latin-American sister movements as that led by Genaro Vázquez Rojas in Guerrero recognized, after the student struggle in Mexico City, that it had to have close ties with the urban masses. It now recognizes also the necessity of struggle committees and councils not only among the urban masses but among the peasant masses not directly linked to the guerrillas. And, as we said, Vázquez is still programmatically at the stage of "national liberation," that is, in the stage that was typical of the guerrilla movement before Che's Bolivian experiment.

In Cuba, the participation by the working class and the urban masses in the revolutionary mobilization which brought the guerrillas and the Rebel Army to power was diffused primarily in a movement of revolutionary solidarity with the struggle in the countryside. This was because of the very peculiar structure of the pre-revolutionary Cuban economy, which was characterized by minimal industrialization and by an extensive rural proletariat produced by sugarcane monoculture. It is extremely unlikely that the same thing will occur in countries like Mexico, Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Peru, and Colombia. It is probably that the Cuban dynamic will be repeated in the Central American countries and that there the urban sectors will be mobilized on the basis of active solidarity with the guerrilla movement. But in the large countries, in which the urban contingents encompass millions and millions of men and women, mere appeals to solidarity with the guerrilla struggle in the countryside have not been, are not, and will not be sufficient. In other words, the victory of the guerrilla struggle depends on the support it gets in the cities, but this support must take a political expression. This in turn assumes organization on a party and mass level which takes account of the concrete and specific needs of the urban struggle. The dynamic of the movement of millions of workers who are the decisive factor in the urban centers arises not so much out of a consciousness of solidarity with the problems of other sectors -- with the problems of the rural masses -- but out of the specific class contradictions in those centers. Of course -- without denying the importance which the expression of solidarity by the urban masses not only with national but international struggles will have in any advanced program -- the task of revolutionists will be to give adequate expression to the dynamic implicit in the concrete problems of the masses, problems which will surely impel them to their most radical actions.

The ascendancy of guerrilla struggle in most recent years was not, of course, owing only to hasty and ill-considered extrapolations of the Cuban experience.

However absurd and even infantile, in some cases, these experiments in "metalogical imitation" may seem (many were failures), they were justified by a profound contradictory reality. In any case, the Cuban example found fertile ground and there were many reasons to justify the rapid formation of guerrilla movements. The contradiction which sustained all these actions was the clear urgency of revolution on the continent and the relative passivity of the urban sectors from which the greater part of the guerrillas came who were anxious to put their countries in the revolutionary vanguard. But today this is no longer justified. It is evident that if the working class of the imperialist countries is beginning to awaken from its twenty-year torpor, we need not greatly emphasize that the Latin-American workers also have their scores to settle with the system and that there are more than a few of these.

The general strategy which Che outlined in advocating the creation of other Vietnams (and which the Fourth International has clearly recommended since 1965) remains valid also in the new stage where new tactical considerations assume a greater importance. Moreover, today, the prospect of creating a new Vietnam based on the urban crises is the most realistic one. For this reason the revolutionary Marxist organizations, which are composed primarily of urban elements, acquire a crucial importance. With the exception of Guatemala, Venezuela, and Bolivia -- although of course some other case may have escaped us -- the revolutionary Marxist organizations in most Latin-American countries are in a formative stage politically and organizationally. This is especially true in Mexico, Brazil, Argentina and Chile. Their primary function is to strengthen themselves as much as possible in order to be able to take on concrete tasks of leading the masses in revolutionary actions under their own banner, in actions capable of touching off another Vietnam.

The organizational weakness of most of the revolutionary Marxist organizations prevents them from being able to undertake independent armed action on their own initiative. Of course, if the possibility exists that one of the sections is able to undertake an armed struggle in the countryside, that its leadership and that of the International consider it opportune to begin a struggle of this type in a country where the conditions were ripe, then the entire movement must help, must redouble its efforts in support of the section taking this road. By the way, it may, of course, be said that such activity will be essential in order to bring about a qualitative increase in the strength of the International as a whole. But the draft resolution seems to indicate that such a case, exceptional at least according to

the information we have, is the rule. Logically, therefore, the draft resolution does not take into consideration the specific problems of building a political leadership, of creating a stable organization, and formulating a correct program (based on the Transitional Program, which is a real weapon that the revolutionary Marxist movement and specifically the Trotskyists have in comparison to the other groups and tendencies). But these are the questions that are on the order of the day in the majority of countries. In view of this, it seems paradoxical that a resolution whose objective is to orient the Latin-American revolutionary movement in its difficult situation considers the exceptional case the most important and devotes only secondary remarks to the most common and general problems which our movement faces. The resolution that is adopted by the congress must consist in its essential part of a guideline for the activity of the majority of revolutionary Marxists, or in any case, the work of revolutionary Marxists in the majority of the countries.

The draft resolution recognizes the need for every revolutionary Marxist party or group to develop a transitional program in accordance with the specific conditions they face. However, we must also take into account the very important common features that exist in Buenos Aires and Mexico City, in Lima and Caracas, in Rio de Janeiro and Santiago de Chile, in Monterrey and São Paulo, in Bogotá and Santo Domingo. Something like what was done in the document on the world youth radicalization must be carried over into the resolution that the congress adopts on Latin America. That is, if such a complex and varied problem as the world youth rebellion has certain common features which serve to orient the International, why cannot such features be established in the problems of the Latin-American region?

In view of the real possibility that the developments of 1968 indicated a tendency and were not a mere isolated or exceptional case, we in Mexico, for example, face the inescapable necessity of quickly preparing a minimal national organization. We must develop a national organization which could coordinate the movement that will arouse a multitude of people throughout the country and especially in the urban centers of Mexico -- Monterrey, Guadalajara, etc. If we do not exploit this opportunity, it is probable that guerrilla warfare will be the logical expression of a movement based more on the physical survival of the revolutionists engaging in it than on any immediate revolutionary perspectives. If the movement which is inevitably nearing in Buenos Aires, Rio de Janeiro, Mexico City, etc. fails, then a repression will sweep Latin America that will make the present one look pale in comparison.

Of course, the strategy that is to orient the revolutionary movement in Latin America must focus on the basic premise of a rapid, massive military confrontation with imperialism. A revolutionary movement embracing the overwhelming majority of the urban masses can checkmate the oligarchies, even when it is not led by a principled leadership. When the mass upsurges are led by revolutionary Marxist groups or parties the revolutionary crises will come to a violent explosion, to an armed confrontation, much more quickly. The 1968 developments in Mexico clearly pointed to that. The revolutionary Marxist groups will quickly go on to armed confrontations with the bourgeoisie in the urban centers. When the crisis, as we said, encompasses the majority of the masses, then victory at this level is assured. The Santo Domingo experience is very significant. No one can deny that the revolution had triumphed "nationally" in that country. Here we get to the nub of the question. In Latin America, a revolution in national limits is inconceivable. Since imperialism plays a fundamental role in preserving the existing structures in Latin America, imperialist intervention is inevitable. Thus, the victory of the revolution in Latin America will have to be an international victory -- that is, the revolution will have to find support immediately in other countries. In this period, when the revolution takes the form of a guerrilla movement, imperialism intervenes on the level of Green Berets and military "advisors." When the revolution defeats the oligarchies the imperialists intervene in the way they did in the Dominican Republic. But the political repercussions from the invasion of Santo Domingo were minimal in comparison to what awaits the imperialists in the rest of the continent. The invasion of Brazil, Venezuela, Peru, etc. would have repercussions that would raise the crisis of imperialism to a higher stage. It would be the prelude to the creation of another Vietnam, of other Vietnams.

The revolutionary Marxists of this continent are in a strategic position and if they prepare themselves adequately they can play a decisive role in promoting and quickening the revolutionary crises in the big cities. Of course, when that happens, when the imperialists intervene in one of the countries on the continent in the style of the Dominican intervention, the revolutionary Marxists of that country will require the resolute support of the international movement. Then the crisis will cease to be "national." The resolution must include an adequate conception of that. The tempo of struggle in Latin America will quicken steadily. If the organizational prerequisites are adequately met, this struggle will move on rapidly to higher stages of struggle.

The resolution must look ahead more

precisely to organized political action by revolutionary Marxists in movements which will embrace the broad masses of the workers and will mature in very deep crises where imperialist intervention will be inevitable. The example of Mexico where 500 students and workers were cold-bloodedly massacred and thousands of persons were wounded shows what a panic a crisis, even one which is not at all revolutionary in character, can arouse in the national oligarchies. This act, committed by one of the most "stable" governments on the continent, showed the profound strategic weakness of capitalism in Latin America. We need only translate this capitalist weakness into revolutionary strength in order to take advantage of its full magnitude.

Without overlooking the crises that will take place in those countries where rural guerrilla warfare will be decisive in the development of the revolution, the resolution must give full weight to the

crucial importance of the second stage which began in 1968. It must clearly state that in this stage, with the acceleration of revolutionary crises in the cities, Che's objective can be realized much more rapidly, although not exactly in the form he predicted. This will give decisive importance to the revolutionary Marxists who can draw upon a long tradition in which this type of urban struggle has been the principal form of combat. This is beginning to be seen. Many revolutionists in Mexico who had been content with the OLAS resolutions are beginning to seek new explanations to explain the 1968 events which changed the political picture here. Our task is to show them that our conceptions are the answer to their questions. In this way, we will be able to absorb the entire revolutionary generation awakened by the Cuban revolution. Since the Cuban leadership so far has no answers to the questions raised by the new stage opening in 1968, this generation is laboriously seeking a new focus for organizational and political regroupment.

LETTER FROM JOSE VALDES

Santiago de Chile  
March 29, 1969

To the Delegates --

Dear Comrades:

Our comrades of Chile send fraternal and Fourth Internationalist greetings to the comrade delegates. Because of the impossibility of traveling, we are sending some notes for your consideration.

José Valdés

On LATIN AMERICA

(1) We have resolved to support in general the Draft Resolution presented by Comrade L.

(2) We reject the document of Comrade J.H.

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(1) We approve in general the document of Comrade L. because we hold that it contains not only a correct political analysis of the L.A. situation and its perspectives and provides a clear line of orientation for the construction of the revolutionary vanguard, but also because it constitutes a step forward in our F.I. movement with regard to the decision that the Trotskyists of Latin America and other parts of the world prepare politically and technically to integrate themselves into the armed struggle or to accelerate the beginning of the insurrection.

We Trotskyists have represented the continuity of the revolutionary Marxist tradition, betrayed by Stalinism and the Social Democracy, we have made programmatic, theoretical and political contributions, many of them accepted at the present time by other revolutionary currents, and we represent historically the interests of the proletariat. But the absence of a decision to prepare ourselves militarily in specific favorable political conjunctures to organize a plan for the insurrection of which Trotsky spoke to us about in the "Russian Revolution" and in his "Military Writings" caused our movement to lose incomparable opportunities in various countries to convert ourselves into the real vanguard of the revolution. It is time to ask ourselves: What would have happened if the Trotskyist movement had resolutely decided to prepare itself, and to prepare the worker and peasant vanguard, in order to initiate an armed insurrection in Bolivia and Ceylon, countries in which the Trotskyist movement had gained an appreciable mass influence?

The document of L. contains not only this important strategic decision (which for some is of a technical character but which for us is fundamentally political because it is intimately linked to the construction of the party and the triumph of the Socialist Revolution), but also correctly characterizes the present situation as prerevolutionary, reaffirms the continental character of the Revolution, gives a correct long and prolonged perspective to the armed struggle fundamentally because of the imperialist reaction and intervention (case of Santo Domingo). The document of L. clearly defines the Cuban Revolution and the Castroist current, delimiting itself from some of its positions and foquista guerrilla deviations, correctly indicating the basic orientation for integration into the Castroist movement in order to construct the revolutionary Marxist party. The document warns about impatience and spontaneism and is careful to indicate that the transitional program must be adapted by each section to the specific situation of each country.

In other pages included herewith, we propose some additions and corrections to the document of L.

(2) We reject the document of Comrade J.H. for the following reasons:

(a) It leaves our L.A. movement disarmed, or at least paralyzed, since the L.A. sections of the F.I. are already carrying out a policy that coincides in general lines with the Draft Resolution presented by Comrade L. In this sense, the criticisms of Comrade J.H. indirectly constitute a criticism of the present orientation of the L.A. sections of the F.I. Comrade L. in this case would be the "Albania" of the polemic.

(b) He does not make any concrete analysis of the present political conjuncture in L.A. nor indicate either perspectives or precise tasks that would help us to carry out a policy and strategy for constructing the party.

(c) He does not indicate a clear policy with regard to Castroism and the rest of the revolutionary left concerning the continental nature of the L.A. revolution. His criticisms of Castroism and its revolutionary tactics leads to political confusion, lamentable in the case of Comrade J.H. who contributed so much in his articles in recent years to clarifying a correct position on the Cuban Revolution. Now Comrade J.H. has come to place in doubt whether the Cuban leadership has



contributed in a decisive manner to the maturing of a new revolutionary left (see page 13 of the J.H. document, French edition). The Castro-Guevarist leadership has committed errors, but no one can place in doubt that its orientation and influence have provoked a crisis among the traditional parties of the left and have contributed to liberate new revolutionary forces which today constitute the most viable and real alternative for accelerating the L.A. Socialist Revolution.

(d) The position of Comrade J.H. with regard to armed struggle and guerrilla war is frankly traditionalist and, in some cases, hardly serious when he ridicules the action of the guerrilla groups, approximating in his criticisms, made from a rightist angle, the pamphlets against Debray written by the theoreticians of reformism and Stalinism. It would have been more fruitful if Comrade J.H. had drawn a balance sheet of the errors committed by the Guatemalan, Venezuelan, Colombian, Peruvian, and Bolivian guerrillas in place of opening a discussion in the abstract on guerrilla war.

(e) He does not indicate a clear orientation for constructing the revolutionary Marxist party, limiting himself to posing generalities on which we are all in agreement, such as the necessity for carrying on work in the fronts of the masses, based on the transition program.

Comrade J.H. says that the crucial question for the F.I. is to link itself to the Youth. We agree. But to win the vanguard of the Latin-American worker, peasant, student youth, which is Castro-Guevarist in its great majority, it is necessary to have a clear policy to facilitate the integration, something that Comrade J.H. does not do; just the contrary, all his arguments could block us from this integration and lead us to isolate ourselves from the Youth. Comrade J.H. says that the document of Comrade L. distracts attention from this key problem for the F.I. To the contrary, the document of Comrade L. is precisely an effort to give a policy that expresses the concerns of the Castroist Latin-American youth.

Comrade J.H.'s entire policy reduces to proposing the possibility of a united front with OLAS. In some L.A. countries it could be suitable for the sections of the F.I. to pose a united front with the Castroist organization. (We should not speak of the OLAS in the abstract because this organism has not been constituted in hardly any country; it is more concrete to refer to the revolutionary group that is closest to and linked with Castroism.) In other countries, there are incomparable conditions for becoming integrated into the new revolutionary left. The precise position of J.H. of

opposing integration into the Castroist current would close the possibility of applying this line, which would lead in some countries to our isolating ourselves from the vanguard.

Integration into the Castroist current must not be understood as an application of the old tactic of entryism, since we would not be integrating ourselves into a reformist grouping but into a revolutionary nucleus which in fact, although not in words, accepts the theory of the Permanent Revolution and the propositions of the Second Declaration of Havana, the March 13, 1967 speech of Fidel Castro and Che Guevara's letter to OLAS on "creating two, three, and many Vietnams," documents in which the socialist character of the Revolution is specified. We integrate ourselves in order to apply this program in revolutionary action and insofar as is possible to win the leadership of this movement with our best cadres in order to guarantee the application of this program.

(f) Comrade J.H. says that the document of Comrade L. is in contradiction with the document on the world situation presented to the W.C. in which it is indicated that the present revolutionary process tends to approach the "classical" model or norm. This estimate, which is debatable and which ought to be specified, would in any case be a tendency of the process that does not automatically cancel the present concrete armed struggles and guerrilla wars of Asia, Africa and L.A.

(g) The document of Comrade J.H. could be of interest in opening a polemic on another level on problems of revolutionary strategy, but it contributes very little towards a W.C. bringing out a positive resolution that would effectively help the possible work of the sections of the F.I.

Although the document of Comrade J.H. is rejected, we propose that it be included as discussion material for a debate which the sections of the F.I. should resolve to initiate now on questions of strategy in the armed struggle.

(h) He distorts the document of Comrade L. when he says that the Draft Resolution on L.A. "simply proposes a continental tactic or strategy of technical preparation in a rural guerrilla war for a prolonged period." On page 1, we have pointed out the political contributions of this document, with which we believe that we have demonstrated the unilateral criticism of Comrade J.H. He also distorts when he says that the document of Comrade L. is a "faithful reflection of the publicly expressed views of the Cuban leadership on this question" (of guerrilla war). In reality, Comrade

L. tries to indicate his differences with the Castro-Guevarist theory of the "foco" and polemicizes with the thesis of Debray, without naming it. We propose that the W.C. agree to incorporate into the discussion on insurrectional strategy (which we proposed in the previous paragraph should be opened after the W.C.) a document criticizing the theory of the "guerrilla foco." A documented debate, conducted without haste on the subject, would be of great benefit to the sections of the F.I. and would avoid the superficialities of Comrade J.H. in demanding that Comrade L. ought to pose the tactic of guerrilla war for all continents (page 24 of the J.H. document, French edition).

(i) Comrade J.H. criticizes Comrade L. because he supposedly suggested in a different article, "An Insufficient Document," that the resources of the F.I. should be concentrated so that one of its sections could place itself at the head of an insurrection. No one can deny that

the Trotskyist movement would qualitatively increase its prestige if it contributed decisively to the triumph of a Socialist Revolution. But this cannot come from an act of will with the objective and subjective conditions to carry it out in practice. If these conditions were to obtain in some country we do not have the least doubt that a genuine praxis of proletarian internationalism would concentrate forces -- not only economic ones -- for such an aim. International aid and solidarity are not only empirical and pragmatic objectives, in face of accomplished facts, such as taking up collections for sections suffering repression or propaganda for freeing political prisoners. If it were only for this, that kind of proletarian internationalism would be an internationalism for the stage of defense and defeat. There can and must be also a proletarian internationalism to prepare the offensive and victory of the armed insurrection, the only road for the triumph of the Socialist Revolution.

## REPORT ON WORLD CONGRESS

(Given at New York branch meeting June 4, 1969.)

By Joseph Hansen

I'm going to report on the Third Congress since the Reunification Congress was held in 1963. Or, if you figure from 1938, the Ninth Congress since the Fourth International was founded.

The size of the congress has been indicated in the public report published in Intercontinental Press -- around a hundred delegates and observers, representing about thirty different countries. It was fairly representative, therefore, of the status of the Trotskyist movement at this stage in quite a few areas. Some places were not represented for reasons that we do not know -- maybe a breakdown in travel arrangements, or for other reasons of that kind.

The congress lasted for about a week, and still did not complete its agenda. Several important points had to be held over because there simply was not time in that brief period of one week to discuss all the points that needed to be taken up.

The subjects included the general resolution, which the delegates referred to as "the Theses," which covered the political situation in the world since the last congress -- bringing things up to date; a special resolution on Latin America which proposed an orientation, and another document, in fact, two documents, which made an estimate of the Cultural Revolution in China. Then a very important resolution and discussion on the youth movement as it has developed in the past few years throughout the world; and finally, a report on the activities of the Fourth International.

In comparison with the previous two congresses, that is, the Reunification Congress and the congress in 1965, there was one notable difference. At the Reunification Congress there was complete agreement so far as the principled basis of the reunification was concerned. I should explain that just before the Reunification Congress, a Seventh World Congress had been held which was marked by an extremely sharp fight between Pablo on the one hand, and those who supported his position -- he was the former secretary of the Fourth International -- and those who disagreed with his positions as they had developed up to that point -- who were led by Livio Maitan, Pierre Frank, and Ernest Mandel. The Seventh Congress ended and then the Reunification Congress opened.

Following the Reunification Congress, Pablo split from the Fourth International. I won't go into the issues on which that

occurred, but simply record the fact that a split did occur, after the Reunification Congress, a rather small one. Then came the Second Congress after the reunification (or Eighth Congress), the main task of which was to consolidate the reunification, as it had existed over a period of two years, and in the face of the split by Pablo. So there were no major differences recorded at that congress.

Now the present congress was different. We had some differences. I'll go into these in a moment, their nature, and what they might mean.

First, I should like to just indicate something of our general attitude towards the Fourth International, which we unfortunately cannot be legally members of, and say something about the role we have played in building the Fourth International. We were instrumental -- that is, our leaders of that time, 1938 and earlier, were instrumental -- together with Leon Trotsky, in creating and founding the Fourth International. And ever since that time, we have done our utmost to build the Fourth International, to help it in every possible way. Since the beginning of the Trotskyist movement, our leaders have consciously opposed any tendency to fall into any kind of narrow isolationist attitude. And because of this long tradition in our movement, the Socialist Workers Party has always had an attitude toward the problems of building an international that could be said to be among the very best.

One of the things we have always held to -- very consciously -- was not to try to assume leadership of the International. We viewed our position, and our role, and our function, even though we were the most powerful sector of the movement for many years, as that of offering support -- helping and supporting the key leaders but not substituting for them and not trying to assume the leadership.

Over that long period, there was only one big split with serious consequences, if we leave aside the split in the SWP in 1939-40. In 1953, a split occurred which lasted for ten years. In our opinion, this was not our responsibility. It was due to a series of very bad errors that were committed at that time by the leadership of the International under Pablo. It was aggravated by the fact that McCarthyism, which raged at that time in the United States, prevented us from being able to give a clear picture to the International of our positions on certain items; and a series of misunderstandings arose as a result of that. These were

finally overcome, and we had the reunification of 1963.

Two points should be noted in this reunification, because we felt them in the present congress. One was that at the Reunification Congress we reached an agreement to leave the assessment of the differences of 1953 to a time in the future when we could discuss them in an educational way without any heat. We did not think it advisable at the time to undertake an assessment of who was right and who was wrong in 1953 and the following years. We thought it best to leave that discussion to a period when it could be viewed in the proper, historic perspective, and with the balance sheet drawn in a way that would eliminate any factional heat due to factional hangovers. All of us agreed on that.

The other thing was that in 1963, certain differences on the question of China had to be considered. We had reached agreement on all the other major questions in the world as we saw them at that time, with the exception of China. Here it turned out that during the years of the split the comrades who were under the International Secretariat had not taken the same position as we had in the Socialist Workers Party, and in the International Committee, with which we had fraternal relations, on the question of China. They did not believe in the necessity of a political revolution. That was the key point, so we had some discussion on that question, and we reached an agreement that what we would do was use a formula that included the substance of calling for a political revolution in China, but without naming it as such. That was the agreement that we reached in 1963.

Since then, that is, during the Cultural Revolution, the comrades who were formerly with the International Secretariat, came to the conclusion that it was correct to call for a political revolution. They came to this conclusion after Mao had come out for a political revolution in China. We thought that this was a progressive step on their part, and that it might lead to a still closer approximation of the positions that had existed before the Reunification Congress. And that's the way things stood as the congress was being prepared.

Now, as to the documents and the discussion that occurred on them at the congress. First on the Theses, the general political resolution, which is called "The New Rise of the World Revolution." I won't go into this very much, because it will be published, as finally edited, in a coming issue of Intercontinental Press. Briefly, what it did was to bring up to date all the major happenings in the three sectors of the world revolution, pointing to the importance of Vietnam, and what Vietnam

had done in re-arousing the colonial world and contributing to a new upsurge in the other sectors. The Theses dealt with the events in Czechoslovakia, indicating the deep-going tendency in the deformed or degenerated workers states towards a political revolution. It took up what has been happening in the advanced countries, particularly in France with the explosion of May-June 1968, and how this has accelerated the revolutionary process in Europe, with repercussions all over the entire world. The United States was included, the Theses dealing with the black liberation struggle and the political explosion on the campuses, and how this has contributed to a completely new mood in the United States and opened up great new possibilities for the revolutionary movement. The general conclusion of the Theses, put briefly, was that what has been happening in the past period, that is, since 1965, is an overcoming of the defeats of the previous period, the big ones in places like Brazil and Indonesia. A shift is occurring towards the classical revolutionary norms, and since the word "classical" may not be the best in this instance, let me explain what is meant by this.

It means that the pattern of revolution as we have seen it in China or Cuba or other places in the colonial world where the peasantry have played a very big role, where the cities, and the city masses seem to have been rather quiescent, or able to play only a secondary role, has now changed, or is changing. What we are witnessing is the resumption of the key role of cities; that is, the key role of the urban masses, and in particular the working class. This signifies that there are greater possibilities now of revolutions occurring somewhat on the pattern of the Russian Revolution in which a party is required of the Leninist type. This now becomes more and more the probability. This was the general conclusion of the Theses.

There were contributions in the discussion from various areas, some of which were of particular interest -- one from Pakistan, for example, which pointed out what had been happening there in the weeks just before the congress, where for the first time a student rebellion, spreading over the country, had succeeded in bringing down a government administration, and ousting one dictator even though he was replaced probably by one not much different. This was symptomatic of the times.

And there were some interesting contributions from India, on the problems that they face there, and particularly on the role of Maoism, not as a revolutionary force, but as an obstacle towards the building of a revolutionary movement. Other significant contributions were made

from a number of areas. There was general agreement on this resolution, although, of course, not all the formulations met with unanimous approval. There were differences on some of these.

I come to the question of Latin America -- the resolution around which the sharpest differences appeared at the congress. I'll go into that at greater length, one reason being that I was more directly involved in that than in some of the other discussions.

There was general agreement on the first part of the resolution which describes the conditions in Latin America as being prerevolutionary, almost revolutionary, or at least of explosive proportions over the entire continent. This situation has existed, in my opinion, in Latin America for about ten years or more, so that there was really nothing new in this, beyond recording how difficult it is becoming for the oligarchies in Latin America and their American backers to keep the lid on the situation.

The differences arose over what conclusions should be drawn from this general situation in the way of advancing the revolution. Thus the differences concerned the question of strategy in the revolutionary struggle. Our view on this question was that what was proposed, namely, guerrilla war, can be taken as either a tactical or strategic question. If it is taken as a tactical question, then the use of guerrilla warfare ought to be decided by each section and fitted into a broader strategy. For example, if the Peruvian Trotskyists think that it would advance the revolutionary process in Peru to engage in guerrilla warfare this is a tactical problem for them to decide in relation with their overall problem of constructing a combat party capable of leading a revolution to success. But if guerrilla warfare is not viewed that way, but is viewed as a strategy, that is, a new way of carrying out a revolution, then the Leninist concept of constructing a combat party as the main strategic task is put into question and we disagree with that. This, then, ought to become the axis of the discussion -- the question of whether or not guerrilla warfare could be accepted as a strategy. Our view on this was shared by other comrades there, India for example.

The opposing thesis, that of the comrades who maintain that rural guerrilla warfare should be adopted as a continental strategy for a prolonged period, is linked with a certain view of where the Fourth International stands, and what the possibilities are facing the Fourth International. The view is something like this: the Fourth International has great prestige because of its political and theoretical capacities, but it remains small

organizationally. At the same time it is confronted with tremendous revolutionary possibilities, particularly in a place like Latin America, and everything now hinges on the possibility of these small forces engaging in the struggle in such a way as to make a breakthrough.

This view was expressed most eloquently by Livio Maitan in a letter which was published in the internal bulletin. Everything hinges, according to this view, on whether or not the Fourth International can make a breakthrough, particularly in Latin America, but also anywhere it may be possible. Once such a breakthrough is made -- the Trotskyists coming to power in a country like Peru or Bolivia or Ecuador, or a place like that, or becoming a major party in a place like France -- then everything else will follow; because the old charge that the Trotskyists can talk, and theorize, and argue well about politics and all that sort of thing, but can't organize -- that will fall to the ground.

Our position was that the situation is certainly ripe enough. This has been shown over and over again -- the ripeness of the situation in country after country, throughout the world, and it would take a very long list to name all the places -- but what is needed for the Fourth International to forge ahead in a big way is more forces. You cannot leap over yourself, more forces are required, even in those areas where the opportunities are greatest. As a matter of fact, that is where you need them the most. This boils down then to the old question of party building, building a combat party. That's what we tried to maintain and to present at the congress as observers.

We forecast, in our arguments, that in Latin America the revolutionary struggle would tend to shift to the urban centers, and we cited as one of the first examples of that trend what happened in Santo Domingo. And then, of course, the way the United States responded to that.

The contention of the comrades of the opposing view was that the struggle will continue to be mainly in the rural areas, not because there's anything better about the rural areas, but simply that it is easier for guerrillas to survive in a rural area than it is in a city area.

We posed against the orientation concentrating on the preparation of guerrilla war, an orientation towards the youth, that is, toward those sectors of the population which have shown by their own actions that they are drawing revolutionary conclusions and tending to move into action. We maintained that this orientation was valid for Latin America as well as for other parts of the world.

The opposite position was that we should orient towards engaging in military preparations for rural guerrilla war on a continental scale, no matter how small the forces might be in any given country.

Our conclusion was what this line of argumentation implied was an adaptation to the limitations of the Cuban leadership. And I'll go into this to indicate precisely what we meant by that, so as to avoid any possible misunderstanding.

They, of course, denied that they were adapting at all to the Cubans. Instead, they held that if any conclusion was to be drawn it was that we were under the influence of the peace movement in the United States and that we were continuing in the tradition of "commentary" politics; that we comment and do not engage in action.

I got the impression that some of the comrades who took this view tended to divide the European Trotskyist movement as it was and as it stands now along the following lines: That there was a bad past in which the Trotskyists were engaged in entryism -- that was in Europe -- and there was a bad past in the United States, in which the Trotskyists engaged in commentary politics. Fortunately at the present time, in France they have overcome the stage of entryism, but it appears that in the United States we have not yet overcome the stage of commentary politics. Only one or two comrades expressed it that clearly on the floor. These comrades had the position that the Fourth International should stop living in the shadow of Stalinism and on its mistakes, and strike out boldly, with new tactics and vigorous actions.

In considering the limitations of the Cuban leaders, some points were brought out at the congress which have not been discussed before. Our view on the Cubans as we presented it at the congress was that the Cubans made an enormous breakthrough in their revolution. They succeeded in gaining a victory due to the default of the Communist Party, and the fact that they, as a young generation of revolutionaries, refused to follow the Communist Party, and struck out on their own. Under the peculiarities of the situation in Cuba at that time, they succeeded, through guerrilla warfare and its development, in gaining power. This was their great positive achievement. But this very achievement, in the peculiar form in which it occurred, also tended to set the subsequent course of this leadership along lines which they have not yet transcended.

First of all, in Cuba they utilized the Communist Party. They dismantled it, tried to put it together and make something new out of it. It was like using old bricks in a new building. They found the Cuban CP useful in this respect.

Then, in extending the Cuban revolution, thereby defending Cuba in the most effective way, they sought to repeat the Cuban pattern, that is, the pattern of the Cuban revolution. They sought to utilize the Communist parties in other parts of Latin America.

After a time, this effort to utilize the Communist parties in Latin America ended up in a real faction fight. Because the Cubans, in utilizing the Communist parties, did not try to build a combat party in any of these countries; instead they tried to utilize the Communist parties to build guerrilla forces. This proved not to be successful. So they ended up in a factional struggle with the CP's, in which the key issue became armed struggle vs. peaceful coexistence.

On that issue, of course, all of us were on the Cuban side -- against the concept of peaceful coexistence.

The faction struggle ended in a split with the important Venezuelan CP, and this was codified more or less at the OLAS conference in 1967. Here, one of the limitations of the Cubans showed up, that in splitting with the Venezuelan CP, they did not make any political accounting. No political accounting over what the role of Stalinism was, and they sort of buried the whole thing and ended up in a very small minority. Because of their incorrect political course, the Cubans ended up with a small minority not only in Venezuela but elsewhere in Latin America. Nowhere did they succeed in building, or putting together, forces of a size and quality capable of carrying out a revolution in the pattern of the Cuban revolution, or any other pattern.

At the OLAS conference, they projected a new course -- that they would work with anybody. We interpreted that to mean, well, "anybody," that includes Trotskyists. How else would you designate Trotskyists from the Cuban viewpoint?

The defeat of Che Guevara followed that. It had a dampening effect on the whole Cuban line, and its implementation. At the OLAS conference the OLAS had a definite structure, had a definite set of rules, and was projected as a definite organization. And if you'll recall what was said at the time, it was projected that the OLAS might even constitute the core of a new international. This appeared in different newspapers and magazines written by people who had very close contact with the Cuban leadership. Such an article appeared in Ramparts, for example. But Che's defeat had a dampening effect, and the OLAS began to wither. It eventually became more and more reduced, until at the congress, the comrades who were closest to the situation in Latin America said, "OLAS does not exist. What does

exist is a number of currents, or tendencies, who more or less agree on the necessity of armed struggle, or guerrilla warfare, who come under the general designation of OLIAS, and that's all that remains."

Despite these bitter experiences, the line of the Cuban leaders -- and this is primarily at the present time the course and the line of Fidel Castro -- remains rural guerrilla warfare on a continental scale over a prolonged period. That's their line. But our assessment of it -- we're talking now of the assessment we made at the congress in presenting a minority view -- is that it is more difficult today to repeat that pattern than it was in 1958 and 1959. The enemy, that is, the imperialist enemy, has learned a bit, and there has been a series of defeats which have had their effect in Latin America.

In presenting these views, we asked, or rather called for, a drawing of a balance sheet on the whole experience of guerrilla warfare, as to what conclusions could be drawn from it, its weaknesses, whatever positive qualities it has, how far it should be included in the program of the Fourth International, just what assessment should be made of it.

In the process of this discussion, we brought up the question of Che Guevara and the lessons to be learned from the defeat of his undertaking in Bolivia. We drew some rather sharp political conclusions concerning Che Guevara's course in Bolivia.

First of all, we talked about Che Guevara as a symbol. He really is a very admirable figure. He is an admirable figure to all youth who are inclined in a revolutionary direction. He caught their imagination. For one thing, he was a man of action. That's a type of revolutionist coming into increasing prominence -- revolutionists of action. Che Guevara's dedication is particularly impressive. He was second or third in the leadership of Cuba, had enormous prestige, an assured government career. He gave that up. He gave up his wife, his children -- everything. He gave up all this in order to dedicate himself to a struggle that was very hazardous, a difficult, hard struggle. No wonder he caught the admiration of the youth everywhere. We share this feeling about Che Guevara. We share it very deeply, because to us, he's our kind. We're the kind who dedicate ourselves in the same way, really dedicate our lives to the revolution.

At the same time, we have to make an estimate of him politically, of what he did politically, and what happened politically.

First of all, on the points where we

agree with Che Guevara.

We agree with Che Guevara on his overall goal of revolutionary socialism. But we disagree with him that this can be precipitated at any given moment by the will of a revolutionary.

We agree with him on the concept that the best aid that can be given to the Vietnamese revolution would be to create one, two, many Vietnams. But we disagree with him on its being possible to do this through the action of a small group that decides in a selected country that it will precipitate a Vietnam there.

We agree with Che Guevara on his internationalism, and particularly with his concept that the best way to defend Cuba is by extending the revolution. Here we disagree with him on one simple thing. We disagree with his concept that a revolution can be exported. In saying this we are taking into consideration more what he tried to do than what he may have said on this point. That's what he actually tried to do in Bolivia -- export a revolution.

We agree with him on his opposition to Stalinism. What we disagree with him on is how to oppose Stalinism. Our concept is that in opposing Stalinism, we must work this out through political confrontation with Stalinism, through the elaboration of differences with Stalinism, through the assessment of the historical experience with Stalinism, so that the whole development of Stalinism and its meaning becomes understood to the core. It's not enough simply to be anti-Stalinist. Much more is required.

We agree with him in his opposition to the politics of peaceful coexistence. Our alternative to that policy is to construct a combat party in the Leninist tradition, and what we stress is the importance of political leadership.

We did not take up the technical side of Che Guevara's operation in Bolivia, simply indicating that on this very little has been said by experts. Fidel Castro only went so far as to say that Che Guevara had a tendency sometimes to be much too bold in these operations; but he might have meant that in the sense of throwing himself personally into sectors of the battle where he could easily have been killed.

What we were concerned about was Che's political errors. And these we listed as follows:

First, he assumed that a particular situation in Bolivia followed directly from a general situation on a continental scale. If all of Latin America is in an explosive condition and if the whole situ-



ation is prerevolutionary, then if you look at Bolivia, you must say that Bolivia is the weakest link in Latin America. And you can list all the reasons why it should be the weakest link. But what Che left out in making this estimate was that there are also ups and downs within a particular country, and that it becomes very, very important in a revolutionary struggle to know when the movement is actually rising among the masses, and when it is declining. This involves the question of timing -- when to throw yourself into action, how to conduct yourself, what slogans to raise, what actions to engage in. This takes us to the next point.

Second, Che Guevara left out the timing in relation to the Bolivian class struggle. Timing is a crucial question in an important revolutionary action. I should say that it's also a very difficult question for even a revolutionary party to determine. We know that from the Bolshevik experience. It is very difficult for even a revolutionary party to determine precisely the moods of the masses, the exact extent that they're moving forward, and to be able from this knowledge to undertake the correct action at the correct moment. It does not follow directly from a general situation and it requires a party in order to determine it. Che had no party. His timing was conceived in the light of a general continental situation and on the objective need to help the Vietnamese and to defend the Cuban revolution, not on a direct and immediate appreciation of Bolivian realities.

To be noted in this conjunction was his belief that a revolution can be precipitated through the action of a small force, even from the outside, because most of the people who he brought into Bolivia in the beginning were from the outside. This whole approach of Che Guevara in this situation resembled a sectarian approach. Preconceived ideas. The general situation is explosive, you've got to help the Vietnamese, and the revolution can be precipitated by a small force. He proceeded almost dogmatically. He formed his concept of the situation in Bolivia in much the way sectarians do.

His third political mistake was that in place of relying on a combat party, in place of constructing that, or having it available to him in Bolivia, he depended on a very treacherous ally. In the first place, you shouldn't depend on an ally, any ally at all; you should have your own forces. But he didn't have his own forces -- political forces -- and he had to depend on an ally. And the ally was a very treacherous one -- it was the Bolivian CP. Even with the Bolivian CP, his political preparations were inadequate. He did not work out his alliance with the Bolivian CP carefully. What he should have done, since they were treach-

erous, was to have a showdown with them in advance, before the operation was even engaged in. He had to have this showdown with them in order to determine how reliable they might be when the fighting began. It was absolutely essential for the success of his guerrilla operation in Bolivia to have good connections with the miners, and to have good connections with the masses in the cities, particularly in La Paz. The fact that he did not undertake this showdown, but simply engaged in the action, made it much easier for the Bolivian Stalinists to shift their differences with Che Guevara from a political level -- that is, the difference between the line of peaceful coexistence or armed struggle -- to shift it from the political level to organizational questions, which happens nearly always in a factional fight with an unprincipled group. They raised the organizational question against him. They were all for what he did, but they had organizational differences with him. First of all, they accused him of a lack of consultation. And, of course, they had a point there. He did not consult them about the operation. Next, they raised the question of who should have command. That's not a very good question to debate because it involves personal qualifications and the whole thing gets lowered to a very vulgar level. The Stalinists did this very deliberately to avoid the main political question. It was an error to permit this kind of a situation to develop.

Che Guevara's fourth error, which I have already referred to, was to begin an armed action without a political party or even a nucleus of a party either in the countryside or the city. He did not even have any ties with the Trotskyists, who had a certain connection with the masses both in La Paz and in the mines, and he did not have any connections with the peasants, or any organized political forces in the countryside, so that when he began his action, he was faced with a situation in which if the peasants did not rally immediately to his cause, then he would have to substitute for them. So he fell into a position where a small force substitutes for the masses, or tries to substitute for them. I'm quite sure that in the writings of Che Guevara you can find statements against this, against any substitution for the masses, statements that certain preconditions are required for guerrilla warfare; but the fact is that this is what he fell into in Bolivia.

His fifth error was that he made no advance political preparation among the peasants of any kind. Not the slightest of any kind whatsoever. Party or no party, simply no kind of preparation whatsoever with the peasants. So they were taken completely by surprise. All of a sudden, here are these guerrilla fighters, and it

takes them some time to estimate this, and to judge what it may mean. Precious time was lost by that while the enemy mobilized.

Then, his sixth mistake was to underestimate the will, the readiness, and the technical capacities of the CIA and the Pentagon to initiate countermeasures against him. This he badly underestimated. They, on the other hand, did not underestimate him at all. When they learned about his action, we now know, they held a top-level meeting in Washington, involving all the forces around Johnson -- the Pentagon, the CIA, the State Department, all their top men were involved with all their connections in Bolivia, their vast resources, technical apparatus, and we don't know how many millions of dollars were spent. They estimated Che Guevara as being a very serious person, one who required their special attention. In other words, they had a better appreciation of him than he had of them. That's a bad mistake for a political person to make. You've got to estimate the enemy very, very carefully.

His seventh error was to choose a position -- and this involves a technical side, too -- where it was difficult to break out or to receive aid. It may have been a very good area to practice the technique of guerrilla warfare, but it wasn't very good to receive aid, or to break out of. And he was actually caught when he tried to break out of that place. So this choice made it easier for the counterforces to isolate him when the peasants did not rally immediately, as he had hoped they would.

If we summarize all these errors, we come to the following general conclusion about them, that Che Guevara put guerrilla technique -- armed-struggle technique -- above politics. He put military action above party building. And I think that this is incontrovertible, that this is what he actually did.

The conclusion to be drawn from this, remembering that Che Guevara is a very important advocate and practitioner of guerrilla warfare, is that first of all, guerrilla warfare does not stand up as a general strategy however well it may fit in as a tactic in certain situations when it is used by a well-constructed combat party.

A second conclusion to be drawn from this experience is that it presented fresh proof that the struggle in Latin America has become more difficult and requires a better instrument than previously -- it requires the construction of a combat party to a much greater degree than, say, in 1958 or 1959.

Here's how the comrades of the op-

posing position answered these arguments. They agreed with the criticisms of Che! A few seemed doubtful or hesitant, but the key comrades on the other side agreed with all these criticisms of Che, and even said that they had made the same criticisms themselves, as long as a year and a half ago, in a meeting of the International Executive Committee. They only disagreed on one point -- they disagreed that it was an outside enterprise for Che to come to Bolivia. They didn't agree with that. Perhaps this flows from the concept that Latin America is one country, with the same main language, facing the same general problems. On that basis they would be right in saying that it was not an outside enterprise.

But they did not elaborate. They maintained that despite the errors of Che, the concept of guerrilla warfare still remains valid. And, of course, anyone who practices it now, will profit from this experience and won't make those kinds of errors. The concept still remains valid. They drew the same conclusion for the defeats of the guerrilla struggles in Peru, for example, under Luis de la Puente, and Guillermo Lobatón. The same for Venezuela, and the same for Guatemala. Wherever there has been a defeat for the guerrilla struggle, it was a misapplication of the concept. The concept still remains valid. Also, they agreed on the need for a party. They maintained that the only way you can build a party in Latin America today is through practicing or preparing for guerrilla warfare.

The vote on this resolution was 2-1 in favor of the comrades who favored the guerrilla war strategy. One-third of the delegates were against it. We had to ask ourselves what this represented. Our conclusion was that this represented a feeling, or a mood, or a conclusion on the part of the Latin-American Trotskyists, in combination with a similar attitude among a goodly sector of the French youth. The French youth are emerging from the experience of entryism, which they are much against; they do not have a long experience in party building and they are heavily influenced by the whole general aura surrounding Guevara, the deep sympathy for Guevarism, and the attempts to practice Guevarism in the advanced countries as well as in the more backward countries. They are heavily under this influence. So it was this combination or the agreement between them and the Latin-American comrades that was registered at the congress.

I should add that not all the Latin-American comrades agree with this perspective. Some of the comrades in Argentina were opposed to putting the strategy of guerrilla warfare above the strategy of party building. The Argentines split about a year and a half ago, almost down the middle, and this appears to have been one

of the key issues, although it was unstated. And the comrades who were rather opposed to adopting guerrilla warfare along these lines engaged in a split in which it was very difficult for anyone outside Argentina to determine who was in the majority. So these comrades, seemingly in a minority, according to the report of the United Secretariat representative, did not carry full weight at the congress. There may be other comrades in Latin America, too, whose analysis of guerrilla warfare is more or less the same as ours.

But I should say that it's a very real problem, and a difficult one to handle, because of the stand of the Cubans on this question, and because of the fact that it has become a key issue in the differences between Stalinism and the revolutionary current, being posed as armed struggle versus peaceful coexistence. In this conflict guerrilla war was identified with armed struggle, although it is only a specific form of armed struggle. This complicated things since a critical attitude toward the strategy of guerrilla warfare was easily misinterpreted as being identical to the position of the Stalinists.

The next point is the Cultural Revolution. Here we were faced with a strange situation. We had two documents, which originated from one document. The original draft was one we prepared at the request of the comrades on the United Secretariat. Despite the great amount of work we have here, we agreed to do this. The document was sent to the United Secretariat. The majority of the comrades there agreed on a number of changes. This, of course, was their right since what they wanted from us was a first draft. When the changed document came back, we were rather surprised at the extent of the changes, and the nature of the changes. Looking them over very carefully, bearing in mind our entire experience of analyzing the Chinese revolution, and recalling the differences that had existed before 1963, it appeared to us that the document now reflected a differing way of looking at the Cultural Revolution and at China, and that back of the changes loomed some rather large questions: How do you estimate Maoism? What kind of danger is it? To what degree is Maoism the same as Stalinism? A whole series of questions like that appeared to be involved although they showed up only in the form of changes and amendments.

We put the two documents column by column, and ran off copies of the two documents that way, so that the changes could be studied more easily. But our delegation forgot them, and we only had a dozen or so. Thus the comrades at the congress did not have the benefit of seeing them side by side.

This confronted us with a considerable difficulty in bringing out precisely what these differences were, and what they signified. One of the delegates there made a wisecrack that all that was involved was a "marital dispute between the Europeans and the Americans." Everybody laughed at that. Who wanted to get involved in a marital dispute? Naturally there was a tendency on the part of many comrades to say, "Well, this is just hair splitting; let's not get involved in it."

The report for the majority was given by Livio Maitan. My impression of his report was that it was rather general and intended primarily for publication. I could not follow all the details of it as he gave it, but I see from the document itself that it has 36 footnotes. I can't remember any previous report so well supplied with footnotes. I mention this because in my opinion the report appeared to avoid the differences that faced the congress. This made it especially difficult for the reporter for the minority to try to bring out the meaning of the differences. He had to start from scratch, take the two documents, and try to show what was involved by singling out instances which by themselves might not really mean much, such as whether to say "Stalinized Chinese Communist Party" or just "Chinese Communist Party." That was not easy.

We had two other minority reports. One was made by Comrade Peng, who made a very good presentation of his viewpoint. The gist of it was that he considered the minority document to be all right so far as the record was concerned, but that it missed the main problem, which was how to intervene actively in the dispute between the Liu Shao-chi wing and the Maoist wing of the bureaucracy. His position was for intervention on the side of Liu Shao-chi, whom he considered to be a kind of Khrushchevist. Khrushchevism should be regarded as having two aspects, Comrade Peng explained. On the one hand it is more crassly opportunistic than Stalin would ever indicate in language. On the other hand it stands for de-Stalinization. What we ought to support, critically, is the trend towards de-Stalinization. This was the reason Comrade Peng gave for intervening on the side of Liu Shao-chi.

Then we had a report by Comrade Capa of Argentina, who was also for an active policy of intervention in China, but he tended to be for intervention on the side of Mao. His difficulty was that there's a real problem of Maoism among guerrilla fighters in certain parts of Latin America, and he's against Maoism. Thus it was not easy for him to draw a line of separation.

One of the most interesting posi-

tions was the one advanced by Ernest Germain. He tried to bring out that the area of agreement between the two documents was much more fundamental than the disagreements; that actually the two documents were almost the same so far as the points of agreement were concerned. He listed these as follows:

First of all, both sides agreed that what we have before us is a deformed workers state in China.

Secondly, that a political revolution is required.

Thirdly, both sides agree that the Cultural Revolution was a consequence of an intrabureaucratic struggle. A split occurred over differences within the bureaucracy.

But in the process of this struggle the masses were mobilized. This was No. 4 in the points of agreement, that there was a mass mobilization in China. And this mass mobilization had the effect, No. 5, of weakening the bureaucracy.

Finally, the sixth point, Maoism is alien to Marxism.

On all these points we have substantial agreement and we really should not have two documents before us, in the opinion of Comrade Germain.

The changes that they made in the original document, according to him, were either editorial changes, small changes, which we would probably agree to; and, No. 2, they added certain points to explain the objective reasons for the Cultural Revolution.

If you look at the two documents, you'll see a series of points listing a number of contradictions to be seen in Chinese society. These contradictions led to the explosion known as the Cultural Revolution.

Comrade Peng made a good point on one of these -- the contradiction between the population explosion and the limitation of resources available for this exploding population. He said that this could have been said for the last 100 years in China. And the same for many other countries in the colonial world, and this didn't explain the particular reasons for the Cultural Revolution in particular.

The third point that Ernest made was changes in statements of fact. He had the impression that the first draft of the resolution implied that there had been a military takeover and they had rectified this to indicate that there had not been a military takeover even though the military had grown stronger.

The fourth change was to repeat formulas which were used at the Reunification Congress to the effect that Peking comes closer to revolutionary positions than Moscow does. This point was discussed by some of the comrades at the congress, and there was considerable criticism by some of them as to the validity of this point.

Comrade Pierre Frank explained the insertion of "bureaucratic centrism" to characterize the Maoist regime. I won't go into this now.

One of the points to be noted was Livio's impression that much of this discussion was scholastic. He told a story about reading a description in one of Solzhenitsyn's novels of Stalin writing on linguistics; and Solzhenitsyn says at one point, "And at his shoulder stood the angel of scholasticism." Then Livio added, "I thought that angel was in this congress a good deal of the time."

The vote on this resolution was three to one.

I should mention that on both the Latin-American resolution and the one on the Cultural Revolution, the International is going to continue the discussion. In many places, the documents had barely arrived on the eve of the congress, and in some places they had not, due to delays in translation and similar difficulties. It was agreed to continue the discussion on the Cultural Revolution immediately after the congress, and to reopen discussion on the Latin-American resolution within a reasonable time, six months or so.

We come to the resolution on the youth. We had expected that this would meet with rather general approval at the congress, because it dealt with an explosion on the campuses throughout the world. The role of youth was highlighted at the congress itself by a report from Pakistan, telling what the students had accomplished there. And while we were at the congress a number of items appeared in the papers telling about new student actions.

The report at the congress dealt with these questions, how the revolt of the youth had swept many countries, and how we as Trotskyists had become engaged in this movement in many countries, with special emphasis on what this had led to in France, and what had been accomplished there. From this, we had drawn the conclusion that the main task facing the world Trotskyist movement in the immediate period following the congress was to turn all its resources, insofar as they are available, for our main task, towards becoming preoccupied with this field of work, that is, among the radicalizing

youth.

The document itself explained the reasons for this on a world scale, the importance of this politically, and it proposed a series of transitional slogans for work in this field. This is the first time that the Trotskyist movement has proposed a series of transitional slogans for this field.

Somewhat to our surprise, we discovered that there was a good deal of resistance to the document. This was led mostly by the young comrades from France. In their opinion -- and this is listed in the order of their differences -- first of all, the document was superficial. It didn't fit France. It was not worked out so they could utilize it in France as a guide for their actions. The answer of the comrades favoring the document was that what we were proposing here was a document indicating a line.

Perhaps I should mention that I got the impression that a different concept may be involved as to what should be aimed for in a resolution. Our convention documents are worked out to indicate a line to follow; then we write articles to provide the supporting material and to explain in detail all the developments. If you were to put all this together in a single document you would have quite a manuscript. But in a resolution we prefer leanness, just the main indications. The comrades in Europe have a tendency to make a huge document, filled with all kinds of explanations, points of fact, quotations, arguments. If someone asks where our movement stands on a particular question, a big document can be handed to him, and you can say, "Here it is."

This is very useful for a small organization with few members, that does not have its own press, that has only irregular or limited publications. A big document is very handy to have in such circumstances. So when they come to a congress, this is one of the things they expect from it. If they don't get it, they're disappointed and think the document must be superficial or abstract. It doesn't include everything they would like it to include. We noticed at the conference this tendency of comrades from certain countries to ask that specific points be included concerning their country that were of almost a tactical nature. They want such points in so their country is better represented. Then from their standpoint the document is less superficial, more concrete, and of a higher level.

Another argument against the document was that it was noninterventionist, that it was sort of propagandistic, and didn't propose direct intervention in struggles, how to intervene precisely. This was raised by some of the French com-

rades and was really part of their position that the document was not thoroughly enough worked out.

But I also think that their argument that the document wasn't interventionist was probably related to their feeling that the main axis of work in the immediate period should be preparation for guerrilla war and engagement in it where possible.

Then there was some criticism of the slogans. There are two types in the resolution, democratic and transitional. These comrades felt that the democratic slogans have been superseded. Either they belong to a stage long past or they are on too low a level to appeal to the vanguard that we want to reach.

One of our comrades made the observation that they did not seem to have passed the democratic stage in France, otherwise they would not have had the trouble they did in holding their congress. The right to hold a congress freely is a democratic demand. In the last issue of Intercontinental Press you can read a report on how some of the people who came to participate in the presidential campaign for Alain Krivine were thrown out of the country by the police. This was a violation of democracy. Fighting for democratic rights in France still seems to be very much on the agenda.

On the question of transitional slogans, they raised the point that these really concern the working class, so that in relation to students the only slogan you could raise would be that workers control education. In the case of France, that would mean putting control of education under the CP. Do you want that?

We could see from this that their concept of a transitional program was different from ours. We conceive of it primarily as a method, an approach, a way to engage in politics; whereas they appear to view it as a completed program, a piece of literature. In any case, it was clear to us that more discussion is required on this particular point, to resolve any differences we may have over the nature of the transitional program.

But after all this discussion, with these differences being posed sharply in some instances, and argued rather hotly, everybody agreed that the main area of our work in the coming period is the youth. Everybody agreed on this; there was no disagreement on that at all. And a motion was passed that this document should become the basis for a continuing discussion. No vote was taken on this resolution.

On activities. This report dealt mainly with the international campaigns that the Fourth International has been

conducting -- the big campaign around Hugo Blanco, for example, the big demonstrations around the struggle against the war in Vietnam, and so on. This included such campaigns as the one launched last year to help the French comrades during the May-June events. One of the encouraging figures, showing the growth of the Trotskyist movement, was the weekly circulation of the Trotskyist press on a world scale -- about 100,000 copies. On recruiting, the success of the French comrades in this field was reported as a star example. From a very small grouping, they expanded to a rather sizable formation. Now with the election campaign they have just been engaging in, they will probably be able to double the forces they had previously.

On the negative side, the reporter dealt with the perennial weakness of the center, and the necessity of strengthening the center. This, of course, had a familiar ring to our ears, since we have had a similar problem over the years. More personnel, more finances, better conditions of work -- these, it was hoped, would solve the problem. They do have very difficult conditions considering the legal status of the Fourth International in most countries -- it's not easy to remedy the situation.

Now let me summarize as to where we stand. On the nature of the differences and what may happen. I think we will have to see how the discussion will develop before drawing any conclusions about this. The differences over orientation on guerrilla warfare should very shortly be put to the practical test, and I think it won't be too long before we'll be able to have better evidence on the particular question, one way or the other. We will see to what degree the coming social explosions involve the urban masses. Maybe the comrades who put great store in the strategy of guerrilla war will be able to gain a breakthrough, putting a Trotskyist government in power in some country in the immediate future. I am afraid that the odds are against this. The experience up to now has not proved promising, including the experience of Che Guevara's attempt. But it remains to be seen. And maybe some of the comrades have learned much more than we would give them credit for.

On the question of China. This discussion should, I think, prove quite interesting. It may involve basic concepts and our basic analysis of the Chinese revolution; but it remains to be seen how deep the differences are, and how firm different comrades will stand on their positions as the discussion develops and arguments are advanced.

We should add that there's another

area in which differences may come up -- the estimate of 1953. One of the points that was left off the agenda was a resolution on the question of entryism as it was practiced in Europe. The resolution ends the application of entryism, but also includes a historic estimate of it so if you vote for the resolution you not only have to vote for the change in tactics, but also for the historic estimate included in the package. And this rather compels those who disagreed with this tactic, or considered it a dangerous one that may have at times cost more than it was worth -- it requires them to say something about the historic estimate in the resolution. As to what that will lead to, it's hard to say; I don't imagine the differences being of such grave nature as to lead to any hot discussion.

But it could turn out that the discussion on China and on the question of guerrilla warfare as it develops, the question of party building as it is associated with the problem of entryism, that all of this could turn out to be one of the richest and most educational discussions that the Fourth International and the world Trotskyist movement has had up to this point. That remains to be seen. My feeling is rather optimistic.

I should state that in my opinion, the discussion on these points is not at all doctrinaire; it's not a question of hair-splitting, dogma, or anything like that. In each of these instances, we're dealing with very real problems in which Trotskyists are deeply involved in their countries, problems which they meet every day, and try to handle for good or for bad, but real problems. In the case of guerrilla warfare, there's not a country in Latin America where this is not advocated by key sectors of the vanguard.

The question of the Cultural Revolution is of top concern because of the Maoist groupings. Relations with them vary from country to country or grouping to grouping. In some cases Maoists are involved in common actions with our comrades and this necessitates a certain tone in talking with them. In other places relations with the Maoists are quite different.

Our way of solving differences of this kind in the movement is through free and democratic discussion. That's the tradition in the Trotskyist movement. I think that in the coming period we'll demonstrate once again the contrast between the monolithism of bureaucratic parties like the CP and the Social Democracy, and a living movement like ours, that recruits and assimilates through discussion and debate related to actions in which we are engaged.

LETTER FROM HUGO BLANCO TO JOSEPH HANSEN - JANUARY 1970

El Frontón  
January 1970

Comrade Joseph Hansen:

The object of this letter is to convey our opinion on the international debate on Latin America.

We repeat once again that we stand on the Transition Program. That we are against the guerrillerista current.

The "Draft Resolution on Latin America" reached us at a time when our attention was concentrated on a struggle against a student syndicalist deviation that showed up among the leaders of a party filled with persons who were anything but active. It was on the eve of a Plenum that was to take a stand on this. Preparing for this, we did not have time to study the draft closely. We did not know that you had presented a document differing with it.

The contradictory aspects of the document prevented us from seeing that it was an expression of the guerrillerista current that we had fought for years.

Although I, preoccupied by a specific national question, came out in favor of the document, the Plenum did not discuss it because information that another document, yours, existed had not reached us.

Then a Peruvian comrade returned from Argentina, influenced by El Combatiente. After incorporating himself in the leadership and in all the party bodies without having been elected, he began to arbitrarily alter the line of the party. He openly declared that the line of the FIR was "obsolete," and, without a previous discussion, began to alter the line against the program of the FIR that was voted on and ratified by the Plenum. He utilized the majority of a leadership that had been elected to carry out our line in order to shift the party toward a verbal guerrilla-ism. To achieve this he undertook a convenient "purge" of the leadership, threatened more purges, and in practice excluded me from it, despite the fact that the Plenum had elected me as a member of the C.C.

They did not disagree with the documents that we sent in defense of the line. (They did that after the rupture.) It was easier to say nothing about the documents and act contrary to them, expelling and disciplining those who opposed this. All this could be done because in recent years the FIR has consisted of a numerous group of petty-bourgeois elements who in general do

nothing. The ratification of our line by the Plenum, the start made in applying it, signified a danger for these charlatans: either become active or get out of the party. With the arrival of the comrade holding the guerrillerista deviation, they were offered an ideal solution: neither become active nor get out -- talk about guerrillas.

In this way the process of rectifying the party, which was to have begun through engagement in activity, took another form: Those who did not want to work engaged in talking about guerrillas. They constituted a crushing majority (the factor that, as Comrade Livio told me, was decisive in recognizing El Combatiente as the official section in Argentina).

In face of such arbitrariness from people who were inactive, who did not even permit us to work, we few activists decided to reorganize the FIR in accordance with the line laid down in the program and ratified by the Plenum. We are carrying this out with excellent results despite the difficulties that every party nucleus faces at the beginning.

In reality the importation of the guerrillerista deviation was beneficial, since it accelerated purging the activists.

Your document, which we have just read, finished clarifying the scene for us; we see that our personal stand in favor of the "Draft" was a mistake and that the guerrilleristas were completely correct in taking it as their banner. We leave it in their hands; really it is theirs, not ours, we apologize for our initial confusion.

As for us we stand on the Transition Program, on the Program of the FIR, on the document of Comrade Joseph Hansen, who once more, as many other times in the history of our movement, has shown his Trotskyist consistency, the maturity of the Socialist Workers Party.

We advocate the methodology of Chaupimayo, criticizing ourselves for our deficiency in party building. We hold that it was one more demonstration of the continued validity of the method of the Transition Program. We think that the use of guerrilla war as a tactic was correct; we think that we will use this tactic again in Peru. Probably the guerrilla charlatans will not accompany us; they did not accompany us either in Chaupimayo.

Another factor must be taken into account; "guerrilla-ism," at least in



Peru, is another form of being "revolutionary" without doing anything.

The members of my guerrilla force (except an artificial element) were taken from the best in the union vanguard; it is sufficient to mention the organizational and economic secretaries of the Federación Provincial de Campesinos and general secretaries of four unions. People who had been looked down on for occupying themselves with demanding "crumbs" while the "genuine revolutionaries" argued over how to take power. This happened and will happen again; here and elsewhere. Today we are fighting for higher wages and against unemployment, with our old Transition Program in hand. The audacious guerrillistas call us cowards, they tell us that we don't want to make the revolution or that we are thinking of doing it in the year 2,000. We know that we will again take up arms in the city and the countryside; we did it before they did, with the forces that emerged from our people, not artificially "a suero." With this in mind we are working patiently today in organizing the peasantry and in advancing the workers' wage demands. We have confidence in Comrade Trotsky because Chaupimayo showed us that he was right.

Comrade, it would seem that we Trotskyists have been guilty of considerable complacency in face of guerrilla-ism in order not to appear sectarian. We criticized Comrade Moreno's "Two Methods" because of its "excessive hardness in form"; but we were in agreement with the content and still are. For this reason we republished it, because it drew the line of demarcation. It seems that international Trotskyism considered

this work to be "too hot" and now we are paying dearly for not having debated his thesis exhaustively. And the result is that now, when guerrilla-ism in Latin America is declining, defeated by the reality, it is reborn...within the Trotskyist movement!

Another item in which Moreno was right as against us: My defense and the defense of the happenings at Chaupimayo should not have been that of a "Trotskyist guerrilla" as was done in general, but as an example of the application of the Transition Program in opposition to guerrilla-ism. By way of contrast it stood out as an example of armed struggle that arose as a result of work among the masses.

It is understood that in identifying myself with Comrade Moreno it is in the general defense of our method; I know little about the current situation in Argentina.

There is much that must be said about guerrilla-ism, unfortunately I am pressed for time, hence the lack of order in this letter.

I am confident that you will defend our position with the necessary firmness. Up to now it appears to me that there has been too much complacency in face of the guerrilla current.

I authorize you to use any document of ours, either in whole or in part, in the discussion within the Trotskyist movement.

Affectionately,  
s/Hugo Blanco G.

A CONTRIBUTION TO THE DISCUSSION  
ON REVOLUTIONARY STRATEGY IN LATIN AMERICA

by Joseph Hansen

Events of sufficient importance have occurred since the last world congress of the Fourth International to provide some significant tests of the position on Latin America adopted by the majority of the delegates at that gathering.

On the conclusions concerning the bleak perspective facing capitalism in Latin America and the general economic, social, and political instability of the continent, conclusions upon which all the delegates were in agreement, the resolution has stood up well. Little needs to be added to what was said in April 1969.

On the central axis of work for the subsequent period, over which a division of opinion occurred, with a substantial minority opposed to adopting a strategic orientation of preparing for and engaging in rural guerrilla warfare for a prolonged period, things stand differently.

It is worth recalling the enthusiasm of some of the delegates at the congress over this orientation.

"Best Chance of a Breakthrough"

In a contribution to the pre-congress discussion, "An Insufficient Document," Comrade Livio Maitan declared: "What is expected from us from now on is that we demonstrate in practice the historical value of our movement and we will be judged essentially on this basis. This can appear, at bottom, to be an elementary truth, but it is a question of inspiring our whole activity with this recognition. It is a question more precisely of determining in what countries we have the best chance of a breakthrough and subordinating everything to the elementary necessity for a success in these countries, and even, if necessary, in a single country. The rest will come later." (International Information Bulletin, January 1969, Part 2, page 17.)

Comrade Maitan listed several possibilities -- "(youth movement in France, antiwar movement and youth movement in the United States, South Africa with a certain time) and we must unquestionably make an effort in the direction of India...."

But of the prospective areas, Comrade Maitan was of the opinion that "we must place everything above all on a sector of Latin America and you know very well which one. We must exploit the preparatory period of the congress to convince the entire movement to operate in practice, every day, with this perspective. Permit me to express myself a little paradoxically: it is necessary to understand and to explain that at the present stage the

International will be built around Bolivia."

Comrade Maitan did such a thorough job of convincing the majority of the delegates that the state of mind of some of them verged on euphoria. Thus one delegate was of the opinion that the immediate perspectives were so brilliant that for the first time a congress of the Fourth International was actually discussing the possibility of taking power somewhere in the world!

The Defeat in Bolivia

On July 14, 1969, only a few months after the world congress, a turncoat who had betrayed Che Guevara's guerrilla front in Bolivia was shot in his home in Santa Cruz. The Ejército de Liberación Nacional headed by "Inti" Peredo issued a statement that he had been executed as "an act of justice." The government struck back with extreme ferocity, staging a nationwide witch-hunt in which some were killed, many tortured, and hundreds imprisoned. On September 9 "Inti" Peredo was killed. The guerrillas had suffered a crushing defeat. Intercontinental Press carried extensive accounts, including reports on the involvement of our comrades and their victimization. It is not necessary to repeat in this article what was published in Intercontinental Press.

At the next congress, the Bolivian comrades will no doubt tell the full story of what happened and draw whatever lessons they think ought to be drawn. It is to be hoped that they will be able to clear up several obscure points, particularly the policies followed by "Inti" Peredo.

For instance, in an interview published in Punto Final in June 1969 just before the guerrilla front went into action, "Inti" Peredo made the following declaration: "The ELN maintains the principles established by Che. We hold valid the thesis of the need for a guerrilla foco in the current situation in Latin America. Because of this we announced that we would return to the mountains. We will build an armed force. We are not trying to form a political party." (See Intercontinental Press, March 2, 1970, page 170.)

Peredo was thus on public record as opposing party building and favoring foquismo. Were Peredo's views known to the Bolivian comrades when they participated in the front which he led? Even for those who believe in the strategy of guerrilla war, as opposed to the strategy of building a Leninist combat party, it should have been obvious that the foquista concepts held by the head of the Bolivian guerrilla

front doomed the possibilities of success.

But Peredo, it must be believed, was operating according to foquista concepts at the time of the world congress of the Fourth International, although it was not reported there. In retrospect we can see still more clearly what illusions some of the delegates were laboring under in believing that by throwing the Trotskyist movement behind Peredo's guerrilla front in Bolivia the Fourth International could make a historic breakthrough within months, after which the rest would follow.

#### Minority Favored Guerrilla Warfare as a Tactic

To prevent being misunderstood, let me recall the position taken by the minority at the world congress. The minority did not reject guerrilla warfare per se. On the contrary it recognized that under certain circumstances engagement in guerrilla warfare can prove advantageous. In my article "Assessment of the Draft Resolution on Latin America," I stated:

"A section of the Fourth International may find that at a certain stage of the revolutionary process in its country, it is necessary and productive to engage in guerrilla war, as a specific form of armed struggle. The proviso is that it be conceived as a tactic entailed by political considerations, not as a new-found formula guaranteeing quick or certain success, and that it be within the means available to the section. This holds, it should be added, not only for Latin America but for similar areas elsewhere." (International Information Bulletin, February 1969, page 14.)

This was rejected by the majority, and with particular insistence by Comrade Maitan. I will consider the possible reasons further on. I wish to stress here only that the minority at the world congress favored guerrilla warfare as a tactic which sections of the Fourth International might find useful at the right time and right place in furtherance of political aims related to revolutionary strategy as a whole.

A necessary condition is the development of leaderships in the sections of high enough level and sufficient experience to be able to make correct political judgements on guerrilla war as on other important tactical questions. Whether such leaderships actually exist can only be determined, of course, by how they conduct themselves, including how they assess their victories and defeats.

Besides the defeat suffered by our movement in Bolivia, another serious defeat was suffered in Argentina, where the

official section (El Combatiente) was hard hit in Rosario. Two accounts of this have been published in Intercontinental Press, but little can be said about the lessons to be drawn in the absence of an official report from the leadership of the section. It is to be hoped that an objective assessment can be made available as part of the internal discussion on Latin America.

#### "Absolutely Clear" in Peru and Bolivia

The majority resolution on Latin America failed to stand up well in another area. To justify converting rural guerrilla war into a strategy, it was argued that the Latin-American ruling class, operating hand in glove with U.S. imperialism, left no other alternative open. Against the ferocious violence of the ruling class, nothing could be done except to turn to guerrilla struggle.

As the resolution put it, after acknowledging the mass mobilizations that occurred in 1968: "Nonetheless, revolutionary Marxists cannot conclude from this that the 'classical' variant calling for a progressive rise and broadening of the mass movement and its structuring and reenforcement through traditional organizational forms before it reaches the armed struggle has been revalidated. In the international context, after all the experiences of the last decade and in face of an increasingly brutal repression by the native ruling classes and imperialism, such a variant is not the most probable. In reality, the adversary is in nowise ready to allow a mass revolutionary movement to organize more or less legally or normally, not only because in the given economic and social conditions a general mobilization even for economic goals would threaten disastrous consequences for the system, but also and above all because the men in power no longer underestimate the dynamics of mass movements, even when they start off with limited objectives. The experience of Bolivia, where all forms of normal organizational activity are continually stamped out, as well as the experience of Peru, where the repression has not let up since 1962, especially in the countryside, are absolutely clear." (Intercontinental Press, July 14, 1969, page 720.)

The main spokesman for the majority, Comrade Maitan, has been compelled in the light of subsequent events to make a considerable shift. In his article "Cuba, Military Reformism, and Armed Struggle in Latin America," which appeared in the April 20, 1970 issue of Intercontinental Press, Comrade Maitan had no choice but to admit the appearance of reformist regimes in Latin America.

Moreover, not as a freakish, isolated occurrence: "The Peruvian and Bolivian events and the orientation adopted by Velasco Alvarado and Ovando Candia -- who are trying to give the impression that they are the initiators of a revolutionary-democratic renewal and a struggle against the imperialist grip on their countries -- deserve attention not only for their intrinsic importance but also because they express a tendency which might materialize in other countries as well. In fact 'Peruvian' currents are taking form increasingly in other places and it is symptomatic that in the ranks of the revolutionary movement itself some are predicting and even hoping that these currents will come to power."

Still more: "To complete the picture, American imperialism...adopted a cautious wait-and-see attitude toward the Peruvian regime and, in spite of everything, toward Ovando as well. The outline of a more flexible line for Latin America was, moreover, presented in the Rockefeller report."

Comrade Maitan draws an absolutely clear conclusion from the current developments, although it is the opposite of the equally absolutely clear conclusion in the antecedent majority resolution: "All of this confirms the fact that there are important forces, and forces of a different nature, which have a stake in a positive development of the experiments in progress in Peru and in Bolivia. This implies also that in certain conditions similar experiments might be undertaken in other countries."

In short, a big change may be in the making. Who knows? "I am considering potential tendencies which may or may not crystallize. However, the important thing is that these tendencies exist, are operating, and already constitute one of the elements in the political interaction in Latin America."

Did these potential tendencies exist at the time of the world congress? A delegate who ventured to express the thought that such a variant was conceivable, in some areas at least, met with stern reproof. But events compelled Comrade Maitan to shift his view. Ironically the events occurred in the very countries cited in the majority resolution as definitive proof that all variants other than "increasingly brutal repression" had been excluded.

The lesson to be drawn from this is the danger of thinking in absolutes, especially where tactics are involved. It was "absolutely" excluded that U.S. imperialism could adopt flexible tactics. It was "absolutely" excluded that the indigenous bourgeoisie had any alter-

native tactics they could resort to but the most brutal repression. Therefore the revolutionists had "absolutely" no choice but to elevate guerrilla warfare into the main axis of their work and engage in it no matter what the thinking of the masses or the state of the mass movement might be.

#### A Tactical Question After All

In conjunction with this, another welcome turn is to be noted in Comrade Maitan's article. He now places more stress on "the need for preliminary political and organizational work" before engaging in armed struggle.

"And without such preparation," he states, "any attempt at armed struggle will be condemned to isolation and failure. There would also be the danger of forgetting that there are periods when an effort to develop mass work and to create the instruments for this must have absolute priority."

He even makes a notable concession to the view that engagement in guerrilla war is a tactical question: "For example, it would be absurd in Peru today to rely primarily on preparing a new wave of guerrilla warfare, failing to understand the need for deepgoing activity of political clarification and to exploit all the possibilities which, despite everything, the new situation offers for stimulating mass movements and establishing links with them. This is also true on a different scale and probably for a markedly shorter period for Bolivia."

Perhaps the biggest shift since the world congress has taken place in the position of the Bolivian comrades. In a unanimous resolution passed in November 1969 (published in an English translation in the April 13, 1970 issue of Intercontinental Press), the Bolivian comrades adjusted their position as follows:

"The military's operation to rescue the bourgeoisie and the bourgeois state has forced it to relax the repression of the unions. Having failed in its attempt to destroy the unions, the government is now moving to animate the unions with the aim of hitching them to its cart. This makes possible a certain democratic leeway which must be utilized to the maximum. We must provide the driving force for a reorganization of the entire workers movement from the individual unions on up to the COB, based on an independent class line. But trade-union reorganization must be combined with a struggle for a program of economic social, and political demands. We must resume the struggle from the level it had reached when the repression came."

In resuming the struggle in the indicated way, the Bolivian comrades outlined in their resolution the main points of "a transitional program providing impetus to a mass mobilization." They spelled this out in specific detail in the statement they issued to the mine workers congress held at the Siglo Veinte mine the second week of April (published in an English translation in Intercontinental Press, May 11, 1970).

Our Bolivian comrades made a correct turn in resuming activities in accordance with the method indicated in the 1938 Transitional Program. Trotskyists throughout the world will feel gratified that the Bolivian section was able to make this readjustment.

In practice our Bolivian comrades in this instance handled involvement in "rural guerrilla warfare" as a tactical question to be judged in the light of the ups and downs of their national situation and in relation to their own needs and opportunities. But this was one of the key points the minority sought to establish at the world congress as a general concept of our movement.

What is primary in revolutionary strategy, the minority maintained, is building a combat party; resorting to guerrilla warfare should be regarded as a secondary, tactical question. That the Bolivian comrades found themselves compelled to act as they did, departing from the majority line which they had whole-heartedly subscribed to and sought to carry out, offers a certain lesson.

#### Still, It's More Than a Tactic

It is strange in the light of this experience that both Comrade Maitan and the Bolivian comrades should still insist on the correctness of the majority position.

In their November 1969 resolution mentioned above, the Bolivian comrades assert: "Guerrilla warfare is still a valid method. The blows suffered and the losses of men and equipment are not important. However painful, all these losses can be repaired. The important thing is to be clear on the fact that there is no other path for real revolutionists."

Again: "Despite the defeats suffered, we reaffirm the validity of guerrilla warfare. Therefore, the duty of every Marxist-Leninist revolutionary is to join in this conception. Giving life to the guerrilla movement and the revolutionary army is intimately bound up with revolutionary mobilization of the masses; this will be the culture medium of the guerrillas, as Che said. Guerrilla warfare is the continuation by other means

of the class struggle; it is the culmination of the mass movement."

Comrade Maitan speaks even more clearly in his article, "Cuba, Military Reformism, and Armed Struggle in Latin America." Having just agreed that "it would be absurd in Peru today to rely primarily on preparing a new wave of guerrilla warfare," and having just conceded that this also holds true for Bolivia -- the two countries that served as prime exhibits for an opposite view at the world congress -- Comrade Maitan reaffirms the majority position. He restates the thesis that constituted the heart of the majority position at the world congress:

"The fundamental perspective, the only realistic perspective for Latin America is that of an armed struggle which may last for long years.... Even in the case of countries where large mobilizations and class conflicts in the cities may occur first, civil war will take manifold forms of armed struggle, in which the principal axis for a whole period will be rural guerrilla warfare, the term having primarily a geographical-military meaning and not necessarily implying an exclusively peasant composition of the fighting detachments (or even necessarily preponderantly peasant composition). In this sense, armed struggle in Latin America means fundamentally guerrilla warfare."

In the balance of his polemic, Comrade Maitan seeks to put his unnamed opponents in the position of either being against armed struggle in principle, or of making a false dichotomy between mobilization of the masses and engagement in armed struggle, or of raising false problems such as the interrelationship of tactics and strategy. Above all, he insists that the key question facing the revolutionary movement in Latin America is to work out in advance the concrete forms which the armed struggle in the coming years is likely to take.

On this he appears to feel that he, along with the "great majority of Latin-American revolutionists," has already come up with the correct answer. In a single sentence Comrade Maitan states the gist: "If you take account of the geographical facts, the demographical structures of the majority of the population, and the technical and military considerations stressed by Che himself, it follows that the variant of rural guerrilla warfare on a continentwide scale will be the most probable one."

That's an accurate statement of the majority position, including the intimation that its original inspiration is to be found in the tactical prescriptions which the Cubans sought to substitute for

the strategy of building combat parties in Latin America.

### The Discussion Among the Guerrilla Fighters

Other changes have occurred in the situations facing our movement in Latin America besides the ones in Peru and Bolivia. Since the last world congress, the configuration of the revolutionary vanguard has undergone significant alteration.

The most important development is undoubtedly the discussion opened by such figures as Héctor Béjar on the lessons to be drawn from the guerrilla experience. As thinking revolutionists, they cannot help but wonder what has gone wrong. Why is it that more than ten years after the Cuban revolution not another success has been registered in the entire continent? It is surely not due to lack of courage or audacity, to lack of commitment to armed struggle, to failure to regard the Cuban revolution as the great model to be emulated.

As a first approximation in making an analysis, some of the revolutionists have sought to locate technical, or perhaps political, errors. Not a few, as was to be expected, have been found. But then the Cubans made not a few technical and even political errors, yet succeeded. The Cuban experience demonstrated that it is possible to commit considerable errors without ending in disaster. Nevertheless, throughout Latin America, attempt after attempt in countries of the most varied kind and with leaders of the most varied temperaments and skills have ended in defeat.

One of the reasons adduced is the more intensive repression exercised by U.S. imperialism. But if this were the reason, then it is clear that a more effective and powerful strategy than the one used by the Cubans is required.

Inevitably the most conscious revolutionists are haunted by the feeling that something is eluding them in their efforts to discover what has been going wrong.

It is very instructive to see how in their efforts they continually touch on questions directly connected with the problem of building a combat party. This stands out with the utmost clarity in Héctor Béjar's analysis, although he continually turns away from that road. Moreover, in their efforts they are drawn, despite themselves, toward reading Trotsky.

This search for the correct reasons for the defeats suffered by the Latin-American revolution since the Cuban

victory is a very positive development. It shows that some important sectors of the vanguard, or at least some important cadres, have come to realize that action alone is not sufficient. Correct concepts -- a correct theory -- are also required. This is in marked difference from the Cuban revolutionists, who got along without much theory and who even decried theory.

The Trotskyist movement has every reason to foster this discussion and to offer answers of its own. Unfortunately the majority line is not conducive to this. History has settled the question, if we are to believe Comrade Maitan. Che was right. Guerrilla warfare is the solution, and an alternative strategy, reducing guerrilla warfare to a tactical problem, is a priori virtually excluded, including the Russian strategy in 1917 of which Trotsky, following Lenin, was the great practitioner and exponent.

### The Cubans Pause for Reflection

Another very important change in the Latin-American situation is the current reluctance of the Cuban leaders to become involved in "rural guerrilla warfare."

At the world congress, the majority counted on the Cubans continuing to do what they had done in the case of the guerrilla front opened by Che Guevara in Bolivia. This was a hazardous calculation, the minority maintained, because the full consequences of the defeat of Che had yet to be measured. In particular the Cubans might be in process of reassessing their line in Latin America in view of the repeated setbacks that had been experienced. If the Cubans were to undertake a reorientation, the minority pointed out, then the resources available to the small groups still committed to carrying out the old line would become even more limited. To plunge ahead despite this change in the situation could prove to be exceedingly ill-advised.

It is now fairly clear that what the minority called attention to at the world congress (and much before that in the leadership of the world Trotskyist movement) turned out to be an accurate political assessment. The changed attitude of the Cubans has now become one of the key questions in the discussion going on in the vanguard over revolutionary strategy in Latin America and what course to take. This has had its repercussions inside the Fourth International.

In the resolution passed at the world congress, the first task assigned to the revolutionary Marxists in Latin America was: "Integration into the

historic revolutionary current represented by the Cuban revolution and the OLAS, which involves, regardless of the forms, integration into the continental revolutionary front which the OLAS constitutes."

The majority has now been compelled to modify this. In his article "Cuba, Military Reformism, and Armed Struggle in Latin America," Comrade Maitan writes: "First of all, it must be noted that not only has the OLAS, as an organization, failed lamentably but also that the role of the Cuban leadership in the Latin-American revolution is being increasingly disputed. I already mentioned the public attack on the Cuban leadership by Douglas Bravo's movement. But others are also expressing criticisms that follow more or less the same lines. In fact, most of the groups linked to Castroism are increasingly taking their distance from Havana, accentuating their independence. They now have a tendency to consider the relations they establish among themselves more important than their relations with the Cubans and what remains of OLAS -- more properly speaking, of the preliminary moves to establish this organization."

In order to maintain a correct attitude toward the Cuban revolution, it is of crucial importance to understand the pressures it faces and the courses open to the Cuban leadership. Some comrades in the Fourth International appear to be leaning to the opinion that a qualitative change has occurred and that Cuba ought now to be designated as a degenerated workers' state. Against this view, Comrade Maitan argues -- correctly so, in my opinion -- that while various things are disturbing, particularly the political influence of the Kremlin, the adverse developments have not reached the point of qualitative change.

It must be said, however, that Comrade Maitan's attempt to rebut the charge that Fidel Castro has given up internationalism is exceptionally weak: "Revolution in Latin America is still considered a necessary condition for the survival and development of the Cuban state itself. There is indisputably a turning inward on domestic problems and a pause for reflection. It is also probably that no initiative similar to Che's Bolivian campaign nor even like those previously in Venezuela will be attempted in the present stage. But there is nothing to support the assumption that in the event of the outbreak of a new wave of revolutionary struggle and armed struggle in a Latin-American country the Cuban leadership would adopt a reserved attitude or try to cool things down. Once again its active solidarity would be assured."

The guerrilla groups that charge the

Cubans with having given up internationalism point precisely to the lack of "active solidarity" in operations designed to further the strategy of "rural guerrilla warfare." Their point is well taken if you agree with them that "the only realistic perspective for Latin America is that of an armed struggle" and that "armed struggle in Latin America means fundamentally guerrilla warfare." However, that is precisely the viewpoint of the majority. Comrade Maitan reasserts it in the most emphatic way in his article.

Were he to participate actively in the discussion now being carried on between the Cubans and their critics on this point, he would in all consistency have to agree with those who are "taking their distance from Havana." For what is their basic point? It is simply that they are attempting to continue in accordance with the line previously followed by the Cubans. It is the Cubans who have changed, not they.

Shouldn't Comrade Maitan come to their aid by at least polemicizing with the Cubans, marshaling arguments to convince them to stop drifting in such a crucial matter as "rural guerrilla warfare" and to resume their old line?

#### We, Too, Should Pause to Reflect

It would be wiser for our movement, of course, to emulate the Cubans in their "pause for reflection," even if our conclusions are not the same as theirs.

Since the defeat of Che Guevara in Bolivia, the Cubans have faced a crisis in their international revolutionary orientation. The basis of the crisis is the failure of "rural guerrilla warfare" to win any successes. It has met with defeat after defeat.

In addition, despite all the prestige of the Cuban revolution and the immense advantage of holding state power, the Cubans even appear to have come out second in their factional struggle with the Stalinists on the continent.

Precisely because of their success in Cuba, it was difficult for the Cubans to see the negative consequences of their orientation placing guerrilla warfare above party building. How could it be that what had proved successful in one instance should prove disastrous in a series of other instances? The outcome of Che's venture proved conclusively that it was not a question of experience or know-how. What, then, is the correct solution to the crisis?

It would be a big mistake for our movement to exclude the possibility of the Cuban leaders, or at least some of



them. eventually arriving at a correct solution, It is true that the outcome is not guaranteed; the comrades who are ready today to write off the Cubans may have the satisfaction finally of being able to say that they were right. But one of the determinants in the outcome may well prove to be our own attitude toward the Cubans, particularly our explanations and the course we propose.

Thus both for the fate of the Latin-American revolution and the immediate future of the Trotskyist movement it is of the utmost importance to fight for a positive outcome to the dilemma facing the Cubans in their international revolutionary orientation.

From this standpoint, Comrade Maitan's insistence on the sovereign virtues of "rural guerrilla warfare" is disorienting. In his article "Castro, Military Reformism, and Armed Struggle in Latin America," he reduces the key problem of the Latin-American revolution to that of sketching "the concrete forms armed struggle will take." As a contribution, he sketches various forms, trying to put them into a kind of logical order and to assess the chances of their being seen in Latin America in the future. This is a barren exercise in the absence of the political context, particularly the party-building context, of the forms. Above all, he is attracted to guerrilla warfare. "Guerrilla warfare," he says, "has proved at the same time necessary and effective in all kinds of experiences over the past fifty years in Asia and Africa, as well as in Europe itself during the Nazi occupation (above all in Yugoslavia, in Italy, and in France)."

The only conclusion the Cubans could come to on reading that, if they are utilizing their pause for reflection to really think things through, is that the Trotskyists have become more "Cuban" than the Cubans and that they are advancing arguments that hardly point forward.

#### The Basic Problem is Political, Not Technical

What the Fourth International should do by every conceivable means is insist on the primary task at the present stage. This is to begin at the beginning -- to assemble sufficient cadres to start serious construction of Leninist combat parties.

This requires a sustained polemic against all the tendencies that stand in the road or that threaten to divert the work. The main one, of course, still remains Stalinism, which has gained a reprieve in Latin America because of the persistence of the Cubans and others in seeking to lift rural guerrilla warfare

into a strategy in opposition to the strategy of party building.

It also requires some concrete examples of what we mean when we talk about engaging in revolutionary politics. And some concrete examples, anywhere in the world, of what we mean when we talk about building a Leninist party.

This is so elementary that one feels embarrassed to have to insist on it more than three decades after the founding of the Fourth International. Yet this is the real situation, and there is no point in blinking it. A few further words should be said about this in the interests of rearming our movement.

#### Once Again, the Meaning of Cuba

The most decisive turning point in the long ideological struggle against the pernicious influence of Stalinism was the Cuban revolution. Viewed in historic perspective, the leaders of this revolution represented the first contingent of a new generation that was able to appreciate the positive meaning of the Russian revolution and the existence of the Soviet Union, yet was repelled by Stalinism.

This contingent came to power in Cuba through means that had long ago been superseded in the arsenal of revolutionary Marxism. That this could actually occur was solely owing to the default of Stalinism in combination with objective conditions for revolution that were exceptionally favorable.

Our movement hailed this development, defended it with all our energy, and sought to further and to extend the Cuban revolution.

The absence of a revolutionary Marxist party in Cuba did not disconcert us because we understood the uniqueness of the combination of circumstances that had made the success possible. We considered that the logic of the revolution, if it were not to fall back, would impel the development of such a party in Cuba in the long run and that the same would hold true in Latin America as a whole. Our basic line therefore remained promulgation of the theory and practice of building revolutionary Marxist parties as the correct revolutionary strategy.

We faced some difficult tactical problems. While the Cuban revolutionists had succeeded in bypassing the Cuban Communist party, they were forced into reliance on the Soviet Union for material aid because of the efforts of U.S. imperialism to crush the revolution. Without that aid the Cuban revolution, as

a matter of simple fact, could not have survived. Nevertheless an overhead political cost was involved. The Cubans were undoubtedly made aware, if they did not sense it themselves, that one of the conditions for receiving material aid was to keep "Trotskyism" at a distance. Stalinism was thus able to play a certain role in Cuban affairs. The resulting unhealthy state of affairs reached its height under Aníbal Escalante.

A further complication was that the cause of the Cuban revolution was taken up with the greatest enthusiasm by the youth everywhere. This was an extraordinarily heartening development with its clear portent for the future. However, these revolutionary-minded youth did not understand the basic political reasons for the Cuban success; they sought for the explanation on the side of skillful technique in the use of arms.

The Cubans fostered this lack of understanding, wittingly or not, since they never assessed their own revolution in the light of the default of Stalinism. To have done so, they would have had to settle accounts with Stalinism -- to which the Kremlin would have responded by cutting off material aid.

Moreover, the Cubans in their own international revolutionary orientation insisted on the priority of skill in the technique of armed struggle. Their contempt for theory and hostility to party building were additional negative elements.

All of this fostered ultraleftism and even an antipolitical attitude among the youth drawn into the orbit of the Cuban revolution, particularly in Latin America. It should be added that, like many youth on first coming to revolutionary views, they were inclined toward ultra-leftism to begin with. They thus evinced a strong predilection for sheer action violent action, even by small isolated contingents, without consideration for the political necessity to calculate everything they did and said in relation to the problem of reaching the masses and organizing and mobilizing them on the necessary scale.

This was where the revolutionary-minded youth were to be found, this was what they were like, and the Trotskyists, if they were not to lose contact with the new generation of revolutionists, beginning with the Cubans, had to go through the experience with them.

#### The Extraordinary Value of Hugo Blanco's Work

In taking this course, we made no concessions in principle. In the imperialist centers we stood on our own Trotskyist

program in the first line of defense of the Cuban revolution. It is enough to recall what the Trotskyists in the United States and Canada did in helping to organize and advance the Fair Play for Cuban Committee. Our comrades in Europe and India and many countries in Latin America were similarly active.

Our first big advance came in Peru through the work of Hugo Blanco, carried out with the active participation of Argentine comrades like Daniel Pereyra and Eduardo Creus under the leadership of Comrade Nahuel Moreno.

Regarding engagement in guerrilla warfare as a tactical question, these comrades at first made an effort along the lines of the Cuban model. Through hard practical experience they soon learned that it had disadvantages. Working directly with his own people, whose Quechua language he spoke, Hugo Blanco discovered more effective means of mobilizing them on a broad scale. Around the slogan "Land or Death!" Hugo Blanco established a nucleus of cadres who succeeded in building a peasant movement that shook Peru. Some, who were outside this work, have charged that Hugo Blanco was inspired by "syndicalist" notions. Others said later that he overlooked the necessity for "armed struggle." Neither allegation is true. Hugo Blanco was inspired by Trotskyist concepts and he did not hide them.

The movement was defeated, owing to two reasons. The first was that it was left in the lurch by the leftist organizations in the cities, which were dominated primarily by the Stalinists or had other reasons for antipathy to Hugo Blanco's political approach. The second reason for the defeat was the absence of a Leninist combat party on a national scale.

Héctor Béjar has bitterly criticized the Stalinists and those influenced by them for the historic opportunity they let slip by denying aid to Hugo Blanco's movement. On the question of the absence of a combat party, Héctor Béjar holds a position heavily influenced by the antipolitical conceptions of the radical Latin-American youth who came most directly under the sway of the Cuban ideology. In his opinion, "premature" organization of a political party can doom a revolutionary cause.

Hugo Blanco has criticized himself for not devoting more attention to the problem of party building on a national scale. He is correct in seeing the negative results of not having on hand an already constructed party; but how much more he could have done along these lines personally under the circumstances is not easy to determine by anyone not intimately

involved in the events. In any case, it hardly behooves those on the outside to lay too much stress on how Hugo Blanco might better have directed his activities. He was very young, he was gaining invaluable experience in mass work, he was learning by leaps and bounds, he was making a historic contribution. Above all, he was not opposed to party building. He was in fact imbued with a clear theoretical concept of its necessity.

The outcome of this experience was that Hugo Blanco emerged as Peru's most outstanding revolutionary figure. The Fourth International is not exaggerating when it stresses this. It is acknowledged without debate by the most varied sources, including those in the enemy camp.

In presenting Trotskyism to the radicalizing youth of Latin America from 1962 on -- that is, the youth in those countries who were especially caught up with the concept that guerrilla warfare and only guerrilla warfare offered any hope for success in carrying out the socialist revolution -- the world Trotskyist movement was in position to point to the work of Hugo Blanco.

The meaning of Hugo Blanco's course lay not solely in his personal example and his valor. Others have been similarly valorous and similarly dedicated. For the world Trotskyist movement, for the Fourth International, the value of what Hugo Blanco did lay in his political line as developed in the living struggle in Peru.

Through the example of his work, Hugo Blanco gave incomparable assistance to the Fourth International in those years when young revolutionists, inclined under the influence of the Cubans to make a principle of guerrilla action, demanded that we show them something in practice matching what we had laid out on the level of theory and program.

The value of this example has not lessened with time. Just the contrary. Hugo Blanco's reputation is looming ever larger, as is shown by the estimate made of his work by Héctor Béjar in his essay which won the Casa de las Americas prize for 1969. If we are to engage in self-criticism it ought to be for not doing more in publicizing Hugo Blanco's work in recent years and in seeking better to emulate it.

### The Danger of Adaptation

In deliberately turning in the direction of the youth aroused by the Cuban revolution and becoming involved with them, our movement faced the danger of adapting to their primitive political level. That danger had to be accepted, the alternative being a sectarian withdrawal from the scene of struggle in the

manner of the Healyites, who simply walked away from Latin America and defense of the Cuban revolution. It appeared, however, that the majority of cadres in the world Trotskyist movement were of sufficiently high political level to reduce the danger to a minimum.

The greatest pressure toward adaptation came in the beginning, and we saw some instances in the immediate aftermath of the Cuban victory that were quite painful. This was the case, for instance, with Comrade Bengochea and his group who split from the Trotskyist movement to set up a guerrilla front in Argentina in isolation from the masses and as an alternative to party building.

Strangely enough at first sight, it was only when the Cubans themselves initiated their "pause for reflection" that a majority in the top leadership of the Fourth International fell victim to the disease and elevated "rural guerrilla warfare" into a main strategy in Latin America, passing a resolution to that effect at the last world congress.

We are faced, inevitably, with the question, "How could this happen?"

A possible subjective explanation is that the central leadership feels that our movement faces unparalleled opportunities and that we must not "miss the boat." As Comrade Maitan phrased it in his contribution, "An Insufficient Document": "Our capacity for political analysis and overall theoretical generalization...will be a major trump card in the future, too.... More particularly, our role will be appreciated at its true value by the new movements if we are in position to express in time and better than any other current their real needs and to outline solutions to the problems which they raise."

As an abstract statement, this is unassailable. Concretely, however we have seen what Comrade Maitan meant: It is to express in time and better than any other current the best technique for conducting "rural guerrilla warfare."

Again, in the same document, Comrade Maitan specifies: "But it is only by successes or revolutionary struggles at the head of a mass movement in one or several countries that we will be able to surmount our difficulties and present contradictions. What is expected from us from now on is that we demonstrate in practice the historical value of our movement and we will be judged essentially on this basis."

Concretely we can now see better what he meant. The Fourth International, in Comrade Maitan's opinion, can overcome

its present difficulties only by engaging in "rural guerrilla warfare" better than anyone else, and "we will be judged essentially on this basis."

"Rural guerrilla warfare," Comrade Maitan seems to feel, offers a surefire means by which the Fourth International can win an early breakthrough in Latin America and, no doubt, elsewhere. If others have failed to derive the full benefits of "rural guerrilla warfare," it is because they were not as good technicians as the Trotskyists can prove to be under the guidance of the majority.

In other words, reacting to the demand that the Fourth International produce a major organizational success in the immediate future, the majority leaders have looked for shortcuts and have found one -- they believe -- in "rural guerrilla warfare."

They appear to view the formula as widely applicable. This is perhaps the reason they refused at the world congress to accept the evaluation of guerrilla warfare as a tactical matter. The majority, of course, acted consistently in refusing to concede on this even if it meant creating a rather sharp division among the delegates. If "rural guerrilla warfare" is elevated into a main strategy, it ought to be viewed as a matter of principle, precisely as the minority views the priority of party building as a principle.

Thus two concepts concerning the main road of the revolution were adumbrated at the congress.

The source of the pressure for elevating "rural guerrilla warfare" into a principle is clear. It is the guerrilla fighters, particularly in Latin America (with the Cuban currently counted as they pause for reflection), and significant sections of the radicalizing youth, that is, those who have not yet gained political experience and who have made a mystique out of the fate of Che Guevara and who don't know much about Hugo Blanco's example.

The course prescribed by Comrade Maitan and made official in the Latin-American resolution represents a concession to ultraleftism. This is how it must be characterized objectively.

If we consider this happening in the context of the development of the Fourth International in recent years, we can better see why it occurred when it did. Our patience with the ultraleftist mood among sections of the radicalizing youth, our understanding of the origin of this mood, and our tactical flexibility in dealing with it enabled us to recruit sufficient cadres so that when the radicalization of the youth began on a mass scale internationally, we soon began recruiting by the hundreds wherever we had well-established parties or groups. In France, for instance, our movement experienced dramatic growth in the May-June 1968 period. It was precisely following this exhilarating expansion of forces that some of the leaders of the Fourth International above all Comrade Maitan, began adapting to ultraleftism.

In Latin America at the same time, successive defeats of the guerrilla fronts and the shrinking of the forces available to the various guerrilla movements appeared to offer exceptional opportunities to Trotskyists and others willing to make an immediate major commitment to guerrilla action. Some of the comrades who were convinced of the extraordinary gains to be made on the quick wanted more than a tactical view of engaging in guerrilla warfare. They wanted total commitment of the movement as a whole, the elevation of engagement on the guerrilla road into a principle.

It was this combination that provided Comrade Maitan with his majority at the world congress.

Consistent application of the course charted by Comrade Maitan would prove disastrous for the Fourth International. The line could hardly be confined to Latin America or even the colonial world generally, for the same ultraleft tendencies to which the adaptation has been made are operative in the imperialist centers. Fostering an ultraleft course in Latin America would surely be paralleled by permissiveness toward ultraleftism, if not worse, in the imperialist centers. In fact, there is evidence that this has already been occurring in the quite different context of conditions in Britain.

The adoption of a resolution by a world congress elevating "rural guerrilla war" into a main strategy should therefore be regarded as a grave development. After full discussion on the issues in all the sections of the Fourth International, every effort should be made at the next world congress to rectify this error.

June 26, 1970

Rome  
March 26, 1970

Dear Comrade Hugo,

Several days ago, Comrade Joe showed me the letter that you sent him.

This letter as well as certain statements in your interview published by Intercontinental Press indicate that a discussion between us is necessary. In the past days I had already written an article examining the three fundamental problems of this stage; namely, an estimate of the Peruvian and Bolivian regimes, the attitude of the Cubans with regard to the Soviet Union, and the revolutionary movements and the problem of armed struggle. As soon as the translation is finished, I will send you a copy. In addition I have the intention of preparing a letter for you on the crucial problems that we must discuss in the International.

I limit myself today to underlining once again that the World Congress document, which you approved and which you now criticize, was prepared on the basis of long discussions with the Latin-American organizations that supported and continue to support it by an overwhelming majority. This means that it is the product of the experience of our movement as a whole. I do not know if in your country there are actually charlatans who, in not wishing to either become active or to leave the organization, are talking about guerrilla war and hiding behind our document. If this is the case, it must be condemned. However the document must be judged on the basis of its intrinsic content. Each analysis and each conclusion must be examined closely, concretely: What is there wrong in it? How is it mistaken? What is the concrete alternative if the line of the document is rejected?

I reject completely the definition "expression of the guerrillista current," which is not justified either by the letter or the spirit of the document. The concept is clear and it is wrong to consider our concept to be in opposition to the concept of the Transition Program. We are more convinced than ever of the validity of the fundamental criteria of that Program; but the problem is to determine how these criteria apply in the current situation of the Latin-American countries, what is the real perspective of development of the mass struggles and the armed struggle. I will add again: that the polemic between guerrilla war and mobilization of the masses -- at the stage we are in -- is false not only within the Fourth International, where, to my

knowledge, there are no "guerrillista" deviations (not even in Argentina, Comrade) -- but also in the majority of the Latin-American revolutionary movements, which have now surmounted the stage of Debrayism (as for us, we were the first to criticize Debray's little book head on, even if this "singed" us). It is quite possible that in the future there will be new "guerrillista" tendencies and we will undertake the necessary polemics; but now the essential thing is on the one hand to formulate a strategy of prolonged armed struggle, on the other to establish effective links with the mass movement and to avoid having this movement either condemned to a routinist practice or to succumbing periodically in face of the repression. There are no a priori solutions to this problem, not even -- I apologize for my heterodoxy -- in the Transition Program. It is necessary each time to make concrete analyses and to check the analyses through action (certain very important indications for the Peruvian movement at this stage are contained in the supplement of Revolución Peruana for February 1970 in your article on mobilization of the peasants).

A few words concerning Argentina. Personally I was not in favor of the trip to Argentina, nor were the comrades of El Combatiente. I do not know if certain Peruvian comrades tried in a mechanical way to apply schemes drawn from another country. But I can tell you very clearly that in the fundamental documents of El Combatiente which I have read, there are no "guerrillista" deviations. If you are of a different opinion, I ask you to demonstrate it more specifically in your statements. In any case, I don't believe that the crisis in the FIR was the product of what happened in Argentina: according to information I have received -- unfortunately not very much -- it has its own dynamics and is the product of the great weakness of the party in recent years and the absence of a strategic orientation.

Fraternally,

Livio Maitan

GUERRILLA WARFARE: THE LESSON OF CHINA

Letter from a Chinese Trotskyist

31 July, 1969

My Dear Friend:

I find it quite understandable that the proposed new Statutes were not adopted at the recent World Congress of the Fourth International. The draft, in my opinion, is too formalistic and does not correspond to the realities of our world organization, which, old as it is, is still in the formative stage, if one judges by the substance.

The resolution on Latin America contains not a few valuable ideas. Yet in some respects it represents the opposite of the position held by Comrade Peng. It fails to emphasize the importance of mobilizing masses and of political-educational work among them. By attaching undue importance to the role of guerrilla warfare in the revolution, it raises the danger of the revolutionary vanguard becoming isolated in action. This could lead to military putschism.

As set forth in the resolution, the question of guerrilla warfare is posed in direct opposition to the Transitional Program in the sense that it implies rejection of the traditional way to the arming of the proletariat formulated in that fundamental document. Needless to say, we must now give increasing attention to the question of armed struggle in the light of new experiences. Guerrilla warfare is just one form of armed struggle. We must now supplement our old position -- but not substitute guerrilla warfare for the traditional method of arming the proletariat.

Comrade Peng's opinions about guerrilla warfare are absurd. During the past forty years, if he has not forgotten anything, he has learned nothing either. What he has steadfastly remembered is the criticism made by Trotsky at the end of 1927 with regard to Stalin's China policies. After betraying the Chinese revolution by his opportunism, Stalin aggravated the disaster by ordering the Chinese Communists to engage in military adventures. Having helped strangle the revolutionary struggles in the cities, he sought to make up the losses overnight by inciting peasant insurrections in the villages.

Recognizing the new situation resulting from the revolutionary catastrophe, Trotsky called on his Chinese followers to put forward a program of democratic demands, capped by the demand for an all-powerful national assembly to be elected by free, equal and universal suffrage. This was to provide a realistic

counter to the dictatorship of Chiang Kai-shek and to enable the revolutionary vanguard to gain time for recovery from the defeat instead of exhausting themselves in hopeless struggles. This "transitional" program would enable the Communists to restore their connections with the working masses in the conditions of a triumphant counterrevolution and thus prepare for a new upsurge of the revolution, which Trotsky considered inevitable.

Trotsky's criticism of Stalinist policies and the program he advanced in opposition to them proved completely correct. It is to Comrade Peng's credit that he has not forgotten them. What is unfortunate is that he forgot, or never understood, the precise circumstances in which Trotsky set forth his ideas. He forgot, or never understood, that while condemning military adventurism and proposing a program of democratic demands, Trotsky repeatedly counselled his Chinese followers (circumstances permitting) to support and where possible participate in armed struggles against the Kuomintang and also to support and take part in the struggle against Japanese imperialism. Here are just two examples of Trotsky's advice, retranslated into English from Chinese:

1. "Of course, we shall not ourselves be engaged in the guerrilla war (against the Kuomintang). We have another field of action, other tasks to perform. Yet we very earnestly hope that at least we should have our own men in some of the most powerful armed detachments of the Red Army. The Oppositionists should live and die together with these armed detachments. They should help maintain contact between the detachments and the peasants and should have the (guidance of the) organization of the Left Opposition when carrying on this kind of work." (Letter to the Left Opposition of China, January 8, 1931 )

2. "I said all workers' organizations in China should participate in the present war against the Japanese invasion. They should put themselves in the front lines. At the same time, they should not give up their program and their independent activities." (Letter to Diego Rivera, September 23, 1937 )

For Comrade Peng, however, both in the fight against the Kuomintang regime and in the war against the Japanese invaders, the only way we could intervene was by writing articles. Nevertheless, during the years of the anti-Japanese war, there were some Chinese Trotskyists engaged in the armed struggle.

In two places -- one in Kwantung, the other in Shantung province -- we even had our comrades leading their own armed detachments. In neither of these two situations was anything of consequence achieved. The detachments were disbanded or destroyed either by the Japanese troops or by Stalinist forces. Reasons for these defeats were many, but this was the main one: the actions were the result of individual initiatives, not an organizational decision; the activity was neither endorsed nor supported by the organization; it therefore lacked political direction and control.

The Chinese Trotskyists formally organized themselves into a unified political group in 1931. When the Chinese Communist Party seized power, they had existed as a political tendency, if not as a party, for twenty years. Yet they had carried out no significant action or any work of great influence. One could advance many reasons, whether real or imaginary, to explain this regrettable fact. The most important, or one of the most important, however, was our erroneous position toward armed struggles. While condemning the Stalinist policy of building "Soviet areas" in the countryside and organizing a "Red Army" from among the peasants, we actually went over to the extreme of opposing, or at any rate being indifferent to, armed struggle. We did not, of course, reject armed struggle in principle. But we did regard it as something very, very remote, to be seriously considered only after a revolutionary situation had matured nationally and workers in the cities had gone out in a general strike. As long as this had not happened, any attempt to take up arms was considered unthinkable and branded as "military opportunism" or "military putschism." Hence we never thought of sending some of our comrades to work in the anti-Kuomintang armed detachments as Trotsky had counselled us to do. We did not participate in the anti-Japanese war, except by manifestoes and articles, although the conditions for such participation were excellent.

For this false attitude toward armed struggle, Comrade Peng is not, of course, alone responsible. I, as one of the leading members of the organization, bear a share of the responsibility, although I did once attempt to enter the armed struggle and Comrade Peng condemned it. However, it was Comrade Peng who insisted most stubbornly on the false line of the Chinese Trotskyists in the question of armed struggle. He has not examined his attitude in retrospect and still clings to it.

In our epoch, as Trotsky pointed out, nearly every class struggle tends to become transformed into civil war. This was especially true of China under the military dictatorship of the Kuomintang.

Under such circumstances, any underestimation of armed struggle, or an incorrect attitude toward it, can be fatal to a revolutionary organization. This bitter truth has not dawned on Comrade Peng even yet. That is why he still cannot comprehend the major reason for the victory of the Chinese Communist Party and our failure. The reasons he gave in his article, "Return to the Road of Trotskyism," in which he tried to explain why the Chinese Communist Party was victorious, seem to me absurd and ridiculous. He wrote:

"...the taking of power in 1949 by the CPC, however, was in no way a result of the guerrilla warfare strategy itself, but rather, a result of the exceptional historical circumstances created as a result of the Japanese invasion of China and World War II. First of all, the Soviet Union's occupation of Manchuria, the most industrialized part of China, dealt a heavy blow to the forces of Chiang Kai-shek, and the modern weapons which the Red Army obtained from disarming the Japanese were used to arm the Fourth Army of the CPC commanded by Lin Piao. Most important also was the inability of US imperialism to intervene. US imperialism even cut off aid to Chiang Kai-shek's regime many months before its defeat (that is, in fact, one of the major reasons for the defeat)."

This "explanation" hardly seems to have been given by a revolutionist, but rather by one of Chiang Kai-shek's apologists: We were defeated only because the United States was unable to intervene and deprived us of aid, while the Communists triumphed only because of the help they got from the Soviet Union!

Anyone who observed and experienced what happened during 1945-49 could not accept Comrade Peng's "explanation." It was obvious to everybody that a civil war was raging between the forces of revolution and counterrevolution, between the broad toiling masses on the advance, and the landlord-bourgeois classes in decline. Failing to see this fundamental fact, Comrade Peng attributed the victory of the Chinese Communist Party to "modern weapons" obtained through the Russians and Chiang Kai-shek's defeat to cutting off the supply of such weapons by the United States. Even Gen. George C. Marshall understood that giving greater supplies of weapons to Chiang would simply mean giving them to the Communists. That was why "US imperialism even cut off aid to Chiang Kai-shek's regime many months before its defeat."

Here I will not argue further with Comrade Peng about the reasons for the victory of the Chinese Communist Party. Instead, let me ask him a few questions: If the Chinese Communist Party had not engaged in armed struggle against the



Kuomintang during the preceding twenty years, how would they have been able to take advantage of the "exceptional historical circumstances created as a result of the World War II?" If the Chinese Communists had not trained themselves as "soldier-revolutionaries," how could they have utilized the modern weapons given them by the Russians? And if the Communists had not been able to make use of the aid they received, how could they have taken advantage of their enemy's lack of aid?

Obviously, whoever wishes to turn favorable historical situations to his advantage, must prepare himself for that purpose. Such situations, by the way, have not been rare, and more are bound to occur. If, however, we do as Comrade Peng would have us do -- if we confine our work to publishing a magazine and to theoretical discussions -- if the weapon we can use is that of criticism only -- if we do not prepare, or allow others to prepare, to transform the "arms of criticism" to the "criticism of arms" -- then all favorable situations will pass us by without our being able to make the slightest use of them.

In the previously quoted article by Comrade Peng, he says: "We do not reject guerrilla warfare as a tactic, but rather as a strategy. Definitely, when the situation in any country matures to the point that we must immediately prepare the masses for armed insurrection to seize power, guerrilla warfare by the peasants might be the most useful tactic."

This brief passage, in my opinion, contains several grave errors:

1. Owing to the "peculiarities of our epoch" the question of armed struggle (including guerrilla warfare as one of

its forms) must be considered and dealt with on the level of strategy.

2. The experiences of revolutionary struggles in many countries during the past forty years attest that guerrilla wars were not necessarily conducted entirely by peasants. Nor were the rise and maintenance of guerrilla detachments seen only during and after an uprising by the urban proletariat. On the contrary, such detachments have arisen and existed prior to the maturing of a revolutionary situation in the cities. Experience has shown that guerrilla activity in the countryside can serve as a powerful stimulant to revolutionary action in the cities.

3. If we consider guerrilla warfare purely as a "tactic" when the situation is maturing to the point where it is necessary to prepare the armed uprising for the seizure of power, then we will prove unable either to organize and direct the insurrection in the cities or to organize and direct guerrilla warfare in the countryside, for we shall have done nothing to prepare ourselves for this kind of struggle.

Comrade Peng has not drawn any lesson either from the history of the Chinese revolution in general or from the experiences of the Chinese Trotskyists in particular. Instead he persists in his false position on the question of armed struggle. What is worse, he is now trying to "export" this false position to the International. That is why I have had to write these comments, which I hope you will transmit to our friends abroad.

Comrade Livio:

I did not answer your letter [of March 26, 1970; see International Information Bulletin, No. 7, September 1970] sooner because, to tell the truth, I could only have repeated what has been said by Comrades Hansen, Moreno, or by us of the FIR an infinite number of times in our newspaper.

Now the events in Bolivia warrant examination in the light of both methodologies. Comrades of greater capabilities will surely be doing this; nevertheless I feel an obligation to voice what I think despite all the limitations I face: low level, lack of information, isolation, etc., (the repression has worsened).

You state that the alternative between engaging in guerrilla action and mobilizing the masses has already been superseded, not only for our movement but for the majority of the Latin-American movements and that all that is involved now is to determine the concrete forms of armed struggle.

In my opinion this is not so. Although "Debrayism," the guerrillerista position in its extreme form, has been superseded, less rigid forms of Guevarism continue to confront us.

It is undeniable that under the blows of reality, the Guevarist comrades are slowly coming closer to Leninist positions. This shows us that our attitude toward them must be completely fraternal in order to help them in their evolution. But this does not mean that we should move toward them ideologically; exactly the contrary, the more firmly we hold to our Leninist positions both theoretically and practically, the more effective the aid we can offer them in surmounting their positions.

In my opinion, to state that the discussion between guerrillerismo and mobilizing the masses is no longer of fundamental importance signifies merging with Guevarism in evolution. It is a way of "superseding the discussion" by identifying ourselves with them.

It is true that these comrades are already talking about mass work, but we should take note, not only by their praxis but by the contradictory way in which they refer to this work, that their conception is different from ours. It is typical to hear them talking about "linking armed struggle with the mass movement," or that it is necessary for "the guerrilla fighter to carry on preliminary work among the masses before launching the struggle." Although these affirmations show us that a healthy

process is going on, we cannot identify with it. They still stand within the guerrillerista schema.

For us what is central is the mass movement, which at a certain moment arrives at armed struggle in one form or another. We are not guerrilla fighters carrying on prior work preparatory to the outbreak of guerrilla war, placing fundamental importance on the geographic locale, the establishment of supply lines, etc. We are revolutionists carrying on political work in the ranks of the masses, leading them toward revolutionary maturity, organizing the party on this basis. At a certain moment we can become guerrilla fighters if this is the form the armed struggle has to take. Our work is political, the military is incidental. For the guerrilleristas it is the reverse; they are "guerrilla fighters" who incidentally carry on "preliminary work." This is not a play on words, Comrade; it involves profound differences in the mode of confronting every task. Their "preliminary work" is not the same as the Leninist conception of mass work.

If we seek to move ideologically in the direction of the Guevarist comrades, the danger exists not only of retreating back to where they stand, but of passing each other going in opposite directions, which is what apparently has been happening with respect to the importance of rural guerrilla warfare. As we know, many of them are placing more and more importance on the urban struggle, be it confined within the guerrillerista conception.

I now turn to some interesting translating errors committed by the comrades here in Peru who hold your positions. In place of: "Likewise, it is widely accepted that viable connections with the masses cannot develop almost automatically as the consequence of courageous initiatives by small vanguard groups but can only be established by systematic organizational and political work" [see Livio Maitan, "Cuba, Military Reformism, and Armed Struggle in Latin America," Intercontinental Press, April 20, 1970, p. 358], they wrote: "The idea...that solid relations are not an almost automatic consequence of the initiative and courage of small vanguard groups, but can be established only through systematic political and organizational work, is a much more prolonged acquisition." To tell the truth, I am more in agreement with the erroneous translation.

Further on, referring to my replies in the interview [see "Bejar, Gadea, Blanco on the Peruvian Revolution," Intercontinental Press, February 23, 1970,

p. 162], in place of: "However, what is vital for the Latin-American movement, once there has been a clarification of the relationship between armed struggle and the masses and the need for a party as the instrument of revolution, is to sketch the concrete forms armed struggle will take" [Maitan, *op. cit.*, p. 359], they wrote: "But once again lack of clarity on the relations between armed struggle and masses and on the necessity of the party as instrument of the revolution, it is vital for the Latin-American movement to project the forms in which the armed struggle will become concretized." Here, too, I am more in accord with what the erroneous translation says, which continues to place importance on the first two points as the axis of the discussion by attributing to me "lack of clarity."

Nevertheless, in place of your sentence, I would prefer saying:

"Once there has been a clarification on the necessity of work within the mass movement and the necessity for a party, what is important is to determine the form these tasks will take in each country, exerting ourselves to sketch the general characteristics of the region."

For example, it appears that the Peruvian MIR has already reached an understanding of the necessity for mass work. Consequently, what we must discuss with the MIR are the forms of this work, the methods, the key sectors in which this work must be carried out, the immediate slogans, etc. And not "the forms armed struggle will take."

To tell the truth, in Peru, because of our limitations, we have not ventured to say much on Latin America in general. Against this, the document of the Argentine comrades (La Verdad) on this, is worthwhile.

In line of development of the tasks mentioned above, we can still find ourselves confronted with the need to elucidate the forms of armed struggle; that moment will be determined by the process of the mass struggle. Whether such a study has been made (aside from the Argentine document), I do not know; I view the annotations included in the Latin-American document as lacking the necessary depth.

In my opinion, because of the view that rural guerrilla war is imminent, great possibilities of serious work in the distained, "classical form," the Leninist form, are being lost.

With regard to Bolivia, the COB document [see "Theses Adopted by Bolivian Labor Movement," Intercontinental Press, July 13, 1970, p. 676] indubitably shows the mark of persevering Trotskyist work.

Because of this it is all the more painful to see comrades showing lack of confidence in this marvelous proletariat, which destroyed the army and was on the verge of taking power in 1952 (in Bolivia no defeat in a war was required for workers militias to spring up and destroy the army). At that opportune moment, the audacity was lacking to raise the Leninist slogan, "The COB to Power!"

This same proletariat is showing us that it has not been defeated--far from it. The rise of Torres is the product of terror inspired by the working class. The next weeks and months will be of decisive importance for Bolivia. In view of this it is very sad to see, precisely at this time, valuable revolutionists being pressed to leave for guerrilla war, separating themselves from the worker and student masses that are moving into struggle. It would not be strange, should these masses be defeated, that they will be blamed, or perhaps it will be used to demonstrate "the impossibility of coming to power through the mass movement." If this misfortune occurs, a big share of the guilt will lie with those who took away from the masses a part of their valuable vanguard. As if there were an oversupply of revolutionary cadres to lead the masses in these days!

Thus Leninist work is required not only in Peru, where for the moment we must bide our time, but also in Bolivia and Chile, which are or could be on the verge of armed struggle.

(I know almost nothing of the position of the Chilean comrades, but from outside the country it can be seen that the electoral and postelectoral processes have opened magnificent opportunities for the revolutionary left, provided they do not, in sectarian fashion, leave the masses in the hands of the opportunists.)

It is correct in Bolivia to discuss the form that armed struggle must take within the process of the mass upsurge, but the best teacher in this is the Bolivia of 1952, which does not recommend taking to the hills, isolating oneself, or anything like that. Work among the peasants as a complement to the movement of the workers and city dwellers generally is one thing; such work will almost surely lead to peasant guerrillas. The guerrillas of the ELN are something quite different, holding as they do a more or less modified Guevarist, but not Leninist, conception.

With respect to the characterization of the Peruvian regime (in referring to what you have written, I am taking the version in Intercontinental Press), I believe that the fundamental difference between your interpretation and ours is that for us there exist important economic changes corresponding to neocapitalism, the strengthening of the imperialist and

native sectors interested in the industrial development of our countries. In addition, it is clear that political reasons for this development exist--the necessity of holding back the masses by means of pseudonationalism and what you call

"military reformism." It appears to me that you place no importance on the first aspect. I will not dwell on this since you must be aware of our articles on the subject.

Hugo Blanco G.  
El Frontón  
October 17, 1970

DEFENSE OF AN ORIENTATION AND A METHOD

by Livio Maitan

I. Reply to Some Questions and Arbitrary Interpretations of Comrade Hansen

The discussion in progress on Latin America concerns questions vital for the revolutionary movement and for the future of Trotskyism in that part of the world. The situation of some of our sections, the blows we have suffered, and the divisions that exist make it essential to clarify and define the problems sufficiently to permit all the necessary conclusions to be drawn at the next world congress. However, our discussion can be fruitful only if the legitimate desire to win acceptance of one's own point of view does not involve the danger of ignoring or underestimating the changes that have occurred. One must avoid setting up strawmen, arbitrarily reconstructing the positions of others, as well as engaging in a tendentious and scholastic reading of documents. At the same time, while not denying that connections exist between the orientations proposed for Latin America and possible orientations in other sectors, we think that no progress can be made in our discussion by mixing in problems which, if they need be discussed at all, should be taken up in a different context.

Comrades who have read the document of the last world congress attentively, as well as a whole series of articles, analyses, and documents written by comrades belonging to the majority, should realize without any difficulty that a not inconsiderable part of the criticisms raised against us by Comrade Joe Hansen are not directed at our real conceptions. We stated this already with regard to his initial document. But since he persists, we have no choice but to go back over a certain number of arguments, devoting the first part of our text to a more direct polemic with "A Contribution to the Discussion on Revolutionary Strategy in Latin America."

Let us sum up and summarize the points most worthy of attention.

1. In his attempt to account for the thrust of ultraleftism which is supposed to have wreaked havoc extending even into the leadership of the International, Comrade Hansen refers to the rise of new generations and the breakthrough achieved by our movement in some European countries, notably in France in May-June 1968. "It was precisely following this exhilarating expansion of forces, he adds, "that some leaders of the Fourth International, above all comrade Maitan, began adapting to ultraleftism." Perhaps this is an apt formulation, but unfortu-

nately the chronology is wrong. The orientation expressed in the world congress document had already been outlined rather precisely at least as far back as the beginning of the second half of 1967, notably in discussions between comrades in the leadership of the International and representatives of certain Latin-American sections. From Comrade Hansen's first article itself it can be deduced that I had defined my orientation before May 1968 and thus before the Trotskyist breakthrough in France was concretized in the building of the Ligue. But one thing must be absolutely clear. The draft resolution for the world congress drawn up in October 1968 was not the project of the analyses or thoughts of one person alone or of a small group, but the outcome of a collective elaboration, in which a large number of our cadres in Latin America, representing a very clear majority of our movement, participated more or less directly. I would also add that it was important to us at the time to see that our conclusions were shared by revolutionary militants of other movements, movements that had evolved as the result of manifold experiences in the struggle.<sup>1</sup>

2. At the world congress, the minority made no substantial criticisms of the analysis of the situation in Latin America. That is why now, in order to show the incorrectness of our perspective, Comrade Hansen prefers to make ironic comments about the mentality and illusions he attributes to certain delegates, which -- it seems -- were cleverly manipulated by Comrade Maitan. In fact, the document and the reports and contributions to the discussion all stressed the long duration of the armed struggle, strictly refraining from fostering any naive optimism. Comrade Hansen even pointed to "pessimistic views" in the document. If, for our part, we often stressed the urgency of adopting the orientation we proposed and putting it into practice, it was because armed struggle was already taking place in Latin America and because it would not fail to develop in the future owing to the fact that the objective situation, in general, was pushing things in this direction.

This said, have changes occurred since 1968 in the situation in Latin America? In our March 15 article which Comrade Hansen cites several times we already answered this question, considering the possibility of "Peruvian" tendencies spreading to other countries. The document of the congress, moreover, had mentioned a variety of political

currents in the military, and the analytical part concluded with the affirmation: "If the objective possibilities are not exploited in time by the revolutionists, imperialism and indigenous capitalism will reorganize, if only precariously, alternating between 'new' and traditional solution." But we have no reason not to acknowledge that at the time we did not expect "new" solutions to develop with such scope and so near in the future. In this respect, we are ready to make our self-criticism.

However, even leaving aside all considerations of method, we do not plead guilty on the nub of the question. What we felt, and still do, is that in Latin America it would be wrong, in general, to count on the traditional variant of prolonged or relatively prolonged phases in which the workers movement would have the possibility of developing along more or less "normal" lines, more or less legally and progressively strengthening its trade-union and political organizations up to the moment of the outbreak of armed struggle which would be limited to the decisive phase of a general insurrection. This prognostication by no means excluded "reformist" or "democratic" interludes, or attempts to achieve "new" solutions; it sought to grasp the fundamental tendency of a whole period of class struggle in that part of the world. From this standpoint, the Peruvian and Bolivian events have not shown us wrong; all the more so, furthermore, because one could not claim that Velasco has allowed the masses to organize freely and independently; his objective, to the contrary, being to fasten the grip of the military regime on the masses, who are at best regarded as a passive supporting force. And no one can close his eyes to the fraudulent character of the Ovando regime, which has done nothing to replace all-out repression with a more selective type, and which is still ready to jail, exile, or even kill those who do not accept the rules of its game.

Comrade Hansen would unquestionably have scored a point if we had been slow to grasp the new tendencies and draw the necessary political and tactical conclusions from them. But this has not been the case, and our critic admits it, even though he wishes to see a contradiction in this. But why a contradiction? The contradiction exists only in his imagination: for, according to him, we have made a principle out of guerrilla warfare, "forgetting" the mass movements, and now, both in Peru and Bolivia, we stress the need for exploiting the possibilities that have opened up and even of formulating "a transitional program capable of impelling mass mobilization." However, if the minority comrades had been willing to listen to us at the congress and to read our document, as it is, they would have seen that we did not wait for the

events in Peru and Bolivia to discover, or rediscover, the transitional program....

The question of whether it is possible that other countries in Latin America might adopt the "Peruvian road" and whether more generally an objective possibility exists for "reformist" operations was already answered in our article "Cuba, Military Reformism, and Armed Struggle." [See Intercontinental Press, April 20, 1970, p. 352]. We explained that in fact in other countries the ruling classes -- or certain sectors of the ruling classes -- might be led to seek new solutions, despite the danger of objectively starting up a dynamic capable of threatening the system as a whole and despite the narrow margin for maneuver both economically and socially.

Since then the attractions of "reformism" or "populism" have unquestionably grown in various countries. In Chile, shaken by increasing tensions throughout the last year, Allende's electoral success -- accompanied by a strong polarization on the right around the conservative Alessandri -- preemptorily imposed a choice on the bourgeoisie between an attempt to cancel out the electoral verdict by force or a political maneuver, or acceptance of a daring reformist experiment, which, while having an economic content analogous in several respects to the Peruvian experiment, would, nevertheless, develop in a political context much more favorable to the mass movement. New turns, spectacular new crises might, then, be on the order of the day in Latin America in the weeks and months to come. While never losing sight of the fundamental guidelines established by the world congress, which, as we have said, remain substantially valid, our movement must be prepared to decisively and flexibly exploit any possibility for strengthening itself, including by exploiting sops of "legality," above all by increasing its links at the level of the masses.

A final item on this subject: no one can exclude a priori the possibility that in a more distant future the basis for a strategy of armed struggle in Latin America might change radically. If we assume that imperialism and the native bourgeoisie can hold on for a few decades more, structural changes will inevitably occur in the meantime. For example, the specific weight of the agricultural economy and the peasantry would decline rather drastically. In such a perspective, what we have written in our documents on rural guerrilla warfare would lose a large measure of its meaning. But we have elaborated and will elaborate a policy for the context that exists now and will persist at least for a certain period, and our orientations are aimed at exploiting all the potentialities of this stage by

corresponding to the present situations and relationships of forces.

3. According to Comrade Hansen, "two concepts concerning the main road of the revolution were adumbrated at the congress" in the sense that the majority is supposed to have considered rural guerrilla warfare a "matter of principle," while the minority considered the matter of principle was building the party. Thus, by an arbitrary procedure, a question of vital importance for orienting our movement in the present stage has been transformed into a false problem!

If it needs repeating once again, we do not accept this interpretation of our view. We even add that if in fact there were a tendency in the International that denied the "principle of building the party," we would not only have to wage an uncompromising struggle against it but would even have to consider breaking with it -- just as we had to break with tendencies that defended the idea that the bureaucracy in the workers states could possibly reform itself or that power could be won without revolutionary violence.

At bottom, Comrade Hansen contrasts two concepts that by no means stand in opposition. Our conception is and remains that in order to carry through the workers' struggle for power to its culmination, a revolutionary party is a *sin qua non*. This is the ABC of Leninism and we will not go back to it. Guerrilla warfare is one method of struggle to be used in a definite context to help build or reinforce the party. Has Comrade Hansen, for example, ever thought of opposing building the party and participating in a general strike? Why, then, does an orientation that involves our organizations participating in a guerrilla struggle in a given context stand in contradiction with the conception of the need for building, not a study club or a Marxist and Trotskyist propaganda group, but a "combat party?"

The world congress document contained an explicit polemic against all the spontanéist, or semispontanéist tendencies that have existed and still exist in Latin America as well. Read it attentively, if you please, comrades of the minority, and without preconceptions. Remember what we ourselves wrote on this question in the past, opposing Debrayism when it was the latest thing in ultra-left circles. Read, or reread what the Bolivian comrades wrote, for example, and take into consideration what they have done and are doing to organize their party, to train Trotskyist cadres, among other things, organizing their schools in strict clandestinity, in much less comfortable circumstances than those of our schools in Western Europe, or those

of our American comrades!

But there is another point that should definitively clarify our real conception. According to Comrade Hansen -- and I am referring here to his first discussion article -- there was a contradiction in the congress document between the analysis, which characterized the situation continent-wide as prerevolutionary, and the "considerable reservations as to the possibility of a major victory anywhere in Latin America in the near future." But this contradiction exists in reality because of the subjective factor, that is, the lack of a revolutionary party capable of operating on the mass level. It is precisely because the sections of the Fourth, despite their influence in certain countries, are at present not in position to play such a role (nor are any other groups able to play it in their place) that, while not absolutely excluding exceptional variants, we do not count on any successful revolutions in the near future and we projected a perspective of prolonged struggle. Far from forgetting or underestimating it, we assigned to the factor of the party an essential place in the analysis itself. Comrade Hansen's criticisms thus have no basis whatever.

Another example of a misinterpretation: Comrade Hansen quotes our discussion article "An Insufficient Document," which says: "Our role will be appreciated at its true value by the new movement if we are in position to express in time and better than any other current their real needs and to outline solutions to the problems which they raise." According to him, and he returns to this theme twice, this means that we are suggesting that the Trotskyists should become the best technicians of rural guerrilla warfare. This is a ridiculous conclusion. We are just as aware as Comrade Hansen that in this area others have more experience than we and that it is above all the political and theoretical acquisitions of our international movement that we can capitalize on. However, if we take ourselves seriously when we talk about the inevitability of armed struggle and at the same time the irreplaceable role of the Trotskyist movement, this implies that in a revolutionary or prerevolutionary context we must ourselves assimilate the indispensable "technical" concepts and transmit them to others.

Must I remind the minority here that Lenin recommended studying military technique in detail and that Trotsky indicated that insufficient technical preparation had been "the weak side of all revolutions?" As regards our movement, it ought to be regretted, for example, that the experience of a certain number of our cadres in the European



resistance is completely unknown to other sectors of the International, although this experience might prove definitely useful.

4. Comrade Hansen considers that we developed our conceptions under the influence of the Cuban leaders.

Let us acknowledge that this allegation does not impugn our revolutionary honor. We admit having learned something from the Cuban revolutionists, who, after all, established the first workers state in the Americas and who have not, up to now, suffered a process of bureaucratization like that of the other workers states. In any case, since I cannot examine the Cuban conceptions and their evolution fully here, I will note briefly the following:

a) It is true that the Cubans have often fostered false conceptions of revolutionary struggle in Latin America. But in their own armed struggle they have absolutely not acted as adventurists or "foquistas."

b) For our part, we have not neglected to express our criticisms of the Cubans, while taking account of the limits imposed on revolutionists in given contexts, and as we have already said, we formulated a critique of Régis Debray's book at a time when the Cubans were supporting it without any reservations.

c) We quite quickly pointed out, what, according to our analysis, were the reasons for the<sup>2</sup> defeat of Che's guerrillas in Bolivia, being careful to avoid getting mixed up with the opportunists of all stripes who had opened a counterattack. Nonetheless, we considered it incorrect to characterize Che's undertaking as an artificial operation, or an application of the foco theory because subjective and objective conditions for armed struggle existed in Bolivia at the time.

d) We have never thought that armed struggle could only be conducted in Latin America if the Cuban revolutionists supported it. At the world congress we were completely explicit in advancing the hypothesis, in our contribution at the end of the debate that there would be a rectification of the Cuban orientation and stating that, if this rectification was not determined by a change in the objective situation, we would maintain our course. That did not exclude possible rectifications of tactical approaches, the determination of timing, etc.

Now in fact we have cause to reflect on the Cuban line. This, moreover, was also true six months ago, when we wrote our article that appeared in Quatrième Internationale and Intercontinental Press. As regards Latin America, what Hansen calls the "pause for reflection" seems to

be continuing. But three things at least are already clear. The Cuban analyses of the developments in Peru and, to a lesser extent, in Chile, are incorrect and our entire movement has rightly criticized them. In these cases, then, there is no progress. The second element is that in the polemic between the Cubans and some Latin-American movements previously linked to Cuba, the latter have been the ones who have most clearly affirmed the necessity of abandoning the foco theory and having a much more developed and more dialectical conception of armed struggle. Finally, no one can deny that the new relationship with Moscow has had a considerable effect on the policy of the Castro leadership. And this puts another question mark over the results of the "pause for reflection."<sup>3</sup>

5. Our policy must of course be examined at the next world congress. The experiences of Bolivia and Argentina in particular must be scrutinized free from all factional considerations. We cannot undertake such a balance sheet here, in the absence of all the elements which are indispensable for making a judgment.

However, as regards Argentina, until we are more fully informed, we are inclined to believe that very grave errors have been committed and when they applied the basic orientations both of the world congress and the Fourth Congress of the PRT [Partido Revolucionario de Trabajadores] the comrades in fact departed from these guidelines. In the present context of the country, they have had to pay very quickly an extremely heavy price both politically and organizationally for these errors. As regards Bolivia, it must at least be made clear that there was no premature or aborted attempt on our part and that the causes of the repression that hit us last year must not be sought in this area.

Our Bolivian comrades themselves will have the occasion to answer the question of whether they were aware of Peredo's conceptions. Obviously we knew that these conceptions were not ours both as regards building the party and the strategy of the armed struggle. This is why we did not envisage a unification with the ELN [Ejército de Liberación Nacional], but strove to achieve a united front which by its very nature could not threaten our organizational and political autonomy. On this point no doubt is possible. If there was anyone who simply wanted to "throw the Trotskyist movement behind Peredo's guerrilla front," he must be sought somewhere else. In a document by Comrade Moreno at the end of 1967, we could read literally:

"Inti Peredo and his heroic companions survive and continue struggling. They are in fact the new leadership and governing organization of the proletariat

and the Bolivian masses. On all the walls of Bolivia the same slogan is written: Inti will not die. This fundamental, decisive, concrete fact is the first that we must take into consideration in looking at the Bolivian situation...Inti and his group, like Fidel and his group in their time, have survived. There can be no Marxist analysis of the revolutionary reality in the southern triangle, in our country, or in Bolivia that does not start off from this immediate, concrete, definitive, and conclusive fact known to all... Hence the number one task of all Latin-American revolutionists at this time, of OLAS as the only organization capable of supporting the armed struggle, of our party as a component of this organization, and of a country bordering on Bolivia is first to save and then to consolidate the ELN and Inti as its unchallenged leader. There is no more urgent task than this...

"OLAS, and most concretely its armed detachments, is the highest organizational expression of the Latin-American mass movement for the struggle for power. Our entry into OLAS has much greater importance than our activity in the Peronist unions in its time, for the Peronist opposition slates, or our entry into the Peronist movement and the 62. But for our action to have this fundamental importance we must join its armed detachments, or help to create them where they do not exist. This means loyal and disciplined recognition of the leadership of OLAS, recognition of the disciplined and centralized character which the struggle and its Latin-American organization must have, and most of all the need to maintain direct contact with the Cuban leadership, which is the unchallenged leadership of the continental civil war and of OLAS. It also means our unconditional entry into its armed detachments...."

This piece is unique as a mélange of mechanical formulations, opportunism, adventurism, and distortion of the objective facts. But how can it be explained that after writing this Moreno opted for the minority line and that Comrade Hansen has never had the least occasion to differentiate himself from him?<sup>4</sup>

Here then is our answer to the questions raised in Comrade Hansen's document. If no overall criticism of his position flows from this, the reason is very simple. The minority comrades do not have an alternative line that we could analyze and reject.

At the world congress, the minority asked the delegates to reject the fundamental line of the document and proposed opening a discussion. Fourteen months later Comrade Hansen has renewed the argument, but the result is no different. The line of the majority is subjected to criticism but there is no proposal for

replacing it. It is good to recall the criteria of the transitional program, warn against dangers, stress the essential role of mass work and the necessity of a revolutionary party. But Latin America is experiencing a situation of profound crisis in which, in a number of countries, the class struggle has already gone over into armed combat. We have proposed a strategy for this stage based on the experience of our sections and taking account of the experiences and conclusions of other revolutionary currents which have already participated in the struggle. What does the minority propose? What is its conception of armed struggle for a continent at a stage when, I repeat again, armed struggle is on the order of the day. How does it think that the struggle for the overthrow of imperialism and national capitalism can take place concretely? There are many questions that demand answering if the discussion in progress is to result in the necessary clarity at the next congress.

## II. A Few Reminders on the Revolutionary Marxist Conceptions of Armed Struggle

Since our debate on Latin America involves the question of armed struggle more generally -- a question which faces the entire workers movement in a time so rich in revolutionary upheavals -- we consider it useful, before clarifying our guidelines, to review what the Marxist theoreticians have written on this subject.

Everyone knows that Engels studied military questions very seriously and it was he in reality who gave us the celebrated definition incorrectly attributed to Marx: "Insurrection is an art, like war or anything else. It is subject to certain practical rules, and a party that disregards these rules is heading for its downfall." From this famous passage in Revolution and Counterrevolution in Germany it clearly follows that the hypothesis advanced by Engels is that of a mass insurrection, conceived as the culmination of a profound revolutionary process (that is, collapse of the existing system, a crisis in the armed forces, active mobilization of the oppressed classes, etc.). This is -- need it be pointed out -- the "classical" variant which materialized in October 1917 in Russia. In his preface to Marx's book Class Struggles in France, Engels indicated the changes that had occurred especially from the standpoint of military technique, but, contrary to the false interpretations of the reformists, he did not change his opinion on the essential point, armed insurrection, and he insisted on the necessity of a broad mobilization of the masses as well as the previous preparation of armed detachments.<sup>5</sup>

In his letters Marx's collaborator alluded several times to guerrilla warfare, notably with regard to the American Civil War and Poland. He noted, among other things, that geographical conditions were not sufficient for the development of guerrilla warfare if the social conditions were lacking.

With Lenin who operated in a context where, in a general sense, revolution was already on the order of the day, the problems of armed struggle reappear much more frequently and in a more concrete and direct form. In this area also Lenin's intransigence of fundamental conceptions and goals goes hand in hand with the greatest flexibility as to means whose adoption or rejection depend on their correspondence to the ends, on their practical usefulness. It is sufficient to recall his position toward terrorism against which he polemicized strongly, without, however, rejecting it in principle, accepting it to the degree in which it was integrated in an overall plan and not divorced from the mass movement.<sup>6</sup>

But the very essence of his method was expressed most explicitly in an article entitled Guerrilla Warfare (1906) from which it is worth recalling some passages:

"In the first place, Marxism differs from all primitive forms of socialism by not binding the movement to any one particular form of struggle...Marxism, therefore, positively does not reject any form of struggle. Under no circumstances does Marxism confine itself to the forms of struggle possible and in existence at the given moment only, recognising as it does that new forms of struggle, unknown to the participants of the given period, inevitably arise as the given social situation changes...In the second place, Marxism demands an absolutely historical examination of the question of the forms of struggle. To treat this question apart from the concrete historical situation betrays a failure to understand the rudiments of dialectical materialism...." another document, Lenin pointed out: "Substituting the abstract for the concrete in a revolutionary situation is one of the gravest and most dangerous possible faults." (July 1917).<sup>7</sup> It is clear then that a study of Lenin's indications on armed struggle must not lead us to apply these indications mechanically but should help us with regard to basic criteria and conceptions. From this standpoint, it would be absurd to talk of "principles," and it is not us, if Comrade Hansen will permit, who elevate guerrilla warfare into a principle, and still less in its specific rural form, nor, moreover, any form of armed struggle.

There is no need for me to stress here the conceptions of Lenin that in-

spired the Bolshevik party in the October revolution. They are part of the essential heritage of our movement. In the context of the present discussion, however, it seems to us worthwhile to review the fundamentals, that is, for Lenin the class struggle at a given moment in its development reaches the level of civil war and then "the military question becomes the essential political question" (stress in the original). Here is a precise idea certain comrades should reflect on instead of engaging in variations on the theme of which, in the abstract, takes precedence, the political or the military aspect. Secondly, Lenin conceived of the insurrection "as the culmination and crowning moment of every workers movement as a whole." But he never made the slightest concession to the spontanéist conceptions of insurrection that ignore or underestimate the following facts: that insurrection is an art and thus has its specific military aspects; and that, "at a given moment," lineups based on political slogans are not sufficient and "a lineup must take place on the attitude toward armed insurrection."<sup>8</sup> If the working class wants to have a chance to win the game, it must prepare its military force, "its revolutionary army," the building of which will be "difficult, complex, and long in duration."

It would be wrong, specifically, to think that Lenin did not pay enough attention to partisan struggle or guerrilla warfare. To the contrary, the question is scrutinized closely in some of his writings dealing with the revolution of 1905.<sup>9</sup> It was clear to him first of all that partisan struggle could not be compared to traditional terrorism, because it was in fact integrated in the general framework of armed insurrection. The platform proposed for the unification congress of the RSDRP [Rossiiskaia Sotsial'demokraticeskaja Rabochaia Partiiie -- Russian Social Democratic Labor party], which was drafted in March 1906, after reviewing the essential conceptions on armed insurrection, added that "scarcely anywhere in Russia since the December uprising has there been a complete cessation of hostilities which the revolutionary people are now conducting in the form of sporadic guerrilla attacks on the enemy;" that "these guerrilla operations, which are inevitable when two hostile armed forces face each other, and when repression by the temporarily triumphant military is rampant, serve to disorganise the enemy's forces and pave the way for future open and mass armed operations;" and that "such operations are also necessary to enable our fighting squads to acquire fighting experience and military training, for in many places during the December uprising they proved to be unprepared for their new tasks." On several occasions Lenin did not neglect to give specific advice on the

makeup and technical education of partisan detachments.

Moreover, in his Guerrilla Warfare Lenin gives us the key to a more general understanding of the function of partisan struggle: "Guerrilla warfare," he wrote, "is an inevitable form of struggle at a time when the mass movement has actually reached the point of an uprising and when fairly large intervals occur between the 'big engagements' in the civil war." And further on: "It is therefore absolutely natural and inevitable that in such a period, a period of nation-wide political strikes, an uprising cannot assume the old form of individual acts restricted to a very short time and to a very small area. It is absolutely natural and inevitable that the uprising should assume the higher and more complex form of a prolonged civil war embracing the whole country, i.e., an armed struggle between two sections of the people. Such a war cannot be conceived otherwise than as a series of a few big engagements at comparatively long intervals and a large number of small encounters during these intervals. That being so -- and it is undoubtedly so -- the Social-Democrats must absolutely make it their duty to create organisations best adapted to lead the masses in these engagements and, as far as possible, in these small encounters as well." Ten years afterward, making a new balance sheet of 1905, Lenin said: "The Russian revolution of 1905 confirmed what Kautsky wrote in 1902... 'the future revolution... will be less like an abrupt uprising against the government than a long civil war! That is certainly going to happen in the imminent European revolution!'"

From this we can conclude that Lenin in fact considered armed insurrection, which would be the culmination of a mass mobilization, as the decisive phase of the revolutionary struggle for power. But he did not limit all armed struggle to the insurrection. He foresaw the possibility of a prolonged civil war, even in the industrialized countries of Europe, and he considered guerrilla warfare a necessary method in a given context, more precisely when a revolutionary or prerevolutionary situation was produced or persisted but when a "big" full-scale battle was ruled out because of a temporary relationship of forces.

It is superfluous to note in our movement that Lenin's conceptions on insurrection and on armed struggle more generally can also be found in Trotsky's work after the first Russian revolution. The Year 1905 and the History of the Russian Revolution contain pages and entire chapters that rank among the most brilliant contributions to revolutionary theory. Like Lenin, Trotsky conceived of the insurrection as the peak of a revolutionary mass mobilization and made

no concessions to adventurist, putschist, or elitist orientations. But neither did he concede anything to spontanéist interpretations of insurrection, stressing the need for organizing armed struggle to the point of making a partial defense of Auguste Blanqui. Moreover, he was very careful not to limit civil war -- which in turn is "a definite stage in the class struggle" -- to the insurrection striking for power; armed struggle, in fact, embraces other stages and other variants. In the specific case of the 1905 insurrection in Moscow, Trotsky also noted the importance of guerrilla warfare -- in connection with the mass movement -- and he explained, using concrete examples, the effectiveness of even very small nuclei of fighters. "A little war based on revolutionary strike -- such as we have seen in Moscow -- cannot itself assure victory. But it can provide the means for testing the discipline of the soldiers. And then, after the initial important success, when a section of the garrison has gone over to the rebels, the skirmishing of small detachments, guerrilla warfare, can become a large-scale conflict involving the masses. In this confrontation, a section of the army, supported by both the armed and unarmed population, will combat the loyalist section of the army, isolated in a sea of popular hatred." (The Year 1905.)

Trotsky returned to the question of guerrilla struggle in his Problems of Civil War and his Military Writings. In many places he polemicalizes strongly against the methods and conceptions characteristic of guerrilla warfare, whose peasant social mold he did not fail to note. But there can be no mistake about this -- all this refers to the period following the seizure of power in Russia and the organization of the Red Army. In this context, the denunciation of "theories" that guerrilla warfare was "the revolutionary tactic par excellence," corresponded to an elementary necessity.

This by no means implies that Trotsky failed to recognize or that he minimized the significance of partisan struggle or guerrilla warfare in its manifold forms in other contexts. We have seen how he appraised the role of small armed detachments in 1905. In Problems of the Civil War he picked up the thread of his reflections in The Year 1905, writing that "in the initial period of the revolution we are pretty well compelled to rely exclusively on partisan detachments." Even after the seizure of power, if the resistance of the enemy is not completely broken, such detachments "can play an extremely effective role in the open country." Trotsky's Military Writings, moreover, explain several times the role of guerrillas during the civil war, within the framework, of course, of the overall strategy of the Red Army (which, moreover, Trotsky noted was originally

formed precisely from partisan detachments).

The idea of the role of guerrilla struggle before the seizure of power is taken up on other occasions. "Partisan detachments," Trotsky declared November 9, 1918, on the floor of the congress of soviets, "are characteristic of the period of struggle for power," and later on he wrote: "guerrilla warfare can achieve miracles when impelled by a class rising up in a struggle for power." And again (February 24, 1919): "The purpose of guerrilla warfare is to wear out a stronger opponent. Guerrilla warfare as such cannot be decisive in achieving final victory over an organized army. Indeed, it does not even contemplate this objective. It limits itself to tying down and obstructing its opponent, to destroying railway lines and spreading chaos. It is in this area that the weaker force has the advantage over a stronger opponent."

On the question more specifically of rural guerrilla warfare, Trotsky grasped the importance of armed peasant detachments in his writings on the second Chinese revolution and the following period, although he condemned the adventurist orientation of the Chinese CP and the Stalinized Comintern. He noted that guerrilla struggle could develop or survive because of the difficulty repressive forces have in moving decisively over "immense expanses" against a scattered multitude. He even projected the hypothesis, in a Left Opposition document, that peasant guerrilla nuclei could maintain themselves "continuously throughout the prolonged period needed by the proletarian vanguard to gather its forces, in order to engage the working class in the battle, and coordinate its struggle for power with the broad peasant offensives against its most immediate enemies." Later, in a letter written in 1931, he expressed the hope that the Chinese Left Oppositionists would integrate themselves into the armed detachments to share the fate of the fighters.

Finally, the Transitional Program poses the problem of arming the proletariat in the context of a struggle against fascist reaction. The point of departure must be strike pickets -- "the basic nuclei of the proletarian army" -- and workers self-defense detachments. "The arming of the proletariat," the document concludes, "is an imperative concomitant element to its struggle for liberation. When the proletariat wills it, it will find the road and the means to arming."

From my brief review of the conceptions of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky, I obviously do not draw the conclusion that the orientation of armed struggle we are proposing for this stage in Latin America flows automatically from these conceptions. That would in fact be using

the method we reject as scholastic. Our concern is to emphasize that our conceptions and criteria are part and parcel of the approach of the masters of revolutionary Marxism and no one can accuse us of any ultraleft-tinted revisionism. We are drawing on the generalizations, outlines, and even some extremely valuable anticipations of the past. Our task is to fill in these outlines with a concrete content in the specific conditions under which we are struggling now.

### III. On the Balance Sheet of Guerrilla Warfare

From a recognition of the fact that the guerrilla movements in Latin America have suffered a series of unquestionable setbacks, it does not automatically follow that this method of struggle must be rejected. After all, there are periods in the class struggle when one defeat follows another, no matter what method is adopted. No one can conclude from this, however, that we must abandon strikes. Likewise, Comrade Hugo Blanco's attempt ended in failure. This does not prevent Comrade Hansen from speaking, correctly, of the "extraordinary value" of his action. The question in reality is more precise and it demands an analytical answer: Are these failures explained by the incorrectness of the method in general, or by other more specific reasons?

We will not draw up such a balance sheet here. This will be done at the next world congress, with the contribution of our Latin-American comrades. However, we would like to advance a few brief considerations.

First of all, if we accept the criterion that all experiences of the workers movement that end in defeat are negative, we would have to blot out the greater part of the history of the class up to our day, beginning with the crushing of the Paris Commune. Every comrade knows, however, that defeats -- often inevitable in the given relationship of forces -- are not only rich in lessons for future battles (events like the Paris Commune make it possible to grasp in advance all the possibilities of the future), but they can also provoke crises in the opponent's system, weaken it in the long or intermediate term, stimulate the consciousness of the oppressed and the ripening of the vanguard. In short, all later developments would be different without such "defeats." In drawing a balance of the last decade in Latin America, we must not forget above all that it was precisely the method -- correctly applied -- of guerrilla warfare that made possible Fidel Castro's victory and the establishment of the first workers state in the Americas. As for the wave of guerrilla movements that spread subsequently to a number of

countries, it at least highlighted more dramatically the contradictions and the decay of the neocolonialist system; it provoked major political crises, whether immediately or later, prevented the stabilization of certain regimes, palpably accelerated the crisis of the traditional workers movement, and gave impetus to the development of new young vanguards. What has been written in Peru and Bolivia, for example, by partisans of Velasco and Ovando is quite eloquent in this regard.

It goes without saying that these considerations by no means eliminate the need for analyzing the reasons for the defeats, and especially the major ones. We did not wait for the criticisms of the minority to see that there were tendencies or groups in Latin America whose orientations and methods were leading inevitably to failure. "The experience of several countries has shown," I wrote in 1964, "that the revolutionists claiming to be Castroists have not rid themselves of putschist or adventurist tendencies despite certain grave setbacks and painful losses. Their weakness lies notably in an arbitrary extension of some of the specific features of the Cuban process, in overestimating the importance of military techniques to the detriment of more strictly political factors, in the tendency to divorce the action of very small vanguard nuclei from the development of the mass movement. Our task is to warn against such errors, which, moreover, need I repeat, have already had very negative consequences in several countries." (Quatrième Internationale, Vol. 23, No. 24.)

In our critique of Régis Debray, furthermore, we drew a preliminary balance sheet of the 1965 guerrilla movement in Peru. "We are inclined to the view," we wrote,<sup>10</sup> "that the defeat of the 1965 movement was not due essentially to false theoretical conceptions, or over-all line, but was rooted in an incorrect analysis that led to belief that the conditions vital to its success existed. These conditions -- namely: (a) a growing movement in the countryside; (b) real ties between the group undertaking guerrilla warfare and this movement; (c) active solidarity on the part of the exploited urban layers; (d) a political crisis so acute as to impel very wide segments of the population into struggle, eliminating those important areas of passivity and apathy which have unfortunately featured the Peruvian situation at crucial stages in the past -- did not exist in 1965." [See International Socialist Review, September-October 1967.] We also mentioned the technical military criticisms raised against the MIR by Castroist circles regarding the premature creation of guerrilla base areas. We might also add now -- on the basis of additional information -- that beyond declarations of principle the Bejar

nucleus did not concern itself with achieving the minimum conditions for establishing ties with the peasants, and that De La Puente and his companions did not take account of certain transformations which had occurred in their area of operation.<sup>11</sup> This, very briefly, is my opinion on Peru.

As regards Bolivia, there is no need here to go back over the political errors which were the basis of the defeat of Che's guerrillas. We have discussed them several times, while the same time pointing out -- on the basis of the analyses and perspectives of the Bolivian comrades -- what the conditions were for a victorious outcome of the new wave of armed struggle, which seems clearly inevitable. If we make an assessment now, benefiting from greater hindsight, and taking into account also of other experiences, such as those in Venezuela, it appears still more clearly that a common feature of all these struggles was in fact failing to recognize, or underestimating, the inevitable necessity of not viewing guerrilla warfare in isolation from the movements, the concrete conditions, and the spirit of the masses, even in the earliest and most embryonic stages. Understanding this problem is, of course, not sufficient to solve it -- in the last analysis, what must be done is to create a given relationship of forces at the right time; but such an understanding of the dialectical relationship between armed struggle and the mass movement is a condition sine qua non for avoiding new defeats.

We agree very largely with Comrade Hansen in his evaluation of the implications of Hugo Blanco's experience in the valley of La Convención and the method he used to give impetus to the peasant movement; all the more so because on the base of the orientations expressed by the Peruvian comrades contacted at the time in 1962 (we unfortunately knew very little about Hugo's activity), we had concluded that "it is very likely that it will be in direct connection with the land occupations...that the armed struggle will develop, especially in its first stage." It is correct also to reject the allegations that Blanco acted purely as a "syndicalist," not seeing the perspective of armed struggle.

From an objective standpoint, there is no question that the cause of the unfavorable conclusion of the struggle lay in the fact that the full development of the movement remained limited to the Cuzco region, and that the workers movement in the cities, still under the influence of the traditional organizations, remained passive. It is also unquestionable that the FIR -- decimated, among other things, by repression -- was not able to operate in any way approximating a Leninist party on the national scale, or to



effectively aid the comrades in Cuzco.

There are, however, two other questions which we may be able to come back to in the course of our discussion, let us hope, with the indispensable assistance of Comrade Hugo himself. The first point: In the absence of a party, was the role of political leadership played in practice by the unions, with all the difficulties inevitably flowing from this (and all the more because the unions did not represent a homogeneous reality nationally, or even regionally)? All fetishism of organizational forms must be carefully avoided. After Lenin, it was Trotsky himself who taught us this by his masterly analyses of the 1920s and 1930s. But when a classical instrument for mobilizing the masses and offering them revolutionary leadership is lacking, there is the risk that you may have to pay a very heavy price, all the more so if you are not completely conscious of the dangers inherent in this unfavorable situation. To what extent was our Peruvian movement aware of this at the time?<sup>12</sup> Second point: Did the comrades in La Convención have the perspective that at a given time there might be a wave of repression, that they would have to fight arms in hand, that the militias might no longer be the most adequate instrument, and that the only viable solution, in such a context, would be the action of guerrilla detachments (which, by comparison with other experiences would have had the inestimable advantage of a very profound tie to the peasant masses)? Were they prepared for such an eventuality?

It is quite possible that we are mistaken and that new information will compel us to rectify our opinions. But we have the impression that at least the second question must be answered in the negative and that, therefore, it is in this area also that the causes of the unhappy end to the movement in Cuzco must be sought.

#### IV. General Guidelines and Concrete Applications

Let us try again to clarify and spell out our conceptions of armed struggle in Latin America at this stage.

Our movement cannot restrict itself to criticizing the reformist orientations of the Communist parties nor to affirming the inevitability of revolutionary struggle for power. If we did do so, that would mean objectively to give lip service to armed struggle -- in the style of classical centrism from Kautsky in 1910 to Rodney Arismendi -- but, in the absence of a concrete application of this principle, renouncing it in practice. In the best of suppositions, I repeat, this would come down to accepting a spontanéist conception of insurrection, a conception which, in fact, can be perceived some-

times in the formulations used in the documents or publications of certain segments of our movement and which is in flagrant contradiction to the revolutionary Marxist conception of insurrection as an art, of the necessity, in a revolutionary or prerevolutionary context, of specifically military activity by a combat party. We are not unaware of the fact that in a context like that of Latin America today adventurist deviations can always occur, above and beyond more or less correct formulations in documents -- we have to keep our eyes open to this danger and fight it without hesitation, if necessary. But above all at the time when we began to spell out our present conceptions on Latin America, that is, in the second half of 1967, the emphasis had to be put on the opposite danger. Despite its being founded by a leader of the October Revolution, the founder of the Red Army, and a man with an extraordinary list of honors for his participation in revolutionary struggles throughout the world, our movement might have given the impression of either being ignorant of the problems of armed struggle, or viewing them in a purely theoretical or propagandistic way to such an extent that even in our own ranks there were comrades wanting to study military problems who drew on other sources, unaware of Leon Trotsky's contribution. This deficiency must be accounted for by the conditions in which we struggled for decades and by a legitimate concern not to encourage a suicidal adventurism, not to impose overwhelming tasks on very small nuclei. But, with the objective situation on our side, it was vitally necessary to make a turn. The world congress document was a contribution in this direction; the documents and decisions of the Bolivian and Argentinian comrades, at bottom, have had the same significance, with the advantage of adding more concreteness to the overall conceptions.<sup>13</sup>

Referring to the last part of my article of last March, Comrade Hansen accuses me of outlining "various forms, trying to put them into a kind of logical order and to assess the chances of their being seen in Latin America in the future. This is a barren exercise in the absence of the political context, particularly the party-building context, of the forms." What we did in our writings -- perhaps without the needed clarity and precision -- was on the one hand, give indications, starting precisely from an analysis of the specific and concrete situations; on the other, to review briefly the categories of armed struggle that could possibly be determined on the basis not of an abstract logic but of the real experience of the revolutionary struggles which have thus far marked the transition from capitalism to socialism. The concept of armed struggle is not synonymous with an insurrection of the masses who generate



armed detachments from within their ranks. When the class struggle reaches the level of an armed confrontation, such an insurrection can, in fact, take place; but the result may also be a civil war with real armies occupying different regions of the country locked in conflict. "There is finally," we wrote, "a third variant which occurs when the class struggle has already reached the level of armed confrontation but not yet the generalized form of a civil war. This is the variant of guerrilla warfare which, as we have seen, can assume very different concrete forms." It is perfectly legitimate to ask whether these categories can be applied in the present Latin-American context and in what forms. In principle, we cannot exclude totally new variants. For my part, I am ready to examine any suggestion on the question with the greatest interest.

The most favorable variant would unquestionably be the one "of an explosive crisis involving the breaking up or paralysis of the state apparatus and a mass mobilization so impetuous that it could prevent or neutralize recourse to repression as a decisive measure" (point No. 18 of the congress document). We did not rule out a priori that such an eventuality might occur. However, in order for this to happen not only the native ruling classes but imperialism as well would have to find themselves in a state of collapse and impotence which it would be irresponsible to count on in the immediate or near future. This is why we consider this variant by far the least likely. What is possible is upsurges in the mass movement culminating in broad mobilizations, or political general strikes. But, in the absence of a specific orientation for armed struggle and the necessary instrument to lead it (and only spontanéists could conceive of its emerging out of the struggle itself), such mobilizations would be subject to police or military repression, or to decline and exhaustion. The last fifteen years in the history of a country like Argentina are very instructive in this respect.

In his initial contribution, Comrade Hansen mistakenly judged that the document on Latin America stood in contradiction to the considerations set forth in the one on the world situation (first part, last paragraph). It is clear that the allusion to drawing much closer to "the Leninist norm of proletarian revolutions" refers primarily to the industrialized capitalist countries. It concerns the neo-colonial countries more indirectly. In any case, reaffirming the primordial role of the industrial working class and its methods of action and organization -- which involves a definitive rejection of all revisionism along the lines of Marcuse, Sweezy, and even Lin Piao -- does not automatically resolve the question of the forms of armed struggle. In

this area, the revolutionary crisis of May 1968 in France has not given us the slightest pointers for the simple reason that this extraordinary mass mobilization halted on the threshold of real struggle for power, which would inevitably have culminated in an armed confrontation.

In speaking of "classical" norms the reference is clearly most of all to the October Revolution. We do not doubt in the least that this "model," in principle, represents the most favorable variant, because the breadth of the mobilization of the workers and peasants produced a very clear situation of dual power, gave rise to the embryonic forms of a new revolutionary democratic state structure, and reduced to a minimum the armed confrontation, which was conducted by detachments arising from the masses and closely linked to the ascending mass movement. But even leaving out the civil war that followed, it must not be forgotten for an instant that two conditions permitted such a development: the bourgeois army had been broken up by the war and the state apparatus more generally was in the midst of crisis; a revolutionary party existed, linked to the masses for fifteen years, which posed the question of armed struggle and the creation of a military apparatus from the start. Applying the schema of October to Latin America today, "forgetting" these two essential elements, would really be a "barren exercise!"

We must start by recognizing that prerevolutionary situations exist in Latin America -- in the context of the worldwide crisis of imperialism -- but that revolutionary parties of mass influence have not arisen. (The Fourth International is better able to explain this than anyone.) At the same time the class struggle has attained the level of armed confrontation while bourgeois armies remain that are not disintegrating and have the advantage of increasingly modern potentialities; as a last resort, the imperialist army can intervene directly (Santo Domingo). This is why the vanguard, the Trotskyist organizations first of all, must at the same time accomplish the tasks of winning or considerably increasing their mass influence and of participating in the armed struggle. We reject the conception of those who think that this contradiction -- which is an objective contradiction -- can be overcome by the determined action of small nuclei, which, by throwing themselves into armed struggle, would automatically create favorable conditions and set off an irreversible dynamic. But neither do we accept the mechanistic -- and, from the methodological standpoint, Menshevik -- idea that the problems of participating in armed struggle will not arise before the relationship of forces is reversed or radically changed on the mass level.

In fact, the masses, in a series of countries at least, are more and more realizing that the only way out in the last analysis is armed struggle. This is shown, for example, in the sympathy that surrounds those who organize armed struggles, even when these are adventurous undertakings. This explains, moreover, why, despite some appearances, the gap is widening between the masses and the bureaucratic apparatuses and why the groups organizing armed commandos are multiplying. In this context, revolutionists adopting forms of armed struggle, linked to mass work and precise political analyses, can accelerate certain process and impel an evolution in the relationship of forces.

All that we have said implies that in its initial stages the armed struggle will develop under conditions unfavorable to the revolutionary forces and that for a period, probably a rather protracted one, the armed struggle will be unable to rise to the level of a mass insurrection or real civil war. The form of armed struggle suited to such a relationship of forces in such a context -- as Lenin and Trotsky indicated -- is precisely guerrilla warfare in its manifold forms.

When Comrade Hansen writes that if certain guidelines of the document on Latin America are accepted, we must draw similar conclusions for "the rest of the colonial and semicolonial world," he raises a real problem. We do not think that it is correct to proceed to generalizations in the abstract and we would not attempt to outline the methods of struggle necessary in South Africa or Thailand by way of analogy, citing some so-called strict logic. But, without regard to our conceptions and our possible deviations, it is a fact that over the last fifty years guerrilla struggle has developed -- in different forms -- in many countries of the world, from China to Nazi-occupied Western Europe, from so-called Portuguese Guinea to Bolivia.

In a whole series of cases, guerrilla warfare was a phenomenon linked to military operations in an armed conflict of much wider dimensions. More generally, on the other hand, this worldwide expansion of guerrilla warfare is only a reflection of the revolutionary character of the historical period in which we are living. But, if we want to explain all this and comprehend the potential tendencies for the future, we must understand above all that this spread of guerrilla warfare throughout the world -- even in genuinely adventurist forms -- is, in the last analysis, the result of the contradictions in this period, of the relations between the forces present.

The concept in the Transitional Program that "the world political situation as a whole is chiefly characterized by

a historical crisis of the leadership of the proletariat," whose farsightedness can be appreciated today better than at any time in the past, can be specified as follows. In many countries of the world, the old society is in crisis, the ruling classes are split and unable to impose long-term solutions, the masses no longer accept their condition or bourgeois and imperialist domination -- they are demanding a qualitative change. At the same time, despite the spectacular episodes of these years, the relationship of forces within the exploited classes remains unfavorable to revolutionists in the sense that at the mass level the bureaucratic apparatuses retain the dominant influence as well as considerable room for maneuver. This is why, when the class struggle reaches the level of armed confrontation -- which it does most often independently not only of the will of the traditional organizations but also of the concrete decisions of the revolutionists -- this occurs in conditions where the conservative forces have the military advantage. As a result the tendency arises to adopt the method of guerrilla warfare, which, let me repeat once more, is the most suitable form of armed struggle in the given context.

In Latin America, as long as there is no radical change in the relationship of forces within the working class and peasantry, the alternative of avoiding armed struggle does not exist in practice, because, regardless of our strategic or tactical choices, the stage of armed confrontations has already opened and the question of armed struggle is posed periodically, even in countries which have experienced or will experience "democratic" interludes or non-violent class struggles and in spite of any temporary defeats.

Rejecting all one-sided interpretations or caricatures of our conception, we reaffirm here that the stress put on rural guerrilla warfare had a very precise meaning that did not imply any concession to revisionist ideas, or to foguista illusions, and this stress went hand in hand with the understanding "there will inevitably be a whole gamut of variants and that the different factors at work will combine in different forms according to the different countries and conjunctural situations" (point No. 17). We also envisaged the possibility of essentially urban guerrilla warfare and armed struggle. (In this, Comrade Hansen would certainly admit that we are not exactly under Cuban influence.)

It is necessary to stop a minute on the case of Uruguay. In this country, from an objective standpoint, the possibility of a struggle for power along the lines of the "classical" variant has, in

fact, existed. The upswing of the mass movement, especially in mid-1968, was so great that the masses mobilized almost unanimously against the regime. Moreover, for historical reasons, the regular armed forces at the time were so small and so inadequate to the needs of a civil war that they would not have been an insurmountable obstacle. What was lacking, however, was a strategy for taking power, a strategy of armed struggle developed in advance, concrete instruments for such a struggle prepared in advance. This deficiency was the result of the hold of the reformists over the proletariat. As a result, the full potentialities of the situation were not exploited and urban guerrilla warfare appeared to broad layers of vanguard as the only valid form of struggle.<sup>14</sup> The Tupamaros, who are the protagonists in this struggle, enjoy very extensive sympathy and support. From this standpoint, it cannot be claimed that they are cut off from the masses. They cannot be criticized either, as some have done, for conducting a fundamentally urban struggle, given the structure of Uruguay. Their weaknesses lie, in our opinion, in the lack of a clear political perspective of struggle for power. This makes them appear much more like militants who punish the exploiters and oppressors for their crimes than a real alternative leadership.

The developments subsequent to the world congress make it possible to get a better idea of the perspectives for countries like Brazil and Argentina. Practice has shown that the armed struggle can begin with forms of urban guerrilla warfare (without thereby excluding the necessity at a later stage for a more comprehensive strategy which must include, above all in Brazil, armed struggle in the rural areas). The mobilizations in Córdoba and Rosario more particularly have shown on the one hand the validity of the analysis that the stage of prostration of the workers movement had been surmounted and on the other that the question of armed struggle could arise concretely on the mass level. It is regrettable that certain Argentinian comrades did not understand this and have continued to pose the problem of beginning the struggle in the same terms as in 1967. This is wrong in several respects, and has led them to adopt adventurist resolutions.<sup>15</sup>

The development of a line for Chile has thus far presented very grave difficulties, which is reflected, among other things, in the oscillations and internal crises of the MIR. But after Allende's success, a situation has been produced that makes it possible to put the question of a struggle for power before the masses who have mobilized and are not ready to let themselves be robbed of the victory they won in the elections without fighting back. Both before and after September

4, the documents of the Chilean comrades have correctly viewed the problem of armed struggle and arming the proletariat in connection with mobilizing against any reactionary attempt to crush the rising mass movement. In reality, if the Chilean revolutionists were able to establish an even partially favorable relationship of forces vis-à-vis the Communist and Socialist parties, they would have to put their trust in such an orientation with the perspective of a rather rapid passage to a real insurrection. Unfortunately the actual situation -- which is the result of the evolution of the workers movement for forty years -- does not permit us to entertain any excessive optimism. The alternative, then, is shaping up in the following terms. Either the bourgeoisie will choose to risk a reformist operation, accepting a new version of the popular front (in this case the perspective of an armed confrontation would be postponed for a certain time) or it will seek a showdown, because the response of the dominant organizations will not be adequate to head off a repressive regime -- and then the problem of armed struggle will be posed in forms similar to those in other Latin-American countries. It goes without saying, that in any case, by a flexible orientation free from sectarianism, our comrades can promote an understanding on the mass level of the necessity of a revolutionary outcome through armed struggle.

We will not go back over what we have already said on the need for a comprehensive and well-hinged strategy for a country like Bolivia, where the armed struggle may take different concrete forms from its first stage. We will not go back either over what our Bolivian comrades have written on the necessity of exploiting the situation created a year ago by the Ovando coup. (It should be said in passing that the situation may change again in the near future, since the credit of the Ovando regime is becoming more and more eroded.) We are not, moreover, in a position to evaluate the episodes which marked the resumption of the struggle by the ELN. I would stress the fact, however, that, far from declining, sympathy for the guerrillas has increased and it is symptomatic that leaders of the student movement have publicly associated themselves with the fighters. This says a great deal about the possibilities for close links between the masses and a guerrilla movement capable of avoiding all adventurism and sectarianism and basing itself from the outset on a correct orientation.

It is not our task here to outline specific indications for every country in Latin America. The sections there have been the ones to do this and will continue

to do so. The next world congress will, if necessary, be able to aid them in this task. We are perfectly aware that overall conceptions and general rules are not enough. They are, in the last analysis, only a precondition; the real difficulties begin when you have to evaluate the relationship of forces minutely, discover the weakest link in the enemy's armor, establish your timing, determine the minimum forces for undertaking a given

action, etc. But what we wanted to do here was to further clarify the real significance of an orientation and a method which was approved by the last congress and which cannot be abandoned without very grave consequences for our movement in such an explosive region of the world.

September 30, 1970

#### FOOTNOTES

1. During the summer of 1967 -- the period of the OLAS conference -- we were convinced that on his essential appreciation of the conclusions of that conference we had no differences with Comrade Hansen, whose article analyzing the conference was republished without reservation by the organs of the International and several of its sections.

2. Cf. our articles published in Quatrième Internationale of November 1968 and Intercontinental Press of December 8, 1967 and September 2, 1968.

3. Comrade Hansen reproaches us with being more Cuban than the Cubans and adopting a guerrilla warfare course at the very moment when the Fidelistas are taking a "pause for reflection." If that were true, it would in any case show that we are capable of thinking independently. But unfortunately in this case also Comrade Hansen takes liberties with the dates.

4. In his document Hansen presents Moreno in a very favorable light, writing: "Our first big advance came in Peru through the work of Hugo Blanco, carried out with the active participation of Argentine comrades like Daniel Pereyra and Eduardo Creus under the leadership of Comrade Nahuel Moreno." A stage in the life of our Peruvian movement, on which the opinions of the participants are, to say the least, divided, is presented in a grossly oversimplified way. Furthermore, it is not our movement's style to use expressions like "under the leadership of Comrade Nahuel Moreno," which should be avoided even if they had any correspondence with the reality.

5. It is regrettable that in a publication by three Argentine comrades (El Unico Camino Hasta el Poder Obrero y el Socialismo), the idea is slipped in that Engels' preface contributed to the degeneration of the German Social Democracy. This is a totally unacceptable judgment.

6. "In principle, we have never renounced and can never renounce terrorism." (in an article in Iskra, No. 4, May 1901.)

7. It is impossible for me to cite Lenin

in the different translations and making bibliographic references would burden the text. I am translating [into French] from the Italian edition of the complete works. [The text in the standard English edition of the complete works is given where the author provides sufficient reference to find it. -- Translator.]

8. In 1917 Lenin scored those Bolsheviks who forgot that the military question had become the essential political question and who "expect that a wave will topple Kerensky....Such a naive hope would be the same thing as trusting to 'luck.' In the party of the revolutionary proletariat such an attitude can become a crime."

9. Cf. above all the following articles: "Guerrilla Warfare," "The Political Strike and the Street Fighting in Moscow," and "Lessons of the Moscow Uprising."

10. We apologize for quoting ourselves again, but the record must be clear.

11. Some persons have stressed the gaps in the MIR's analysis of Peruvian society. We don't think that this played a very important role in practice. In regard to Bejar's position on the party, see our article of last March 15.

12. I presume to raise this question, among others, because in a letter by Comrade Blanco (January 1964) one reads: "Today I have the impression that there must be a single centralized apparatus embracing all the aspects of the open struggle and that apparatus will depend on the only mass revolutionary party sui generis that exists in our country -- the peasant unions." (In the letter of April 7, 1964, published in Quatrième Internationale, Vol. 23, No. 24, the question is posed in different terms.)

13. As regards Argentina, I consider that the little book El Unico Camino, written by three Argentinian comrades, made a valid contribution in several respects. It goes without saying that we do not accept their impressionist, confused, and outright false generalizations on Trotskyism, Castroism, and Maoism, which,

however, were part of the stock and trade of the PRT -- including Comrade Moreno -- before the 1968 split.

14. The interpretation that the Tupamaros had their greatest expansion with the peak of the mass movement and began to decline after the downturn does not correspond to the reality and it reflects a mechanistic method of analysis. (Cf. the article from La Verdad, republished by

Intercontinental Press, September 21, 1970.)

15. The elements that have changed with respect to 1967 -- in different directions -- are notably the social situation in certain regions of the country, the situation among the urban working class, the organizational situation of our section, and last but not least, the situation in Bolivia.

## THE STRATEGIC ORIENTATION OF THE REVOLUTIONISTS IN LATIN AMERICA

by Ernest Germain and Martine Knoeller

The discussion on the strategic orientation for Latin America that has been taking place in the ranks of the international Trotskyist movement since before the last world congress and that is still continuing fits into the framework of a broad debate of like character developing throughout the entire anti-imperialist vanguard of the continent. This is an essential preliminary point to be borne in mind that immediately clarifies one vital fact. This debate is not the result of any revolutionary group accommodating to "pressure" from some "mystical" sect that lacks political experience on behalf of some "surefire solution." It is rather an outgrowth of the practical, living experience of all revolutionists and all mass struggles over the past ten to twelve years on this continent.

This experience can be summed up in a few words. Whatever the different starting points of the mass movements in the various countries of Latin America, everywhere they have come to the same conclusion--that is, all forms of struggle that revolutionists have attempted, in close liaison with the masses or in isolation from them, have culminated in armed confrontations with local or international reaction, or both at once, from the moment they began to show the slightest serious progress.

Whether it was militant peasant unionism (Hugo Blanco); militant working-class unionism (Córdoba, Rosario); whether it was mass urban uprisings (Santo Domingo) or mass rural uprisings (recently in Ecuador); whether it was urban guerrilla warfare (Uruguay, Brazil) or rural guerrilla warfare (Peru, Colombia); the armed confrontation with the state, imperialism or a direct representative of imperialism (like the counterinsurgency groups or Rangers), did not occur at the conclusion of a long period of building up forces by a gradual advance of mass mobilizations. In every case, this confrontation came in the initial stage of the ripening of each potentially revolutionary form of struggle.

The reasons for this state of things does not lie either in the relative weakness of the mass movement, as some claim; or in the "premature" adoption of violent forms of action by this movement, as others claim. It lies in a complex combination of several factors:

(a) The hyperacute and explosive nature of the social contradictions, which make it impossible to channel the militant thrusts of the masses into reformist paths.

(b) The assimilation by the masses

of the principal lessons of the Cuban Revolution, notably a loss of confidence in the traditional bourgeois and petty-bourgeois formations and an accentuated hostility toward imperialism.

(c) The assimilation by imperialism and by the Latin-American bourgeoisie of the principal lesson of the Cuban Revolution, that is, the tendency of any vast mass movement to exceed the limits of its initial objectives and enter into a process of permanent revolution.

(d) The capacity of the masses for rapid recovery, even after grave defeats, precisely because of the inability of the ruling classes to achieve real solutions, even temporarily, for the ills the people suffer. (Two striking examples of this are the revival of the Brazilian movement in 1968 in vast mass demonstrations and strike mobilizations, despite the crushing defeat suffered in 1964; and the recovery of the Bolivian mass movement in 1969, despite the no less crushing defeat it suffered in 1964, which was, proportionately speaking, bloodier and more grave than the Brazilian one.)

(e) The considerable strength retained by the bourgeois repressive apparatus (constantly fueled, financed, and reinforced by imperialism itself). The strength of this apparatus stands in clear contradiction to the weakness and decay of the traditional bourgeois and petty-bourgeois political apparatuses (Peronism, Vargasism, Goulart populism, the AD in Venezuela, and APRA in Peru). The result of this is that the bourgeois army is becoming the bourgeoisie's principal political force in all the Latin-American countries.

We by no means draw the conclusion from this that imperialism and the bourgeoisie can no longer govern except under the hideous mask of "gorillas." To the contrary, we have explicitly warned the comrades against such a simplistic view of things at the Ninth World Congress.<sup>1</sup> But we do draw the conclusion that whatever the vicissitudes or maneuvers of the bourgeois, one variant seems extremely improbable, if not excluded; that is the one of a rather protracted period of 'bourgeois democracy' on the European or American model (with all the limitations of such democracy, it goes without saying) that would permit the increasing growth of the mass movement thereby permitting revolutionists to achieve a progressive buildup of strength through slow and patient work in the unions or other mass organizations, thus making it possible to postpone a major armed confrontation

until the revolutionary organization and mass movement have achieved sufficient experience and maturity to undertake this struggle in the best possible conditions.

The possibility of such a development seems excluded, in our opinion, because the bourgeoisie wants to prevent it at all cost and because it still has enough power to prevent it.

Let us take the exceptional and only case in Latin America over the last decade where the workers movement has been able to develop and grow in conditions of more or less classical "bourgeois democracy"--Chile. What do we see the moment Allende has won his celebrated electoral victory? The entire vanguard is talking about the possibility of an armed confrontation with the bourgeoisie. No one seriously believes that it would be possible to "purge" or dismantle the bourgeois military apparatus, to say nothing of overthrowing capitalism in Chile, without the army acting.

The eventuality of going through an "Allende era" without an armed confrontation would be the worst of possibilities. It would mean a terrible defeat for the workers movement; that is, with Allende limiting himself to a "classical" popular-front policy, not modifying the capitalist structures of the economy and the state in any way, with the masses accepting this deception and betrayal without a violent reaction, and with the right returning triumphantly to power on the basis of a general decline in combativity, on the basis of a great demoralization.

If we rule out this highly pessimistic hypothesis, armed confrontation is on the order of the day in the relatively near future even in Chile. And, we repeat, everyone is talking about it. Because under this variant, the masses, more and more outraged and exasperated by the hesitations, cowardice, and inevitable capitulations of the popular front to the class enemy will themselves move into extra-parliamentary action over Allende's head. And in that case, a violent reaction by the possessing classes and their army is not only possible but probable. (The only countries where such a confrontation is not on the order of the day obviously are those where the mass movement has been disorganized and on a very low level for long years, as in Mexico; that is, in those countries where there are no reasons to impel the bourgeois into such a conflict. But even in Mexico, all that was needed was the first timid efforts of an explosive student movement to influence sectors of the working class and poor peasantry and the government proceeded to stage the massacre of Tlatelolco.)

As long as the five factors mentioned above remain valid (and in this specific

combination, they are valid for the moment only in Latin America and a few countries of Southeast Asia), the important and intensely fought major armed confrontations will occur from the beginning and not in the culminating phase of every major resurgence of mass struggles. This is the lesson of experience. It is by no means contradicted by the establishment of "military-reformist" regimes in a certain number of Latin-American countries. To the contrary, the installation of such regimes completely confirms this lesson, which we are considering precisely in isolation from the specific form of the bourgeois governments in Latin America (with the sole partial exception of Chile, where the formal structure of bourgeois democracy has thus far been maintained). The regime of General Velasco has not had to suppress broad mass movements, not because he has tolerated them, or been forced to tolerate them by "mass pressure," but because none have yet developed. The limited movements that have occurred, notably a few spontaneous land occupations and hard-fought strikes have all encountered fierce repression which has claimed many lives. As for Bolivia, the first sign of a new rise in mass struggles provoked a coup d'etat followed by a bloody armed confrontation. Those who think that because he came to power "with the support of the left" General Tórres will prove more "tolerant" have a few disagreeable surprises in store for them, as soon as he has restored the unity of the army, which is his primary aim.

We can regret that these things are so. We can say that this is not the best variant for the Latin-American revolution. But, nonetheless, it is the only realistic one. It will occur in any case, whether the revolutionists are prepared for it or not. Since the Cuban Revolution the Latin-American revolutionists have increasingly preferred to prepare for the armed confrontation instead of having to face it unprepared. We frankly believe that they are right. To state this, explain it, and draw the general conclusions from it was the fundamental function of the document presented by the majority of the United Secretariat to the Ninth World Congress and which was adopted by this congress.

#### The Influence of the Cuban Revolution on the Strategic Orientation of the Latin-American Revolutionists

When Comrade Joe Hansen referred in his last discussion document to the preponderant influence exercised by the Cuban Revolution for ten years on the thought and action of the Latin-American revolutionists, he got entangled in a strange and significant contradiction. On the one hand, he proclaims as an absolute dogma that guerrilla warfare is



not a strategy but a tactic. On the other hand, he states that the principal lesson the young revolutionary vanguard in Latin America drew from the Cuban experience was to engage in guerrilla warfare in its most primitive form--"foquismo"--and that the majority of the Fourth International is now succumbing to the same sin, at the very moment when the Cuban comrades themselves are in the process of correcting their errors. "These revolutionary-minded youth" (in Latin America), he writes, "did not understand the basic political reasons for the Cuban success; they sought for the explanation on the side of skillful technique in the use of arms."

If the Cuban experience essentially meant "foquismo," if guerrilla warfare is a tactical question, how did it happen that for ten years the entire revolutionary vanguard in Latin America crystallized around debates and passionate struggles centering on the Cuban experience? A few tendencies can always get disoriented. Still very small, the Fourth International could succumb to "the influence of ultraleftism." But for the entire revolutionary movement in Latin America (we repeat, the entire movement with only a few thoroughly minor and insignificant exceptions) to let its mind be clouded for more than ten years by a purely tactical problem--that would really be an inexplicable mystery. And Comrade Hansen does not resolve it with a few passing references to "inexperienced youth."

The mystery is very easily solved, because it exists only in the rather unreal construction of our friend Joe Hansen. The reality is much more complex. The revolutionists who let themselves be hypnotized by the question of "foquismo" and the purely tactical aspect of guerrilla warfare did not constitute all the revolutionary movement in Latin America but only a small minority. Of course among this minority were some of the most courageous elements that the Latin-American revolution has yet produced. The losses they suffered because of their tactical errors were heavy and painful. But the principal debate, the one which caught up almost all the revolutionary movement in Latin America, was not over a tactical question but over a strategic one. The essential contribution of the Cuban revolution to crystallizing and reinforcing the revolutionary current in Latin America was not involved with "foquismo" (which only Régis Debray really systematized) but with the question of which orientation to follow--one toward taking power through armed struggle; or a reformist one toward collaborating with the "national" bourgeoisie and its army (or a fraction of its army)?

The fundamental cleavage the Cuban revolution introduced into the anti-imperialist movement was the result of

this strategic alternative. It was on this ground that the Cuban Revolution challenged and combated thirty years of Stalinist and neo-Stalinist verbiage about an "alliance of progressives," the "electoral road to power," the "democratic tradition of our army," and so forth. It is because this question is a strategic one and not a tactical one that the debate has been so impassioned, the cleavage so profound, the crystallization so long drawn out. Otherwise, all that has occurred in the Latin-American left since 1959 would become incomprehensible indeed. Even the October Revolution, whose historic impact is unquestionably greater, was not able to provoke cleavages in the workers movement for ten years over purely tactical questions (such as the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly; the Brest-Litovsk peace, etc.). On the other hand, it produced cleavages on strategic issues (on the dictatorship of the proletariat, that is, soviet democracy or bourgeois parliamentary democracy) which still persist, and for good reason!

Let it be said, moreover, in passing that the nature of this cleavage reflected the nature of the Cuban experience itself and that it is a complete distortion to say, as Régis Debray and a few others have done, that Fidel and Che overthrew the Batista regime starting from some isolated "foco." In reality, the July 26 Movement was an organization that developed out of the left wing of a mass anti-imperialist movement in both the cities and the countryside, that even before the landing of the Granma had a political and material infrastructure in the cities much more solid than anything possessed today by any revolutionary vanguard organization in Latin America, and that in conditions of extreme clandestinity, under a ferocious dictatorship, tried to establish a close liaison with the mass movement. It should be added to this that up until the end of the struggle against Batista the July 26 organization had a greater number of people fighting and falling victim to repression in the cities than in the Sierra Maestra. Moreover, the general strike of January 1, 1959, played a key role in unleashing the process of permanent revolution.

These facts do not have a purely anecdotal value. They enable us to illustrate another contradiction in Comrade Hansen's document. He puts great stress on the heavy losses and disastrous defeats resulting from the guerrilla struggle in Latin America over the last ten years. What, then, is the mysterious reason why so many revolutionists and revolutionary groups in Latin America remain partisans of armed struggle, despite these losses? Is this out of a pure death wish or blind romanticism? Still, grave losses usually force mili-

tants to react, even those most set in their ways. Two years after the 1933 defeat in Germany neither the Communist nor the Socialist party dared repeat the policy that led to the disaster. Isn't ten years time in Latin America enough for people to draw the minimum lessons from catastrophic errors?

Here again the mystery clears up as soon as you leave the arbitrary construction erected by Comrade Hansen (i.e. "for or against foquismo") and rejoin the real and actual debate of the Latin-American vanguard ("for or against the strategy of armed struggle"). As soon as you look at the problem in this way, the reason why the Latin-American revolutionists persist, and why they are right to do so, becomes plain. They have acquired the conviction by experience that the losses suffered owing to hesitations or refusal to engage on the road of armed struggle have been, are, and will be infinitely greater than the losses of the guerrillas, given the nature of the political systems that prevail and must prevail in Latin America.

Compare the losses in guerrillas with the number killed in the massacres of unarmed worker and peasant populations in countries like Peru, Bolivia, and Brazil, and you will understand why these losses do not alarm any of the revolutionists.

We had the same experience during the Nazi occupation. When a certain level of ferocity on the part of the enemy is reached, revolutionists (including, if possible, broader groups and masses) take up arms as a measure of self-defense, even in the physical sense of the term. There were more survivors among the Yugoslav, Polish, and Russian partisans than among the unarmed sectors of the civil population exposed to the Nazi mass arrests (and we are not including the Jews exposed to total extermination). Many more of the armed partisans in all the countries occupied by the Nazis survived than the Communist, Trotskyist, Socialist, and trade-union leaders who let themselves be deported to concentration camps. Many more of the Vietnamese Communists who have been fighting arms in hand for twenty-five years have survived than of the Indonesian Communists who refused to engage in such a struggle. This is the historic dilemma confronting the revolutionists in many Latin-American countries.

Once you understand the great strategic debate that the Cuban Revolution launched in the Latin-American revolutionary movement in such terms, you have reason to evince much greater concern than Comrade Hansen does over the revision of strategy that is underway on the part of the Cuban leaders. If it were all a question of tactics it would obviously be

an excellent thing to stop disseminating hundreds of thousands of copies of the "terrible simplifications" of the hapless Régis Debray. But, unfortunately for Comrade Hansen, much more is at stake than a simple change in tactics. The question is whether under the combined effect of the failures of "foquismo," Soviet pressure, and the evolution within their own country, the Cuban leaders are not abandoning their strategic orientation toward overthrowing the bourgeois state in Latin America, which is the orientation of the "Second Declaration of Havana," of the permanent revolution. The question is whether they are abandoning their most important strategic advance to return to a neoreformist and neo-Stalinist variant of revolution by stages--first the "anti-imperialist revolution" in which socialists are supposed to give more or less critical support to a still intact bourgeois state and army (or their "progressive wing"); then a properly socialist stage.

The great majority of Latin-American revolutionists have recognized this danger, beginning with Hugo Blanco, who emphasized it in excellent terms that we entirely approve of. Once again the fundamental explanation is not to be sought in the realm of psychology (a previous embellishment of the Cuban line now producing an abrupt rebound, and so forth). It lies in the political logic. Any refusal to envisage armed confrontations in the near or relatively near future in Latin America can mean only one of two things--either abandonment of all perspective for revolutionary transformation; or a return to the illusion that this transformation will be miraculously possible with the aid or benevolent neutrality of the bourgeois army (or a part of it). There is no need to say that much more than the death of Che or this or that guerrilla defeat in this or that country, it is the practical experience of the Velasco regime in Peru, the Ovando-Tórres regime in Bolivia, and the election of Allende in Chile that is encouraging the return to these neo-Stalinist conceptions. There is no need to point out, either, that Moscow's international apparatus, which does not lack resources, is exerting every means to promote such a regression and not without success, unfortunately, in Havana also. Let us hope that there at least these successes will be strictly ephemeral, and let us work toward this end with all our strength. This is an essential contribution we must make to the defense of the Cuban Revolution.

Comrade Hansen is wrong when he suggests that the majority of the Ninth World Congress based its orientation on the contingency that the Cubans would continue to support guerrilla warfare in Latin America. We do not think that the destiny of the Latin-American revolution

depends on the orientation of the Cuban leadership. We think, to the contrary, that the rise and new victories of the Latin-American revolution will determine the destiny of Cuba (and subsidiary to this we think that they will profoundly influence the orientation of Fidel Castro). It is in this sense that our strategy of armed struggle in Latin America is an integral part of our defense of the Cuban Revolution.

### The Historical Variants of Armed Struggle

In order to define more precisely the character of the strategic debate now underway in Latin America--and on Latin America within our movement--let us examine the principal variants of revolutionary struggle growing over into armed struggle that we have seen thus far in the history of the workers movement. (We are obviously leaving the minor variants out of the discussion.)

1. There is the variant that can be called classical--the mass movement undergoes a rapid expansion (after a long period of building up strength and experience) and goes over into arming the proletariat and confronting the bourgeois army at the moment when the revolutionary crisis reaches its fullest flowering, that is simultaneously with a general mass mobilization and emergence on a wide scale of organs of dual power. This is what happened, grosso modo, in Russia in 1917, in Germany in 1918-19, in Spain in 1936, in Vietnam in 1945-46, to pick the most well-known examples. Such a confrontation can occur at the outset of the revolutionary crisis, which happened in Spain and Vietnam; or only when the revolutionary crisis itself nears its culmination, which was the case in Russia. We will come back to the significance of this subvariant.

2. There is the variant that could be called "ultraleft"--a revolutionary party, already strong but clearly a minority, provokes a premature confrontation between its forces, in isolation, and the enemy army. The struggle invariably ends in defeat, a useless defeat. This is the case of the 1921 "March Action" in Germany by the young German CP; it was the case of the 1927 Canton putsch unleashed by the Chinese CP, and so forth.

3. There is a variant intermediate between the first and second, that is the case of an armed confrontation with the enemy which results from the advance and maturing of the mass struggle itself before the revolutionary party has won sufficient national influence to be able to defeat the bourgeois state. This was the case of the Paris Commune, the December 1905 insurrection in Russia, the armed struggles resulting from the general strike against General Kapp's

1920 putsch in Germany, and the Asturias insurrection in 1934. The outcome of such struggles is uncertain. Although they generally end in a defeat, such defeat is not inevitable. Above all, it is not useless because it enables the masses and the revolutionists to acquire the practical experience indispensable for a victorious insurrection in the future. This, in any case, was Lenin and Trotsky's opinion on the December 1905 insurrection in Russia. (In the chapter on "The Art of Insurrection" in Volume II of the History of the Russian Revolution, Trotsky explains that the Red Guard could be formed so easily in Petrograd at the time of the February 1917 revolution because the proletariat of the city had retained the tradition of the armed struggles in 1905.) We, for our part, are convinced that the Spanish workers would never have broken the assault of the fascists in almost all the big cities of the country in July 1936 if they had not gone through the experience of the 1934 insurrection and several minor armed uprisings between 1931 and 1936.

4. There is finally the instance of autonomous armed detachments of the mass movement which launch a struggle for one of the following reasons: to extend the fight being waged by the mass movement, with the aim of forcing the counterrevolutionary army to disperse its forces and relax its pressure on the centers of working-class agitation; to facilitate resumption of the mass struggle after a grave but not definitive defeat. (A subvariant is that of a rise of peasant insurrections coming as a delayed response to a working-class upsurge in the cities, after it has been defeated. This, in general, was the case of the Chinese guerrilla struggle after 1928. The aim of saving the cadres persecuted in the cities can play an important part in rapidly unleashing such a fight.) The guerrilla war in Russia in 1906, in China after 1928, in Yugoslavia under the Nazi occupation, and in Vietnam after the start of the imperialist reconquest all fall under this category.

Why this classification? Because it enables us to narrow the debate. We will not insult Comrade Hansen by claiming that he is opposed to the first category of armed struggle. No doubt he will not insult us by claiming that, turning our backs on all the experience of the international communist movement, we are deliberately seeking to provoke putsches. The debate is thus focused on the problems of the third and fourth category of armed struggle.

Now, we must highlight an extremely important distinction between the different cases that fall under the first category. Why were the Bolsheviks able to

avoid (and were a thousand times right to do so) a full and deliberate armed confrontation with the bourgeois army at the time of the February Revolution? Why could such a confrontation not be avoided in Germany or Spain? Was it owing exclusively or principally to the presence of the Bolshevik party in Russia and its absence in Germany and Spain? Frankly, we do not think so. We think so still less because in February and March 1917 the Bolshevik party was not the party of Lenin or of Lenin and Trotsky but the party of Stalin-Kamenev-Molotov, with a policy not fundamentally different from that of the German Independents in November-December 1918 to January 1919.

The reason for the difference between the Russian and German and Spanish cases seems to us to be an objective one. In Russia, the army had been broken up to such a degree by an external factor prior to the revolutionary process-- the world war-- and was moreover so rent by internal social contradictions (between landlord officers and land-hungry peasants), that it had virtually ceased being an adequate counterrevolutionary instrument. In fact, it never became such an instrument. After the conquest of power by the Bolsheviks, the counterrevolutionary officers had to recreate a new army from scratch in order to be able to unleash the civil war. This was, moreover, one of the reasons for their final defeat.

In Spain, the situation presented itself in a totally different way. There had been no war with a foreign power. The army was materially intact. It was shot through with unquestionable political and social contradictions, which a revolutionary party of the stature of the Bolshevik party would certainly have exploited, widened, and made more explosive by tenacious work among the soldiers; but it is extremely improbable that even the best revolutionary policy could have kept the reactionary officer corps, gathering around it the most politically primitive and backward section of the population, from constituting a counterrevolutionary striking force that would have acted as soon as the mass movement reached a certain level of revolutionary initiative.

What is the reason for this capacity for action on the part of the bourgeois army in the first phase of the revolutionary process? It derives from the uneven development of the revolutionary process, from the uneven development of consciousness in the various segments of the population, from the uneven development of the break up of capitalist society and the bourgeois state.

It is normal and virtually inevitable that the conscious industrial proletariat, the vanguard of the agri-

cultural and plantation proletariat, and the vanguard of the poor landless peasantry will reach the level of revolutionary initiative, going over into revolutionary action and constituting soviets, well before the working population of petty-bourgeois origin and the strata of workers still influenced by reactionary political formations begin to break with bourgeois society. A revolutionary party enjoying great political authority can seek, by its action, to reduce this uneven development; it cannot eliminate it. If the party tries to eliminate this unevenness by deliberately curbing the enthusiasm of the most revolutionary strata it risks producing the opposite result. Not only because the most advanced strata may become demoralized and withdraw from the struggle, but because the essential element for convincing or neutralizing the hesitant strata may disappear, this element being less the propaganda of the party or the soviets than the resolute action of the proletariat.

Save in exceptional cases, which a revolutionary party cannot count on without risking falling victim to disastrous illusions, it is unlikely that a revolutionary situation will coincide with a breakup of the army. Furthermore, the start of disintegration in the armed forces, coinciding with a general mobilization of the masses, will certainly provoke a move by the army. The military chiefs will feel that if they let the revolutionary process proceed a few weeks more, the ground might sink under their feet. One of the factors which no doubt precipitated the military coup d'etat in Brazil in 1964 was precisely the "mad sergeants' " mutiny, which indicated that the seed of dissolution was beginning to take root in the army.

Once we have understood this uneven process of the decay of bourgeois society, of which the army clearly remains one of the last intact "hard kernels," once we have understood this uneven process of the revolutionary mass mobilization which clearly leaves a backward layer of the population as a base for the army, even when the majority of the proletariat is already engaged on the road of revolutionary struggle, then, we understand that there is no Chinese wall between armed struggles of category number 1 and categories number 3 and number 4. And we also understand that the more the industrial and agricultural proletariat is in a minority in the nation--that is, the more backward the country--the more this relative weakness coincides with an extreme explosiveness of the objective situation, with a potentially revolutionary lightening mobilization of the masses, then, the more virtually inevitable is the intervention of the army in

the first phases of a broad mobilization, if only for the purposes of self-defense and self-preservation of the officer corps.

We have taken a long historical detour to return to the initial strategic conclusion concerning Latin America. Let us reinforce this conclusion by two clarifications on armed struggle, in the light of the general experience of the workers movement.

Can the struggle of armed detachments autonomous from the mass movement be equated with putschism or with terrorism? It would be strange, to say the least, if Lenin, who had struggled his entire life against putschism and populist terrorism should suddenly become an advocate of such methods in 1906 and maintain this position until the end of his days. What characterizes putschism is the attempt to win power--or sometimes to bring a radical reversal in the political situation of a country--by means of the violent armed action of a small minority. We reject this conception and everything that flows from it, just as Lenin and Trotsky always rejected it. For us the conquest of power is inconceivable without action by the broad masses--the emancipation of the workers will be the deed of the workers themselves.

But this by no means implies that we reject all violent armed action by autonomous detachments separate from a broad mass movement in every situation and for no matter what immediate tactical objectives. The theses "The Fourth International and the War," which Trotsky drew up in 1934, explicitly anticipated the need for such actions in defense of the USSR, in the event of an imperialist aggression against the first workers state. The experience of the second world war showed that such actions were possible and useful and by no means conflicted with the task--a more protracted one--of reorganizing and reviving the mass movement defeated by fascism.

In the struggle against rising fascism, exemplary actions by autonomous armed detachments may be useful and indispensable to convince the masses that such a struggle is possible--before the masses themselves enter into it. This was confirmed both by the German experience (negatively) and by the Austrian (positively)--the Schutzbund uprising in Vienna in February 1934 was an insurrection by a small minority, but neither Trotsky nor the Trotskyist movement would for an instant have considered condemning it as "putschist"; it was the right-wing Social Democracy that utilized this argument, completely misunderstanding the nature of fascism). It was confirmed above all by the Spanish experience, where the first initiative in fighting back arms in hand against the fascist insurrection did not come from the "broad masses" but from

small detachments of the vanguard of the workers parties and trade-unions, who, by their example drew the broad masses into the struggle later.

While we are resolute opponents of any isolated action incomprehensible to the masses; we are by no means advocates solely of armed actions organized by the masses themselves within the framework of their organizations. This variant is not always possible. In this respect Lenin employed a formula which summed up perfectly the historical experience of his time and the epoch following his death. In periods of a partial ebb of the mass movement in the wake of a defeated mass uprising, as well as in periods of a rising mass movement before the development of a generalized insurrection, actions by autonomous armed detachments are useful and essential to "disorganize the enemy's force and pave the way for future open and mass armed operations...." (Lenin, Werke, Vol. 10, pp. 146-147, Dietz-Verlag 1958, the resolution on "Fighting Guerrilla Operations" prepared for the reunification congress in March 1906 [Collected Works, Vol. 10, p. 153, Foreign Language Publishers, Moscow 1962.]). This is true, however, only if these actions are understood by the masses and correspond to their feelings and concerns.

Let us repeat again, to avoid any misunderstanding, that these considerations apply only to prerevolutionary conditions and in a precise political context (the absence of democratic liberties, the impossibility of a gradual ascent in the mass movement, etc.). There is no question of mechanically extending this reasoning to all countries in the world, least of all the United States, Japan, Great Britain, Germany, etc. In this regard likewise Lenin said all that needed to be said in "Guerrilla Warfare": "Marxism demands an absolutely historical examination of the question of the forms of struggle. To treat this question apart from the concrete historical situation betrays a failure to understand the rudiments of dialectical materialism. At different stages of economic evolution, depending on differences in political, national-cultural, living and other conditions, different forms of struggle come to the fore and become the principal forms of struggle; and in connection with this, the secondary, auxiliary forms of struggle undergo change in their turn. To attempt to answer yes or no to the question whether any particular means of struggle should be used, without making a detailed examination of the concrete situation of the given movement at the given stage of its development, means completely to abandon the Marxist position." (Oeuvres, Volume 11, Editions Sociales, Paris 1966, p. 216 [Collected Works, Foreign Language Publications, Moscow 1962, p. 214].)

The document adopted by the Ninth World Congress did not establish universal rules, either for all continents or for all time to come in Latin America. It drew a certain number of strategic conclusions from a body of "concrete historical circumstances," for as long as these circumstances last. It is on this basis that we must be answered, not one of proclaiming abstract principles valid at all times and places.

### A Polemic Leading Nowhere

In this respect, we are left perplexed by the vigorous polemic against the Ninth World Congress document which Comrade Hansen resumes in his "A Contribution to the Discussion on Revolutionary Strategy in Latin America." There are two possible explanations for this polemic, based on Comrade Hansen's document as well as the discussion article he wrote before the world congress.

1. Comrade Hansen may consider that the majority of the international leadership has abruptly gone over to Debrayist, foquista positions. In this case, he is engaging in a war to defeat the ultraleft phantom of foquismo.

If this is really the case, we can set his mind at rest immediately. Both the Reunification Congress documents and the Eighth World Congress documents, as well as the resolution on Latin America voted by the Ninth World Congress clearly and unequivocally opposed foquismo. There is really no danger of seeing the Fourth International take up the ball dropped by the Fidelista team in advocating "foquismo" in Latin America. The leading cadres of our movement have conducted a systematic polemic against "foquismo" for long years. You need only read Comrade Livio Maitan's article on Régis Debray's book to realize this.

Let us add that an objective reading, without preconceptions, of the Ninth Congress document makes it possible to conclude that it by no means advocates "a strategy of rural guerrilla warfare" (to say nothing of "a strategy of the 'foco guerrillero'"), but the strategy of armed struggle, which is an entirely different thing. To try to give the opposite impression, Comrade Hansen has been forced to single out a single sentence in the document adopted by the Ninth World Congress and polemicize against it instead of analyzing the document as a whole and polemicizing against its general line. The least that can be said is that this is not a very fruitful method of argument and will not advance the movement.

2. The other possibility is that Comrade Hansen considers that by putting "excessive" stress on the strategy of armed struggle, the World Congress document might "inspire" the sections to launch

into premature actions. The heavy way he emphasizes the "defeat in Bolivia" seems to support this hypothesis. Therefore, this second one warrants a longer refutation.

The adoption of any strategy, even with the greatest unanimity and lack of dispute, always involves the risk of erroneous tactical applications. No guarantee whatever exists against such errors--and their appearance cannot in any way be considered an argument against the correctness of the strategy. In every period, participating in broad mass movements (and a fortiori in temporary united fronts with reformist organizations) has led some elements to make an opportunist adaptation to the more backward layers of the masses. This is what is called "tail-endism." Revolutionary Marxists combat such opportunist adaptations but they hold no less obstinately to the line of participating in mass movements and organizations (above all, the unions), which is a correct strategic line. Only sectarians on the model of the KAPD [Kommunistische Arbeiter Partei Deutschlands -- Communist Workers party of Germany] and Gorter have taken the pretext of the danger of opportunist adaptation to reject struggling inside mass organizations.

The adoption of the strategy of armed struggle in Latin America corresponds to an analysis of the objective conditions and their general tendencies of development, to the concerns and needs of the vanguard. This does not imply that it safeguards the revolutionary Marxist organizations against tactical errors in applying it. But it does imply one thing: as long as the conditions apply which we outlined above, conditions which make armed confrontations inevitable in an early phase of the advance of the mass movement, every revolutionary organization, even relatively small ones, that have passed a minimum threshold of organizational solidity, are condemned to periodic crises if they fail to take a correct position on this question (and by correct position we do not mean a purely literary and propagandistic position but also a minimum of practical application).

To explain the successive crises of the Argentinian organization simply by "Debrayist," or "foquista" pressure means substituting a fundamentally idealist explanation for a materialist one. It means failing to understand that the roots of these crises lie in the irresistible pressure for armed struggle resulting from the objective situation -- the pressure of the masses as much as the vanguard. It means believing that it is "foquista false consciousness" that determines being -- not being, that is the systematic strangling of the liber-



ties of the workers in a climate of explosive contradictions, that determines the consciousness of the necessity of armed struggle.

On this question Comrade Hansen would do well to reflect on Lenin's words devoted to this very subject of guerrilla warfare: "It is not guerrilla actions which disorganise the movement, but the weakness of a party which is incapable of taking such actions under its control. That is why the anathemas which we Russians usually hurl against guerrilla actions go hand in hand with secret, casual, unorganised guerrilla actions which really do disorganise the Party. Being incapable of understanding what historical conditions give rise to this struggle, we are incapable of neutralising its deleterious aspects. Yet the struggle is going on. It is engendered by powerful economic and political causes. It is not in our power to eliminate these causes or to eliminate this struggle. Our complaints against guerrilla warfare are complaints against our Party weakness in the matter of an uprising." (Lénine, Oeuvres, tome 11, Editions Sociales, Paris 1966, p. 221-2 [V.I. Lenin, Collected Works, Vol. 11, Foreign Language Publishers, Moscow 1962, p. 219].)

This quotation admirably expresses the problem confronting our movement with regard to guerrilla warfare and armed struggle in Latin America. It ought to convince Comrade Hansen that he is on the wrong road and is leading us to an impasse by his polemic.

If Comrade Hansen's fear were limited only to seeing sections of too small a size engage prematurely in organizing autonomous armed detachments, we would obviously be in complete agreement with him. We are keenly aware that a primitive accumulation of forces must precede the formation of these detachments. Without this there could not be the indispensable coordination between mass work and the work of armed detachments, between paving the way for the mass insurrection and the preliminary "disorganizing the enemy forces." We are determined opponents of the spontanéist idea that "the party is built as the armed struggle extends." For the same reason, we are likewise opponents of the no less spontanéist idea that "the methods of armed struggle are learned as the mass movement rises to its peak." We are in favor of conscious, that is, planned and far-sighted, intervention by the revolutionary leadership at every stage of the struggle. And this implies the necessity of preparing for armed struggle when you expect it in the next stage.

But all these obvious truths would not justify Comrade Hansen's polemical heat, because they are already incorporated in the Ninth World Congress. What

was and still is necessary is to clarify the position of the Fourth International toward the great strategic debate on the "revolutionary or reformist road" in Latin America. And -- whether Comrade Hansen likes it or not -- this debate is very largely (not entirely but in very large part) expressed in terms of "for or against the armed struggle in the near or relatively near future."

Likewise, in seeking to counterpose party building to the strategy of armed struggle, Comrade Hansen is leading the discussion into a blind alley. In the same way, party building could be counterposed to any strategy, for example participating in mass demonstrations. This is the error Healy and other sectarians make who have reproached the SWP for participating in the antiwar movement, the Black nationalist movement, and the women's liberation movement rather than "building the revolutionary party." The SWP has replied correctly to these infantile objections that there is no other way to build a revolutionary party -- as opposed to a sect or religious-type cult -- than formulating a correct strategy corresponding to the concerns and needs of the masses themselves.

The fact is that the strategy of preparing for armed struggle, in most Latin-American countries, corresponds in precisely this way to the needs and pre-occupations of the masses, to all their fighting experience over the last ten years. In these conditions, we will answer Comrade Hansen as the SWP answered Healy, that there is no way to build revolutionary parties in Latin America without adopting a correct position on one of the key strategic questions posed by the vanguard and the masses -- preparation for the armed struggle. Far from being mutually contradictory, party building, propaganda and agitation for transitional demands, and public defense of the strategy of armed struggle are inseparable and complementary in the present conditions in Latin America.

#### The Function of the Ninth Congress Document

The function of the document adopted by the world congress is precisely to clarify this strategic question. It does not attempt to determine when and in what precise conditions each section must "unleash" armed struggle. That is a question that depends on the circumstances in the various countries, on the development of the objective situation, on the level of consciousness of the masses and the mass struggle, on the preparedness and extent of our own forces, and other such factors. It is, in other words, a purely tactical question and must be left to the judgment of each section (with a minimum of coordination among neighboring



sections, insofar as we take seriously our own postulates about "continent-wide revolution," building a "world party," opposition to "national communism," etc.). Not for a moment did the world congress have the intention of bringing pressure to bear on this or that section to make such decisions. Where they have been made, they have been made by the section and the section alone. (This puts Comrade Hansen, moreover, in the disagreeable position of initiating an international polemic against tactical decisions reserved to the competence of the national sections. You can't have it both ways, Comrade Hansen!)

The world congress document had a different objective -- a strategic and not a tactical one. It's purpose was to define the position of the Fourth International in the great ideological debate that is polarizing the revolutionary vanguard in Latin America. In order to illustrate the meaning of this intervention and its intimate connections with party building and defending transitional demands, we would like to give a few examples drawn from the still fresh experience of the revolutionary movement in Latin America.

During the congress of the miners union in Bolivia and the congress of the COB [Central Obrera Boliviana -- Bolivian Workers Federation] which followed it, there were many discussions on the demands taken from our transitional program -- nationalization without indemnity or compensation (the question of compensating Gulf Oil is at the center of political polarization in Bolivia), reestablishing workers control over the mining industry, etc. Does Comrade Hansen think that after the experience accumulated by the Bolivian miners you can stop at that, and top it off with a fancy governmental formula or even a propaganda campaign for a "socialist revolution?" Thousands of miners and other vanguard Bolivian workers will surely answer: "Dear comrade, completely agree on workers control, eliminating indemnities to Gulf Oil, and the workers-and-peasants-government formula. We would point out, however, that we already partially achieved workers control fifteen years ago. All well and good. But in fighting for your nice program, which we already adopted almost twenty years ago, we ran up increasingly against the army. First it harassed us; then encircled us; then repressed us; and finally massacred us, our wives, and our children. Today it has 'generously' withdrawn fifteen kilometers away from our mining centers, but no further. Are you proposing a mere repetition of what happened in the 1950s? How then can we prevent the massacre of our wives and children? Are you proposing nothing more than building the party? But how can this organization defend itself from intervention by the army, in a year, two years,

three years? Isn't it irresponsible to urge us on the one hand to engage in widening mobilizations and struggles which must inevitably and in very short order provoke a violent clash with the army; and at the same time say nothing and do nothing to prevent this clash from being one between reaction armed to the teeth and the virtually unarmed masses?"

Our Bolivian comrades were entirely right to raise the question of arming the proletariat and preparing for armed struggle at the congress of the COB. It will be the historic shame of the Communist party and a pseudo-Trotskyist like Lora that they deliberately removed this question from the agenda, when all the experience of the proletariat and all the logic of the situation in Bolivia put it at the center of the strategic thinking of any half-way perceptive worker militant. The events that occurred a few weeks later have entirely confirmed the urgent immediacy of this question.

Let us take another example. In Argentina, the military dictatorship is compelled by the relationship of forces to tolerate a not entirely state-controlled trade-union movement. But every time any union leaders become too radical, the army intervenes to remove them. Like any reformist bureaucracy, the union apparatus in control displays an abject servility toward capital and its military flunkies. Obviously, the Argentinian revolutionists are striving to weaken the grip of this bureaucracy on the working class. To this end, with only a few exceptions, they defend the idea of extending and generalizing struggles (a few even use and abuse the slogan of a general strike). To every appeal by a Trotskyist journal for extending and generalizing struggles, the vanguard workers would have the right to answer: "Hold on! Hold on! You say that partial struggles, purely economic ones, are not enough. But as soon as the struggle widens, the army intervenes, as in Córdoba and Rosario. Do you want to send us into a massacre?" And if Comrade Hansen thinks that it is enough to answer them. "Build a revolutionary party before thinking about military self defense," they would be still more justified in replying: "But before you have built your party, stop calling for a generalized struggle which threatens to end in a massacre. At least be consistent with your own logic!"...It is apparent where such logic would lead, in the absence of a clearly advertised strategy of preparing for armed struggle....

Contrary to the impression Comrade Hansen leaves, we did not state in the world congress document that preparing for armed struggle was synonymous everywhere with making preparations for guerrilla warfare, or even rural guerrilla warfare. The situation is very

complex in this respect. It would have been useless and out of place for a world congress to want to establish a single variant for the future. We note in passing that even an organization entirely committed to rural guerrilla warfare like the Brazilian VPR [Vanguardia Popular Revolucionaria -- Revolutionary People's Vanguard] has come to the conclusion that urban guerrilla warfare is the best means for preparing for rural guerrilla warfare because it enables them more effectively to accumulate cadres and experience for this objective than isolated operations launched from the beginning in the countryside.

Armed struggle can develop out of self-defense in strikes as well as self-defense in peasant land-occupations movements. It can be closely combined with continuing the mass movement -- which is obviously the most favorable case, as Comrade Maitan has already emphasized -- as well as prolong such a movement after a partial defeat, with the objective notably of protecting the cadres or freeing the victims of repression. It can take place in the cities, in the countryside, or in both environments at the same time in varying proportions depending on the specific conditions of the moment and the country and the available forces. It must always be sought to integrate armed struggle closely with mass work, which must be pursued without letup through building the party, which remains the No. 1 overall task. It would be necessary to avoid stripping the plants and unions of experienced activists who have already gained experience in mass work, except to save them from repression. It would be profoundly irresponsible to want to set any general rules, since for the entire continent as well as each country changes in the objective conditions may call for changing tactics, as the Bolivian section has correctly done.

But the essential thing, in this regard, is to tell the masses openly that armed confrontations are inevitable as soon as the mass movement attains any serious breadth at all and that they must prepare for this. The essential thing is not to think that it is enough to declare this on paper, but also to prepare yourself for it as soon as you have assembled a minimum of forces. The future of our movement in Latin America, the future of every revolutionary organization on that continent depends in large part on the frankness and seriousness with which they approach this body of questions now and in the future.

So that the discussion can make real progress and not harden into a dialogue of the deaf, we would like to pose four questions to Comrade Hansen.

1. Does he believe that, as a

general rule (with only a few minor exceptions) in the stage immediately ahead of us in Latin America it is improbable if not impossible that we will see a peaceful advance of the mass movement, broadening out in successive waves within an essentially bourgeois-democratic framework?

2. Does he believe that, as a general rule, it is improbable that the breakup of the reactionary bourgeois armies in Latin America will proceed at the same rate as the rise of the mass movement, and that therefore these armies will lose their capacity for carrying out a bloody repression of the movement?

3. Does he think, on the basis of the two preceding considerations, that it is the duty of the Latin-American revolutionists to carry out a propaganda campaign to prepare the masses, and above all the vanguard, for the military confrontations inevitable in the near and relatively near future in most of the Latin-American countries? Does he think that the revolutionary strategy on whose basis the sections of the Fourth International are built must include a clear, unmistakable answer to this question, which in any case is being discussed by the entire vanguard?

4. Does he think that once our own organizations have accumulated a minimum of forces they must, in their turn, prepare for these confrontations or risk very heavy losses, both in physical terms (inflicted by the class enemy) and political terms (inflicted by the other tendencies in the revolutionary movement)?

If Comrade Hansen answers "no" to these questions, then the differences separating us would clearly be serious and would require a thoroughgoing discussion. But in this case, for heaven's sake, let us discuss these differences, and not "foquismo" which no one in our ranks is defending, or immediate and universal organization of "rural guerrilla warfare," which is a completely twisted interpretation of the document voted on by the world congress.

If, as we firmly hope and as we expect from all his own revolutionary background and the revolutionary tradition of his party, Comrade Hansen, in general, answers "yes" to these questions (perhaps with a few nuances), then there are no differences over strategy, then the debate as it has developed thus far has been based on misunderstandings and divergent interpretations of texts. Then all that remains would be a debate over the tactical question of whether one or another section was right or wrong to draw this or that tactical conclusion from our common strategy. Such a debate would not be

without interest. But it would support none of the dark apprehensions Comrade Hansen manifests about an ultraleft danger threatening us. And such a debate would be severely limited in extent, because Comrade Hansen would be the first

to proclaim that the decision in these tactical matters lies within the competence of the national sections and not the world movement....

November, 1970

#### FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup> In a recent polemical document, Comrade Hansen wrote: "To justify converting rural guerrilla war into a strategy, it was argued [in the majority resolution -- E.M. & M.K.] that the Latin-American ruling class, operating hand in glove with U.S. imperialism, left no other alternative open. Against the ferocious violence of the ruling class, nothing could be done except to turn to guerrilla struggle." (Page 4 of "A Contribution to the Discussion on Revolutionary Strategy in Latin America.")

To prove this peremptory claim, Comrade Hansen quotes a passage from the resolution which declares that the class enemy will not permit legal organization of a mass movement that progressively develops and grows without trying to repress it by violence. Then he exclaims triumphantly that Bolivia and Peru prove the contrary! Really, Comrade Hansen? Where, then is the revolutionary mass movement tolerated by General Velasco in Peru? Where then is the revolutionary mass movement that the army has not sought to repress by force, far from tolerating it, in Bolivia? It is clear that Comrade Hansen is confusing the alternative "military dictatorship of the gorilla type or military dictatorship of the reformist type," with the alternative "military dictatorship or bourgeois democracy." It is this last alternative

the resolution excludes, save in exceptional cases; and we will continue to exclude it. As for the first alternative, the majority document anticipated it in so many words, as is evident from the following passage:

"This does not exclude possible oscillations in the most disparate directions, including new ephemeral pseudoreformist attempts, political gambles, and even variants within the framework of military regimes (groups of officers are continually playing at "Nasserism" in several countries and the immediate import of military coups is not always the same in every given situation). But this will change nothing in the general, deep-seated tendency: in a situation of chronic crisis and prerevolutionary tensions, the ruling classes will inevitably be impelled to adopt brutal repressive measures and utilize despotic and terrorist political regimes. Since these classes often are not very solid as social forces and cannot realistically contemplate solving their problems with popularly based reactionary regimes on the fascist model, military regimes remain the most likely recourse." (Intercontinental Press, July 14, 1969, p. 718.) The least one can say is that this analysis has not yet been contradicted by the evolution in Latin America except -- temporarily -- in Chile.

## IN DEFENSE OF THE LENINIST STRATEGY OF PARTY BUILDING

by Joseph Hansen

The following article is in reply to two contributions to the current internal discussion in the world Trotskyist movement -- one by Comrade Livio Maitan, "Once Again on the Revolutionary Perspectives in Latin America -- Defense of an Orientation and a Method" (in an English translation in International Information Bulletin, No. 2, January 1971, pp. 6-20), and the other by Comrades Ernest Germain and Martine Knoeller, "The Strategic Orientation of the Revolutionists in Latin America" (in English in International Information Bulletin, No. 2, January 1971, pp. 21-32).

I have proceeded on the assumption that comrades will have just read or reread these two contributions and will therefore have the arguments freshly in mind. Since these and my attempted answers are often rather involved, it will perhaps be helpful to indicate the main points I propose to discuss.

The two contributions share a basic position -- defense of a "turn" adopted at the last world congress; namely, an orientation toward the "strategy" of armed struggle or guerrilla warfare.

I will seek to show that this orientation -- contrary to the contentions of the authors of the two contributions -- does not represent a continuation of the views of Engels, Lenin, and Trotsky on guerrilla warfare. Instead, it stands in contrast to their views, and represents a departure from their strategy of building a mass revolutionary-socialist combat party.

I will go into the origin of the position of the authors of the two documents and cite further evidence in an effort to prove that their position represents an adaptation to ultraleftism, that this has already had bad repercussions in our movement internationally, and that it could prove dangerous to the future of the Fourth International if persisted in.

In addition, I will try to show that in the discussion now taking place in the vanguard in Latin America and elsewhere on the subject of the defeats suffered by the protagonists of guerrilla warfare in the past decade and the need to find something more effective, the majority position places us at a disadvantage in presenting the program of Trotskyism, and even plays into the hands of conscious

anti-Leninists.

In passing, I will try to take up all the main arguments presented in the two documents even though this will take us down some side roads and require us to examine a number of exhibits from history. One of the more important items will be an exploration of the reasons for the persistence of certain errors, including the "strategy" of guerrilla warfare.

I will also take up the contention of the majority that no "alternative line" to theirs has been proposed. The truth is, as I will try to show, the majority displaced the previously held alternative line, voting for a new "orientation and method" of guerrilla warfare without drawing a proper balance sheet of the experience in Latin America and elsewhere with respect to the defeats suffered by this strategy, and without a concrete projection of what can be expected to result from the new line.

Without drawing any sharp line between the two documents, which are repetitious in some respects, I have divided my reply into two parts, one for each of the contributions. This division was intended, among other things, to facilitate pointing up the origin of the new orientation and some of the first consequences of applying it.

I.

### In Reply to Comrade Maitan

#### Comrade Maitan's Contentions

Brushing aside what the test of events has shown, Comrade Maitan reaffirms his support of the resolution passed at the last world congress in favor of guerrilla warfare.

The tone he has adopted and the new arguments he advances would indicate that he is persuaded that the best defense is to take the offensive. He implies that quite belatedly I reopened the discussion with the article I wrote last summer, "A Contribution to the Discussion on Revolutionary Strategy in Latin America." (Available in English in International Information Bulletin, No. 6, July 1970.) By way of reply, Comrade Maitan argues as follows:

1. Factual inaccuracies, misreadings or misunderstandings, and flaws in reasoning are to be found

in the criticisms I raised in my article.

2. If the situations in Bolivia and Peru -- as I contended in my article -- changed in a way not expected by the delegates at the last world congress who voted for the resolution on Latin America sponsored by Comrade Maitan and others, the possibility of such reversals was at least referred to in the resolution; and while the alteration occurred with quite unforeseen speed, Comrade Maitan is prepared to make his self-criticism on this.

Still, nothing in Latin America changed in such a way as to require any considerable modification of the basic orientation adopted by the majority at the last world congress -- namely, centering the activities of the Trotskyist movement on preparing for rural guerrilla warfare for a prolonged period (while being ready to shift to urban guerrilla warfare, if this appears feasible, and while not excluding other forms of armed struggle of even more efficacious nature, however unlikely the perspective for these may appear to be at the moment).

3. In Argentina, Comrade Maitan is compelled to admit, things went badly. However, this had nothing to do with the "turn" adopted by the last world congress, which remains valid whatever actually happened. The comrades on the scene made serious errors.

4. In Bolivia, where another bad defeat was suffered, it does not matter. The comrades on the scene applied the line correctly. Circumstances beyond their control caused the defeat. If anything their experience further confirms the correctness of the line of the last world congress, inasmuch as defeats are often a precious source of lessons for the revolutionary movement.

5. The criticisms offered by me are to be understood as deriving from a scholastic approach that offers lip service to the idea of armed struggle while denying it in practice -- in the tradition extending from Karl Kautsky to Rodney Arismendi; that is, from the centrist ideologist of the Second International to the Uruguayan Stalinist leader who seeks to straddle the line dividing those who favor armed struggle from those who favor peaceful coexistence.

6. Guerrilla warfare is a specific form of armed struggle, of the art of insurrection, backed by the full authority of our Marxist teachers. The beginnings are to be found in the writings of Engels. Lenin developed these begin-

nings more concretely, "even giving specific advice on makeup and technical education of partisan detachments." Trotsky approved of engaging in guerrilla warfare under certain circumstances. What Comrade Maitan and those who agree with him are doing is filling in the outlines so admirably anticipated by the great Marxist masters.

The contentions advanced by Comrade Maitan obviously vary in weight and importance. To find a frame within which they may be judged most fruitfully, I propose not to follow his sequence, but to begin by taking his strongest argument -- his appeal to authority.

#### Engels on Guerrilla Warfare

Comrade Maitan brings in Engels on four items: (1) That Engels studied military questions very seriously. (2) That Engels held insurrection to be an art, subject to certain practical rules. (3) That Engels never changed his opinion on the central point, armed insurrection. (4) That in his letters, Engels "alluded several times to guerrilla warfare, notably with regard to the American Civil War and Poland. He noted, among other things, that geographical conditions were not sufficient for the development of guerrilla warfare if the social conditions were lacking."

Up to now, I do not know of anyone in the Trotskyist movement who has ever disputed these points. What bearing they have in the current discussion remains a mystery.

On the other hand, it takes but little reading of Engels to find that he did not advocate a "strategy" of guerrilla warfare. He considered it an auxiliary in the field of war, or a phenomenon, hardly of major importance, observable or to be expected at certain phases in a war.

Comrade Maitan really ought to admit that Engels was neither a practitioner nor theoretician of guerrilla war as a strategy for winning a revolution, particularly rural guerrilla warfare for a prolonged period on a continental scale.

#### Lenin's 1906 Experience

In appealing to Lenin, Comrade Maitan refers the reader to three articles. I will provide the precise sources in English to facilitate finding them: "The Political Strike and the Street Fighting in Moscow," dated October 17, 1905 (Lenin Collected Works, Vol. 9, pp. 347-355); "Lessons of the Moscow Uprising," dated August

29, 1906 (Ibid., Vol. 11, pp. 171-178); "Guerrilla Warfare," dated September 30, 1906 (Ibid., pp. 213-224).

It is important, in my opinion, to read these articles in connection with the current discussion, not simply to place Comrade Maitan's quotations in context, but to be able to judge more accurately whether the lessons to be drawn from these articles speak for or against the position adopted at the last world congress.

First of all, on method, a question raised by Comrade Maitan in the title of his article. Although he never explains in his text precisely what he means by "method," he does cite Lenin on the necessity to be concrete. It is a very good quotation, deserving to be repeated somewhat more fully than the version provided by Comrade Maitan

"Let us begin from the beginning," Lenin said. "What are the fundamental demands which every Marxist should make of an examination of the question of forms of struggle? In the first place, Marxism differs from all primitive forms of socialism by not binding the movement to any one particular form of struggle. It recognizes the most varied forms of struggle; and it does not 'concoct' them, but only generalises, organises, gives conscious expression to those forms of struggle of the revolutionary classes which arise of themselves in the course of the movement. Absolutely hostile to all abstract formulas and to all doctrinaire recipes, Marxism demands an attentive attitude to the mass struggle in progress, which as the movement develops, as the class-consciousness of the masses grows, as economic and political crises become acute, continually gives rise to new and more varied methods of defense and attack. Marxism, therefore, positively does not reject any form of struggle. Under no circumstances does Marxism confine itself to the forms of struggle possible and in existence at the given moment only, recognising as it does that new forms of struggle, unknown to the participants of the given period, inevitably arise as the given social situation changes. In this respect Marxism learns, if we may so express it, from mass practice, and makes no claim whatever to teach the masses forms of struggle invented by 'systematizers' in the seclusion of their studies. We know -- said Kautsky, for instance, when examining the forms of social revolution -- that the coming crisis will introduce new forms of struggle that we are now unable to foresee.

"In the second place, Marxism demands an absolutely historical examination of the question of the forms of struggle. To treat this question apart from the concrete historical situation betrays a failure to understand the rudiments of dialectical materialism. At different stages of economic evolution, depending on differences in political, national-cultural, living and other conditions, different forms of struggle come to the fore and become the principal forms of struggle; and in connection with this, the secondary, auxiliary forms of struggle undergo change in their turn. To attempt to answer yes or no to the question whether any particular means of struggle should be used, without making a detailed examination of the concrete situation of the given movement at the given stage of its development, means completely to abandon the Marxist position." ("Guerrilla Warfare," pp. 213-214. Emphasis in original.)

This is the dialectical method, as stated by Lenin, that Marxists must follow in considering new forms of struggle such as the tactic of guerrilla warfare developed by the Russian masses themselves in a great revolutionary upsurge that had placed the struggle for power by the proletariat on the agenda as an immediate issue facing the revolutionary party.

Nowhere in the balance of his article examining the various facets of this new "auxiliary" form of struggle does Lenin so much as hint at the idea of adopting guerrilla warfare as a strategy or as "an orientation and a method" as Comrade Maitan does. Quite the contrary.

"In a period of civil war," says Lenin, "the ideal party of the proletariat is a fighting party. This is absolutely incontrovertible. We are quite prepared to grant that it is possible to argue and prove the inexpediency from the standpoint of civil war of particular forms of civil war at any particular moment. We fully admit criticism of diverse forms of civil war from the standpoint of military expediency and absolutely agree that in this question it is the Social-Democratic practical workers in each particular locality who must have the final say." (Ibid., p. 221. Emphasis in original.)

Even further: "I can understand us refraining from Party leadership of this spontaneous struggle in a particular place or at a particular time because of the weakness and unpreparedness of our organization. I realise that this question must be settled by the local practical workers,

and that the remoulding of weak and unprepared organisations is no easy matter." (Ibid., p. 221. Emphasis in original.)

In fact, Lenin stated flatly: "It is said that guerrilla warfare brings the class-conscious proletarians into close association with degraded, drunken riff-raff. That is true. But it only means that the party of the proletariat can never regard guerrilla warfare as the only, or even as the chief, method of struggle; it means that this method must be subordinated to other methods, that it must be commensurate with the chief methods of warfare, and must be ennobled by the enlightening and organising influence of socialism." (Ibid., p. 221. Emphasis added.)

#### What was the Concrete Situation?

First of all, Lenin said, Marxism learns from the masses; it does not teach the masses forms of struggle invented by "systematisers." "In the second place, Marxism demands an absolutely historical examination of the question of the forms of struggle. To treat this question apart from the concrete historical situation betrays a failure to understand the rudiments of dialectical materialism."

The same stricture applies, in my opinion, to the positions taken by our Marxist teachers. If we do not consider those positions in the light of the concrete historical situation, we can open ourselves to the charge of failing to understand the rudiments of dialectical materialism. Comrade Maitan may not be open to such a charge inasmuch as he refers us to articles by Lenin that enable us, in connection with other articles written by him in those years, to ascertain the concrete situation in 1905-07 in Russia for ourselves. It is to be hoped that every comrade in the world Trotskyist movement will take the trouble to do this.

One of the rewards may be some clues toward solving a tantalizing mystery. In combing through the works of Lenin for statements that might be cited in association with his own position, however badly they fitted, why was Comrade Maitan able to find so little outside of what Lenin wrote in 1906?

After all, Lenin lived for another eighteen years, didn't he? His interest in the ways and means of winning a revolution remained unflagging, didn't it? Why did he write so little, then, on guerrilla war even as an "auxiliary" form of struggle "subordinated to other methods"?

The context in which Lenin considered the question in 1906 was a great revolutionary mass upsurge that proceeded from "a strike and demonstrations to isolated barricades"; from "isolated barricades to the mass erection of barricades and street

fighting against the troops. Over the heads of the organisations, the mass proletarian struggle developed from a strike to an uprising." (Lenin: "Lessons of the Moscow Uprising," op. cit., p. 172.)

In this immense mass uprising, in which soviets were formed that came under the leadership of Trotsky, it appeared possible to win power. This confronted the revolutionary party with the immediate problem, among others, of organizing the military side of the insurrection. One of the factors in this was guerrilla war which flared without the Bolsheviks having taken the initiative in it.

Lenin, weighing this development, concluded that guerrilla war should be viewed as an auxiliary form of struggle within the context of the "classical" pattern of a revolution headed by a working class fighting for power under the leadership of a revolutionary-socialist party.

Since Comrade Maitan considers this "classical" pattern to be the least likely to occur in Latin America in the coming period, one can gauge how far he stretches things in appealing to Lenin for authority on making guerrilla war the main orientation.

Lenin did not draw up a balance sheet on the party's involvement in guerrilla war. He did, however, draw up a balance sheet of the period in which this occurred. Strange as it may seem from Comrade Maitan's standpoint, Lenin did this by taking up a different "auxiliary" form of struggle -- the active boycott of the elections which the Bolsheviks had called for, and which to them was the counterpart in the electoral arena to opening up armed struggle in the extra-parliamentary field.

As is well known, the revolutionary upsurge dies down, and by 1907, when new elections were set, Lenin proposed participating in them. His article of June 26, 1907, "Against Boycott," includes his balance sheet of the previous period: (See op. cit., Vol. 13, pp. 17-49.)

"Two phases in the development of the Russian revolution now stand out before us in all their clarity: the phase of upswing (1905) and the phase of decline (1906-07)." (P. 29) It follows from this that Lenin had misjudged the situation somewhat in 1906 when he wrote "Guerrilla Warfare." He had not seen that the ebb had already set in. His article "Against Boycott" was intended, as he indicates, to make a rectification of this misjudgment.

"We have already pointed out above," he wrote, "that the condition for the success of the boycott of



1905 was a sweeping, universal, powerful, and rapid upswing of the revolution. We must now examine, in the first place, what bearing a specially powerful upswing of the struggle has on the boycott, and, secondly, what the characteristic and distinctive features of a specially powerful upswing are.

"Boycott, as we have already stated, is a struggle not within the framework of a given institution, but against its emergence. Any given institution can be derived only from the already existing, i.e., the old, regime. Consequently, the boycott is a means of struggle aimed directly at overthrowing the old regime, or, at the worst, i.e., when the assault is not strong enough for overthrow, at weakening it to such an extent that it would be unable to set up that institution, unable to make it operate. [Lenin adds a footnote: "Reference everywhere in the text is to active boycott, that is, not just a refusal to take part in the institutions of the old regime, but an attack upon this regime. Readers who are not familiar with Social-Democratic literature of the period of the Bulygin Duma boycott should be reminded that the Social-Democrats spoke openly at the time about active boycott, sharply contrasting it to passive boycott, and even linking it with an armed uprising."] Consequently, to be successful the boycott requires a direct struggle against the old regime, an uprising against it and mass disobedience to it in a large number of cases (such mass disobedience is one of the conditions for preparing an uprising). Boycott is a refusal to recognise the old regime, a refusal, of course, not in words, but in deeds, i.e., it is something that finds expression not only in cries or slogans of organisations, but in a definite movement of the mass of the people, who systematically defy the laws of the old regime, systematically set up new institutions, which, though unlawful, actually exist, and so on and so forth. The connection between boycott and the broad revolutionary upswing is thus obvious: boycott is the most decisive means of struggle, which rejects not the form of organisation of the given institution, but its very existence. Boycott is a declaration of open war against the old regime, a direct attack upon it. Unless there is a broad revolutionary upswing, unless there is mass unrest which overflows, as it were, the bounds of the old legality, there can be no question of the boycott succeeding." (Pp. 24-26. Emphasis in original.)

Ended along with the boycott, of course, was its complement, engaging in technical preparations for an armed

uprising. Why didn't Lenin draw up a balance sheet on the "auxiliary" form of struggle, guerrilla warfare? He had reason to find the question embarrassing, as we shall see.

#### How Trotsky Viewed Lenin's Stand

A balance sheet in historical retrospect exists nonetheless. The author of the balance sheet is Leon Trotsky and it is to be found in his biography of Stalin.

In view of its pertinence to the discussion now being conducted in the Fourth International, and the fact that the leaders of the majority position on this question have not mentioned it up to now, I take the liberty of quoting it in its entirety despite its length.

Trotsky has just referred to the period of reaction following the defeat of the 1905 revolution. He continues:

"Terror from above was supplemented by terror from below. [The fight of] the routed insurrectionists continued convulsively for a long time in the form of scattered local explosions, guerrilla raids, group and individual terrorist acts. The course of the revolution was characterized with remarkable clarity by statistics of the terror. 233 persons were assassinated in 1905; 768 in 1906; 1,231 in 1907. The number of wounded showed a somewhat different ratio, since the terrorists were learning to be better shots. The terrorist wave reached its crest in 1907. 'There were days,' wrote a liberal observer, 'when several big acts of terror were accompanied by as many as scores of minor attempts and assassinations of lower rank officialdom... Bomb laboratories were established in all cities, the bombs destroying some of their careless makers...' and the like. Krassin's alchemy became strongly democratized.

"On the whole, the three-year period from 1905 through 1907 is particularly notable for both terrorist acts and strikes. But what stands out is the divergence between their statistical records: while the number of strikers fell off rapidly from year to year, the number of terrorist acts mounted with equal rapidity. Clearly, individual terrorism increased as the mass movement declined. Yet terrorism could not grow stronger indefinitely. The impetus unleashed by the revolution was bound to spend itself in terrorism as it had spent itself in other spheres. Indeed, while there were 1,231 assassinations in 1907, they dropped to 400 in 1908 and to about a hundred in 1909. The growing percentage of

the merely wounded indicated, moreover, that now the shooting was being done by untrained amateurs, mostly by callow youngsters.

"In the Caucasus, with its romantic traditions of highway robbery and gory feuds still very much alive, guerrilla warfare found any number of fearless practitioners. More than a thousand terrorist acts of all kinds were perpetrated in Transcaucasia alone during 1905-1907, the years of the First Revolution. Fighting detachments found also a great spread of activity in the Urals, under the leadership of the Bolsheviks, and in Poland under the banner of the P.P.S. (Polish Socialist Party). On the second of August, 1906, scores of policemen and soldiers were assassinated on the streets of Warsaw and other Polish cities. According to the explanation of the leaders, the purpose of these attacks was 'to bolster the revolutionary mood of the proletariat.' The leader of these leaders was Joseph Pilsudski, the future 'liberator' of Poland, and its oppressor. Commenting on the Warsaw events, Lenin wrote: 'We advise the numerous fighting groups of our Party to terminate their inactivity and to initiate some guerrilla operations...' 'And these appeals of the Bolshevik leaders,' commented General Spiridovich, 'were not without issue, despite the countermanding action of the [Menshevik] Central Committee.'

"Of great moment in the sanguine encounters of the terrorists with the police was the question of money, the sinews of any war, including civil war. Prior to the Constitutional Manifesto of 1905 the revolutionary movement was financed principally by the liberal bourgeoisie and by the radical intellectuals. That was true also in the case of the Bolsheviks, whom the liberal opposition then regarded as merely somewhat bolder revolutionary democrats. But when the bourgeoisie shifted its hopes to the future Duma, it began to regard the revolutionists as an obstacle in the way of coming to terms with the monarchy. That change of front struck a powerful blow at the finances of the revolution. Lockouts and unemployment stopped the intake of money from the workers. In the meantime, the revolutionary organizations had developed large political machines with their own printshops, publishing houses, staffs of agitators, and, finally, fighting detachments in constant need of armaments. Under the circumstances, there was no way to continue financing the revolution except by securing the withdrawal by force. The initiative, as almost always, came from below. The first expropriations went off rather peacefully, quite often with a tacit under-

standing between the 'expropriators' and the employees of the expropriated institutions. There was the story of the clerks in the Nadezhda Insurance Company reassuring the faltering expropriators with the words, 'Don't worry, comrades!' But this idyllic period did not last long. Following the bourgeoisie, the intellectuals, including the self-same bank clerks, drifted away from the revolution. Police measures became more stringent. Casualties increased on both sides. Deprived of support and sympathy, the 'fighting organizations' quickly went up in smoke or just as quickly disappeared.

"A typical picture of how even the most disciplined detachments degenerated is given in his memoirs by the already-cited Samoilov, the former Duma deputy of the Ivanovo-Voznesensk textile workers. The detachment, acting originally 'under the directives of the Party Center,' began to 'misbehave' during the second half of 1906. When it offered the Party only a part of the money it had stolen at a factory (having killed the cashier during the act), the Party Committee refused it flatly and reprimanded the fighters. But it was already too late; they were disintegrating rapidly and soon descended to 'bandit attacks of the most ordinary criminal type.' Always having large sums of money, the fighters began to preoccupy themselves with carousing, in the course of which they often fell into the hands of the police. Thus, little by little, the entire fighting detachment came to an ignominious end. 'We must, however, admit,' writes Samoilov, 'that in its ranks were not a few...genuinely devoted comrades who were loyal to the cause of the revolution and some with hearts as pure as crystal...'

"The original purpose of the fighting organizations was to assume leadership of the rebellious masses, teaching them how to use arms and how to deliver the most telling blows at the enemy. The main, if not the only, theoretician in that field of endeavor was Lenin. After the December Insurrection was crushed, the new problem was what to do about the fighting organizations. Lenin came to the Stockholm Congress with the draft of a resolution, which, while giving due credit to guerrilla activities as the inevitable continuation of the December Insurrection and as part of the preparation for the impending major offensive against Tsarism, allowed the so-called expropriations of financial means 'under the control of the Party.' But the Bolsheviks withdrew this resolution of theirs under the pressure of dis-

agreement in their own midst. By a majority of sixty-four votes to four, with twenty not voting, the Menshevik resolution was passed, which categorically forbade 'expropriations' of private persons and institutions, while tolerating the seizure of state finances only in the event that organs of revolutionary government were set up in a given locality; that is, only in direct connection with a popular uprising. The twenty-four delegates who either abstained from voting or voted against this resolution made up the Leninist irreconcilable half of the Bolshevik faction.

"In the extensive printed report about the Stockholm Congress, Lenin avoided mention of the resolution concerning armed acts altogether, on the grounds that he was not present during the discussion. 'Besides, it is, of course, not a question of principle.' It is hardly possible that Lenin's absence was accidental: he simply did not want to have his hands tied. Similarly, a year later at the London Congress, Lenin, who as chairman was obliged to be present during the discussion on the question of expropriations, did not vote, in spite of violent protests from the Menshevik benches. The London resolution categorically forbade expropriations and ordered dissolution of the Party's 'fighting organizations.'

"It was not, of course, a matter of abstract morality. All classes and all parties approached the problem of assassination not from the point of view of the Biblical commandment but from the vantage point of the historical interests represented. When the Pope and his cardinals blessed the arms of Franco none of the conservative statesmen suggested that they be imprisoned for inciting murders. Official moralists come out against violence when the violence in question is revolutionary. On the contrary, whoever really fights against class oppression, must perforce acknowledge revolution. Whoever acknowledges revolution, acknowledges civil war. Finally, 'guerrilla warfare is an inescapable form of struggle... whenever more or less extensive intervals occur between major engagements in a civil war.' [Lenin.] From the point of view of the general principles of the class struggle, all of that was quite irrefutable. Disagreements came with the evaluation of concrete historical circumstances. When two major battles of the civil war are separated from each other by two or three months, that interval will inevitably be filled in with guerrilla blows against the enemy. But when the 'intermission' is stretched out over years, guerrilla war ceases to be a preparation for a new battle and becomes instead a mere convulsion after defeat. It is, of course, not

easy to determine the moment of the break.

"Questions of Boycottism and of guerrilla activities were closely interrelated. It is permissible to boycott representative assemblies only in the event that the mass movement is sufficiently strong either to overthrow them or to ignore them. But when the masses are in retreat, the tactic of the boycott loses its revolutionary meaning. Lenin understood that and explained it better than others. As early as 1906 he repudiated the boycott of the Duma. After the coup of June third, 1907, he led a resolute fight against the Boycottists precisely because the high-tide had been succeeded by the ebb-tide. It was self-evident that guerrilla activities had become sheer anarchism when it was necessary to utilize even the arena of Tsarist 'parliamentarism' in order to prepare the ground for the mobilization of the masses. At the crest of the civil war guerrilla activities augmented and stimulated the mass movement; in the period of reaction they attempted to replace it, but, as a matter of fact, merely embarrassed the Party and speeded its disintegration. Olminsky, one of the more noticeable of Lenin's companions-in-arms, shed critical light on that period from the perspective of Soviet times. 'Not a few of the fine youth,' he wrote, 'perished on the gibbet; others degenerated; still others were disappointed in the revolution. At the same time people at large began to confound revolutionists with ordinary bandits. Later, when the revival of the revolutionary labor movement began, that revival was slowest in those cities where "exes" [expropriations -- J.H.] had been most numerous. (As an example, I might name Baku and Saratov.)'" (Stalin, pp. 95-99.)

Long as this quotation is, it still does not complete Trotsky's balance sheet. Further on, in the same chapter, he considers a specific incident, the Tiflis expropriation of June 12, 1907:

"The Tiflis expropriation could in no way be regarded as a guerrilla clash between two battles in a civil war. Lenin could not help but see that the insurrection had been shoved ahead into the hazy future. As far as he was concerned, the problem consisted this time only of a simple attempt to assure financial means to the Party at the expense of the enemy, for the impending period of uncertainty. Lenin could not resist the temptation, took advantage of a f opportunity, of a happy 'exception.' In that sense, one must say outright that the idea of the

Tiflis expropriation contained in it a goodly element of adventurism, which, as a rule, was foreign to Lenin's politics. The case with Stalin was different. Broad historical considerations had little value in his eyes. The resolution of the London Congress was only an irksome scrap of paper, to be nullified by means of a crude trick. Success would justify the risk. Souvarine argues that it is not fair to shift responsibility from the leader of the faction to a secondary figure. There is no question here of shifting responsibility. At the time, the majority of the Bolshevik faction was opposed to Lenin on the question of expropriations. The Bolsheviks, in direct contact with the fighting detachments, had extremely convincing observations of their own, which Lenin, again an emigrant, did not have. Without corrections from below, the leader of the greatest genius is bound to make crude errors. The fact remains that Stalin was not among those who understood the inadmissibility of guerrilla actions under conditions of revolutionary retreat. And that was no accident. To him the Party was first of all a machine. The machine required financial means in order to exist. The financial means could be obtained with the aid of another machine, independent of [the] life and of the struggle of the masses. There Stalin was in his own element.

"The consequences of this tragic adventure, which rounded out an entire phase of Party life, were rather serious. The fight over the Tiflis expropriation poisoned relations inside the Party and inside the Bolshevik faction itself for a long time to come. From then on, Lenin changed fronts and came out more resolutely than ever against the tactic of expropriations, which for a time became the heritage of the 'Left' Wing among the Bolsheviks. For the last time the Tiflis 'affair' was officially reviewed by the Party Central Committee in January, 1910, upon the insistence of the Mensheviks. The resolution sharply condemned expropriation as an inadmissible violation of Party discipline, while conceding that rendering harm to the labor movement was not the intention of the participants, who had been 'guided by a faulty understanding of Party interests.' No one was expelled. No one was mentioned by name. Koba [Stalin] was thus amnestied along with the others, as one who had been guided by 'a faulty understanding of Party interests.'" (Ibid., pp. 109-110.)

#### What About the Transitional Program?

The above quotations are taken from one of the chapters of the Stalin

biography that were completed by Trotsky before he was assassinated in 1940. The views expressed by Trotsky in this chapter undoubtedly represent his final thinking on the subject of guerrilla warfare.

No doubt this accounts for the fact that in the Transitional Program, which he wrote in 1938, Trotsky does not even mention guerrilla warfare, still less rural guerrilla war for a prolonged period on a continental scale.

The section in the Transitional Program concerning transitional steps to be considered in defending the gains of the working class against fascist attack and the counterrevolution in general speaks throughout in terms of the masses and their organizations.

"Only armed workers' detachments, who feel the support of tens of millions of toilers behind them," writes Trotsky, "can successfully prevail against the fascist bands." Tens of millions of toilers behind them!

"The struggle against fascism," continues Trotsky, "does not start in the liberal editorial office but in the factory -- and ends in the street. Scabs and private gun-men in factory plants are the basic nuclei of the fascist army. Strike pickets are the basic nuclei of the proletarian army. This is our point of departure. In connection with every strike and street demonstration, it is imperative to propagate the necessity of creating workers' groups for self-defense. It is necessary to write this slogan into the program of the revolutionary wing of the trade unions. It is imperative everywhere possible, beginning with the youth groups, to organize groups for self-defense; to drill and acquaint them with the use of arms." (Emphasis in original.)

From this point of departure, further developments hinge on the course of the mass movement:

"A new upsurge of the mass movement should serve not only to increase the number of these units but also to unite them according to neighborhoods, cities, regions. It is necessary to give organized expression to the valid hatred of the workers toward scabs and bands of gangsters and fascists. It is necessary to advance the slogan of a workers' militia as the one serious guarantee for the inviolability of workers' organizations, meetings, and press." (Emphasis in the original.)

The culmination of this process is the arming of the proletariat as an imperative concomitant element of the struggle for liberation. "When the proletariat wills it, it will find the road and the means of arming. In this field, also, the leadership falls naturally to the sections of the Fourth International."

In appealing to authority for justification of the orientation toward guerrilla warfare, Comrade Maitan quoted only two sentences from the Transitional Program. Is it necessary, in the light of the evidence, to point out what liberties he has taken with Trotsky's thought on this question in order to bring him into the camp of the strategists of guerrilla warfare?

#### The Reunification Document

In thumbing through the texts in search of quotations, it is curious that Comrade Maitan decided not to use one of much more recent date. This is the point included in the statement of principles upon which the major groupings in the world Trotskyist movement succeeded in achieving reunification in 1963 after a split that had lasted almost a decade. The point is as follows:

"13. Along the road of a revolution beginning with simple democratic demands and ending in the rupture of capitalist property relations, guerrilla warfare conducted by landless peasant and semiproletarian forces, under a leadership that becomes committed to carrying the revolution through to a conclusion, can play a decisive role in undermining and precipitating the downfall of a colonial or semi-colonial power. This is one of the main lessons to be drawn from experience since the second world war. It must be consciously incorporated into the strategy of building revolutionary Marxist parties in colonial countries." ("For Early Reunification of the World Trotskyist Movement," republished in Intercontinental Press, May 11, 1970, p. 444.)

Until Comrade Maitan chooses to explain why he left out this reference, one can only speculate as to his reasons.

Perhaps his main consideration was that the stand taken by the Reunification Congress on this question stood in the way of the guerrilla-war orientation he came to adopt.

1. The Reunification Congress placed utilization of guerrilla action on the plane of tactics, within the general strategy of building a revolu-

tionary Marxist party.

2. The Reunification Congress confined utilization of the tactic to the "colonial countries."

An additional consideration, which Comrade Maitan may have had in mind in deciding not to cite this document, was that it was drawn up and submitted to the world Trotskyist movement as a principled basis for its reunification by the Political Committee of the Socialist Workers party. The inclusion of point No. 13 shows that the leadership of the Socialist Workers party recognized the role played by guerrilla warfare after World War II in countries like Cuba. This fact does not fit in with the thesis that the SWP leaders belong to the line of "classical centrism from Kautsky in 1910 to Rodney Arismendi" rather than the classical line of revolutionary socialism running from Engels to Leon Trotsky in 1940.

Comrade Maitan appealed to authority in an effort to bolster his position. The effort was counterproductive. Our Marxist teachers were unanimous in regarding guerrilla warfare as a tactical question, at best an "auxiliary" form of struggle within the general strategy of building a revolutionary party, at worst tragic adventurism that could deal heavy damage to the party and set back the revolutionary movement as a whole. In short, they speak for the position maintained by the minority at the last world congress.

#### A Question of Methodology

Upon completing his selection of quotations, Comrade Maitan states his general conclusion:

"From my brief review of the conceptions of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky, I obviously do not draw the conclusion that the orientation of armed struggle we are proposing for this stage in Latin America flows automatically from these conceptions. That would in fact be using the method we reject as scholastic. Our concern is to emphasize that our conceptions and criteria are part and parcel of the approach of the masters of revolutionary Marxism and no one can accuse us of any ultraleft-tinted revisionism. We are drawing on the generalizations, outlines, and even some extremely valuable anticipations of the past. Our task is to fill in these outlines with a concrete content in the specific conditions under which we are struggling now." (Op. cit., p. 13.)

From the standpoint of methodology,

this is a revealing paragraph. Comrade Maitan states that the orientation he is proposing for this stage in Latin America does not flow automatically from the conceptions developed by Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky.

I would agree on that, and add that neither does the orientation proposed by the minority flow "automatically" from those conceptions. The orientation, even though reached within the general frame of the conceptions developed by our Marxist teachers, must be checked against the reality.

But that is not all. As dialectical materialists we must ascertain how any changes in the reality affect the conceptions developed by our Marxist teachers.

Thus in proposing a change in orientation as far-reaching as the one voted for by the majority at the last world congress, the proponents of that change were duty bound to state how our Marxist teachers viewed the question of guerrilla warfare and how their conclusions should be modified. This was required in order to maintain the continuity of Marxist theory on this question.

But the comrades of the majority did not do this in preparing their documents for the congress, nor did they do it at the congress. It is first now -- after the change in orientation and under pressure from the challenge of the minority -- that Comrade Maitan turns his attention to this task; and we see that he begins in a most unpromising way. He does not even provide a correct presentation of the views of our Marxist teachers.

To be noted additionally in his general conclusion cited above is that having explained that his orientation does not flow "automatically" from the conceptions of Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Trotsky, Comrade Maitan almost immediately qualifies what he has said in such a way as to leave us in doubt. According to him, the method followed in reaching the majority orientation on guerrilla warfare was to draw on "generalizations, outlines, and even some extremely valuable anticipations" and to "fill" them with "a concrete content" taken from the current situation in Latin America. In other words, you set up an empty mold and fill it with material lying at hand.

What if you make a mistake in choosing the "outlines"? Then the corresponding selection of "concrete content" will automatically be wrong. Has Comrade Maitan permitted us to

glimpse the method that led him into his mistaken orientation? If so, he himself has provided us with the label -- it is scholastic.

#### From Brazil, a Telling Example

The question of the relationship between the guerrilla orientation and the Leninist theory and practice of party building is not confined to our own ranks. It presents a formidable problem for us on a world scale in relation to other currents that have their own theoreticians. I will cite an example that deserves the closest attention.

The November 15, 1970, issue of the New York Times Magazine printed an article by Sanche de Gramont entitled "How One Pleasant, Scholarly Young Man From Brazil Became a Kidnapping, Gun-Toting, Bombing Revolutionary." The article was based on an interview in Algiers with Ladislav Dowbor, one of the leaders of the Popular Revolutionary Vanguard (VPR), who was captured by the São Paulo police on April 21, 1970, tortured, and released two months later on June 14, along with thirty-nine other guerrilla fighters, in return for the release of the kidnapped West German Ambassador von Holleben.

At the age of twenty-six, Dowbor, an economist of Polish ancestry, became converted in 1967 to the view of Carlos Marighella. As is known, Marighella was not a foguista, nor is Dowbor.

Gramont said of Dowbor: "He gives the impression of being a theoretician, who although lacking any aptitude or liking for violent action, has willed himself to participate in the operations of armed groups because they conform with his analysis of the situation in Brazil."

The article quoted Dowbor extensively, placing particular emphasis on his theories. "As Ladislav Dowbor... explained the process," said Gramont, "the decision to deal exclusively in armed actions was not impetuous or improvised, but the result of a careful political analysis."

Here are some of Dowbor's points:

"You cannot build the revolutionary consciousness of a population through political explanations. But military actions can create this consciousness...."

"When we invest a factory and force the manager who is two weeks late with salaries to pay his men, we provoke the army, the police, the press

and the clergy into taking positions against us and in support of the visible enemy. It is then that the workers are able to identify the system as an enemy."

The police have to demonstrate to the bourgeoisie that they are doing their job, and so they organize a repression. "The workers see the police and the army and the press working together and come to recognize that the enemy is not individual but social. And that is already a form of class consciousness."

Dowbor has done some reading. That he has read accurately can be judged from the following:

"Now, this method of creating class consciousness through armed action is very different from the methods that Lenin developed for the creation of a workers' party. If you are mainly concerned with organizing the masses, you address yourself to those classes that are most capable of being organized, like labor, large groups of men with identical interests who are easy to reach. But armed action, which means living in small, clandestine cells, reduces the possibility of contact with the population. We must rely on the repercussions of our actions. If it is a violent action, it will appeal to those parts of the population that are sensitive to violence -- that is, the marginal masses, the unemployed, the favelados.

"Tactically, when you perform an armed action, you don't limit yourself to the interests of one class. You are reaching the masses not through political cells or speeches or pamphlets, but through the fait accompli of violent action. We are not telling them, look, it's better for you to organize a strike against your oppressors, we are saying, here is what we have done against the system. This makes us a mobilization movement, not an organizational movement."

It is clear enough from this explanation that Dowbor, after studying Lenin's theory of party building, believes that it has been superseded. He explains:

"Another advantage of small, radical military groups is that it solves the Leninist problem of how to remain in the vanguard, ahead of the masses. Classical Communist parties run the risk of being outflanked by their own rank and file, but we remain far ahead of the masses by the very nature of our struggle. With us, it is not the masses that fight, but the

political elite."

Such an elite, of course, has its own problems -- to which its theoreticians have addressed themselves:

"We run the risk of isolating ourselves from the masses, since we are fighting and they are not. That is why we do not attempt political education. We do not lecture on socialism or other theories the masses won't understand. Our attacks against the visible enemy are immediately understood."

It is not my intention to suggest that Comrade Maitan shares Dowbor's views. In the current discussion in our movement, Comrade Maitan's contributions are studded with affirmations on the need for party building and the need to avoid becoming isolated from the masses. What I do suggest is that guerrilla fighters of a serious theoretical turn of mind like Dowbor would only laugh at the suggestion that the Trotskyists, in deciding at their last world congress to orient toward guerrilla war, took a general outline provided by Lenin and simply filled it with a concrete content to be found in the current situation in Latin America. They don't need rationalizations of that kind to bolster their own views.

To argue convincingly against the theory espoused by Dowbor, it is necessary to begin by explaining why the Leninist theory of organizing a mass revolutionary-socialist party remains completely valid today. As against Dowbor's theory, which elevates guerrilla warfare into a strategy, it is necessary to demote guerrilla warfare to its proper place; that is, to a tactical level. In this context, Comrade Maitan's repeated references to his record in opposing Debrayism are beside the point. The Dowbors, who exist in other countries besides Brazil, are not Debrayists. In fact, Dowbor explained to the correspondent of the New York Times that one of the basic principles of his movement "was a refutation of the so-called foco...theory of Régis Debray...."

#### The Theory of the Tupamaros

The Tupamaros hold similar views. They consider the work of formulating a program and of building a mass party to have been superseded. Their fundamental view is that "revolutionary action in itself...generates revolutionary consciousness, organization and conditions." (Quoted in "Uruguay: A Role for Urban Guerrillas?" by Jean Stubbs in the January 1971 issue of



International, p. 38.)

As an example, they cite Cuba: "Instead of the long process of the formation of a mass party, a guerrilla foco is installed with a dozen men and this generates consciousness, organization and revolutionary conditions which culminate in a true Revolution."

They hold this position very firmly: "The basic principles of a socialist Revolution are given and tried out in countries like Cuba, and there's no need to discuss it more. It's enough to stick to those principles, and show -- by deeds -- the path of insurrection to achieve their application."

This contempt for the revolutionary theory and practice of Leninism is fostered by one of the peculiarities of Uruguay of which the Tupamaros are very much aware: "Our armed forces, some 12,000 men [they mean the armed forces of the state], weakly armed and trained are one of the weakest repressive apparatus in Latin America." (p. 40.)

It is instructive that the Tupamaros do not involve themselves in debating over theories as to the relative merits of the variants of guerrilla warfare. Insofar as they display concern for theory, it touches only the key issue separating them from Leninism; that is, the role of a combat party. As they see it, it is sufficient for twelve men to begin exemplary actions of an insurrectional nature and the rest will follow.

#### What Ciro Bustos Learned from Che Guevara

Another example, this time from Bolivia, will enable us to bring the problem into still sharper focus. The example has the additional advantage that it concerns a "foquista," therefore a "guerrillerista" easily answered by Comrade Maitan. It is no one less than Ciro Bustos, who was imprisoned along with Régis Debray on charges of having participated in the guerrilla front opened in Bolivia by Che Guevara.

Bustos, upon being released from prison, went to Chile, since owing to the repression under the Levingston government he could not go to his native country of Argentina. An interview with him was published in the February 2, 1971, issue of Punto Final.

In the interview, Ciro Bustos made clear that throughout his imprisonment in Camiri, Bolivia, he successfully maintained the guise of not being a guerrilla fighter, of being instead a "simple gull" who had been

"taken in" by the guerrillas. He did this at first in order to help protect his comrades. Once begun, he was compelled to continue the role to his "disgust."

The truth is, however, that he was and remains a convinced guerrilla fighter, an advocate of "foquismo," meaning by this "a revolutionary nucleus in action, installed in a definite zone...."

He was asked the following question:

"What changes in revolutionary theory did Che's guerrilla introduce, viewed in critical perspective?"

Ciro Bustos replied:

"'Che's guerrilla,' if you are referring to his action in Bolivia, was the result of his entire trajectory as a guerrilla leader from the Sierra Maestra up to his death. Fidel Castro and the group that brought Che into the Cuban feat, resorted to a method of struggle that has always been used in Latin America, including in the wars for independence and later by Zapata and Villa in Mexico and by Sandino in Nicaragua.

"The change was -- as a method of struggle -- to carry guerrilla warfare from the level of tactics to strategy [llevar la guerrilla del plano táctico al estratégico], and in the political arena [lo político] to establish and demonstrate, in Cuba, that the revolution is not made along the road of sterile ideological 'chit-chat,' but along the road of armed struggle and that for a Latin America, fundamentally peasant, the principal form of struggle is guerrilla warfare. Che, with his permanent elaboration of theory and with his practical example lifted this schema to a high level, where the alternative is no longer national but implies the necessity -- inescapably -- of confronting and destroying imperialism by means of armed struggle, generated and developed throughout the subcontinent as the only possibility of achieving the genuine liberation of our peoples."

The conclusion reached by Ciro Bustos that the peoples of Latin America will achieve their emancipation from imperialism only by taking arms in hand is dead right. No revolutionist will dispute it.

His theory of how this goal is to be reached is simplicity itself. You take guerrilla warfare as it has always been practiced in Latin America and lift it from a tactic to a strategy.

This eliminates the need for any sterile ideological chit-chat about Leninism, Trotskyism, or the role of a revolutionary-socialist party, or the problem of connecting up with the masses.

If you grant the basic premise of this disciple of Che Guevara that it is feasible to convert guerrilla warfare from a tactic to a strategy, it appears to me that the rest of the position taken by Ciro Bustos is quite consistent. In fact, as if in a laboratory experiment -- since he was not present at the last world congress and in all likelihood has not yet heard that such a thing occurred -- he enables us to see in two paragraphs where the basic position of the majority on this question ends up logically.

#### How Issue Was Posed at Last World Congress

In light of the foregoing, let me remind the leading comrades of the majority of the way the minority at the last world congress insisted upon the importance of regarding guerrilla warfare as a tactic and not a strategy.

It will be recalled that in the preparatory discussion, I submitted a document "Assessment of the Draft Resolution on Latin America." (Available in English in International Information Bulletin, No. 3, February 1969.) At the end of the document, I stressed three points "in order to avoid any possible misunderstanding." Two of these involved international actions, such as campaigns around single situations or single issues, and mobilizing aid for a national section under heavy repression. As was to be expected, these were acceptable to everyone.

The third point concerned orientation in relation to guerrilla war. At the time I could see no reason why the author or authors of the draft resolution on Latin America would not accept this, too. To my surprise, they rejected it. Here is the point:

"(3) A section of the Fourth International may find that at a certain stage of the revolutionary process in its country, it is necessary and productive to engage in guerrilla war, as a specific form of armed struggle. The proviso is that it be conceived as a tactic entailed by political considerations, not as a new-found formula guaranteeing quick or certain success, and that it be within the means available to the section. This holds, it should be added, not only for Latin America but for similar areas elsewhere.

"Finally, in view of the differences

that have emerged over the relative place of guerrilla war as a tactic, it would be well to examine the question more specifically in relation to the Transitional Program. Our movement has already recognized that in certain countries, under certain circumstances, guerrilla war can play a positive role. However, it has not analyzed the negative consequences of guerrilla war if it is attempted in countries, or under circumstances, where it is out of place. Experience would now seem to testify rather heavily for the conclusion that while the appearance of guerrillas can signify a sharp rise in the class struggle, it can also mark a phase of decline, in which case it must be judged as a sign of despair and desperation, one of the symptoms of defeat.

"As a consciously applied tactic, guerrilla war would seem to come under the sections of the Transitional Program dealing with the arming of the proletariat and the linkup between the proletariat and the peasantry.

"A critical study of the varied experience with guerrilla war in a whole series of countries would be extremely useful to put this tactic in better perspective, to relate it properly to political strategy, and to counteract the rather widespread tendency to elevate it into a universal formula and even a panacea." (p. 14.)

The rejection of this point was decisive in dividing the delegates at the last world congress into a majority and a minority. Perhaps some of the comrades of the majority did not understand what was involved. The quotations from Ciro Bustos, from the Tuparamos, and from Ladislav Dowbor will, I hope, make things clearer.

Taken in the light of Comrade Maitan's orientation toward guerrilla warfare, the quotations should also assist in providing a better understanding of the forces exerting pressure on our movement. In face of this pressure and the rejection of the position of regarding guerrilla warfare as a tactic, perhaps it will be understood why we feel some skepticism with regard to Comrade Maitan's assurances that on party building he has not changed at all -- he still holds it to be the ABC of Leninism and a sine qua non.

From a leader who rejects the Leninist concept of guerrilla warfare as an "auxiliary" form of struggle, such assurances are not convincing. I am reminded of the famous line from Bob Dylan: "You don't have to be a weatherman to know which way the wind

blows."

### More Than Latin America Involved

In the discussion at the last world congress, the comrades of the majority insisted with some vehemence that the orientation toward guerrilla warfare involved Latin America and nowhere else.

The minority contended that this was an arbitrary and artificial approach that failed to take into account a series of different sets of interrelationships. Here is what I wrote in "Assessment of the Draft Resolution on Latin America":

"Another point to consider is whether the central concept in the draft resolution on Latin America, namely, giving a 'geographic-military' orientation priority over political strategy, can be logically confined to just one continent.

"The Cubans have hardly viewed it that way, and certainly the tendencies immediately under their influence do not view it that way. They incline rather strongly to view it as an internationally valid orientation, except -- perhaps -- in the imperialist sector, about which they have little to say; and the sector of the degenerated or deformed workers states about which they have nothing at all to say so far as the struggle for a political revolution is concerned. It would be very difficult to find convincing arguments to persuade these currents that in the colonial world as a whole the tactic of preparation of and engagement in rural guerrilla war for a prolonged period is valid only for Latin America.

"In fact logic speaks for an opposite conclusion. If the draft resolution on Latin America were to be passed in its present form by the coming world congress, our movement would be hard put to explain why the orientation decided on as good for Latin America was considered to be bad for the rest of the colonial and semicolonial world. It would certainly be contended that such a position is inconsistent and that such a sharp geographical demarcation cannot reasonably be made." (pp. 11-12.)

This view has been confirmed so strikingly that one wonders what prevents Comrade Maitan and those who agree with him from writing about it and drawing the appropriate conclusions. I will leave aside the situation in the Middle East, and even Québec, to take up a development that is absolutely decisive in showing that the orientation cannot be confined to Latin America,

or even the colonial world generally, inasmuch as it has taken place in the central stronghold of the international capitalist system.

The two editors of Scanlan's, a monthly exposé publication in the United States, devoted their entire January 1971 issue of ninety-six full-sized pages to the single theme, emblazoned in colors on the cover: "Suppressed Issue: Guerrilla War in the USA." (The words "suppressed issue" refer to the fact that three printers in the U.S. refused to handle the issue. The editors moved to Canada to publish their magazine, shipping it across the border to subscribers and newsstands.)

The main feature is a section entitled "Guerrilla Acts of Sabotage and Terrorism in the United States 1965-1970." This is a day-by-day listing, running from February 12, 1965, to September 7, 1970, of every "definable instance of left-wing terrorism and sabotage in America since such acts began in 1965" that Scanlan's reporters and researchers could find in the press or in official reports. The grand total, according to their adding machine, amounts to 1,391 cases. (I will leave aside the validity of the list, which is rather dubious.)

In the opinion of the editors, what is occurring -- although the government refuses to admit it -- is "urban guerrilla war in the most advanced industrial nation in the world."

Editor Warren Hinckle is of the view that "if the bombings continue this fall [1970] at the current hurricane pace, it is only going to take someone to say it is so and guerrilla warfare will become a catchword of the 1970's along with women's liberation and the mini skirt."

The authors believe that the Nixon administration is completely unable to stop it:

"The FBI, the Secret Service, the Treasury Department, the Pentagon, the CIA and even the Bureau of Mines are all in on the chase. With all the resources at their disposal to monitor and supervise reputed revolutionaries, it must be a matter of considerable professional and political embarrassment that the combined law enforcement, military, security and spy establishment of the United States has been unable to catch even a literal handful of the thousands of underground revolutionaries who, now as a matter of daily benediction, harass the government with sniper fire or bombs."

Why are they so hard to catch? Because of the effectiveness of their organizational technique. They are divided into tiny cells, consisting of as few as three persons.

What is the social origin of most of these guerrilla fighters?

There are two broad groupings: one consists of members of the black and other nonwhite communities; the other "is the white and middle-to-upper-class citizens of college or dropout age...."

Are these engagers in sabotage and terrorism to be associated with any particular organization?

"The highest profile among the practitioners of this art of the explosionist raspberry," replies Editor Hinckle, "are the Weatherman, who make it a point of principle each time they blow up something to drive the FBI quite crazy by popping up somewhere in the country and telling how they got away with it. It is all a little in the manner of a terrorist's April Fool, but the joke appears always to be on the FBI."

Where did this "new wave of urban guerrillas" get the idea?

"Our object was to document planned guerrilla actions that clearly employed the technique of urban guerrilla warfare as practiced in Latin America." The Tupamaros are mentioned various times. Hinckle refers to the tactics "successfully employed by insurgent forces in Ireland, China, Israel, Algeria, Cuba and currently in Latin American and African nations...."

These tactics "are being experimentally adapted to American surroundings by black urban guerrillas and the burgeoning middle and upper-middle class white revolutionaries who operate with relative impunity from college oriented communities which have become cultural and political 'enclaves' in America."

And who are the theoreticians studied by the new wave of urban guerrillas?

"The revolutionary ideology that Mao defined in his treatises on guerrilla war is regarded in most instances as absolute, major exceptions being his political structure and the encrusted bureaucracy of vertical communism."

Another authority is Régis Debray. "The primary theoretician of the 'new guerrilla' is Régis Debray, a young French philosopher-journalist and close

friend of Fidel Castro....

"Accepting Mao's concept of the guerrillas being one with the people as the sine qua non of a successful guerrilla movement, Debray rejected Mao's principle that 'politics directs the gun.' Rather, it is the gun, in the form of successful guerrilla actions against definable manifestations of imperialism and oppression of the people, which defines and develops successful revolutionary politics.

"This shattering revision of traditional Marxism offs the Communist Party from its traditional and cherished role as the political vanguard which sets the correct 'line' for the people. The guerrillas, through terrorist and military actions geared to gain propaganda successes, gradually politicize and assemble the exploited classes on their side. Communist bureaucrats are left out in the cold.

"What drives most professional observers of the new American revolutionaries to such fits of distraction and disgust is their lack of discernible 'goals,' of 'something to replace what they want to tear down,' their emphasis on the primacy of revolutionary tactics over political structure. Yet this reality, so defiant of traditional politics, is the carefully thought out ideological cornerstone of contemporary guerrilla theory as it is being practiced in Latin America and experimented with under the unique conditions that the United States has to offer any pioneers. The traditional left, and particularly the older left -- from social democrats on the right to leftover descendants of the Luddites on the left -- takes about as much joy in guerrilla politics as Sprig Agnew."

Still another source of the guerrilla gospel is Carlos Marighella. "Marighella's Minimanual of the Urban Guerrilla...is prized as a crime-doer's textbook by American guerrillas."

The editors indicate their appreciation of the applicability of Marighella's prescriptions to the "unique conditions" of the United States by including selections from the Minimanual.

Finally, what is the program of the new wave of urban guerrilla fighters in the United States?

"All American guerrilla groups," Editor Hinckle informs us, "have revolutionary tactics in common, but few share any common ideology. Few, indeed, have a definable ideology or post-revolutionary program. Most are feeling their way along the bombing trail, letting the tactics, as it were, quarter-

back the action in the manner suggested by Regis Debray....

"If the guerrillas can be said to uniformly agree on any goals of American guerrilla warfare in addition to fighting the hated war in Southeast Asia, it would be to support national liberation movements throughout the world and, of course, the black liberation struggle in the United States."

The issue contains some interviews with members of the "new wave" that offer us a rare view of their psychological makeup, including -- according to the editors -- their almost universal use of drugs, ranging from the mildest to the hardest, but for lack of space I will leave these aside.

It would be a mistake to think that this reportage can be dismissed as a piece of propaganda designed to advance the Weatherman group that cannot possibly have much impact in the current situation in the United States. Like all political bids in the radical movement, it requires analysis and an answer by the Trotskyist movement. Its importance can be judged from the fact that the Central Headquarters of the Black Panther party, upon receiving an advance copy of the January issue of Scanlan's, gave it official approval and began serializing it in the weekly Black Panther.

The entire front page of the December 19, 1970, issue of The Black Panther was used to duplicate the headline "Guerrilla War in the U.S.A." A map of the United States from Scanlan's, showing in clusters, graduated as to size, where acts of "armed propaganda" have occurred in the past five years was likewise featured on the front page of The Black Panther as well as an editorial, repeating word for word some of the paragraphs written by Warren Hinckle.

Through The Black Panther, if not through other channels, the issue of urban guerrilla war in the United States has been raised in the vanguard on an international scale. It can be sidestepped only at heavy political cost. What answer should we give?

It is true that a great rise has occurred in the United States in acts of individual violence, not to mention ghetto explosions, or neighborhood flare-ups. The causes lie in the deteriorating economic and social situation and the effort of the capitalist state to repress the resulting dissatisfaction. The escalation of violence is one of the signs of this dialectical interplay.

To recognize this and to seek to turn the radicalization of the Afro-Americans and other oppressed nationalities, the women, and the campus toward constructing the only instrument that can offer a genuine solution -- a mass revolutionary-socialist party -- is one thing. To place the label of "urban guerrilla war" on the radicalization and to seek to divert it into the dead end of terrorism and sabotage conducted by tiny groups, lacking any consistent revolutionary ideology at all and in isolation from the working class, is something else again. A question of basic principles is involved.

To meet this challenge -- which the Socialist Workers party can be counted on to do -- requires, among other things, an effective polemic against the sources from which the "new wave of urban guerrillas" draws theoretical nourishment. This includes not only Debray, but Mao, Marighella, the Tupamaros, the Weatherman experimentalists, and, in general, any ideologist who considers the Leninist strategy of party building to have been superseded by guerrilla action, whether rural or urban.

#### The Shift in Comrade Maitan's Views

In my article "A Contribution to the Discussion on Revolutionary Strategy in Latin America," I asserted:

"The course prescribed by Comrade Maitan and made official in the Latin-American resolution represents a concession to ultraleftism. This is how it must be characterized objectively." (Op. Cit., p. 12.)

As to how a resolution of this kind could gain a majority, I offered an explanation along the following lines:

First, that some of the radicalizing youth which our movement had recently begun recruiting in various areas were not yet free of ultraleftism. This was to be expected, owing to their lack of political experience. These youth especially admired the Latin-American guerrilla fighters, above all Che Guevara, which of course was not to their discredit -- quite the contrary -- but which did present a problem to be overcome in their further development.

Secondly, a sector of the Trotskyist movement in Latin America had become convinced that we faced an impasse unless we turned to guerrilla action. What was required, as these comrades saw it, was more than a tac-

tical approach to engaging in guerrilla warfare. "They wanted total commitment of the movement as a whole, the elevation of engagement on the guerrilla road into a principle." (Ibid., p. 12.)

It was the combination of these two views among many of the delegates at the last world congress, I said, that provided Comrade Maitan with his majority.

Comrade Maitan's insistence on the need and the possibility of a quick breakthrough provided a platform on which these two sectors could unite. The perspective of gaining leadership of a mass movement, or even winning power in a selected country in short order, was very attractive to some of the impatient youth, and, of course, dovetailed with the thinking of those who visualized guerrilla warfare as having extraordinary powers not available to other means.

The role played by Comrade Maitan was thus of key importance in cementing together the combination.

On Comrade Maitan's own evolution -- which also played a role, naturally -- I said among other things: "It was precisely following this exhilarating expansion of forces [the dramatic growth in the May-June 1968 period] that some of the leaders of the Fourth International, above all Comrade Maitan, began adapting to ultraleftism." (Ibid., p. 12)

In his current article "Once Again on the Revolutionary Perspectives in Latin America -- Defense of an Orientation and a Method," Comrade Maitan -- speaking for himself, if not the others -- protests that even if the formulation "began adapting to ultraleftism" were apt, "unfortunately the chronology is wrong." To prove his point, he states: "From Comrade Hansen's first article itself it can be deduced that I had defined my orientation before May 1968 and thus before the Trotskyist breakthrough in France was concretized in the building of the Ligue." (Op. cit., p. 6.)

I am quite willing to stand corrected on the date of Comrade Maitan's conversion to the guerrilla orientation, all the more so inasmuch as, despite his remark about my insinuating he "cleverly manipulated" the delegates, he does not challenge my analysis of the composition of the majority. Just the same it is regrettable that he himself is not more specific about his own evolution on this question.

The best I can do, going by the available record, is to put it somewhere between two dates.

The first date is 1965. In that year, Comrade Maitan wrote an article "Some Criticisms and Comments Concerning the

Document on the African Revolution" in which he posed "the hypothesis of formation, for example, of a workers state in Egypt in a relatively cold way, without the active revolutionary intervention of the masses at the crucial moment of the qualitative leap." (In English in International Information Bulletin, December 1965. See also my reply in the same issue of the Bulletin, "Nasser's Egypt -- On the Way to a Workers State?")

According to this view, if I am not mistaken, a regime like the one headed by Nasser could create a workers state in a "cold way"; that is, without a revolution, without the mobilization of the masses, and, one supposes, without guerrilla warfare, either rural or urban, or any other form of armed struggle whether viewed as a tactic or a strategy.

The second date is May 15, 1968, the date of the letter sent by Comrade Maitan to the United Secretariat, which he submitted under the title "An Insufficient Document" to the international pre-congress discussion. The stand taken in this letter appears to me to be in polar opposition to the stand taken in the 1965 article. Let me recall the two key paragraphs:

"But it is only by successes or revolutionary struggles at the head of a mass movement in one or several countries that we will be able to surmount our difficulties and present contradictions. What is expected from us from now on is that we demonstrate in practice the historical value of our movement and we will be judged essentially on this basis. This can appear, at bottom, to be an elementary truth, but it is a question of inspiring our whole activity with this recognition. It is a question more precisely of determining in what countries we have the best chance of a breakthrough and subordinating everything to the elementary necessity for a success in these countries, and even, if necessary, in a single country. The rest will come later.

"There are, in fact, several countries where we at present have possibilities for an important breakthrough (youth movement in France, antiwar movement and youth movement in the United States, South Africa with a certain time) and we must unquestionably make an effort in the direction of India, but we must place everything above all on a sector of Latin America and you know very well which one. We must exploit the preparatory period of the congress to convince the entire movement to operate in practice, every day, with this perspective. Permit me to express myself a little paradoxically: it is necessary to understand and to explain that at the present stage the International will be built around Bolivia." (In English in International Information Bulletin, January 1969, Part 2,

pp. 17-18.)

In place of a "relatively cold way" -- in which the Fourth International is excluded from playing an active role -- the perspective has veered to concentrating everything on a "breakthrough" whereby a small group of Fourth Internationalists, by picking up the gun, can place themselves at the head of the masses and win power in short order, even if they have to keep repeating the attempt for a decade or more.

My attempt at bracketing the date of Comrade Maitan's conversion may be incorrect. Perhaps it occurred much earlier and he sees no contradiction between his current advocacy of a guerrilla orientation and his earlier view that a workers state can be formed in a relatively cold way, "without the active revolutionary intervention of the masses at the crucial moment of the qualitative leap."

It may be that it all depends on which country you have in mind. In some, the hot way is required. In others the relatively cold way is sufficient.

Even at the cost of my having to make another self-criticism, I hope more material will be provided by Comrade Maitan on this question.

One of the items in the evolution of Comrade Maitan's thinking might have been the internal developments in the Italian section of the Fourth International at that time, when, if I am informed correctly, the bulk of the youth were lost to a Maoist current. But the notorious paucity of records concerning the internal life of the Italian section precludes me from forming a judgment. Perhaps Comrade Maitan can offer us some information on this not unimportant aspect of the question.

#### Orientations in Other Sectors

Comrade Maitan is vexed at my conclusion that the course prescribed by him and made official in the Latin-American resolution represents a concession to ultraleftism. I stated further -- and I see no reason to change this opinion:

"Consistent application of the course charted by Comrade Maitan would prove disastrous for the Fourth International. The line could hardly be confined to Latin America or even the colonial world generally, for the same ultraleft tendencies to which the adaptation has been made are operative in the imperialist centers. Fostering an ultraleft course in Latin America would surely be paralleled by permissiveness toward ultraleftism, if not worse, in the imperialist centers. In fact, there is evidence that this has already been occurring in the quite different context of conditions

in Britain." ("A Contribution to the Discussion on Revolutionary Strategy in Latin America," Op. cit., p. 12.)

Comrade Maitan brushes this aside with the comment that "while not denying that connections exist between the orientations proposed for Latin America and possible orientations in other sectors, we think that no progress can be made in our discussion by mixing in problems which, if they need be discussed at all, should be taken up in a different context." ("Once Again on the Revolutionary Perspectives in Latin America -- Defense of an Orientation and a Method." Op. cit., p. 6.)

Unfortunately, it is not possible, as we have seen, to cut things up so neatly and so disposably. I should like to insist on the importance of the inter-relationship between the guerrilla orientation for Latin America adopted at the last world congress and the orientation followed by certain other sectors of the world Trotskyist movement.

#### Blackburn on Urban Guerrilla War

The London Times of January 12, 1971, published an article entitled "The stagnant revolution." A subtitle was still more eye-catching: "Robin Blackburn looks at the New Left in disarray."

The article was not about the New Left in Britain but -- the United States. Blackburn, or course, told it like it is.

"So far," he said, "nothing has emerged to fill the gap left by the collapse of Students for a Democratic Society which split into warring factions last year and in the process completely lost its strength among the mass of students. Today the various revolutionary splinter groups are no larger than their counterparts in Britain and certainly smaller than those in France, Germany, Italy or Japan. Yet they command more attention than their numbers alone would seem to warrant since, in a situation already charged with social tension, they are readier to move from the word to the deed."

No, Blackburn is not referring to the Trotskyists of the Socialist Workers party and the Young Socialist Alliance or to any of the groups that have jointly inspired and mounted the mass mobilizations against the war in Vietnam that caused one president to drop out of active politics and that have led Nixon to say that he may end up as only a "one-term" president. Blackburn has other forces in mind:

"The F.B.I. claims that there were more than 3,000 'bombings' last year, causing many millions of dollars of damage,



though as yet little loss of life. Most of these actions are the work of small collectives, comprising a dozen or, at most, two dozen members. The only white revolutionary organization committed to such tactics is the Weathermen, formerly a faction within the S.D.S.: its membership is entirely underground and cannot number more than a few hundred.

"The urge to 'pick up the gun' in part reflects the sense of impotence of the mass radical movement, which has proved unable to stop the war in Indo-China, let alone pose a revolutionary challenge to American capitalism. Only a tiny minority has drawn the conclusion that outright civil war is the only option left."

Blackburn mentions specific cases of bombings ascribable to those who have presumably opted for outright civil war. He includes in his survey the following: "At the end of last year Hoover of the F.B.I. announced that he had discovered a collective, comprising almost entirely of priests and nuns, with a plan to kidnap a White House official to be exchanged for a bombing halt in Indo-China."

(Blackburn is referring to the Daniel and Philip Berrigan frame-up case. He fails to mention that the two pacifist priests, speaking from their prison cells in Danbury, Connecticut, where they were alleged to have masterminded the plot, branded the charges as fabrications.)

I will cite two more paragraphs to show beyond question the ideology represented by Robin Blackburn:

"Just when repression or frustration seem to have destroyed the revolutionary movement, it is sustained by the eruption of revolt in some new context. Another source of its power of survival is the new youth culture which has merged with revolutionary politics in a variety of bizarre forms. The old left formed tightly integrated political parties which provided for every aspect of its members...."

"The Weatherman consciously tries to extend the links between the cultural and political underground, which is why it sprung Timothy Leary from jail, winning him over to its political line in the process. The Weatherman claims that the prevalence of the youth culture renders revolutionaries much less visible to the agents of repression. It has now been underground for over six months and none of them has been captured in spite of the fact that all their leaders are on the F.B.I.'s most-wanted list."

#### Bernadine Dohrn's Letter

The true situation is quite different

from Blackburn's account. Both the Black Panthers and the Weatherpeople were already deeply divided when Robin Blackburn wrote his article. The factional struggle in the Black Panther Party soon flared into a public scandal with each side "expelling" the other on charges that included the foulest personal recriminations. This internal war can appear bizarre and even incomprehensible unless you know the central political issue -- the "strategy" of armed struggle in the U.S., that is, the very developments Blackburn found so exhilarating in the American scene.

Robin Blackburn is silent about it, but surely he must have been aware of the December 6, 1970, "New Morning" statement released by the "Weather Underground" over the signature of Bernadine Dohrn, one of the leaders involved in the Manhattan townhouse explosion in which three Weatherpeople lost their lives. The letter is of great interest, for it expresses the views of a sector that is moving away from the "strategy" of guerrilla warfare after having tasted its fruits. Here are some of the points made by Dohrn:

"It has been nine months since the townhouse explosion. In that time, the future of our revolution has been changed decisively. A growing illegal organization of young women and men can live and fight and love inside Babylon. The FBI can't catch us; we've pierced their bullet-proof shield. But the townhouse forever destroyed our belief that armed struggle is the only real revolutionary struggle.

"It is time for the movement to go out into the air, to organize, to risk calling rallies and demonstrations, to convince that mass actions against the war and in support of rebellions do make a difference...."

"The deaths of three friends ended our military conception of what we are doing. It took us weeks of careful talking to rediscover our roots, to remember that we had been turned-on to the possibilities of revolution by denying the schools, the jobs, the death relationships we were 'educated' for."

Weatherwoman Dohrn tells how the group opened up its bombing activities with inner qualms. "Many people in the collective did not want to be involved in the large scale, almost random bombing offensive that was planned. But they struggled day and night and eventually, everyone agreed to do their part."

"At the end," she continues, "they believed and acted as if only those who die are proved revolutionaries." They went into action without really considering what came next.

"This tendency to consider only bombings or picking up the gun as revolu-

tionary, with the glorification of the heavier the better, we've called the military error. After the explosion, we called off all armed actions until such time as we felt the causes had been understood and acted upon. We found that the alternative direction already existed among us and had been developed within other collectives. We became aware that a group of outlaws who are isolated from the youth communities do not have a sense of what is going on, cannot develop strategies that grow to include large numbers of people....

"We are so used to feeling powerless that we believe the pig propaganda about the death of the movement, or some bad politics about rallies being obsolete and bullshit....

"The demonstrations and strikes following the rape of Indochina and the murders at Jackson and Kent last May showed real power and made a strong difference. New people were reached and involved and the government was put on the defensive." (Rat, December 17, 1971.)

Bernadine Dohrn's letter made an impact among the protagonists of urban guerrilla war in the United States and Canada. Among the Black Panthers it served to detonate the growing internal frictions.

Nine of the Black Panthers on trial in New York wrote an open letter in reply to Bernadine Dohrn. The letter, published in the January 19, 1971, issue of the East Village Other, cited Che Guevara and Carlos Marighella with approval, and denounced the strategy of party building in the strongest terms.

The publication of this letter by Eldridge Cleaver's faction was answered by Huey Newton's faction with immediate expulsions, and Eldridge Cleaver responded in kind. The Black Panther party was split wide open. After that, the key issue became obscured by personal insults, charges of murder, and threats of assassination.

One final item, and the true situation -- so cavalierly ignored by Robin Blackburn -- will be outlined sufficiently well for our discussion.

According to Blackburn, Timothy Leary was won over to the Weatherman line. In January Leary was placed under house arrest in Algiers by Eldridge Cleaver. The key difference again was over armed struggle.

Leary, having become convinced he should be a revolutionary, was faithfully studying the works of Kim Il Sung. But he had not really changed his basic views. He had simply added armed struggle as a finishing touch. In his opinion, up to now revolutions have simply meant

the substitution of one set of "armed dictators" for another. "I think that if my philosophy is understood, we might find a way out of this boring, repetitious cycle of one armed group overthrowing another and becoming just as bad."

Here is how it can be done: "In order to break this cycle, I firmly believe that you must liberate people's nervous systems. Free their nervous systems and the rest follows. [Isn't it remarkable how the rest follows? -- J.H.] That is my philosophy and I can summarize it in a few sentences. Internal Liberation must precede external. And you must move from neurological liberation to the religious, to the sexual, to the cultural, to the economic, to the political, to the armed -- instead of the other way." (Quoted in Good Times, February 19, 1971.)

Eldridge Cleaver believes in the reverse order, or at least beginning with armed struggle. Hence the need to keep the good patron saint of hallucinogens under close surveillance in his quarters in Algiers.

The obligation to bring the British public up to date on the seamier side of urban guerrilla war in the United States concerns the London Times and the guest writer whom they billed as "an editor of the New Left Review in Britain."

Of primary interest to us is something more immediate -- The Red Mole bills this British Weatherman and conscious anti-Leninist as a member of its Editorial Board.

This fact helps explain the otherwise puzzling hybrid character of The Red Mole.

#### Entryism and the Ultrared Mole

During the period when a sector of the world Trotskyist movement was practicing "entryism sui generis," one of the ploys was to start up a paper that adopted the guise of being "left centrist." The idea was that when a sector of the organized working class ultimately began moving in a revolutionary direction it would, in its first stage, be left centrist. To be in position to head such a current, some of the Trotskyists who engaged in entryism sui generis thought they had to appear as left centrists -- even though they were really revolutionists.

A supporting circle around the "left centrist" paper made a convenient halfway house for a group of Trotskyists doing entry work and another group assigned to maintaining an "independent" group and sometimes an "independent" newspaper or magazine, often distinguished for its irregularity.

The entire tactic was dangerous, particularly if stretched out. The Stalinist or Social Democratic milieu in which the entry work was carried out was conducive to disintegration of revolutionary morale. The "independent" work tended to become downgraded in importance. Recruiting to Trotskyism, particularly the integration of new cadres, presented special difficulties that inclined the Trotskyist militants to take anything but an aggressive attitude in this field. Out of fear of not conforming to specifications, the "left centrist" paper tended to be politically sluggish and unattractive (genuinely left-centrist papers were often much more audacious in taking a stance further to the left, particularly in occasionally opening their columns to Trotskyist material labeled as such). Worst of all, among some members carrying out this tactic, the left-centrist mask, worn so long, finally tended to become the person -- the one-time Trotskyist changed into a hardened left-centrist.

The Red Mole is remindful of a sui generis "left centrist" Trotskyist paper -- but viewed in a mirror in which the former sign "keep right" reads, as it should in a reflection, "keep left."

The new schema would seem to run as follows: The milieu in which we work is the radicalizing students. In their first stage, they pass through ultraleftism. You have to be there to meet them and attract them. The best tactic in speaking with them is to adopt an ultraleft stance. Just as the old sui generis paper tried to include genuine left centrists on its editorial board, so The Red Mole tries to include genuine representatives of the "new wave of urban guerrillas," or facsimiles thereof, like British Weatherman Robin Blackburn.

It should be observed that in both instances -- both the old sui generis paper and The Red Mole -- the premises are sound enough. Revolutionists have to remain in contact with the masses, either a sector in movement or one likely to move. Currently, the Trotskyists have to remain in contact with the radicalizing youth, recruiting to the maximum from them.

What is disputable in both instances is the symmetrical tactical course, which in neither case follows from the premises. To remain in contact with sources of recruitment, and to carry out actual recruitment successfully, does not require adaptation to the mistakes, prejudices, or low level of political experience and understanding encountered among those we are seeking to win over. Their training as Trotskyists must begin in the very process of recruiting them.

To adapt to the milieu entails three immediate dangers: (1) confusion

as to where Trotskyism stands on issues of considerable substance; (2) loss of one's own militants to the milieu; (3) waste of time and missing of opportunities.

The current permissive attitude toward ultraleftism involves basically similar dangers. Moreover a new logic can be set in motion. Just as entryism fostered the belief among some of those who practiced it that left centrism is Trotskyism, so permissiveness toward ultraleftism can become converted into the conviction that ultraleftism is Trotskyism.

The outcome can thus be most deleterious to the main task facing our movement as a whole -- construction of a Leninist-type party.

### "Let It Bleed"

The confusion created by The Red Mole's adaptation to ultraleftism carries a political overhead. A good example was the scandal resulting from the display given to the article on the Labour party by Editorial Board Member Robin Blackburn in the April 15, 1970, issue and the failure to answer it properly.

In "Let It Bleed," Blackburn argued that the Labour party was a "capitalist party," not essentially different from the Tory party, that its hold over the British working class had been "weakened," and therefore in the upcoming general election it should be actively fought by revolutionists.

Blackburn proposed a course of action:

"The central argument of this article is that after the recent extended experience of Labour Government it would be absolutely incorrect for us to offer any kind of support to Harold Wilson or the Party he leads. I will assume that no Marxist can believe in passively abstaining from politics, especially during an election period when the political consciousness of the masses is stimulated. I will therefore conclude that the only principled course for revolutionary socialists during the coming election will be an active campaign to discredit both of Britain's large capitalist parties. In this campaign we should certainly pull none of our punches. We should disrupt the campaigns of the bourgeois parties and their leading spokesmen using all the imaginative and direct methods which the last few years have taught us."

It is true that the editors printed a brief note stating that with Blackburn's article The Red Mole "opens a long-needed discussion on the Labour Party -- a problem which has bedevilled the revolutionary

movement since its existence. Our pages will be open to all comrades wishing to discuss the question."

However, no article of equivalent length, stating the position of the British Trotskyists, was carried in the same issue. No opposing view at all was printed in that issue. In fact, from the editorial note itself there was no way of knowing that Blackburn did not represent the view of the Editorial Board on this question. For all anyone might know, reading that issue of The Red Mole, Blackburn's analysis and conclusions might be those of the British Trotskyists.

This created a considerable problem. In other English-speaking countries in particular, the Trotskyists were suddenly confronted with the political necessity of publicly disavowing the ultraleft line carried by The Red Mole on this question.

For Blackburn, of course, it was quite a coup, a good example of what a partisan of urban guerrilla warfare can accomplish with an adroit and well-timed thrust.

Two issues later, May 14, 1970, The Red Mole published the first contribution in the discussion "open to all comrades wishing to discuss the question."

This was a letter from Pat Jordan, Secretary, International Marxist Group. After praising Blackburn on some things, Comrade Jordan ventured to say, "I think him wrong in some of his assumptions."

Then he came to the main point of his letter: "As soon as time permits I will be putting down my thoughts in full."

"In the meantime," he continued, "a few points:"

The strongest of these was that he thought Blackburn was "wrong in comparing the Labour Party with the U.S. Democratic Party."

For himself, Comrade Jordan took a pessimistic view of the pragmatic possibilities: "If all the revolutionary Marxists in the whole country went all out to persuade people to vote Labour, it is doubtful whether this would win the L.P. one seat."

However, it was necessary to indicate preferences. He would prefer Labour to win because that "would help to destroy social democracy."

As to what the revolutionary movement ought to do, Comrade Jordan proposed: "The fruitful thing revolutionaries can do in the coming General

Election campaign is to use the heightened political interest (especially among the young people) to spread revolutionary ideas and expose the bourgeois politicians of all parties."

To undo the damage caused by Blackburn's article, this letter was much too little and much too late.

The June 1, 1970, issue of The Red Mole carried the promised article by Comrade Jordan. He had little difficulty disposing of Blackburn's analysis of the nature of the Labour party; but it must be said that when he reached the point where it became necessary to project a course of action, he came down with a sudden case of stomach pains:

"For reasons given above, I am in favour of the victory of Labour in the coming election campaign. However, it would be the height of foolishness to draw from this the conclusion that revolutionaries' main activity should be that of calling upon people to vote Labour. In the first place, it is totally unrealistic to think that small revolutionary groups can influence the outcome of the election. Secondly, to make our main thrust the slogan 'Vote Labour' would be to put ourselves on the left-wing of those forces mystifying the whole electoral process. This would, in effect, be adding our weight to those processes which enable the Labour Party to divert working class aspirations. It would also hinder our endeavors to spread revolutionary ideas and our efforts to warn the working class that its main concern should be to prepare for an attack from whatever government emerges.

"To concentrate upon the slogan 'Keep the Tories Out' would be merely another way of saying 'Vote Labour,' under present circumstances.

"However, it is imperative, from a Marxist point of view, to explain very clearly to the politically aware why it would be best for Labour to win. This is an educational process, not an election-deciding exercise."

Is it too much to say that this position is ambiguous? The IMG rejects the course of running a candidate of its own. It has no independent alternative, not even a candidate for a minor post. Nevertheless the IMG refuses to back the slogan "Vote Labour." Thus the IMG opens itself to the charge of following an abstentionist policy.

Times can arise when it would be correct to call for a boycott of bourgeois elections -- an active boycott. However, as we know from Lenin, this implies a revolutionary upsurge

in which the working class is prepared to drive for power, arms in hand. That was hardly the situation in Britain in 1970. Electoral illusions still persist among the majority of the British workers however few are to be found in the head of Robin Blackburn.

Seeking a "vector" that would enable him to avoid the charge of abstentionism, Comrade Jordan said: "I am in favour of the victory of Labour...."

And what does a worker do in the voting booth? Nothing more than take off his cap and salute like a red mole?

The way Comrade Jordan muddled through in his article does not end the story. On another page of the very same issue of The Red Mole a contrasting line came out with admirable clarity.

In a cartoon strip, two political demagogues stand, each on his soap box, the one labeled "Vote Conservative Now," the other "Vote Labour!" (Underneath, the cartoonist has written, "They're all the same.") A red mole holds up his sign, "Workers and students struggle against capitalism!"

A second panel shows a crowd of moles ganging up on the two speakers, physically beating both of them, trampling them underfoot, tearing up the placard marked "Vote Labour," and joining a long line of moles triumphantly carrying the red flag. That's a bully way of dispelling the electoral illusions of the British workers and showing them what we think of free speech!

As to the relative impact of the article written by the secretary of the IMG and the accompanying cartoon there is no question as to which made the greater impression on the readers of The Red Mole. "Imaginative and direct methods" pay off! Especially when used by an editor to tip off the readers as to the paper's real line.

Within the IMG, a minority tendency voiced some telling criticisms of the orientation of the majority. I will not go into the internal differences in the IMG at this time, but refer comrades to the extensive compilation of both the minority and majority documents entitled "Key Documents Discussed by the IMG Membership in Preparation for Their March 1970 Conference." (See SWP Internal Information Bulletin, October 1970.)

Of special interest in connection with the immediate point is the article dated May 17, 1970, by Connie Harris "The Labour Party in Perspective -- In Reply to Robin Blackburn." This was submitted to The Red Mole for publication in accordance with the public announcement that "Our pages will be open to all comrades wishing to discuss the question."

Despite the promise, the article by Connie Harris was rejected.

#### On Guerrilla Action in Québec

How unrealistic it is for Comrade Maitan to seek to confine the discussion to Latin America was shown in a most convincing way by the attempts of two different small groups, each calling themselves "FLQ," to imitate in Montreal what some of the guerrilla groups have been doing in Uruguay, Brazil, and elsewhere. Not only that. The reaction of The Red Mole was something more than enthusiastic. Urban guerrilla warfare "right in the heart of Canada itself!"

The Canadian Trotskyist movement, which was under heavy attack in the general repression -- two of its leading members were imprisoned -- had little choice but to publicly state its differences with The Red Mole on this question.

In an article in the December 21, 1970, issue of Labor Challenge, Comrade Ross Dowson sought, first, to rectify the bad reporting of The Red Mole concerning the nature, views, and political level of the FLQ. Secondly, he maintained that the support voiced by The Red Mole for the means used by the two action groups was ultraleft.

"The Red Mole article," Comrade Dowson wrote, "commences with a lengthy quotation by Leon Trotsky where he rejects any concept that individual terror is permissible or impermissible from a 'pure morals' point of view and where he expresses his 'sympathies' with terrorists in their struggle against national and political oppression.

"But this is far from sufficient to explain Trotsky's, the revolutionary socialist, position on individual terror. To the above it is necessary to add a further statement by Trotsky: 'Individual terrorism in our eyes is inadmissible -- precisely for the reason that it lowers the masses in their own consciousness, reconciles them to impotence and directs their glances and hopes towards the great

avenger and emancipator who will some day come and accomplish this mission....

"If a pinch of powder and a slug of lead are ample to shoot the enemy through the neck, where is the need of a class organization...what need is there for a party? What is the need of meetings, mass agitation, elections?" asks Trotsky.

"Exactly. Insofar as the handful of persons who identify themselves as FLQ have articulated any theory it is a mélange of ideas, all of which reject all of the forms under which real struggle is now unfolding in Quebec. It is the concept of guerrilla actions, undertaken by small groups, that are supposed to terrorize the bourgeoisie, render capitalist society inoperative and open the way to a change in power, or to spark the working class, already poised, into massive and decisive action -- any and every theory that is substitutist for the class and for the building of mass action.

"Needless to say the kidnappings and the murder committed in the name of the FLQ have achieved, as could be foreseen, none of the results desired by their perpetrators. Far from embarrassing the government and bringing it to the brink they have served to strengthen its hand. They have neither inspired nor mobilized the Québécois, other than the forces of conservatism behind Drapeau in the Montreal civic elections."

While the Canadian Trotskyists were trying to differentiate their own position from the ultraleft one taken by The Red Mole, they were confronted by an even worse problem -- what to do about the remarks made by Comrade Tariq Ali on a television panel filmed at Oxford by CTV, the national Canadian television network. This program was shown throughout Canada, while our comrades, like the rest of the left, were doing their best to mobilize a massive defense against the repression.

Some very provocative questions were directed at Comrade Ali. In answering, he did not appear to keep well in mind the situation in Canada and the need to help to the best of his ability in mobilizing a broad defense against the repression.

For instance, he was asked: "Do you believe, sir, that society today has reached the point where you see you have to use violence to achieve your ends?"

Comrade Ali replied: "I would

say that this is largely a tactical question, depending precisely on the degree of opposition which we encounter in our struggle for socialism. But briefly, the answer is yes. I think that to achieve the ends we believe in to the establishment of a socialist republic, I believe that a certain element of violence is absolutely necessary."

Another provocative question was: "When you were president of the Oxford Debating Union did you not invite Governor Wallace of Alabama to speak at the Oxford Union?"

Comrade Ali answered: "Yes. Do you know why? Because we would have killed him."

That did not come off so well, and Comrade Ali was soon explaining: "Of course, when I say, 'Kill him,' I don't mean it necessarily literally. It's a tactical question. If I believed we could get away with killing him we would. It is a question of if you are organized to do so. I don't think we are. I meant kill him politically. That is what we wanted to do, but that wouldn't have taken place because Wallace wouldn't have got further past Oxford Station."

The setting for broadcasting this TV program, it should be underlined, was Canada in the midst of a great police hunt for urban guerrillas charged with kidnapping and murder. It was shown on the television screens during a repression in which our own headquarters and the homes of many comrades were raided, and two of our leaders were thrown into prison.

Comrade Ali did what he could to turn the provocative questions into a high-level dialogue on the difference between "individual terror" with mass support and "individual terror" without mass support -- a distinction a bit too fine, one must suppose, for the Canadian audience to appreciate at the moment. "At times," he said, "I think that individual terror becomes necessary. I don't believe in individual terror as a principle; I am completely opposed to it. I'll give you a concrete instance. I don't believe in solving this particular argument by shooting off a few people, who are making rude noises. Nor do I think that individual terror can in itself bring you any nearer to what we believe in. Of course not. I believe that individual terror is justified when you have a mass movement, when you have mass support inside a particular society, then it is justified."

Could one disapprove of the Canadian Trotskyists thinking: "Defend us from our friends; we can defend

ourselves from our enemies"?

In seeking the source of the ultrared coloration of the IMG, the personal inclinations of the majority of its leaders should not be taken as the decisive determinant. It can hardly be questioned that some of them feel more comfortable in a red T-shirt adorned with their totem than in less imaginative dress. It is understandable that in trying to recruit from the radicalizing youth they are responsive to a certain degree to the pressure of this milieu. Yet their intentions are the best. The key point to bear in mind is that they are only trying to apply the orientation adopted by the last world congress.

Indeed, from this standpoint, they are rather consistent. If urban guerrilla warfare works for the Tupamaros in a city as large as Montevideo, is it logical to exclude experimenting with it in other large cities? Robin Blackburn, a member of the Editorial Board of The Red Mole is excited over what the Weatherpeople have done in the U.S.; and other members, it seems, became similarly enthused over what was done in Montreal by the FLQ commandos.

One would think that the majority leadership of the Fourth International would recognize the truly dangerous implications flowing from the guerrilla orientation they sponsored at the last world congress.

#### No Scapegoats, Please

Let me turn now to a question that at first sight seems hardly worth taking up but that on further examination turns out to be of some concern.

In the article I wrote, "A Contribution to the Discussion on Revolutionary Strategy in Latin America," I included a section entitled "The Extraordinary Value of Hugo Blanco's Work." In summarizing the facts, I mentioned the name of Comrade Nahuel Moreno.

Comrade Maitan agrees by and large with what I wrote about the gains made in Peru before the imprisonment of Comrade Blanco. He objects, however, to my mentioning the name of Comrade Moreno in the way I did. In a footnote, Comrade Maitan says: "In his document Hansen presents Moreno in a very favorable light, writing: 'Our first big advance came in Peru through the work of Hugo Blanco, carried out with the active participation of Argentine comrades like Daniel Pereyra and Eduardo Creus under the leadership of Comrade Nahuel Moreno.' A stage in the life of our Peruvian movement on which the opinions of the participants are, to say the least, divided, is presented in a grossly oversimplified way. Furthermore, it is not our movement's style to use expressions like 'Under the leadership of Comrade Nahuel Moreno,' which

should be avoided even if they had any correspondence with the reality." ("Once Again on the Revolutionary Perspectives in Latin America -- Defense of an Orientation and a Method." Op. cit., p. 19.)

My comment was based on what I saw at the time during a trip in which I visited both Peru and Argentina as well as other countries. It is true that sharp tactical differences subsequently arose among the comrades. I did not go into these because the conclusions to be drawn would not have changed the overall lesson that one of the prime reasons for the defeat suffered in Peru in 1963 "was the absence of a Leninist combat party on a national scale." Despite Comrade Maitan's criticism, I am still of the opinion that what I said about Comrade Moreno's role was factually accurate.

Of course, Comrade Maitan had his own sources of information at the time I visited Peru and Argentina; that is, the Buró Latinoamericano (BLA) which operated under the leadership of J. Posadas. While I never met Posadas himself to my knowledge, I did meet various members of the BLA. My impression was that they were not to be trusted as sources of information. Nothing that has happened since has caused me to change this opinion. However, I am quite willing to consider any evidence in Comrade Maitan's possession that might lead me to reconsider.

Comrade Maitan's footnote is appended to a sharp political attack against Comrade Moreno. The basis utilized for this is a document "by Comrade Moreno at the end of 1967" that takes as a starting point in analyzing the revolutionary reality in the southern end of South America the fact that Inti Peredo and his guerrilla group still survived after the death of Che Guevara. According to the quotation, Comrade Moreno wrote that the number one task is "first to save and then to consolidate the ELN and Inti as its unchallenged leader. There is no more urgent task than this."

Comrade Maitan cites an additional paragraph in which Comrade Moreno insists on the importance of OLAS and the importance of joining "its armed detachments" or helping "to create them where they do not exist. This means loyal and disciplined recognition of the leadership of OLAS, recognition of the disciplined and centralized character which the struggle and its Latin-American organization must have, and most of all the need to maintain direct contact with the Cuban leadership, which is the unchallenged leadership of the continental civil war and



of OLAS. It also means our unconditional entry into its armed detachments...."

Comrade Maitan then says:

"This piece in unique is a mélange of mechanical formulations, opportunism, adventurism, and distortion of the objective facts. But how can it be explained that after writing this Moreno opted for the minority line and that Comrade Hansen has never had the least occasion to differentiate himself from him?" (Ibid. p. 10.)

To further understand the context of Comrade Maitan's remarks and his bringing in the quotation, it should be noted that he is responding to my raising the question of whether the Bolivian comrades in becoming engaged in Inti Peredo's guerrilla front in Bolivia were aware that he held a foquista concept and was opposed to forming a political party.

Comrade Maitan unfortunately did not provide the source of the quotation. This did not facilitate my search to find it. Thus, as yet, I have not been able to check it in the original. I do not thereby challenge its existence. There are gaps in my files owing mainly to the fact that the comrades in many countries in Latin America, including Argentina, have had to work in underground conditions for long years. Sometimes they overlook sending documents to New York. In certain instances, while they mail them, they never get through. Consequently I can make only a rough approximation of the context in which such a unique mélange, as Comrade Maitan puts it, "of mechanical formulations, opportunism, adventurism, and distortion of the objective facts" could have been written.

1. The Argentine comrades were doing their best to support the Bolivian section in the course being followed there. Thus the October 16, 1967, issue of La Verdad carried an article on the situation in Bolivia "by the well-known leader Hugo González Moscoso."

2. Fidel Castro's confirmation October 18, 1967, that Che Guevara had been killed (he was executed October 9), set off a wave of mourning among leftists everywhere in which the world Trotskyist movement participated. The date cited by Comrade Maitan for the quotation he used would indicate that it was written in this period.

3. In a document written in January 1968 and published in Estrategia No. 7 (September 1968) Comrade Moreno mentions the Peredo brothers only as belonging to the Bolivian Communist

party. Guevara made a mistake, in Comrade Moreno's opinion, in relying on this party although the fact that he did was a hopeful sign that the Cubans through OLAS were overcoming their previous backwardness on the political level and might be on the road to developing a correct political program for the revolutionary struggle in Latin America.

4. It is quite true that Comrade Moreno was strongly of the opinion at the time that OLAS was a most hopeful development and that the Trotskyists should participate in it and strive to help move it from within toward adoption of a program of democratic and transitional demands. Although I do not share some of Comrade Moreno's formulations, I think his basic political reaction was correct. As part of the process of testing out what might develop, it was necessary to assume the sincerity of the delegates in adopting the aims declared at the OLAS conference. Comrade Moreno, of course, was also a strong partisan on a continental strategy of armed struggle under the leadership of the Cubans.

Comrade Maitan wonders how it is to be explained that after writing this Moreno opted for the minority line....

I do not find this so difficult to explain. I assume he did so in the light of further consideration of the changing situation in Latin America and in the light of the discussion preparatory to the last world congress.

In any case, we can count on Comrade Moreno to speak for himself during the discussion leading up to the next world congress and to specify -- as he did at the last world congress -- where he has differences, if any, on some points with both positions.

A graver matter must be considered in connection with this.

At the last world congress, the delegates had to weigh the claims of two factions as to which represented the majority of the Argentine section. On the basis of the available evidence, it was decided that the group associated with El Combatiente had a majority. Since it was not possible to reach an agreement on unifying the two tendencies within one organization, particularly because of the adamant attitude of the newly recognized majority, the group associated with La Verdad was recognized as a sympathizing organization. Both sides agreed to refrain from attacking each other publicly and to do their best to reunite their forces as soon as possible.

It must be emphasized that the basis for recognizing the El Combatiente group as the majority was the number of members claimed to be in favor of its positions. The decision was not made on the basis of any political differences. These were far from clear.

Since the last world congress, the El Combatiente tendency has split into at least three warring groups, each of them vying publicly with the others.

In view of this fact, the question inevitably arises: What was the nature of the "majority" that was recognized at the last world congress? Was it an unprincipled combination? If not, how is its sudden division into at least three tendencies to be explained?

Comrade Maitan does not address himself to this crucial question. Instead he utilizes my passing reference to Comrade Moreno to open up a political attack against him.

Without thereby inferring that Comrade Maitan had any direct connection with them, some further items should be noted.

The May 1, 1970, issue of The Red Mole printed an extensive interview "with a leading Argentinian comrade from the revolutionary Peronist tendency which developed inside the mass Peronist movement. This tendency is now in a united front with the PRT (Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores, the Argentinian section of the Fourth International), with a section of the Communist Party, and with the Camillistas (revolutionary Catholics who call themselves after the Colombian guerrilla priest Camilo Torres)."

The Red Mole asked this "leading Argentinian comrade" if he could "tell us more about the PRT."

"The PRT," he responded, "after kicking Moreno out, with his propagandist and syndicalist positions, had most of its strength in Tucuman...."

Why did the Editorial Board of The Red Mole print this public attack against Comrade Moreno? Some, at least, of the Editorial Board members knew that three things were wrong with it: (1) It was a lie to say that Comrade Moreno had been kicked out. (2) The political characterization of his position was a distortion. (3) To print an attack of this kind was in violation of the decision reached at the last world congress.

The next item is to be found in

the center fold of the June 29, 1970, issue of Rouge -- a translation in full of the interview that was printed by The Red Mole, including the public political attack against Comrade Moreno and the lie that he had been "expelled" (exclu) from the PRT, which a footnote explains is the Argentine section of the Fourth International.

Item number three is more current. This is a statement in the form of questions and answers published in the January-February 1971 issue of the Buenos Aires magazine Cristianismo y Revolución (Christianity and Revolution) which the editors identify as having been received from the Ejército Revolucionario del Pueblo (Revolutionary Army of the People).

The first question is: "What is the ERP and when was it born?"

A long answer follows. The first paragraph reads as follows:

"The ERP was born as a consequence of a political decision of the last congress of the Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores (PRT) held last July. The fourth congress of the party, in 1968, initiated the process that culminated in the creation of the ERP by expelling the rightist faction of Nahuel Moreno. An intense stage of ideological struggle was then opened against the reformist and syndicalist tendencies of the party by those who sought to consolidate the proposal of 'organizing a combat party.'"

In the second paragraph we are informed:

"In an at times confused process, which we have defined as the 'class struggle' within the party, a battle was waged against (a) a reformist current that still exists in certain sectors of the organization, and (b) against a tendency that hid its centrism behind defense of the classical concept of a 'Bolshevik party.' During these two years the party advanced, confusedly but firmly -- incorporating the experience of the continental revolution in the decade of the seventies, incorporating and discussing the principles of 'Maosism,' and the propositions of 'Marighelism' and of the 'Tupamaros' thus indicating its permanent radicalization."

After listing a number of achievements, including "expropriations, bombings, etc.," the statement refers to the fifth congress of July 1970, where a firm decision was reached to remove the "internal contradictions" so as to reach a new level of struggle. "The congress then reaffirmed this

central thesis: 'Consolidation of a classical revolutionary party, ideologically socialist and participating actively in the proletarian internationalism of the Fourth International led by Ernest Mandel, Pierre Frank and Alain Krivine.'

(May we hope for a footnote in Comrade Maitan's next article pointing out that it is not in our movement's style to use expressions like "led by Ernest Mandel, Pierre Frank and Alain Krivine"?)

The above statement is by the grouping currently enjoying, if I am not mistaken, Comrade Maitan's support as the "majority" in Argentina.

One more item will complete the unpleasant list we have been compelled to consider. This is a lengthy document, dated November 24, 1970, and signed by "Domingo," that is circulating in South America under the title "The Crisis in the Trotskyist Movement in Argentina." The Spanish text, we trust, will be translated into other languages, including English, and submitted as part of the international discussion. I will quote merely some of the statements bearing directly on the point regarding the attack on Comrade Moreno.

"The world congress," the document states, "decided to recognize the majority tendency (El Combatiente) as the Argentinian section, granting the La Verdad 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."

A footnote adduces "evidence" to back up this assertion:

"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."

On the alleged "representative," this was a member of the Socialist Workers party in the U.S. who happened by coincidence to arrive in Argentina during the congress, which was held

in underground conditions. This "representative," among other matters, gave a full report at the September 1970 meeting of the United Secretariat on what he had observed in Argentina. No one, including Comrade Maitan, challenged his report as being factional.

The November 24 document goes into the crisis of the Argentine section in some detail. As part of the effort to justify his conclusions, the author provides a background going back to 1951, that is, a period of two decades. This covers three years before the international split in our movement and eleven years before the reunification congress of 1963. The purpose of this background material is to single out Comrade Moreno for attack as a leader of the Argentine Trotskyist movement. Everything that is currently wrong is traced back to Comrade Moreno.

The one-sidedness of this "background" can be judged from two simple facts: (1) The author says nothing at all, not a word, about the role played by J. Posadas and his backers in the vicissitudes of the Argentina Trotskyist movement. (2) The author is similarly silent about Comrade Moreno's positive association with Comrade Hugo Blanco and the other participants in the work in Peru.

An additional fact to be noted is the author's effort to drive a wedge between the La Verdad group and the American Trotskyists. For instance, referring to Comrade Moreno's essay on the Chinese revolution published in 50 Years of the World Revolution 1917-1967, the author adds a footnote: "The SWP comrades found themselves forces to explicitly dissociate themselves from the analysis in this essay."

More of the same is to be found in the document, but this should be sufficient for the time being.

What is the purpose of all this? You don't need a weatherman to know which way the wind blows. The last world congress used a numerical, not a political criterion, to decide which tendency in Argentina represented the majority. If the coming world congress reviews that decision in the light of subsequent developments, it would in all likelihood have to recognize that the La Verdad group now constitutes the majority. To block this, a new criterion would have to be found, a political criterion. What seems to be afoot is a concerted effort to find such a criterion, even if it is necessary to go back to 1951.

This would also explain why public

attacks have been launched against Comrade Moreno. It is a way of stirring up the factional fires.

## II.

### In Reply to Comrades Germain and Knoeller

#### The Aim of the Latin-American Resolution

I am not sure that before writing their article "The Strategic Orientation of the Revolutionists in Latin America" Comrade Ernest Germain and Comrade Martine Knoeller had an opportunity to read Comrade Maitan's article "Once Again on the Revolutionary Perspectives in Latin America -- Defense of an Orientation and a Method" even though Comrade Maitan dates his article more than a month earlier than theirs. Consequently I am not sure whether they thought he had written "an insufficient document" or whether they had already written their article and decided to submit it anyway even though it repeated some of Comrade Maitan's best arguments.

However that may be, Comrade Maitan holds prior claim owing to the earlier date of his article. That is one reason why I took it up first. Another is that I consider him to have established his priority as the ideological leader of the tendency in the Fourth International that has turned to guerrilla warfare as an "orientation and a method."

Although others had advocated engagement in guerrilla warfare -- perhaps in some instances as an orientation, and in others as a tactic -- no one will dispute, I suppose, that Comrade Maitan was the first in the central leadership to go on record (in his May 15, 1968, letter "An Insufficient Document") with a blunt statement on the imperative need for the Fourth International to determine "in what countries we have the best chance of a breakthrough and subordinating everything to the elementary necessity for a success in these countries, and even, if necessary, in a single country."

It was in this same letter that he stated, "...we must place everything above all on a sector of Latin America and you know very well which one."

It was in this letter, too, that he permitted himself to express himself "a little paradoxically: it is necessary to understand and to explain that at the present stage the International will be built around Bolivia."

This was the basic viewpoint

from which the "orientation and method" flowed that Comrade Maitan argued for so eloquently at the last world congress and that proved so attractive to a majority of the delegates.

Comrades Germain and Knoeller do not discuss this. Perhaps that is because they hold a different view from his on what is the best way to present the orientation and method, and to defend it from criticism.

In contrast to Comrade Maitan, whose main objective was to put the Fourth International in a practical way on the road to guerrilla action as a "strategy" that would lead to a "breakthrough" in a selected Latin-American country, Comrades Germain and Knoeller conceive that the Latin-American document at the last world congress had in the main a different intent. "Its purpose was to define the position of the Fourth International in the great ideological debate that is polarizing the revolutionary vanguard in Latin America."

Good. But then what line defines that position? And what course of action is proposed aside from engaging in the great ideological debate?

Once adopted, Comrade Maitan's orientation and method certainly determined how the position of the Fourth International would be defined in public debates; it also determined what should be done in practice in the field of action.

While I am on this point, I should like to say that Comrades Germain and Knoeller, as responsible leaders, are duty bound, it appears to me, to concern themselves with the origin of Comrade Maitan's position as voiced in his letter "An Insufficient Document" and to express their views on it, the better to clarify the framework within which they have taken their position.

Why did they fail to do this? A possible explanation is that it is but one facet of a basic contradiction running throughout their document. This is the contradiction between the real situation and their preconceptions or, perhaps better, misjudgments of it.

#### The Debate in the Latin-American Vanguard

A good example to begin with is the contradiction between the reality of the "great ideological debate" going on in Latin America and Comrades Germain and Knoeller's view of it.

The "real and actual debate of the Latin-American vanguard," they say,

is "for or against the strategy of armed struggle."

It is a debate between those holding to the "strategic orientation" of overthrowing the bourgeois state in Latin America and those maintaining "a neoreformist and neo-Stalinist variant of revolution by stages...."

The truth is that the debate in this simplified form came to a peak at the OIAS conference in 1967. The issue was posed as "armed struggle" versus "peaceful coexistence," with some fire being directed at those, like Rodney Arismendi, who sought to straddle the issue.

In that debate we stood with the Cuban leaders and such guerrilla fighters as Francisco Prada who charged the right-wing leadership of the Venezuelan Communist Party with betrayal. Our movement took a public position in this struggle against the Stalinists and in support of the revolutionists who had come to realize the perfidiousness of Stalinism and the fact that it was not revolutionary but just the contrary.

In reality there were three main positions: (1) The position of "peaceful coexistence" represented by the unreconstructed Stalinists, called "right-wing betrayers" at the OIAS conference. (2) The position of Francisco Prada, Fidel Castro, and others, favoring a "strategy" of armed struggle -- mainly, at the time, rural guerrilla warfare on a continental scale for a prolonged period. (3) The Trotskyist position holding to the orientation and method of building revolutionary socialist combat parties in the Leninist model.

We supported the advocates of guerrilla warfare in this specific battle with the Latin-American advocates of peaceful coexistence, but we did not fuse with them, or give up our program. We never lost sight of the fact that these revolutionists were not debating as Leninists. They were debating as protagonists of the "strategy" of armed struggle.

Even at that time they were not entirely sure of their position. At the OIAS conference, particularly in the corridors and in the private discussions, it was clear that some of the delegates -- and not unimportant ones -- were uneasy over the defeats suffered by the guerrilla movement (this was before the death of Che Guevara). They were bothered by the ineffectiveness of the strategy.

These delegates, I repeat, were

in the forefront of the struggle against the Stalinist position of a "peaceful" or "electoral" road to power in Latin America. They were not armchair strategists. Some of them were active participants in the guerrilla fronts of that time.

It was certainly justified to hope that through further experience and further discussion these revolutionists would develop toward Leninism; that is, toward an understanding of the necessity to build a revolutionary-socialist party and to bring its capacities to bear in the class struggle in Latin America.

Our role, as Trotskyists, was to do what we could to help this process along. That could be accomplished only by advancing from what we already held in common with them (rejection of the Stalinist concepts of "peaceful coexistence," "parliamentary road to power," etc.) to the key point at issue; the need for a revolutionary-socialist party.

Actually the debate had already begun and the Trotskyist influence had been registered at least four years earlier. This is clear from the testimony offered by Héctor Béjar in his book Peru 1965: Notes on a Guerrilla Experience regarding the impact of the practical revolutionary example set by the small group of Trotskyists under Hugo Blanco in 1961-63.

The debate continued even while the fighters associated with Luis de la Puente, Guillermo Lobatón, Héctor Béjar, Ricardo Gadea, and others were undergoing another tragic experience in 1965 with the "strategy" of armed struggle. The accuracy of the criticisms of the fresh experiment, leveled by the Peruvian Trotskyists at the time (see "The Guerrilla War in Peru," in World Outlook, August 6, 1965, p. 9.), can be judged by comparing them with the admissions in Béjar's book.

By way of contrast, it ought to be noted that the Latin-American resolution passed at the last world congress not only did not criticize the concept that guided Héctor Béjar and his comrades, it approved the concept: "The failure of certain guerrilla experiments (in Peru, for example) came about, in large measure, more from errors in assessing the situation, the trends, and the relationship of forces among the masses than from errors in conception." (Intercontinental Press, July 14, 1969, p. 719.) The resolution stands below the critical level reached by Béjar!

How difficult it is for activists like Béjar to draw the main lesson concerning the need for a revolutionary party is shown by the fact that in his book he polemicizes against party building. Even after the experience of such a spectacular succession of defeats as the ones suffered by Guevara and the Peredo brothers, Béjar is still biased against party building, viewing bureaucratism as inherent in the structure of a party, whatever the original intent or program of its founders might be.

Finally, we have the example in 1970, cited earlier, of a current Brazilian protagonist and practitioner of the "strategy" of armed struggle, Ladislav Dowbor, who is quite consciously anti-Leninist in the sense of believing that this "strategy" supersedes the Leninist strategy of building a revolutionary party.

Let me repeat: There are three main positions in the "great ideological debate": (1) Those like the Stalinists who believe in or argue for the feasibility of a "parliamentary road" to power. (2) The Trotskyists, who have been defending the Leninist concept of party building and who have been struggling to apply it, an outstanding instance being Hugo Blanco. (3) Those under the influence of the Cubans particularly, who advance the "strategy" of armed struggle in opposition to both the protagonists of a "parliamentary road" and the partisans of the Leninist concept.

Shifts have occurred in the course of this debate.

First of all, the school that placed precedence on guerrilla warfare has been declining. This is ascribable to the lowering of the Cuban commitment along these lines and to the fact that this "strategy" has yielded no major victories for the past decade.

Secondly, the Stalinist current has been strengthened somewhat. The Cubans lost out, by and large, in their factional struggle with the "right wing" betrayers. One of the results was a revival of popular frontism in Latin America.

Among the items enabling us to understand the underlying reasons for this are the failure of the Cubans to come to grips with Stalinism (out of disdain for the history and theory of Bolshevism and their concern for the economic and diplomatic support supplied by Moscow which was essential to Cuba's defense against U.S. imperialism), the failure of the Cubans to

appreciate that their own victory had caused U.S. imperialism to initiate countermeasures that reduced the effectiveness of guerrilla warfare, the failure of the Cubans to see how the Leninist concept of party building in Latin America could open the way to overcoming the new difficulties.

Thirdly, the Trotskyist tendency has become stronger in various ways, including the adherence of fresh forces. At the same time new differences and even divisions have occurred in our movement, as a sector responded to the arguments and "exemplary" actions of the strategists of guerrilla warfare. This influence was reflected in the "turn" adopted by the majority at the last world congress.

How could one get a picture of the reality of the debate so different from the view that Comrades Germain and Knoeller have of it?

The answer is that this is the picture that emerges from observing the debate in its development as a whole, over a sufficient period of time, paying attention to the trends, and not forgetting, above all, to observe the origin and evolution of the thinking of different currents in the Trotskyist movement itself in relation to changes in the milieu and the composition of the membership, and to such stabilizing factors as the political maturity of the cadres and the experience and continuity of the leadership.

#### Point of Qualitative Change

This way of analyzing the broad debate likewise leads to a view different from that presented by Comrades Germain and Knoeller on how to place the discussion that has been going on inside the world Trotskyist movement. For it follows from the above analysis that the last world congress marked a point of qualitative change and that this, in and of itself, demands explanation.

Why, for instance, did the change occur in 1969 and not in 1965, or 1963, or earlier?

Special interest attaches to why the change did not occur in 1963, the year of the reunification of the world Trotskyist movement. One of the factors that made reunification possible on a principled basis was a common appreciation of the significance of the Cuban revolution, including the role that guerrilla warfare had played in the victory.

If either of the two sides could be said to have been more influenced by the tactics used by the Cubans, it was, in my opinion, the International Committee, inasmuch as its forces in Argentina had already attracted the interest of Che Guevara, and some of them, as in Peru, had experimented with guerrilla warfare.

Out of this practical experience with guerrilla warfare, the majority of the International Committee came to definite conclusions concerning the limitations of guerrilla warfare in Latin America. In particular the lesson was drawn that while it is an advantageous tactic in certain situations, it can, unless it is properly held to an auxiliary role, prove completely disruptive to the process of party building.

Thus had anyone proposed a resolution at the Reunification Congress lifting guerrilla warfare from a tactic to a "strategy," the forces of the International Committee would have been overwhelmingly against it.

Whatever changes may have occurred in the views of individual leaders of the Fourth International in the following period, the same consensus would have prevailed in December 1965 at the second congress following reunification, particularly in view of the fresh defeats suffered in Peru by protagonists of the "strategy" of armed struggle.

Still leaving aside how certain individuals may have viewed the question, the shift that was eventually registered in the form of a qualitative change in majority opinion at the 1969 congress originated, I think, in relation to the OLAS conference in Havana in 1967.

The implications of the debates and decisions taken there were that the Cubans intended to become directly involved in guerrilla actions on the continent. This signified a considerable alteration in the situation -- the Cubans had at their disposal the resources of state power.

Some very practical questions at once confronted the Latin-American Trotskyists, especially in the areas of key interest to the Cubans. The main one, as had already become clear from reports in the press before the OLAS conference, was Bolivia. The Bolivian Trotskyists were therefore confronted with an acute tactical question. Their decision was to participate. They were excluded from Che Guevara's front but did become involved

when the struggle was reopened under Inti Peredo.

However, let us note carefully two provisos: (1) It was -- whatever the opportunities -- still regarded by our movement at that time as a tactical question. (2) It was contingent, so far as substantial resources were concerned, on the involvement of the Cubans.

In many circles the disastrous end of the guerrilla front opened by Che Guevara did not dampen enthusiasm for the "strategy" of armed struggle, although it certainly led the Cubans to pause for reflection. In fact, the disaster had an opposite effect on a not inconsiderable layer. Their enthusiasm for the "strategy" increased.

In my opinion, this was because of Guevara's martyrdom. Instead of cold analysis of the political reasons for the defeat, an emotional reaction swept the entire left, particularly the radicalizing youth. Che Guevara became enshrined as an exemplary figure in his devotion to the revolutionary cause, and the halo extended to his "strategy" of armed struggle.

Then came the May-June 1968 events in France out of which our French comrades succeeded in gaining a new levy many times the size of their group before the sudden immense upsurge. Along with this big influx of recruits came some rather sharp problems connected with Maoism, spontanéism, ultraleftism, and other characteristics of some of the radicalizing youth in various countries at the time. These could be worked out only through further experience, discussion, and debate -- all requiring time.

In the Fourth International, forces had thus accumulated that were ready to respond to an appeal on the urgency and the realizability of a "breakthrough." This ingredient was supplied by Comrade Maitan, as I have already pointed out.

It was this combination and not any "manipulation" of delegates that explains why the last congress, and not an earlier one, made the "turn" toward the "strategy" of armed struggle.

This also explains why the Fourth International came to such a position only ten years after the victory of the Cuban revolution.

And it explains the curious fact that in taking this course at such a belated date, we may pass guer-



rilla fighters moving in the opposite direction (like some of the Weather-people) as a result of conclusions reached on their own, a possibility noted by Hugo Blanco. (See "Letter from Hugo Blanco to Livio Maitan -- October 17, 1970," International Information Bulletin, No. 2, January 1971, p. 3.)

We are provided, too, with a political explanation of the fact that Comrade Maitan and others were prepared in 1969 to push ahead no matter what the objections from the bulk of the forces of the International Committee that had participated in the Reunification Congress in 1963.

By placing the article written by Comrades Germain and Knoeller in this context, which is the real one, it can be more easily understood why their arguments are so singularly wide of the mark, however attractive the verve and eloquence with which they are voiced.

#### The SWP -- Fiction and Reality

To illustrate the meaning of the document on Latin America adopted by the last congress, as they interpret it, Comrades Germain and Knoeller present an imaginary exchange of opinion between the Bolivian miners and a character named "Comrade Hansen" (who bears little resemblance to the real person, if I may be permitted to express an opinion on this).

The exchange makes for good theater. It includes a chorus of "thousands of miners and other vanguard Bolivian workers," who, insisting on the need to defend themselves right now by means of armed struggle, respond with fitting irony to the "nice program" for the future offered by "Comrade Hansen."

The following passage jumps out: "And if Comrade Hansen thinks that it is enough to answer them, 'Build a revolutionary party before thinking about military self defense,' they would be still more justified in replying...." ("The Strategic Orientation of the Revolutionists in Latin America," op. cit., p. 30.)

Let me repeat that the words put in my mouth exist solely in the imagination of Comrades Germain and Knoeller. They, of course, expected no one to take this as anything but hyperbole on their part.

That they could imagine it, however, and put it down as part of an argument suggests a certain estima-

tion on their part not only of my way of thinking but of that of the Socialist Workers party as a whole. The estimation is that we are quite rigid, mechanical, and even conservative -- that we agree on the necessity of armed defense only in a single category, outlined by them as the "classical" variant of armed struggle, which I will come to later.

If Comrades Germain and Knoeller really believe this, it would be much easier to eliminate any misunderstandings if they said it outright, for then we could answer it just as frankly and avoid the temptation of competing as playwrights.

In another passage, Comrades Germain and Knoeller include a comparison that would seem to indicate they see a parallel between the position I have argued for and the one held by "Healy and other sectarians." I will cite the entire paragraph:

"Likewise, in seeking to counterpose party building to the strategy of armed struggle, Comrade Hansen is leading the discussion into a blind alley. In the same way, party building could be counterposed to any strategy, for example participating in mass demonstrations. This is the error Healy and other sectarians make who have reproached the SWP for participating in the antiwar movement, the Black nationalist movement, and the women's liberation movement rather than 'building the revolutionary party.' The SWP has replied correctly to these infantile objections that there is no other way to build a revolutionary party -- as opposed to a sect or religious-type cult -- than formulating a correct strategy corresponding to the concerns and needs of the masses themselves." (Ibid., p. 29. Emphasis in original.)

I do not know if this is sufficient to prove that Comrades Germain and Knoeller hold the view that in the current discussion the SWP is arguing for a "nice" but "sectarian" program on a par with that of the Healyites and other sectarians, but their references are enough to lead me to suspect it.

In any case, their estimate of the SWP position is also a component of the discussion. For purposes of clarification, it would be advantageous to know whether they view the SWP as sectarian -- at least in this instance. And, if they do hold this opinion, it would be advantageous to know they think the SWP took this sectarian direction only recently, or whether they

would put the date further in the past. I doubt that they hold the view that the SWP was always sectarian, for they refer (on page 31) to the SWP's "revolutionary tradition" and to my own "revolutionary background."

So if they hold the view that the SWP has become conservatized, will they please tell us when this occurred? Was it during the years of battling McCarthyism, or more recently with the entrance into the party of a generation of youth who became revolutionists under the influence of the Cuban revolution and the Black liberation struggle? Or still more recently with the growth of American Trotskyism as an outcome of its efforts to mobilize the American people against the U.S. imperialist invasion of Vietnam so as to help speed the victory of the Vietnamese revolution?

On the other hand, if they do not believe that the SWP has become conservatized it would help the discussion if they would state this clearly and emphatically.

#### Is Armed Struggle a Mass Movement?

It may prove useful to examine in closer detail the argument advanced in the paragraph cited above.

From one angle, Comrades Germain and Knoeller appear to consider the armed-struggle movement to be a mass movement, like the antiwar movement, the Black nationalist movement, and the women's liberation movement.

Let us consider this. The SWP participated in the latter three movements precisely because they are mass movements. The SWP does this, in contrast to the Healyites and other sectarians, regardless of the current program or leaderships of these movements. In working in these mass movements, the SWP fights for transitional and democratic demands that will help pave the way for mass acceptance of the program of revolutionary socialism.

At present, however, neither in the U.S. nor in Latin America is armed struggle a mass movement. It is a strategy proposed by some as a substitute for the strategy of party building, which a few small groups are trying to put into practice in isolation from the masses. In the antiwar movement, the Black nationalist movement, and elsewhere, the SWP encounters protagonists of the strategy of armed struggle and guerrilla warfare. Some of them are conscious anti-Leninists like Ladislav Dowbor. We argue against them on a programmatic

level, pointing out that armed struggle represents, as a form or stage of the class struggle, the sharpest possible challenge to the state -- a challenge that is best not undertaken lightly.

If armed struggle existed today as a mass movement, like those mentioned, the situation would indeed be revolutionary and the entire discussion we are engaged in would be decidedly out of place.

It is precisely because armed struggle does not exist in the form of a mass movement that we find the question of how to reach the masses and how to lead them to victory at the heart of the entire dispute, not least of all in Latin America.

But Comrades Germain and Knoeller do not hold to the comparison they advanced. They suddenly switch to a different question that has nothing to do with what they have just argued. They switch to the necessity of "formulating a correct strategy corresponding to the concerns and needs of the masses themselves."

Ordinarily I would not argue against that. The phrase is so abstract that it appears to be in complete consonance with the Leninist position advanced long ago that we can formulate a correct strategy corresponding to the concerns and needs of the masses themselves by participating in their struggles, learning from them, advancing well-timed transitional and democratic demands, fighting opposing currents and building a leadership capable of following through to victory. This is the strategy of organizing a revolutionary-socialist party.

Unfortunately Comrades Germain and Knoeller have shifted to such a level of abstraction that they find it no contradiction to say in the very next sentences on the same page:

"The fact is that the strategy of preparing for [note the "preparing for" -- the ground shifts again in the argument] armed struggle, in most Latin-American countries, corresponds in precisely this way to the needs and preoccupations of the masses, to all their fighting experience over the last ten years. In these conditions, we will answer Comrade Hansen as the SWP answered Healy, that there is no way to build revolutionary parties in Latin America without adopting a correct position on one of the key strategic questions posed by the vanguard and the masses [how did "the vanguard" suddenly slip in at this point?] -- preparation for the armed

struggle."

We are back where we began, or almost back. If we have not got lost in trying to follow the ins and outs of this reasoning, "preparation" for armed struggle is equivalent to actual engagement in a real mass movement like the antiwar movement.

And what is "preparation"? It might mean only propaganda -- "public defense" of the famous "strategy" -- as we can gather from the next sentence: "Far from being mutually contradictory, party building, propaganda and agitation for transitional demands, and public defense of the strategy of armed struggle are inseparable and complementary in the present conditions in Latin America." (Emphasis added.)

Elsewhere, however (page 28), we are told that decidedly more is involved than propaganda for the strategy of armed struggle: "...and by correct position we do not mean a purely literary and propagandistic position but also a minimum of practical application...." (Emphasis added.)

A "minimum" is how much? Occasional small armed actions by a small group? Continual small armed actions by a somewhat larger group? In any case, not a mass action.

If the theory is that in carrying out a "minimum of practical application," one of the minimum acts might luckily serve as a detonator, touching off a social explosion, this amounts to adventurism of the grossest kind.

A "minimum of practical application" refers, I suppose, to "exemplary actions" not intended to detonate anything but just to serve as a source of inspiration to others to go and do likewise, mass movement or no mass movement.

The most significant feature of the admonition by Comrades Germain and Knoeller to engage in a "minimum of practical application" is its abstractness. It is linked to no specific country, to no definite time, to no particular revolutionary organization, to no concrete stage of the class struggle, to no mass movement at all. It stands in polar opposition to the concreteness demanded by Lenin in considering such questions.

And why "minimum" of practical application? If it's worth doing at all, isn't it worth doing to the maximum?

This is probably the place to

take note of an argument used by Comrade Maitan. He asks: "Has Comrade Hansen...ever thought of opposing building the party and participating in a general strike?" (Op. cit., p. 8.)

My answer is: No, I never have. But I have met revolutionists who have done just that. What for us is a tactical question is not so to them. They consider advocating and working for a general strike to be a strategy, a surefire way of winning a revolution.

Comrade Maitan's analogy is a telling one. It happens, however, to speak against elevating armed struggle into a strategy.

#### Politics of the "Death Wish"

Another argument advanced by Comrades Germain and Knoeller ends up rather unexpectedly upon close examination.

Seeking to counter my observations on the consequences of the succession of defeats suffered by the guerrilla fighters in Latin America for the past ten years, Comrades Germain and Knoeller say:

"He puts great stress on the heavy losses and disastrous defeats resulting from the guerrilla struggle in Latin America over the last ten years. What, then, is the mysterious reason why so many revolutionists and revolutionary groups in Latin America remain partisans of armed struggle, despite these losses? Is this out of a pure death wish or blind romanticism? Still, grave losses usually force militants to react, even those most set in their ways. Two years after the 1933 defeat in Germany neither the Communist nor the Socialist party dared repeat the policy that led to the disaster. Isn't ten years time in Latin America enough for people to draw the minimum lessons from catastrophic errors?" (Op. cit., pp. 23-24.)

Prolonged persistence in errors is explainable only by something irrational like a death wish? Isn't ten years time enough? But Comrades Germain and Knoeller imply elsewhere (page 28) that I may be guilty of a "fundamentally idealist" error. How is that to be explained? Such an error could be traced back, if one wanted to, for perhaps 2,500 years -- anyway, longer than I care to remember.

A more relevant example of the persistence of errors may be worth considering. I called attention above to the publicity given by Scanlan's

and The Black Panther to urban guerrilla warfare in the United States. On turning the pages of these publications and noting the testimonials, recommendations, and detailed information concerning guns, explosives, and sniper fire, those familiar with the history of the American socialist movement will inevitably be reminded of the lessons handed down from the eighteenth-eighties. Virtually the same errors are being repeated, not ten, but ninety years later.

For comrades who may not know this background, let me take a few paragraphs to fill them in.

On October 9, 1886, seven out of eight defendants in a Chicago court were condemned to death. In passing sentence, Judge Joseph E. Gary said that the conviction was not based on "any personal participation in the particular act" for which they had been dragged into court -- killing one policeman and wounding seventy others by throwing a bomb. They were condemned because "by speech and print" they had espoused the overthrow of the government by force and violence.

Of the seven, two were spared by the governor, one committed suicide, four were eventually hanged. These were the Haymarket martyrs.

It was proved at the time that they were victims of a most brazen frame-up. But their press in the preceding years had been filled with articles favoring force and violence, particularly the use of bombs.

These declamations did not draw much attention from the American ruling class until the Chicago "anarchists," under the leadership of Albert Parsons, began to connect up with the working class by expressing its needs and current preoccupations through such slogans as "for an eight-hour day." The headway made by Parsons and his comrades became quite palpable when, amidst a general labor upsurge, they became involved in local strike struggles.

Then the ruling class did pay attention. The speeches and writings on "dynamite" as "man's best and last friend" were utilized to frame up the authors in a bombing that was most likely provoked, if not directly organized, by the police themselves.

Worst of all, the frame-up was utilized to launch a nationwide witch-hunt that virtually decimated the socialist movement and stunned the entire labor movement. The revival began not with dynamitings or similar ways of

moving "from the word to the deed," as Robin Blackburn might put it. The revival began with political defense work for the Haymarket victims on an international scale, followed by a new rise in working-class militancy associated with economic issues.

It ought to be remembered that before going to his death on the gallows on November 11, 1887, Albert Parsons regretted the formulations he and his comrades had used in the previous period, for they had played into the hands of the police and had unnecessarily prejudiced their case.

In defense of the Haymarket martyrs, it should be explained that their undue confidence in the efficacy of dynamite, which they had expounded in speeches and writings, did not originate with them. They got it from the theoreticians of anarchism in Europe; in the final analysis, from the examples set by the Russian terrorists of that period, who, revolver and bomb in hand, thought it possible to topple Czarism by the exemplary actions of small groups and even individuals.

Let it be said further in defense of the Haymarket martyrs that they had no leaders of their own of the caliber of Plekhanov, Lenin, Trotsky, and the other Russian Marxist leaders to set them right on the question of terrorist methods.

After this excursion into the past, let us return to the repetition of the old errors in current publications like Scanlan's and The Black Panther.

Comrades Germain and Knoeller might argue that these are not errors. They might contend -- as they do in the case of Latin America -- that the current urge in some circles in the United States to engage in the "strategy" of armed struggle derives from the experiences of the revolutionists and revolutionary groups in the United States itself in the intervening years. However, they themselves exclude that argument. "There is no question," they state, "of mechanically extending this reasoning to all countries in the world, least of all the United States, Japan, Great Britain, Germany, etc." (Ibid., p. 27. Emphasis in original.)

In view of this, we have no choice -- by their reasoning -- except to explain that it is out of a "pure death wish or blind romanticism" that partisans of the "strategy" of armed struggle are to be found today in the United States. For me, a more political explanation would be preferable;

and I think one can be found.

Before taking that up, however, let me dispose of the sentence in their argument reading as follows: "Two years after the 1933 defeat in Germany neither the Communist nor the Socialist party dared repeat the policy that led to the disaster."

What had the Communist and Socialist parties learned from the disaster? What correct lessons had they drawn? I would really like to hear more from Comrades Germain and Knoeller on this, for I have been under the impression for a long time that instead of learning from the disaster in Germany, the Communist and Socialist parties if anything went from bad to worse. In fact, two years later, in 1935, they turned to the policy of the "popular front," i.e., open class collaboration.

For the Socialist parties this was not new -- their death wish had been operative in some instances since the turn of the century. For the Stalinists the death wish took a new form -- from "third-period" ultraleftism they switched to the most blatant opportunism. The new error helped ruin the Spanish revolution, helped pave the way for Hitler to advance on a European scale, and eventually facilitated the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union.

If my arithmetic is not wrong, the Stalinists (and we can, of course, include the Social Democrats) are still practicing popular frontism thirty-six years later. A very persistent death wish!

What is important to note is that the length of time in which an error is followed does not thereby suggest that it may be correct and not an error. We should also note that ending an error does not necessarily mean its replacement by a correct course. A still worse course can be followed.

One of the reasons for the persistence of certain errors is sheer inertia -- a universal problem in all organizations, including the most militant. An example in our own movement is not difficult to find.

The tactic of entryism sui generis was initiated about 1951 or so. It was first conceived as a tactic of limited duration, one of the reasons being a forecast that World War III could be expected to begin in a few years -- by 1954, according to some. The war would surely set off a new wave of radicalism, perhaps on the initiative

of sectors of the bureaucracies of the old workers organizations, particularly those tied to the Soviet Union.

The forecast was eventually discarded as erroneous, but the tactic persisted -- now justified by new reasons. Whatever validity, if any, was to be found in the tactic in the beginning vanished with time. Yet entryism sui generis was carried on for what was it -- seventeen or eighteen years? That's almost twice as long as the error of the Latin-American guerrilla fighters, if that proves anything. Anyway, it was so long that some of the most ardent advocates and practitioners of this tactic (or had it in reality been elevated into a "strategy"?) felt compelled to admit that burial was, perhaps, overdue. Entryism sui generis had come to stand glaringly in the way of progress for our movement.

How ironical that even as entryism sui generis was receiving the decent burial it was entitled to, an opposite kind of error was gestating -- the "strategy" of armed struggle. Let us hope that this orientation and method offers less proof of the tenacity of the "death wish" than did its venerable predecessor.

#### Why They Don't See Beyond Guerrilla War

So why have the guerrilla fighters in Latin America persisted for ten years in following the "strategy" of engaging in armed struggle instead of the strategy of concentrating on party building and of linking this up with the masses?

Comrades Germain and Knoeller argue that it is because of their practical experience. "This experience can be summed up in a few words. Whatever the different starting points of the mass movements in the various countries of Latin America, everywhere they have come to the same conclusion -- that is, all forms of struggle that revolutionists have attempted, in close liaison with the masses or in isolation from them, have culminated in armed confrontations with local or international reaction, or both at once, from the moment they began to show the slightest serious progress." (Ibid., p. 21. Emphasis in original.)

The alternative facing the revolutionists in Latin America, according to Comrades Germain and Knoeller, is as follows: "Any refusal to envisage armed confrontations in the near or relatively near future in Latin America can mean only one of two things --

either abandonment of all perspective for revolutionary transformation; or a return to the illusion that this transformation will be miraculously possible with the aid or benevolent neutrality of the bourgeois army (or a part of it)." (Ibid., p. 24.)

In arguing for this conclusion, Comrades Germain and Knoeller say many true things about the economic, social, and political pressures that have led the revolutionists to this position. But, in my opinion, their approach is simplistic. It is accurate to say that the general economic, social, and political pressures in Latin America (and elsewhere) are driving the best representatives of the oppressed onto the road of revolution, and that many of them have learned enough to conclude that the ruling class and its imperialist backers will not relinquish power peacefully. However, this does not mean that these pressures, plus the modicum of insights gained, assure freedom from errors, including sizeable ones for a prolonged period and on a continental scale.

Additional factors are operative, especially those associated with the ups and downs of developing a leadership capable of providing correct political guidance. It is remarkable that Comrades Germain and Knoeller fail to see this.

Perhaps the reality will become clearer if we list the reasons for the persistence of the erroneous view that there is no alternative to popular frontism except guerrilla warfare:

1. The breaks in the continuity of revolutionary leadership.

Many lessons, won at great cost in struggles of the past, have been lost because of this and are simply not known to the new generation of revolutionists.

To this should be added misinterpretation of the lessons of the past ascribable to leaderships that may be honest but that are one-sided, lacking in good judgment, or that are inclined to sectarianism or cultism.

2. The pernicious role played by consciously counterrevolutionary leaderships.

While the trade-union bureaucracies and the Social Democracy share responsibility, the main source of contamination since the bureaucratic caste usurped power in the Soviet Union has been Stalinism. The Kremlin and its lesser imitators have utilized

the resources available to state power to bury under a mountain of lies and slanders the truth about Trotsky and his efforts to uphold the program of Leninism.

One of the consequences has been the debasement of theory. Great acquisitions of the past -- major lessons drawn from immense experiences -- are simply not known to many young revolutionists, or they know about them only in a viciously distorted way.

The Cuban leaders, with their contempt for theory, and their polemics against its importance, are both victims and abettors of this debasement.

Among the results has been great confusion about the relationship between Leninism and Stalinism. We need not go into that here, but it should be noted that some of the arguments used by the guerrilla fighters show that they do not distinguish between Stalinism and Leninism -- or, for that matter, between Lenin's theory and practice of party building and that of the Social Democrats.

3. The victories in which guerrilla warfare loomed large.

From the long-range view of history these disclosed not so much the efficacy of guerrilla warfare per se as the extent of the decay and weakness of capitalism on a world scale.

4. The illegitimate projection of guerrilla warfare into a surefire method.

Victories such as the ones in China and Cuba gave fresh impetus to the class struggle internationally. In particular they aroused the hopes of a new generation of revolutionists. To them the secret of the successes in China and Cuba and elsewhere appeared to lie in the technique of arms ("power flows from the barrel of a gun"), and it was assumed that this had universal applicability.

The elevation of guerrilla warfare into the answer to all problems further eclipsed the example set by the Bolsheviks -- already darkened by Stalinism.

5. What the Cubans did to give further credence to this view.

The Cubans never subjected their own revolution to a searching Marxist analysis. Still less did they ever come to grips with Stalinism. Instead, they fostered simplistic conclusions

concerning their success and simplistic efforts to emulate it.

Che Guevara himself went so far as to set a personal example in this, opening up a rural "foco" in Bolivia in accordance with the "strategy" of guerrilla warfare.

#### 6. The logic set in motion by the Cubans in relation to guerrilla warfare.

Whatever second thoughts they may finally have had on the subject (for whatever reasons), the impetus they gave to the "strategy" continued on its own. This has been shown in many forms and in many areas.

\* \* \*

We thus end up with a rational political explanation for the persistence of the errors among the Latin-American fighters, particularly those connected with a faulty appreciation (or no appreciation at all) of priorities in the relationship between guerrilla warfare and party building.

And -- not by accident, as I think I am entitled to say -- we have won the bonus of being able to offer a rational political explanation of why it is possible to see some rather startling repetitions in the United States today of errors made in the past century. This fits in rather neatly with the admiring references to be found in the literature of the North American guerrilla fighters to the examples set by their Latin-American cothinkers, and to the efforts to emulate them in Canada and the United States.

#### Safety Lies in Guerrilla Warfare

Another argument is adduced by Comrades Germain and Knoeller in support of their position -- it's safer to be a guerrilla fighter.

The following two paragraphs are particularly eloquent in defending the view that safety first requires you to pick up the gun:

"Compare the losses in guerrillas with the number killed in the massacres of unarmed worker and peasant populations in countries like Peru, Bolivia, and Brazil, and you will understand why these losses do not alarm any of the revolutionists.

"We had the same experience during the Nazi occupation. When a certain level of ferocity on the part of the enemy is reached, revolutionists (including, if possible, broader groups

and masses) take up arms as a measure of self-defense, even in the physical sense of the term. There were more survivors among the Yugoslav, Polish, and Russian partisans than among the unarmed sectors of the civil population exposed to the Nazi mass arrests (and we are not including the Jews exposed to total extermination). Many more of the armed partisans in all the countries occupied by the Nazis survived than the Communist, Trotskyist, Socialist, and trade-union leaders who let themselves be deported to concentration camps. Many more of the Vietnamese Communists who have been fighting arms in hand for twenty-five years have survived than of the Indonesian Communists who refused to engage in such a struggle. This is the historic dilemma confronting the revolutionists in many Latin-American countries." (Ibid., p. 24. Emphasis in original.)

A careful analysis of this string of statements will lead us, I think, to conclude that the historic dilemma confronting the revolutionists is somewhat different from the one indicated by Comrades Germain and Knoeller.

#### 1. It is simply not true that the revolutionists consider the casualties suffered by the guerrillas in their defeats to be inconsequential.

Of course, the dead are unable to bear witness as to the lessons of their experience, except in a mute way. Some of the survivors and new forces interested in the balance sheet view the losses not so much in the context of the murder and even massacre of unarmed workers, peasants, and other sectors of the populace as in the context of the political objectives and means used by the guerrillas. It was precisely because their course led to defeat after defeat that the revolutionists came to ask whether the lives of cadres were being wasted; i.e., not contributing to overturning capitalism any more than if they had met their death unarmed. (The thinking on this is shown quite clearly in Bernadine Dohrn's letter cited above.)

The question of how cadres can best be utilized to advance the revolution stands at the heart of the debate now going on among the revolutionists in Latin America and elsewhere.

The masses themselves seem to have indicated that they, too, have an opinion. They have shown this by their actions, particularly their refusal to follow the prescriptions and examples enjoined upon them by the guerrillas.



Thus another question came up willy-nilly in the debate: What is the correct road to the masses? Or can the capitalist state, after all, be overthrown without their participation? -- as Comrade Maitan held to be possible, at least in certain instances.

## 2. The experience under the Nazis is far from being conclusive.

Perhaps the most striking thing about this argument is what it tells of the difficulty faced by Comrades Germain and Knoeller in trying to observe their own stricture about keeping things confined to Latin America. Seeking items to support their case, they find themselves compelled to go to another continent -- hardly one that is colonial or semicolonial -- back in time by some three decades and under the conditions of World War II. I will return later to what this shows about the logic of their position.

If the lesson of the resistance against the Nazi occupation, as explained by them, is applicable at all to Latin America, then one can hardly avoid the conclusion that Comrades Germain and Knoeller are of the opinion that against the violence of the ruling class in Latin America no alternative exists except to engage in guerrilla struggle. But in a footnote (p. 32), they indignantly deny holding this view. So why do they refer to the experience under the Nazi occupation as a valid analogy?

Let us leave this inconsistency aside and consider their argument from another point of view. Revolutionists took up arms, they report, as a measure of self-defense, even in the physical sense of the term, and there were more survivors among the Yugoslav, Polish, and Russian partisans than among the unarmed sectors of the civil population exposed to the Nazi mass arrests.

It is true in general, one must concede, that casualties among unarmed civilians have tended to rise in comparison with those among the armed forces in war itself. The populations of Japan and Germany, among others, can testify to this, for the Allies carried out a policy of deliberately trying to destroy the civilian rear.

More recently in both Korea and Indochina, the Pentagon has provided the world with fresh examples of the casualties deliberately inflicted on unarmed civilians.

In all probability, if the holocaust of a nuclear war is visited on

humanity, the first -- if not the last -- casualties will be borne on a colossal scale by unarmed civilians. What is the political conclusion to be drawn from this? That the longer capitalism continues to survive, the higher the cost becomes in terms of sheer physical survival. But this general conclusion does not tell us much about the relationship between guerrilla war and party building.

I am willing to concede that under the Nazi occupation life was safer in the camps of the armed partisans than among the unarmed sectors of the civilian population. But I would contend that this hardly alters the conclusions about guerrilla war drawn by Lenin and Trotsky long ago -- that it should be regarded at best as an auxiliary form of struggle, and one that is not without its dangers to the resolution of the key problem of constructing a revolutionary-socialist party.

We have not yet exhausted the question of engagement in guerrilla warfare as a means of physical survival. "Many more of the armed partisans in all the countries occupied by the Nazis survived than the Communist, Trotskyist, Socialist, and trade-union leaders who let themselves be deported to concentration camps," write Comrades Germain and Knoeller.

I note the inclusion of Trotskyist leaders in this rather sweeping statement. We should not forget that in some countries the Trotskyists were liquidated by the Stalinists even under the Nazi occupation. This chain of thought leads us to something even more important.

The country where the greatest number of Trotskyist leaders "let themselves be deported to concentration camps" was the Soviet Union. There, as is well-known, they perished; sometimes being placed in droves before the firing squads of the GPU. In the light of the conclusions they draw, must not Comrades Germain and Knoeller in all consistency maintain that the Trotskyists in the Soviet Union made a fundamental mistake in not turning to the use of guerrilla warfare against Stalin's murder machine? They would have had a better chance of physical survival would they not?

These questions are not rhetorical. They arise quite logically out of the position taken by Comrades Germain and Knoeller, and they really should answer them, particularly since it can hardly be imagined that they have not thought of them.

If their answers are, yes, the Soviet Trotskyists would have been better advised to resort to guerrilla warfare and not let themselves be deported to concentration camps, than another question arises. Was not Trotsky wrong in refusing to appeal to the Red Army against Stalin and his clique when this was still possible? After all, the Red Army would surely have been able to block Stalin, even if Stalin had resorted to guerrilla warfare.

On the other hand, if we agree that Trotsky and the other oppositionist forces in the Soviet Union followed a correct course, then this must be regarded as a supreme example of the Bolshevik view that armed struggle must be subordinated to higher political considerations.

These considerations, of course, are quite material and palpable. They concern (a) the mood of the masses, and (b) the strength of the party, including the capacities of its leadership.

The leadership qualifications of the Trotskyist cadres in the Soviet Union were certainly strong enough. What was missing was the driving force of the masses. They had become demobilized, in this instance out of exhaustion. Moreover the Bolshevik party had begun to disintegrate. The primary job facing Trotsky was to save the party or rebuild it. He had to begin with a faction struggle. By refusing to call on the Red Army, or to engage in guerrilla warfare, Trotsky was simply applying a basic postulate of Bolshevism -- not to fall into the error of trying to substitute the action of small groups of cadres for what must be done by the masses themselves.

It would be excellent if Comrades Germain and Knoeller, or other comrades who went through it personally, would write more about the experiences under the Nazi occupation. In particular one wonders if the partisans, among others, ever discussed how they came to be entrapped in such a situation. Did they ever take up the role played by the Stalinists and the Social Democrats in failing to build revolutionary parties in Europe modeled on the one constructed by Lenin? Surely the Trotskyists -- those that survived the bullets of both the Nazis and the Stalinists -- raised the question.

In any case, for us today the appearance of guerrilla warfare in Europe in World War II must surely be taken in the context of the great debacle in Germany in 1933 that permitted

Hitler to come to power virtually unopposed. The main lesson to be drawn from this was the absence of a combat party.

And since the question has been raised of the virtues of guerrilla warfare under the Nazi occupation, we are compelled, I would think, to follow this unusual development further and ask what finally came of it.

In the case of Yugoslavia, guerrilla warfare, as in the Soviet Union, played an important auxiliary role in the defeat of German imperialism and helped place Tito in better position to later resist the pressure of the Kremlin. But in western Europe and in Greece? If the partisans could be said to have played an important role in preparing the conditions for a successful socialist revolution, they proved incapable of taking power except on a local scale. France, Italy, Greece, and with them various other countries, would most certainly have gone socialist in the aftermath of World War II had not the Stalinist and Social Democrat parties played a consciously counterrevolutionary role. What was needed for the partisans to play a contributing part in a socialist victory was a Leninist party. This did not exist in Europe at the end of World War II. The partisans disintegrated and permitted themselves to be disarmed.

It is important, it appears to me, for the Latin-American revolutionists and the revolutionists in other parts of the world to know the overall context in which the guerrilla struggle in Europe under the Nazi occupation must be fitted for a correct, balanced appreciation of its meaning. Certain vital lessons, obviously applicable to the current scene are well worth considering in detail.

### 3. The experience in Vietnam must be placed in proper focus.

"Many more of the Vietnamese Communists who have been fighting arms in hand for twenty-five years have survived than of the Indonesian Communists who refused to engage in such a struggle," Comrades Germain and Knoeller tell us.

To me it appears inappropriate to engage in a comparative body count between the Vietnamese and Indonesian Communists. First of all, if the comparison is to be made over a period of twenty-five years, it should include the time when the Indonesian Communists were fighting arms in hand: (a) when they participated in the struggle against Dutch imperialism, which bears comparison with the struggle of the Vietnamese

against French imperialism, and (b) when the Indonesian Communists, arms in hand, sought to overthrow the nationalist government in 1948.

The lessons to be drawn from the putschism of some of the leaders of the Indonesian Communist party (including the officers who engaged in the 1965 attempt) should not be left out, one would think, in assessing the "strategy" of armed struggle.

Secondly, the total body count in Indochina over the past twenty-five years may be higher than the total body count in Indonesia over the same period. Such raw facts do not shed much light on the subject we are discussing.

Thirdly, the failure of the Indonesian Communist party to prepare the masses for a showdown with the Sukarno government and to lead them, arms in hand, toward the establishment of a workers and peasants government, which would have been relatively easy at a certain point, is explainable by the Stalinist background and education of the Indonesian CP leaders. The influence of Maoism was especially pernicious. Peking's foreign policy of supporting the national bourgeoisie in countries like Indonesia and Pakistan reinforced the fatal class-collaborationist line of the Aidit leadership.

In short, the catastrophe that befell Indonesian Communism and the Indonesian masses in 1965 is ascribable precisely to the absence of a combat party constructed on the Leninist model.

Like Comrades Germain and Knoeller, I admire the determination of the Vietnamese people to win their freedom. Their will to struggle has had world-wide repercussions, not least of all in the heartland of imperialism.

The plain evidence of the depth and power of this determination ought to lead us all the more, it seems to me, to inquire into the reasons for the protracted nature of their struggle. Surely the policies followed by the leadership have had some bearing on this. In my opinion, three items stand out very prominently:

1. The liquidation of the Trotskyists, who were rather strong in Vietnam before World War II. This meant not only the elimination of capable revolutionary leaders but the repression of the Leninist tendency.

2. The welcome extended by Ho Chi Minh to the Allied imperialist forces at the end of World War II. This enabled

the French to become reestablished and facilitated the eventual involvement of U.S. imperialism.

3. The signing of the Geneva agreement after the victory at Dien Bien-phu in 1954. The agreement, carving the country in half -- presumably only temporarily -- enabled the counter-revolutionary forces to recover in the South and gave U.S. imperialism priceless time in which to prepare to intervene on a massive scale.

To this must be added, as in the case of Indonesia, the role of Stalinism.

Of course, the existence of the Chinese workers state on the border of Vietnam was a major source of inspiration to the Vietnamese people. They could hardly have maintained their long struggle without material aid from China (and from the Soviet Union); and the establishment of a workers state in North Vietnam was one of the consequences of the victory of the Chinese revolution.

On another level, however, both Peking and Moscow have blocked the free development of the Vietnamese revolution. Prime responsibility for the welcome extended by the Vietnamese to the Allied imperialist armies at the end of World War II lies with Moscow. Both Moscow and Peking played major roles in putting across the Geneva agreement in 1954.

Finally, in the period since 1965, while they have supplied material aid, enabling the Vietnamese to carry on the struggle, it has been doled out with an eyedropper, and both Peking and Moscow have carefully refrained from doing anything in other areas to substantially relieve the pressure on war-besieged Vietnam. In their routine declarations of solidarity they have not so much as breathed a word about the need to open a "second front" in behalf of an ally -- a workers state -- suffering an armed assault by the mightiest imperialist power on earth.

In fact, both Moscow and Peking, instead of considering themselves as likewise under attack -- as they are -- give the impression, each in its own way, of having assured both the Johnson and Nixon administrations that the Pentagon can proceed with its dirty work without need to fear much response from them so long as operations do not impinge too directly on their national bureaucratic interests.

The reactionary foreign policy

followed by both Peking and Moscow with respect to the Vietnamese revolution has thus heavily influenced the course of that revolution by affecting the policies of the Ho Chi Minh team. The major guilt for the extended travail of the Vietnamese people lies with the Chinese and Soviet bureaucracies. In face of this, to hail the efficacy of twenty-five years of armed struggle in and of itself, signifies disregarding the politics that has guided (and misguided) that armed struggle.

Again we confront the same lesson as before -- the preeminent importance of a Leninist-type party.

This is the true historical dilemma confronting the revolutionists, not only in many Latin-American countries but in all the Latin-American countries, and all other countries besides. As Trotsky put it in the opening sentence of the Transitional Program: "The world political situation as a whole is chiefly characterized by a historical crisis of the leadership of the proletariat."

### Tactics and Strategy

At the end of my article "Assessment of the Draft Resolution on Latin America," I specified in four paragraphs what I considered to be the crucial point in the discussion on Latin America prior to the last world congress. In replying to Comrade Maitan above, I quoted all four paragraphs, so I will only refer to them here. The gist of the point is that correctly conceived, guerrilla war should be regarded merely as a specific form of armed struggle, a tactic entailed by political considerations.

Repeating this point in my article "A Contribution to the Discussion on Revolutionary Strategy in Latin America," I explained: "What is primary in revolutionary strategy, the minority maintained, is building a combat party; resorting to guerrilla warfare should be regarded as a secondary tactical question." (Op. cit., p. 6.)

Unfortunately, Comrades Germain and Knoeller disregard this plain language and use the words "tactic" and "strategy" in a different way. While this greatly facilitates their argumentation, it hardly adds to the clarity of the discussion.

I do not dispute that ordinarily the words are used rather loosely, "tactics" and "strategy" even being spoken of as equivalents. Sometimes they are used in a more precise sense: "Strategy wins wars; tactics wins

battles." Still more precisely, they can have a dialectical relationship. In the sample sentence, the strategic goal is to win the peace; war is but a tactic to achieve this aim. Thus Trotsky can say: "There are a few things in this world besides military knowledge; there is communism and the world tasks that the working class sets itself; and there is war as one of the methods employed by the working class." (Military Writings, Merit edition, p. 24.)

Comrades Germain and Knoeller use the words tactics and strategy in accordance with a rigid meaning of their own, and on this basis try to make the position taken by the minority at the last world congress look ridiculous.

"...Comrade Joe Hansen...proclaims as an absolute dogma that guerrilla warfare is not a strategy but a tactic." (P. 22.) "...if guerrilla warfare is a tactical question, how did it happen that for ten years the entire revolutionary vanguard in Latin America crystallized around debates and passionate struggles centering on the Cuban experience?" (P. 23.) "The revolutionists who let themselves be hypnotized by the question of 'foquismo' and the purely tactical aspect of guerrilla warfare did not constitute all the revolutionary movement in Latin America but only a small minority." (P. 23.) The "strategic alternative" is "which orientation to follow -- one toward taking power through armed struggle; or a reformist one toward collaborating with the 'national' bourgeoisie and its army...." (P. 23. Emphasis in original.) "It is because this question is a strategic one and not a tactical one that the debate has been so impassioned...." (P. 23.) "But unfortunately for Comrade Hansen, much more is at stake than a simple change of tactics." (P. 24.)

Leaving aside other phrases of the same kind, we come to their conclusion (made in connection with the orientation of the Cubans) supporting the "strategy" of armed struggle: "It is in this sense that our strategy of armed struggle in Latin America is an integral part of our defense of the Cuban Revolution."

To use the language indulged in by Comrades Germain and Knoeller, it is a "strange and significant" fact that not once in this section, which they entitle "The Influence of the Cuban Revolution on the Strategic Orientation of the Latin-American Revolutionists," do they consider where to place party building from the

standpoint of tactics and strategy.  
Not once!

Since the beginning of the Trotskyist movement, basing ourselves on the heritage of Leninism, we have considered our main strategic goal to be the creation of a mass revolutionary-socialist party so as to ensure the victory of the revolution and the establishment of socialism. To create that party requires active participation in the class struggle, and this poses an incalculable variety of tactical problems. These nonetheless can be placed in various broad categories as was done in the Transitional Program. I repeat, it is a strange and significant fact that Comrades Germain and Knoeller do not once refer to this in their lengthy section on tactics and strategy -- which nevertheless presumes to be an answer on this very point.

Their avoidance of the subject is all the more cause for wonder in view of the fact that at least some Latin-American revolutionists have considered the question. I cited four examples above, Héctor Béjar, Ciro Bustos, Ladislav Dowbor, and the Tupamaros. (The positions of the urban guerrillas in the United States and Canada should also be borne in mind.)

Héctor Béjar is completely dubious about the role of the party in relation to armed struggle. Dowbor considers the question settled. In his view the "strategy" of armed struggle "solves the Leninist problem of how to remain in the vanguard, ahead of the masses." The Tupamaros likewise believe that they have found a shortcut. Ciro Bustos is equally convinced that something much better and much more attractive than party building has been discovered. He holds that the change introduced by the Cubans was "to carry guerrilla warfare from the level of tactics to strategy."

These revolutionists certainly find no difficulty in understanding the issue, even if they have not read any of the documents in our internal discussion. And they have the additional merit of coming directly to the point.

It would seem obvious that it is wrong of them to dismiss Lenin as superseded. It would seem just as obvious that it is one of our primary tasks to counterpose to their position our own position; that is, what Lenin and Trotsky taught on how to win a revolution through the strategy of building a combat party capable of employing the transitional method of working out tactics in all areas of the class struggle, including armed confrontations.

It is regrettable that Comrades Germain and Knoeller are not inclined to join in doing this but lean, instead, in the opposite direction.

### The Drift Toward Abstractness

If we look back over the development of the polemic, one of the features that draws attention is the drift of the majority toward abstractness in explaining their reasons for orienting toward guerrilla war.

The discussion began with the draft resolution on Latin America, submitted by the majority, that projected rural guerrilla warfare for a prolonged period on a continental scale, and with Comrade Maitan's thesis on the need to get practical, throw everything into a bid for an immediate breakthrough, and to attempt this in a predetermined geographical area -- at that time it was Bolivia.

These formulations, if not the concepts behind them, were modified so that the final resolution passed by the world congress at least nodded in the direction of the opposition to the new line. According to Comrades Germain and Knoeller, "...an objective reading, without preconceptions, of the Ninth Congress document makes it possible to conclude that it by no means advocates 'a strategy of rural guerrilla warfare'...but the strategy of armed struggle, which is an entirely different thing." (P. 28.)

They continue in the next sentence: "To try to give the opposite impression, Comrade Hansen has been forced to single out a single sentence in the document adopted by the Ninth World Congress and polemicize against it instead of analyzing the document as a whole and polemicizing against its general line. The least that can be said is that this is not a very fruitful method of argument and will not advance the movement." (Emphasis in original.)

But I was not the first to single out the passage (it includes more than a single sentence). Comrade Maitan singled it out for inclusion in a public article "Cuba, Military Reformism, and Armed Struggle in Latin America." Here is precisely how he quoted it:

"The fundamental perspective, the only realistic perspective for Latin America is that of an armed struggle which may last for long years....Even in the case of countries where large mobilizations and class conflicts in the cities may occur first, civil war will take manifold forms of armed

struggle, in which the principal axis for a whole period will be rural guerrilla warfare, the term having primarily a geographical-military meaning and not necessarily implying an exclusively peasant composition of the fighting detachments (or even necessarily preponderantly peasant composition). In this sense, armed struggle in Latin America means fundamentally guerrilla warfare." (Intercontinental Press, April 20, 1970, p. 359.)

Comrade Maitan did not cite this in Quatrième Internationale (June 1970) and Intercontinental Press in order to publicly disavow it. Nothing that he has written since, either publicly or in the internal discussion in the world Trotskyist movement, would indicate that he has changed his mind.

Trying to get away from the projection of rural guerrilla warfare for a prolonged period on a continental scale, and to give the impression that it hardly exists in the final draft of the resolution passed by the last world congress -- Comrade Maitan's public stand to the contrary -- Comrades Germain and Knoeller substitute the phrase "strategy of armed struggle" which is "an entirely different thing" from "a strategy of rural guerrilla warfare."

Strategy of armed struggle...  
This formulation is really winged, particularly if not too much attention is paid to the word "strategy." It lifts us to a high level of abstraction where the specific origin of the differences becomes lost to sight.

Latin America itself is left far behind, and we range across continents and over decades of time, guided only by our dependable compass "armed struggle," picking up quotations, citations, and references. All of these have something in common; namely, armed struggle. And, of course, all of them are applicable to Latin America and to the current discussion, which is one of the advantages of employing a common denominator.

For example, Comrades Germain and Knoeller quote a paragraph from Lenin's September 30, 1906, article "Guerrilla Warfare" (p. 29 of their article). Then they assert:

"This quotation admirably expresses the problem confronting our movement with regard to guerrilla warfare and armed struggle in Latin America. It ought to convince Comrade Hansen that he is on the wrong road and is leading us to an impasse by his polemic."

The quotation from Lenin coupled with the admonition from Comrades Germain and Knoeller convince me that there were guerrillas in Russia in 1906 and guerrillas in Latin America in 1970 when they wrote their article. They convince me, too, that Lenin faced a party-building problem at that time and that we face one today.

What else am I supposed to be convinced of? That the revolution in Russia was on the ebb in 1906 and that Lenin misjudged this, and that similarly in Latin America today the revolution is on the ebb and our comrades are misjudging it? Or that Lenin would have been right had the revolution been on the rise in 1906 so that his words then are applicable now in Latin America, whereas we must disregard Trotsky's conclusions concerning the correct placement of guerrilla war in a period of rise?

Or am I supposed to be convinced that just as some of the guerrillas in Latin America today have developed a new "strategy," so Lenin in 1906 developed a new strategy of guerrilla warfare superseding his previous views on the strategy of building a combat party?

Am I supposed to be convinced that our comrades should begin an active boycott of all elections in Latin America today, but a year from now run for parliament if the parliament measures up to the standards set by the Czar in 1907?

Am I, perhaps, supposed to be convinced that Trotsky was dead wrong in his estimate of Lenin's experience with guerrilla warfare and that he led our movement into an impasse by what he wrote on this in his biography of Stalin?

The same abstractness characterizes all the other examples collected by Comrades Germain and Knoeller, examples going back to the Paris Commune, not forgetting the 1927 Canton putsch, the 1934 Asturias insurrection, and the Chinese guerrilla struggle after 1928.

It is true that these, and a number of other examples, are neatly filed in four pigeonholes called "The Historical Variants of Armed Struggle." Is there a dialectical progression among these categories? Do they constitute nodal points indicating how from small beginnings, minor struggles can escalate into confrontations that logically (whatever the historical sequence) lead to a decisive showdown over who shall wield state power? Do they follow the pattern of movement indicated in

the Transitional Program? The answer is "no" to all of these questions. The classification is neither historical nor dialectical; it is lifeless. Such an abstract classification is useless so far as party-building tasks are concerned, whether in Latin America or anywhere else.

To enable us to draw instructive lessons each of the examples would have to be studied in a detailed way in the concrete situation of the given movement at the given stage of its development, precisely as Lenin advised. Moreover, to relate these lessons in a meaningful way to the problems we face, we would have to bear in mind in a detailed way the concrete situation in which our movement finds itself, including a similarly detailed concrete appreciation of the stage of its own development. In place of analysis of that kind, Comrades Germain and Knoeller abstract "armed struggle" from everything else and arrange the samples like dried flowers. The procedure and the results are hardly surprising. They result from substituting "armed struggle" for party building as the central axis of our movement.

#### The "Variants" of Armed Struggle

The insistence upon armed struggle being a strategy serves other useful purposes besides enabling Comrades Germain and Knoeller to elbow aside the question of the relationship between armed struggle and the strategy of party building. Above all, it permits them to elevate into the first plane the "variants" of armed struggle.

The purpose of this exercise in classification is to corner those who are of the opinion that armed struggle is a tactical question and make them say "yes" or "no" to each of the "variants," particularly the variant of guerrilla warfare.

If you hold that engagement in armed struggle is a tactical question to be decided by a revolutionary party in the light of its own strength and the possibilities or necessities of the situation it faces, the schema drawn up by Comrades Germain and Knoeller is of little interest. In tactics everything hinges on the judgement of the leadership, for the simple reason that no compilation can anticipate the precise configuration of the reality to which the party must respond. In fact, it is a mistake to attempt to work out tactics in advance.

First of all, the selected premises automatically carry their own answer. To judge how barren this procedure is,

you can start with the answers and decide what premises are required to make them applicable; then wait for those precise premises to appear in reality.

Secondly, to decide on a set of tactical variants in advance induces expectation that those variants will appear; one's eyes become set in a certain direction and corresponding anticipatory decisions are made. All this increases the chances of missing what actually occurs and what is really required until the opportune moment has passed.

Of course, Comrades Germain and Knoeller have listed their "variants" not so much in anticipation of future contingencies as to justify the stand taken by the last world congress and to help impel the Fourth International as a whole further along the course of regarding guerrilla warfare no longer as an auxiliary form of struggle but as a strategic orientation. The substance of the question is not changed, but the differences are made more acute since they involve the immediate attitude and orientation of our movement in areas going far beyond Latin America, as I tried to show earlier.

#### Armed Struggle Properly Classified

Let us resign ourselves to following the argumentation by Comrades Germain and Knoeller on "classical" and presumably "nonclassical" armed struggle.

1. "Classical." The mass movement after a long period of accumulating strength and experience, undergoes rapid expansion, goes over into arming the proletariat and confronts the bourgeois army at the moment of fullest flowering of the revolutionary crisis. (Ibid., p. 25 et seq.)

This includes two subvariants, they say. In one subvariant (for purposes of identification I will label it "a"), the armed confrontation occurs at the "culmination" of revolutionary crisis (Russia in 1917; Germany 1918-19). In the other subvariant (let us call it "b"), the bourgeois army remains substantially intact and is able to precipitate a showdown at the "outset" of the revolutionary crisis (Spain in 1936; Vietnam in 1945-46).

2. "Ultraleft." A revolutionary party, already strong but still in the minority, "provokes a premature confrontation between its forces, in isolation, and the enemy army" (Canton putsch of 1927; 1921 "March Action" in Germany).



3. A "variant intermediate between the first and second." (Shouldn't it be listed as No. 1½?) This is an armed confrontation with the enemy resulting from the advance and maturing of the mass struggle before the revolutionary party has won sufficient national influence to be able to defeat the bourgeois state (Paris Commune in 1871; Russia in 1905).

4. Autonomous armed detachments of the mass movement launch a struggle for any one of various reasons. This is the grab-bag category that takes care of all cases not listed under No. 1, No. 3, or No. 2. Includes guerilla warfare.

"Why this classification?" ask Comrades Germain and Knoeller. "Because it enables us to narrow the debate."

Truth to tell, it is hard to see any other justification for it.

Now comes the squeeze play. "We will not insult Comrade Hansen by claiming that he is opposed to the first category of armed struggle."

So that's taken care of; both the majority and minority presumably agree on category No. 1.

Similarly on category No. 2. Both the majority and the minority agree on being opposed to putsches.

By the process of elimination, the "debate is thus focused on the problems of the third and fourth category of armed struggle."

But "there is no Chinese wall between armed struggles of category number 1 and categories number 3 and number 4."

In category No. 1, the most likely perspective, "save for exceptional cases," is the important subvariant "b" where the bourgeois army remains intact and is able to precipitate a showdown at the outset of the revolutionary crisis. This grades into categories No. 3 and No. 4, so that if you are for category No. 1 that makes you for the important subvariant "b," and in all consistency you should be for categories No. 3 and No. 4.

Now, according to Comrades Germain and Knoeller, they do grade into each other. This is because of the uneven development of the revolutionary process. The bourgeois army remains largely intact because it is based on the most backward sectors of the population, the last to be set in motion. The different sectors of the masses achieve revolutionary consciousness unevenly, so that

the most advanced are almost certain to initiate revolutionary action before the heavy battalions are ready for action.

Still according to Comrades Germain and Knoeller, "If the party tries to eliminate this unevenness by deliberately curbing the enthusiasm of the most revolutionary strata it risks producing the opposite result." The advanced strata can become demoralized; even worse "the essential element for convincing or neutralizing the hesitant strata may disappear, this element being less the propaganda of the party or the soviets than the resolute action of the proletariat." (Emphasis in original.)

You must therefore favor category No. 3, which includes the Paris Commune.

(While we are on this point, let us note that the Bolsheviks did attempt to restrain the enthusiasm of the most revolutionary strata in St. Petersburg in the latter part of June 1917 precisely in order to give the less advanced areas an opportunity to catch up. The Vyborg Bolsheviks complained with embarrassment to their friends, according to Trotsky: "We have to play the part of the firehose." [The History of the Russian Revolution. Vol. 2, p. 10.] Trotsky's analysis of this phase of the revolution is highly pertinent to the current polemic. See in particular Chapter 3 of Volume 2 of the History, "Could the Bolsheviks Have Seized the Power in July?," in which Trotsky places the March 1921 action in Germany under the same category as the "July Days" in Russia in distinction from the placement given it by Comrades Germain and Knoeller under category No. 2.)

Finally -- to continue with Comrades Germain and Knoeller's polemic -- "While we are resolute opponents of any isolated action incomprehensible to the masses; we are by no means advocates solely of armed actions organized by the masses themselves within the framework of their organizations." (Emphasis in original.) For example, "In the struggle against rising fascism, exemplary actions by autonomous armed detachments may be useful and indispensable to convince the masses that such a struggle is possible -- before the masses themselves enter into it." (Op. cit., p. 27.)

You must therefore favor category No. 4 which includes guerrilla warfare.

I, too, am interested in narrowing

the debate. Let me try to work through these categories, proceeding for the sake of convenience from the point we have reached and working back.

Category No. 4 is a varied assortment. A good instance, showing the variety, is the reference to forming "autonomous armed detachments" in the struggle against fascism. Woe betide such formations if they go into action by themselves rather than as cadres immersed in the task of mobilizing the masses! The danger is adventurism, putschism. No Chinese wall separates category No. 4 from category No. 2. As proof note the appearance of urban guerrilla fighters in such countries as Canada and the United States, or, if you prefer, the many "foquista" experiments in Latin America.

Thus, if you are against category No. 2, that is, against adventurism and putschism, as Comrades Germain and Knoeller are, you should be extremely wary of category No. 4, which includes guerrilla warfare.

That ought to settle that point. The method used by Comrades Germain and Knoeller -- if followed in the right direction -- yields results diametrically opposed to theirs.

In the wreckage of their argumentation, a few items are worth jotting down for the record.

Note, for instance, how the example they cited of "exemplary actions by autonomous armed detachments" suggests an approach to the struggle against fascism that differs from Trotsky's, as presented in the Transitional Program. Trotsky emphasized the mobilization of the masses by the tens of millions, starting in the plants with the formation of pickets and ending in the streets with massive confrontations -- all under the slogans of self-defense. (Compare on this Trotsky's logical outline of the process, which I quoted earlier.)

On Category No. 3 I am of the opinion that in instances where the mass struggle reaches the point of explosion before a revolutionary party has been constructed, whatever revolutionists there are have no choice but to go with their class. A defeat is not inevitable, as Comrades Germain and Knoeller admit. Besides the Paris Commune, the December 1905 insurrection in Russia (and let us add the Santo Domingo uprising of 1965), we should recall the partial victory in Bolivia in 1952. In fact, the coming period may give us some new and surprising examples to place in category No. 3.

All the more reason for us to concentrate on the crucial work of forming cadres.

As for category No. 1, which Comrades Germain and Knoeller have named the "classical" variant with an "extremely important" subvariant, this appears to me to be an abstract and arbitrary classification.

First of all, even under the worst dictatorships and not just "within an essentially bourgeois-democratic framework" (p. 31), the masses gain experience and build up strength in a molecular way. This process has been very clear in fascist Spain.

The masses can move into the arena with unforeseen explosive violence, as in the case of Santo Domingo in 1965. Had it not been for the U.S. military invasion, the mass movement in Santo Domingo would in all likelihood have smashed the bourgeois army as did the Bolivian masses in 1952.

The masses in Santo Domingo armed themselves in a period of days and won over important sectors of the army.

Similar molecular processes with highly explosive potentials are going on throughout the world, including the advanced capitalist centers, where bourgeois democracy is not exactly in full flower.

One of the main problems confronting the sections of the Fourth International is to become integrated into this molecular process through the formation of cadres rooted in the masses.

Secondly, it is rather misleading to place the Russian revolution in category No. 1, subvariant "a," without clearly specifying that Czarism must be classified more with the oligarchical, military, gorilla, and fascist dictatorships of our times than with bourgeois democracy. Perhaps it would be helpful to divide subvariant "a" into subclassifications "i," "ii," "iii," "iv," etc., according to the type of regime the revolutionists must deal with. It would also be helpful to provide for the dynamism that is reflected in the shifts made by the ruling class from one regime to another.

The Bolsheviks had to construct their party largely in the underground, with their key leaders most often in exile, whether in Siberia or abroad, and with their own forces at times reduced to very small numbers.

In view of this, the vigorous

opposition of the Bolsheviks to terrorist methods, their insistence on the primacy of party building and of linking up with the masses, are all the more instructive.

If Comrades Germain and Knoeller were consistent, they would eliminate category No. 3 by changing it to No. 1½, or, still better, to subvariant "c" of No. 1, and get rid of category No. 4 by including guerrilla warfare as subvariant "d" of category No. 1, where -- with removal of the fractional No. 1½ -- it would be easier to remove any Chinese walls and grade it into category No. 2 which everyone is against.

For good measure, consider the following: Guerrillas appeared at certain phases of both the first (1905-07) and second (1917-20) revolutions in Russia. That was how Lenin and Trotsky came to consider the phenomenon, wasn't it?

If we view both revolutions as following the classical pattern -- the proletariat, backed by the peasantry, rising in a mighty upsurge and the revolutionists staking everything on connecting up with the masses by means of a combat party -- then we must surely say that phases of guerrilla struggle are included in the classical pattern; i.e., what Comrades Germain and Knoeller call category No. 1. We can all the better appreciate Lenin's interest in guerrilla war in 1906. Likewise, the consistency of the minority view in accepting it on the tactical level but rejecting it as a strategy. In addition, we see that to place guerrilla warfare exclusively in a special category is as arbitrary as the rest of the classification proposed by Comrades Germain and Knoeller.

The most striking feature of their classification is the failure to provide for the role of revolutionary leadership; i.e., the presence or absence of a combat party. Thus they merge together in category No. 1, subvariant "a," both the Russian revolution of 1917, which succeeded because of the role played by the Bolsheviks, and the German revolution of 1918-19, which failed because of the absence of a Bolshevik-type party and because of the betrayal committed by the Social Democracy.

In category No. 3 (1½), they place both the Paris Commune of 1871, which failed because of the absence of a party owing to the inexperience of the revolutionary leadership, and the 1905 revolution in Russia, which was defeated because the party-building process was still only in its initial stage. These are important distinctions.

The classification made by Comrades Germain and Knoeller was bound to be arbitrary because it was drawn up not as an accurate reflection of the real world but as a debating device, from the narrow standpoint of the "strategy" of armed struggle, with the role of the party left out, since that is a pivotal point belonging to the minority.

### The Bolshevik Strategy

As an additional item, let me call attention to a historical reference made by Comrades Germain and Knoeller which I hope they will correct at the first opportunity.

"Why were the Bolsheviks," they ask, "able to avoid (and were a thousand times right to do so) a full and deliberate armed confrontation with the bourgeois army at the time of the February Revolution?" They are referring to the outset of the revolution, which is an "extremely important distinction" in their set of categories, and they contrast the situation in Russia with those in Germany and Spain. "Was it owing exclusively or principally to the presence of the Bolshevik party in Russia and its absence in Germany and Spain?" (pp. 25-26.)

Their answer is as follows: "Frankly, we do not think so. We think so still less because in February and March 1917 the Bolshevik party was not the party of Lenin or of Lenin and Trotsky but the party of Stalin-Kamenev-Molotov, with a policy not fundamentally different from that of the German Independents in November-December 1918 to January 1919." (p. 26.)

They hold the true explanation to be that the Russian army had become so broken up by an external factor prior to the revolution -- World War I -- that it had virtually ceased to be an "adequate counterrevolutionary instrument."

Comrades Germain and Knoeller are trying something new -- viewing the course of the Russian from the standpoint of the "strategy of armed struggle." From this standpoint it must be granted that it is odd that the Bolsheviks did not begin with at least "a minimum of practical application" of "armed confrontations" if only for the purpose of providing "exemplary actions." And, frankly, I would think all the more so if the army had virtually ceased to be an adequate counterrevolutionary instrument.

The reasons why the Bolsheviks did not take that course can be stated

succinctly:

1. While Lenin had succeeded in building the cadre of a revolutionary party, the process was not yet completed. He had to finish the task in the very course of the revolution. The principal requirement was a "regroupment" -- to bring in Leon Trotsky and the forces associated with him.

2. The party had to be rearmed. Lenin himself was responsible for a good part of the disorientation displayed by the Bolsheviks in February and March 1917. He had insisted on the formula "Democratic Dictatorship of the Proletariat and the Peasantry" as against Trotsky's theory of the permanent revolution. Not until the Bolshevik party had the correct theory could it go forward. Lenin, as we know, made the correction in his Theses of April 4.

At first he was in a minority of virtually one -- himself, and he was accused of having become a "Trotskyist." Because of his great prestige and political capacities he was able before long to change this minority into a majority and the Bolsheviks could then move forward. The task of building a revolutionary cadre had been completed.

3. The party had to become a mass party in a political struggle against all competing parties and tendencies, particularly in the proletariat. This took additional time.

4. While organizing for the showdown, the proletariat had to learn to trust the political judgment of the Bolsheviks. The first sharp lesson was the necessity to restrain themselves from a premature bid for power, or from provocative actions that would play into the hands of the bourgeois state. What the most advanced section of the proletariat had to wait for was the rest of the masses to catch up.

5. The key forces of the peasantry, assembled in the conscript army, had to be won over to the slogans of Bolshevism; that is, brought -- arms and all -- under the leadership of the proletariat which was in turn guided by the Bolshevik cadres.

6. The Bolsheviks had to be completely sure that a solid majority of the populace had grasped the central demands formulated by the party and was ready to battle all the opposing forces to realize them.

These six considerations are sufficient to indicate that the axis

followed by the Bolsheviks was to build the cadre of a revolutionary party, to expand it into a mass party, and to win a majority. The military side -- the armed struggle -- conformed tactically to the party-building strategy.

What the Russian victory demonstrated for the first time in history was the role that a proletarian party, armed with the program and insights of Leninism, can accomplish in a revolutionary situation, whatever the particular conditions may be.

Can this role be repeated? Yes, it can. The Fourth International was founded on this proposition.

That is why Trotsky, in analyzing the defeats in Germany and Spain emphasized the absence of parties built on the Bolshevik model and not such differences between the revolutionary situation in Russia and subsequent ones in other countries as the degree of disintegration of the armed forces before the revolutionary upsurge of the masses.

#### The Feedback from Practice to Theory

Practice is dialectically related to theory, as all of us know. The "orientation and method" of guerrilla warfare, adopted at the last world congress in hope of establishing the Fourth International in the field of practice, stands in contradiction to the theoretical heritage of our movement. Thus an inevitable feedback from practice was soon registered in the field of theory.

The disdain for theory exhibited by the Cubans found its parallel in the permissive attitude adopted by the architects of the majority line toward the ultraleft posture to be seen in certain sectors of our movement. The two most striking current examples of this posture are the combination of sectarianism and verbal redness displayed by the majority leadership of the IMG in Britain, and the Maoist, Marghellist, and Tupa-marist deviations of what was the El Combatiente grouping at the last world congress.

The contradiction between the theoretical heritage of our movement and the practice of the new "strategy" is shown in other ways. The new practice calls for its own reflection in theory if for no other reason than to explain and justify it.

The defenders of the new "orientation and method" have sought to justify their line by appealing to the author-

ities of the past. Hence the diligent research work, going back as far as Engels. Hence, also, the peculiar selection of quotations and references, the tearing out of context, and the avoidance of references that speak against their position. Hence, to cap everything, the strange and significant fact that neither Comrade Maitan, nor Comrades Germain and Knoeller, cared to bring into consideration Trotsky's final judgment on guerrilla warfare.

The contradiction will deepen if those responsible persist in their course.

On the one hand it will lead to even worse repercussions than those already visible in our ranks, inasmuch as the permissiveness of the majority toward ultraleft errors encourages a more demanding attitude on the part of those committing them. Why should they have to put up with the "softness" of the majority leaders of the Fourth International toward carping criticisms of what they are doing in an honest effort to carry out the line of the last world congress?

On the other hand, the need to offer theoretical justification for the new course cannot help but bend its sponsors in the direction of the more consistent practitioners of the "orientation and method" of guerrilla warfare, who consider Leninism to have been superseded.

These internal and external pressures, working in combination, will tend to induce more vigorous efforts at justifying the new line -- inevitably at the expense of the "old" theory, the "old" program, and the "old" cadres.

#### Four Answers to Four Questions

"So that the discussion can make real progress and not harden into a dialogue of the deaf," say Comrades Germain and Knoeller, "we would like to pose four questions to Comrade Hansen." (Ibid., p. 31.)

It is to be hoped that the discussion does not harden into a dialogue of the deaf. Any joint effort that might help prevent this can certainly count on my cooperation. Consequently I gladly pose four answers.

Question: "1. Does he believe that, as a general rule (with only a few minor exceptions) in the stage immediately ahead of us in Latin America it is improbable if not impossible that we will see a peaceful advance of the mass movement, broadening out in successive waves within an essentially

bourgeois-democratic framework?"

Answer: I think that the general stand taken by our movement long before 1969 on the erosion and disappearance of bourgeois democracy -- and not only in Latin America! -- still remains valid. Out of the many items that could be cited, the following sentences from the Transitional Program, written in 1938, will indicate what I mean: "The bourgeoisie is nowhere satisfied with the official police and army. In the United States, even during 'peaceful' times, the bourgeoisie maintains militarized battalions of scabs and privately armed thugs in factories. To this must now be added the various groups of American Nazis. The French bourgeoisie at the first approach of danger mobilized semi-legal and illegal fascist detachments, including such as are in the army. No sooner does the pressure of the English workers once again become stronger than immediately the fascist bands are doubled, trebled, increased tenfold to come out in bloody march against the workers. The bourgeoisie keeps itself most accurately informed about the fact that in the present epoch the class struggle irresistibly tends to transform itself into civil war." (Pp. 27-28, first English edition.)

Question: "2. Does he believe that, as a general rule, it is improbable that the breakup of the reactionary bourgeois armies in Latin America will proceed at the same rate as the rise of the mass movement, and that therefore these armies will lose their capacity for carrying out a bloody repression of the movement?"

Answer: Unfortunately, I am not good at reading tea leaves. A powerful upsurge of the mass movement -- in Latin America as elsewhere -- will find a dialectical reflection within the armed forces. The bourgeois armies will tend to become weakened, corroded, or paralyzed, even torn with internal contradictions. Some anticipations of this were recently visible in Bolivia, for instance.

The rate at which this will occur will be determined by a whole series of factors, not least of which is the existence of a competent revolutionary leadership rooted in the masses. Only the course of the struggle itself can provide us with a meaningful answer as to the rate.

Again, the Transitional Program outlines a method for anticipating successive situations in this field and for working out effective responses in good time as the complex, dynamic

process actually develops in life.

Question: "3. Does he think, on the basis of the two preceding considerations, that it is the duty of the Latin-American revolutionists to carry out a propaganda campaign to prepare the masses, and above all the vanguard, for the military confrontations inevitable in the near and relatively near future in most the Latin-American countries? Does he think that the revolutionary strategy on whose basis the sections of the Fourth International are built must include a clear, unmistakable answer to this question, which in any case is being discussed by the entire vanguard?"

Answer: That was hardly fair. You smuggled in an extra question. However, let it pass.

As I hope I have made clear previously, I think the discussion involves much more than Latin America; and I must say that it is particularly obscure why you confine this question only to that continent.

I will repeat that the answer is really quite old. Long before 1969, it was included in the basic documents of our movement. The following sentences in the Transitional Program will serve, I hope, to refresh everyone's mind:

"The strategic task of the next period -- a prerevolutionary period of agitation, propaganda and organization -- consists in overcoming the contradiction between the maturity of the objective revolutionary conditions and the immaturity of the proletariat and its vanguard (the confusion and disappointment of the older generation; the inexperience of the younger generation). It is necessary to help the masses in the process of the daily struggle to find the bridge between present demands and the socialist program of the revolution. This bridge should include a system of transitional demands, stemming from today's consciousness of wide layers of the working class and unalterably leading to one final conclusion: the conquest of power by the proletariat." (Ibid., p. 18.)

Please note: "the strategic task." Also note that Trotsky mentioned the immaturity of the vanguard, owing in part to "the inexperience of the younger generation."

Question: "4. Does he think that once our own organizations have accumulated a minimum of forces they must, in their turn, prepare for these confrontations or risk very heavy losses, both in physical terms (inflicted by

the class enemy) and political terms (inflicted by the other tendencies in the revolutionary movement)?"

Answer: I suspect that this is a loaded question in which the authors have in mind a "minimum of forces" for involvement in the "strategy" of armed struggle or guerrilla warfare.

Taking the question at face value, however, I will say the following: In general, the primary problem right now is to increase our own forces so that we can wield greater weight in the political arena, whatever the type of confrontation we are faced with and whatever its source, whether this be the class enemy or opponents challenging us for leadership of the vanguard. Party building is the shortest route to solving these problems at the least overhead cost both physically and politically.

\* \* \*

Now that I have answered these questions and thus helped save the discussion from becoming a dialogue of the deaf, I should like to ask Comrades Germain and Knoeller just one question:

1. What did the four questions above have to do with the real reasons for the decision of the majority at the last world congress to make a "turn" and head toward the "strategy" of guerrilla warfare as opposed to the strategy outlined in the Transitional Program?

But You've Got No Alternative Line

Comrade Maitan should perhaps be heard at this point: "The minority comrades do not have an alternative line that we could analyze and reject." Comrade Maitan may not have analyzed the minority line, but he certainly rejected it.

He explains as follows:

"At the world congress, the minority asked the delegates to reject the fundamental line of the document and proposed opening a discussion. Fourteen months later Comrade Hansen has renewed the argument, but the result is no different. The line of the majority is subjected to criticism but there is no proposal for replacing it. It is good to recall the criteria of the transitional program, warn against dangers, stress the essential role of mass work and the necessity of a revolutionary party. But Latin America is experiencing a situation of profound crisis in which, in a number of countries, the class struggle has already gone over

into armed combat. We have proposed a strategy for this stage based on the experience of our sections and taking account of the experiences and conclusions of other revolutionary currents which have already participated in the struggle. What does the minority propose? What is its conception of armed struggle for a continent at a stage when, I repeat again, armed struggle is on the order of the day. How does it think that the struggle for the overthrow of imperialism and national capitalism can take place concretely?" ("Once Again on the Revolutionary Perspectives in Latin America -- Defense of an Orientation and a Method." Op. cit., p. 10.)

I don't know the purpose of Comrade Maitan's reference to "fourteen months later." He knows very well that at the last world congress the majority rejected the proposal to continue the discussion. The needs of "security" were cited and the right of the majority to have a certain amount of time to test out their new line. I accepted the majority decision although I thought the decision was a mistake, since to continue the discussion did not involve a security question and could have helped lead to earlier clarification of the differences. Thus it was hardly my fault that a considerable delay occurred before the discussion could be renewed. It is a small matter, one indicative nevertheless of a certain attitude.

As to the challenge to develop a counterproposal, this is indeed disarming. What is our "conception of armed struggle for a continent"?

1. This presumes acceptance of the basic position of the majority -- adoption of the "strategy" of armed struggle, which Comrade Maitan (if not Comrades Germain and Knoeller) equates in Latin America with guerrilla warfare in the main, and, in the final analysis, predominantly rural guerrilla warfare for a prolonged period and on a continental scale. The challenge thus amounts to a demand that we present an alternative strategy of armed struggle or remain silent.

But the basic concept advanced by the majority is to be rejected as fallacious, since engagement in armed struggle is a tactical question when it is considered in relation to the party-building strategy. To write tactical recipes, even under the pompous title of "Counterproposals," would be a mistake, as I have already tried to explain.

2. It would be just as much a

mistake, in my opinion, to attempt -- in opposition to the new strategy adopted by the majority -- to spell out the counterstrategy, offering it under some imposing title like "57 Varieties of Party Building" with numerous quotations from Frederick Engels, Karl Marx, V.I. Lenin, Leon Trotsky, and James P. Cannon, and abundant examples selected from six continents over the past seventy years.

It would be an error to attempt something like that even if half the document were to deal with the special problems that appear when the class struggle becomes so sharp as to flare into violent confrontations, whether at the outset or culmination of an upsurge placing government power at stake.

3. By demanding that we advance an "alternative line," the comrades of the majority shirk their own duty. Theirs is the responsibility of explaining and justifying their decision to overturn the line followed up to 1969 and to replace it with a new alternative line called by them the "strategy of armed struggle."

What was wrong with the former line? What was "missing" in it? Why did it suddenly turn out to be inadequate or superseded? And precisely why at such a late date as 1969?

The comrades of the majority have as yet not answered these crucial questions. All they have given us is hints and innuendos. An example is the following by Comrade Maitan:

"We are not unaware of the fact that in a context like that of Latin America today adventurist deviations can always occur, above and beyond more or less correct formulations in documents -- we have to keep our eyes open to this danger and fight it without hesitation, if necessary. But above all at the time when we began to spell out our present conceptions on Latin America, that is, in the second half of 1967, the emphasis had to be put on the opposite danger. Despite its being founded by a leader of the October Revolution, the founder of the Red Army, and a man with an extraordinary list of honors for his participation in revolutionary struggles throughout the world, our movement might have given the impression of either being ignorant of the problems of armed struggle, or viewing them in a purely theoretical or propagandistic way to such an extent that even in our own ranks there were comrades wanting to study military problems who drew on other sources, unaware of Leon Trotsky's contribution.



This deficiency must be accounted for by the conditions in which we struggled for decades and by a legitimate concern not to encourage a suicidal adventurism, not to impose overwhelming tasks on a very small nuclei. But, with the objective situation on our side, it was vitally necessary to make a turn. The world congress document was a contribution in this direction; the documents and decisions of the Bolivian and Argentinian comrades, at bottom, have had the same significance, with the advantage of adding more concreteness to the overall conceptions." (Ibid., p. 15.)

From this it would seem clear that in the second half of 1967 -- following the OLAS conference -- one or more leaders of the Fourth International came to the conclusion that however justified the previous line had been in its time, it had become "vitally necessary to make a turn" of far-reaching scope.

It was necessary to find ways and means of altering the impression among guerrilla fighters that our movement was "ignorant of the problems of armed struggle" or viewed them "in a purely theoretical or propagandistic way."

Thus another irony was added to history -- leaders of the Fourth International pondering over what might be "missing" in the line and activities of the world Trotskyist movement, and deciding it was guerrilla warfare, precisely as some of the guerrilla fighters, pondering over what was clearly missing in the strategy of guerrilla warfare, became inclined to think it might be a revolutionary party.

We are given another hint in the previously cited document by Comrade Maitan "An Insufficient Document" where we are told that we can't surmount our present difficulties until we can demonstrate "in practice" our capacity to make a "breakthrough," specifically by engaging in guerrilla warfare at a predetermined spot on a map of the globe.

The reality thus appears to be that one or more of the leading comrades of the Fourth International became dissatisfied sometime in 1967 or earlier with the party-building strategy laid down at the founding congress of our movement. Something was "missing." Good as our movement had proved itself to be in the field of theory it had not shown itself capable anywhere of making a comparable demonstration in practice, particularly a demonstration

of know-how in acting "arms in hand." Now the objective situation had changed. The field of guerrilla warfare had opened up. It was objectively possible for even a small group to set up a front in the example set by the Cubans, provided everything else was subordinated to this "orientation and method."

That was the real rationale, it would seem from the evidence, behind the decision at the last world congress to elevate guerrilla warfare into a strategy and, with extravagant hopes, to plunge ahead in Bolivia and Argentina.

Instead of enlarging on these reasons and explaining them more fully -- and perhaps convincing us -- Comrade Maitan and Comrades Germain and Knoeller furnish us with a plethora of general arguments that have nothing to do with the alleged incapacity of our movement to prove itself practically, nothing to do with the alleged hindrance offered by the previous line, and nothing to do with the alleged imperious need for a breakthrough. In the absence of an explanation of these views, the demand that the minority provide an "alternative line" sounds like mockery.

4. While demanding that we offer a set of concrete counterproposals, the comrades of the majority do not themselves spell out concretely how their new line either opens a road to the masses or contributes to party building, although they admit that these are key questions facing our movement.

The comrades of the majority should tell us specifically how the engagement of a small group in guerrilla warfare as an "orientation and a method" solves the problem of mobilizing the masses in a struggle for power.

They should tell us specifically how this "strategy" assures building a revolutionary-socialist party.

Some specific examples would be welcome to illustrate the power and efficacy of guerrilla warfare in these two respects.

The truth is that examples abound in Latin America, as well as other areas, including examples from the experience of our own movement, pointing to just the opposite conclusions from those drawn by the majority. This is one of the reasons why the guerrilla movement in Latin America is in crisis. In the case of Peru in 1965 -- which received a stamp of approval in the majority

resolution -- Héctor Béjar's book offers extraordinarily clear testimony on how guerrilla warfare as a strategy diverts revolutionists from party building, separates them from the masses, and leads them into a blind alley.

### A Step Backward

I have already discussed the damaging consequences of the majority line within the ranks of the world Trotskyist movement, where it encourages ultraleftism when what is needed is to counter it. I should like to now turn to some other damaging consequences.

1. It serves to engender false hopes among comrades that they can get substantial help from the Fourth International if they engage in the "strategy" of armed struggle.

However, our movement lacks the resources to fulfill such hopes. The Fourth International is a small cadre organization. Most of its sections are unable even to maintain a regular publication of the quality and size required by their needs. They are unable, most of them, even to maintain a modest staff of full-time professional revolutionists. Problems of this nature are, of course, greatly exacerbated where the Trotskyists must remain in the underground.

The larger sections in the advanced capitalist countries that are beginning to feel the wind in their sails still remain much too small to constitute supply bases of any consequence for guerrilla movements in the colonial and semicolonial areas. In fact, to take full advantage of the openings now appearing they must concentrate all their resources, both in cadres and finances, on the struggles in their own areas, which are of course intimately bound up with those elsewhere in the world.

In Latin America and similar regions, sections should clearly understand that engagement in guerrilla struggles is a tactical problem to be weighed in the light of their own resources without being able to count on anything requisite to their needs from abroad.

The Fourth International as a whole remains at the stage where the primary task is to gather together the first contingents of cadres to be educated and trained. It must concentrate on this and not permit itself to become diverted either by the pressure to make forced marches in hope of a "break-through" or by alluring "shortcuts" promised by new "strategies."

To deviate from this can only encourage adventures or inspire bombastic propaganda that soon reveals its emptiness.

The "strategy" of armed struggle proclaimed by the majority does not conform to the real tasks that must be carried out to improve the size, strength, and material capacities of the Fourth International.

2. Public propaganda in favor of the "strategy" of armed struggle does not help us in the discussion taking place among the Latin-American revolutionists and those elsewhere who think like them. It hinders the work of bringing those breaking from "foquism" or its variants toward Leninism. What we require is redoubled efforts on the part of the leadership of the world Trotskyist movement to defend the Leninist strategy of party building, and to produce "at least a minimum" of concrete examples to indicate in a practical way what we mean.

3. The "orientation and method" of guerrilla warfare hampers engagement in the molecular processes going on in the depths of the masses.

The immediate problem is to win more cadres. They can be won in the vanguard through polemical material in defense of the Leninist strategy of party building along with concrete proposals to engage in work among the masses in a correct way.

These proposals should be drawn up in accordance with the method outlined in the Transitional Program. But this means utilizing democratic slogans and economic demands related to life in the plants, mills, mines, and other sectors of industry, that may at first sight appear to be very modest. It includes similar work in the countryside. And among the oppressed minorities, students, and women.

The "strategy" of armed struggle, which is a strategy of direct confrontation with the state power, with little regard to the necessary correlatives -- as viewed from the standpoint of Leninism -- stands squarely in the way of such work.

4. The new line increases the difficulty of recruiting to our ranks on the basis of a clear espousal of the Leninist theory of the role of a combat party.

The opportunities for getting a fair hearing are much better than formerly. The setbacks and defeats

suffered by the guerrilla movements in a number of countries have led many of the participants and the circles sympathetic to them to begin reevaluating.

This does not mean that they will automatically come up with the right answers. They may be attracted towards Maoism, or even popular frontism. We have to contend energetically to win them to the program of Trotskyism.

The possibilities of recruitment are excellent -- provided we appear as Leninists genuinely convinced of the correctness of the strategy of party building and energetically doing everything possible to carry out this strategy.

The line of the majority hampers recruitment from these sources. The Fourth International gives the appearance of coming over to positions that they have begun to question. If these positions are correct, then the Fourth International only looks ridiculous trying to lend authority to them from the works of Lenin and Trotsky. It would be more appropriate to explain how the teachings of Lenin and Trotsky blocked the Fourth International for so many years from moving over to the "strategy" of armed struggle sooner.

#### Which Was the Key Document?

In the discussion prior to the last world congress, I called attention in my article "Assessment of the Draft Resolution on Latin America" (pp. 5-13) to what appeared to me to be various contradictions between the draft resolution on Latin America and the draft of the main political resolution "On the New Rise of the World Revolution." These differences were so substantial that I wrote:

"In short, the draft resolution on Latin America appears to have been drawn up on the basis of a quite different concept of the key problem facing the Fourth International and the orientation and tasks required to solve it than the concept expressed in the main resolution with its requisite orientation and tasks for the coming period. How the implicit contradiction between the two resolutions would be resolved in practice if both were adopted without either of them being substantially changed is hard to foresee."

Comrade Maitan was particularly insistent that I was wrong on this. In his view there was no contradiction between the Latin-American resolution produced by the commission which he heads and the main political resolution which Comrade Germain reported on.

In his latest document, Comrade

Maitan repeats (p. 16) that I was mistaken in my understanding of a key point in the main political resolution. The point was: "This new revolutionary rise means that essentially proletarian forces and vanguard political currents carrying on the traditions of revolutionary Marxism and workers democracy will be in the thick of the fight, that their methods of intervening, of action, and organization will draw much closer to the Leninist norm of proletarian revolutions." (Intercontinental Press, July 14, 1969, p. 669.)

According to Comrade Maitan, "It is clear that the allusion to drawing much closer to 'the Leninist norm of proletarian revolutions' refers primarily to the industrialized capitalist countries. It concerns the neo-colonial countries more indirectly."

In short, Comrade Maitan is of the opinion that it is very unlikely that the Leninist norm will be seen in the colonial world in the foreseeable future and that -- contrary to my impression -- his view is expressed in the main political resolution.

I am still of the opinion that the allusion is not that clear. In fact, it suggests the contrary to what Comrade Maitan affirms. The sentence in question follows immediately after a paragraph dealing with the colonial revolution and the perspective that imperialism may have to redistribute its financial and military strength in such a way as to reduce "the pressure on the colonial revolution on several fronts, stimulate its resumption and the winning of new victories."

Thus the forecast that the new revolutionary rise signified a trend toward the Leninist norm of proletarian revolutions was made in the context of dealing with the colonial revolution. I, for one, took the main resolution at its face value on this point.

Besides this very important question, the main political resolution, in its final section "The Construction of a New Revolutionary Leadership," paid special attention to the worldwide radicalization of the youth, the great opportunities this opened for Trotskyism, the special problems created by spontaneist and similar tendencies, and how these must be met. Considerable stress was placed on party building.

On the face of it, the main resolution was acceptable. The Latin-American resolution stood in contradiction to its general line.

The article by Comrades Germain and Knoeller adds considerably to the

force of Comrade Maitan's contention that I was mistaken. In that event, both resolutions would appear in a different light to me. The Latin-American resolution would have to be judged as the main resolution, since it set the main course to be followed by the Fourth International in the following period. The resolution presented by Comrade Germain would have to be reduced in importance. It would have to be viewed as auxiliary to the real main resolution that set the key policy for the Fourth International as a whole although this real main resolution bore only the modest title "Resolution on Latin America."

Such a judgment would not impugn the accuracy of the descriptive part of the main political resolution dealing with world developments as a whole since the previous congress. In that respect the resolution would remain valid. What is involved is the axis of activities set for the Fourth International, the axis for strengthening and expanding it as an organization. Specifically this was the adoption of the "strategy" of armed struggle. That was not in the main political resolution adopted at the last world congress.

I do not wish to give the impression that this readjustment in view on the relative weight and importance of the two documents implies any belief that a secret division of labor occurred at the last world congress. Without a doubt, Comrade Germain genuinely believed at the time that the line of action proposed for Latin America concerned only that area and nowhere else. Similarly, I think that Comrade Maitan had not thought out the full implications of what the change in line for Latin America signified for the Fourth International in the rest of the world.

The striking similarity of the two documents now before us show that both Comrade Germain and Comrade Maitan became caught up in the logic of their positions. In trying to justify what they had started, it became necessary for them to proceed further along the road.

They are still far from having reached the logical end of this course, and perhaps they will draw back.

#### The Correct Way to Resolve Differences

Comrades Germain and Knoeller express the fear that what I have previously said is leading our movement into an "impasse." The subheading they chose for the section in which they voiced this fear was "A Polemic Leading Nowhere."

I hope that their fears will prove to be unjustified. True, I tend to discount their fears, inasmuch as from where I stand, our movement is already in an impasse so far as this question is concerned. How do you escape from an impasse and begin getting from nowhere to somewhere, so far as the internal life of our movement is concerned, except through a polemic?

The issues are very important, in my opinion, and we should do our utmost to clarify them in preparation for the next world congress.

Already I can see some progress. When the new line was first proposed, some of us were struck by the self-contradiction of a tactic of rural guerrilla warfare projected on a continental scale for a prolonged period. We assumed that it was a tactic proposed in the traditional sense of our movement, meaning that it was conceived as an auxiliary to the strategy of party building. To us it seemed obvious that a "tactic" could not be extended on such a broad scale and for such a long time. We thus sought to make this self-contradiction apparent to everyone.

Besides this, it seemed improper to us for the Fourth International as a whole to become directly involved in tactical questions best left to the judgment of the sections.

That stage has now been passed. It turned out that what was being projected was not a tactic but a new strategy.

Thus the discussion has clearly shifted to the level of strategy. Of prime importance among the points involved in determining the validity of the new strategy is its connection with past positions of our movement, for this concerns the continuity of our theoretical heritage. That has now been taken up in the two new documents submitted by Comrade Maitan and by Comrades Germain and Knoeller, and by this reply.

The new strategy affects areas other than Latin America, despite assurances to the contrary, as I have tried to prove above. This includes both the vanguard and our own movement. In my opinion, Comrades Maitan, Germain, and Knoeller have not yet met this issue. They have instead sought to avoid it or to deny it. I have sought to present the situation in such a way as to encourage further discussion from them on the question.

One of the gains of the polemic is the clarification that has resulted as to the importance of the differences. It would have been preferable, of course,

if these had turned out to be only minor. It is now clear that underlying the opposing positions at the last world congress were deeper questions, especially concerning the axis of party-building tasks for the Fourth International. Some comrades may find this worrisome. However, the clarification is a positive development. Clearer understanding of what is involved should make it easier to resolve the differences in a principled way and to arrive at greater homogeneity in the next period.

Of course, the atmosphere can become heated, and this is not without danger. In fact, it must be said frankly that signs of undue factionalism have appeared in several areas, the attack on Comrade Moreno being one of them. The most responsible comrades of both sides (and those who have not yet made up their minds) have a common interest in doing their utmost to put a damper on such attacks, which point in the direction of unprincipled factionalism.

The main danger arises from any

sector trying to substitute organizational measures for ideological confrontation and political clarification. The repercussions of reprisals of that kind would surely be felt internationally.

Although the discussion has transcended Latin America, I hope that the Latin-American comrades will find themselves in better position -- now that the repression has eased in some countries -- to contribute to the discussion than was possible for them in the discussion prior to the last world congress. What they have to say will be listened to with the utmost attention in view of the origin of the dispute.

But the comrades in other parts of the world should also express themselves. The new line will inevitably affect their work if it has not already done so. Not even the Trotskyists in such economically advanced countries as Great Britain, Canada, and the United States have been exempt from the repercussions, as I have sought to indicate in this reply.

March 19, 1971.

## 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 opportunist 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- ing 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, dis- claimed 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 author- ship 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 Com- rade 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 Com- rade 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 Interna- cional)" 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 move- ment 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 in- volved 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 cor- respondence written in that official capacity with the sec- tions 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 col- lective and considered opinion of the Latin American Com- mission, if not the United Secretariat as a whole.

For example, the author writes: "For our part, we con- sider the situation extremely grave and judge that a dis- cussion 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 International)" 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 Argentine 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 communique 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.

JULY 7, 1971, LETTER FROM THE POLITICAL COMMITTEE OF  
THE SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY TO THE  
UNITED SECRETARIAT

14 Charles Lane  
New York, N. Y. 10014

July 8, 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 July 7, 1971, meeting. The letter is self-explanatory.

Comradely,  
s/Jack Barnes  
Organization Secretary

cc: Members United Secretariat

New York, N. Y.  
July 7, 1971

To the United Secretariat  
of the Fourth International

Dear Comrades,

We have studied attentively your statement concerning our letter of May 11, 1971, in which we voiced our concern over the "Domingo" letter. We have also weighed the arguments advanced by Comrade Maitan in his "Introductory Note to the Letter Signed Domingo," his note correcting the English translation of the "Domingo" letter, and his "Reply to the Political Committee of the SWP." The apprehensions we expressed over the "Domingo" letter have not been allayed. They have, instead, been increased.

In our letter of May 11, we suggested that the majority of the United Secretariat issue a statement on the "Domingo" letter along the following lines: ". . . (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."

We suggested further that the "Domingo" letter be published in the Internal Bulletin, together with the clarifying statement by the majority of the United Secretariat and our letter of May 11.

We were pleased that you agreed to publish the "Domingo" letter in the Internal Bulletin together with our letter of May 11. On the other points, however, we feel that your response failed to measure up to the requirements of the situation, and represented a default in leadership responsibility.

For example, you did not inform the movement what the "Comité uruguayo (IV Internacional)" represents. From

Comrade Maitan's "Reply to the Political Committee of the SWP," we gather that he, too, does not know what it represents. He refers merely to a group which "if my memory is correct" utilized the name at times.

Thus you ignored our suggestion that if you did not know the identity of the "Comite uruguayo (IV Internacional)" an investigation was in order. The ranks of the world Trotskyist movement are still in the dark as to who it was that received, translated, mimeographed, and distributed the letter signed "Domingo." Was it done by a section? A sympathizing organization? Or an isolated individual who happens to be on Comrade Maitan's private mailing list? Do not the cadres of the Fourth International have a right to such information?

We suggested that you specifically dissociate the United Secretariat from the views expressed in the "Domingo" letter, particularly the factional attack on the *La Verdad* and Comrade Moreno. You did not do this. Consequently we have no choice but to conclude that you share Comrade Maitan's views in this respect.

Finally, we suggested that you make it absolutely clear that Comrade Maitan was not speaking in behalf of either the Latin American Commission or the United Secretariat.

You did this; but in such a way as to deepen our concern. You stated that 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." You then justified this as being perfectly legitimate: "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."

We maintain that the content of the letter, with its sub-headings and footnotes, shows on the face of it that it is not a personal letter but a factional document aimed at lining up comrades in a secret way.

The fact that the majority of the United Secretariat could consider that the writing of such a document by one of its members is a perfectly normal private matter raises a number of questions in our minds as to the concepts and procedures regulating the functioning of the body entrusted with leadership of the Fourth International between meetings of the International Executive Committee.

1. It signified that any member of the United Secretariat is free to act on his own as a private individual in handling situations of a grave nature that require mutual discussion, evaluation, and decision. Such a practice reduces the United Secretariat to a federation of heads of commissions, who consider it normal not even to inform each other at times of important decisions they have made and processes they have set in motion.

2. It opens the way to abuses of a most serious nature, such as operating behind the back of the United Secretariat and behind the back of the leaderships of sections.

3. It fosters the formation of personal cliques and similar unhealthy groupings put together in secret by this or that individual member of the United Secretariat.

4. If it is considered normal for Comrade Maitan to operate in such a fashion it must be considered likewise normal for other members of the United Secretariat to operate in a similar way. The question follows automat-

ically: Who else in the United Secretariat is sending out comparable factional letters to his own private mailing list? The position taken by the majority of the United Secretariat on the question of personal privilege in such matters places the entire committee under a cloud. A serious blow has thus been dealt to its authority and to its claim to be serving as a collective leadership.

Comrade Maitan's attempted defense of his letter does nothing toward counteracting these conclusions.

First of all, we will take up some small matters. In the "P. S." to his "Reply to the Political Committee of the SWP," Comrade Maitan suggests that a security question was involved in revealing that he used the pen name of "Domingo." If the rules of security were violated, the first infraction occurred when the author appended the name "Domingo" to a document that does not contain a single item involving any real security matter.

Of course, if he has organized a secret private faction, then a security problem would be involved—for the faction. To avoid that security problem a simple procedure was open: submission of his document in his own name for publication in the Internal Bulletin.

We should like to point out that so far as the Fourth International as a whole is concerned, we were the ones to call the attention of the United Secretariat to the existence of this document and its circulation in Latin America, something the author had not seen fit to do. Was this a violation of security rules on our part? We acted in a responsible way by bringing the document to the attention of the United Secretariat. Unfortunately the majority of the United Secretariat did not seem to welcome what we did.

Comrade Maitan protests our sending the *La Verdad* group a copy of our letter to the United Secretariat. The *La Verdad* group is both a sympathizing organization and directly involved as one of the subjects of the "Domingo" letter. What about the "Comité uruguayo (IV Internacional)"? By what statutory right is it to be placed in the favored category of being on Comrade Maitan's private mailing list while the *La Verdad* organization—not to mention the United Secretariat—is excluded?

On the alleged mistranslation of "we" and "I," Comrade Maitan refers to his habit of using the Italian "noi" or French "nous" which, he says, "the translators of the IP normally and correctly translate as 'I.'" The translators of IP inform us that they only stumbled upon this quirk after some years of mistranslating Comrade Maitan's "noi" or "nous" as "we." However, what does this have to do with the "Domingo" letter? That document was circulated in Latin America as a Spanish translation in which the "noi" or "nous" was translated as "nosotros" and not "yo." To grasp the impact and import of the document as it was circulated among our Latin American cothinkers, it is necessary to know that the pronoun "nosotros" was used throughout. The correct translation of "nosotros" is "we."

If a translating error was made, it was committed by those who translated the "Domingo" letter into Spanish. Obviously they were under the impression that Comrade Maitan was speaking in some official capacity for the International and not as a private individual. This impression was strengthened by such authoritative-sounding declarations as the following: "Since that time the *La Verdad* group, disregarding the responsible attitude the congress took . . . has indulged in unacceptable factional maneuvers, provoking a deterioration in its relations with

the International."

A more important issue than the translation of "noi," "nous," or "nosotros" is the innuendo made by Comrade Maitan that Comrade Pedro took a special secret trip to Argentina on the invitation of the *La Verdad* group to attend an underground congress they had organized. The United Secretariat knew in *advance* that Comrade Pedro was making this trip to Latin America. It was undertaken in relation to defense work in behalf of the political prisoners in Peru and was timed in accordance with that task. So far as we know, Comrade Maitan was in favor of this work as was the rest of the United Secretariat. Certainly he registered no objections that came to our attention.

These points amount to little more than quibbling. A truly serious item is Comrade Maitan's view of the reunification in 1963, to which we called attention in our letter of May 11. In the "Domingo" letter, Comrade Maitan stated: "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."

It is to be observed that in correcting the "mistranslation," Comrade Maitan specified that the "we" in this passage is correct. Consequently it is absolutely clear that he is expressing what he considers to have been, and to still be, the joint views of the comrades formerly with the International Secretariat.

We observe in particular Comrade Maitan's use of the phrases "entry of the Argentinian organization into the International" and "we relied on a process of progressive assimilation."

In his "Reply to the Political Committee of the SWP," Comrade Maitan uses similar phrases: ". . . we maintained that, in principle, even Healy and Lambert could *enter the International* . . ." (Emphasis added.) He repeats the formula again in relation to Argentina: "We were, with all the more reason, for the *entry* of the Argentine organization. . ." (Emphasis added.)

We conclude from this that Comrade Maitan and the other comrades whom he includes in his "we," took the view in 1963—and have held it ever since—that the reunification consisted of the "entry" of the International Committee into the Fourth International, to be subjected to "a process of progressive assimilation" thereafter.

This was not the viewpoint of the majority of the International Committee, which agreed to engage in the reunification. The viewpoint of the majority of the International Committee was that in 1953-54 a split had occurred *within* the Fourth International involving two factions, both of which belonged to the Fourth International. The main political differences that had led to this split were superseded as early as 1957, in the opinion of the majority of the International Committee, and this opened the possibility for a principled reunification of the two sides, which—if handled correctly—could lead to the eventual liquidation of the former lines of cleavage, a complete fusion of forces, and the construction of a genuinely collective leadership.

It was in accordance with this concept that the majority of the International Committee conducted itself following

the reunification that took place in 1963 on the basis of a statement of the principles of Trotskyism. The majority of the International Committee proceeded quite consciously to attempt to erase the previous lines of division, which had been superseded, and to genuinely dissolve the factions, beginning with its own forces. It consciously rejected any concept of "a process of progressive assimilation" of the other side.

Comrade Maitan's formulations indicate that he had a different concept of the reunification, and followed—and is still following—a different policy from that adopted by the majority of the International Committee. This is what we referred to in our letter of May 11 when we stated that these formulations—coupled with his excursion back in history to 1951 (in the case of the Argentinian section)—indicated that he "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 those reservations." Perhaps it would have been more accurate to say that he acted in accordance with a policy of trying to progressively assimilate the forces of the majority of the International Committee rather than reunify and fuse with them on the basis of the common statement of principles that both sides had adopted.

The policy of "progressive assimilation" has met with a certain success, it seems. Comrade Maitan observes in his "Reply to the Political Committee of the SWP" that the "most severe proposals" against *La Verdad* emanate from comrades who formerly belonged to the International Committee. He adds that "the split of 1968 occurred among Argentine comrades who had all belonged to the International Committee before 1963."

We note something else in Comrade Maitan's "Reply to the Political Committee of the SWP" that is disquieting to us. He uses the terms "majority" and "minority" throughout in a way that shows he is not referring to the voting at the last world congress on the resolutions dealing with Latin America, the "cultural revolution" in China, and the radicalization of the youth. He uses the terms "majority" and "minority" instead as referring to crystallized international factional formations. Thus he says, "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." Again, "The comrades of the PC . . . affirm that a member of the minority found himself in Argentina by chance. . . ." In another place: "A comrade representing the minority can certainly make trips . . . it would be very positive if the comrades of both the majority and minority participated in the congresses of the sections. . . ." Still another:

". . . discussion on trips . . . assures the minority the possibility of expressing its points of view and of asking for all the information it wishes."

Up to this point in the international discussion we have followed a policy of *opposing* the crystallization of international tendencies.

First of all, we were of the view that while some important differences had arisen and been expressed at the last world congress, no general division into two opposing sides had occurred there, whatever may have been the factional posturing of some comrades on certain questions. In addition, we assumed that the areas of common agreement outweighed the divisions in view of the virtually unanimous approval of the general political resolution which outlined the main tasks of the Fourth International for the immediate period ahead.

Upon the renewal of discussion in preparation for the coming congress, it appeared to us that a policy of opposing the crystallization of international tendencies would help ensure maximum freedom of debate. It was a policy, we thought, that would be most conducive to bringing out nuances of thought, would best permit the shifts and changes in views called for by the interchange of opinion, the weighing of arguments, and development of more thoroughly grounded judgments. Moreover, such a policy, we felt, would best foster efforts to broaden the areas of common agreement and bring them to the fore.

Judging from the circumstances surrounding the production of the "Domingo" letter, some of the statements made by Comrade Maitan in defense of it, and the assertion by the majority of the United Secretariat that it is perfectly "normal" to write such letters, it would appear that Comrade Maitan and those who agree with him have been proceeding in accordance with a different policy.

In view of this, it is now our opinion that the leaderships of sections and sympathizing organizations who feel concern about these developments would do well to begin consulting directly with each other, particularly in considering what relationship these developments may have to the political differences that have arisen, and what is the wisest course to pursue. This should include the leaderships of declared tendencies in national sections, where they may exist, inasmuch as this is a period of discussion preparatory to a world congress.

We ask that this letter be published in the Internal Bulletin as a statement of our opinion.

With comradely greetings,  
Political Committee  
Socialist Workers Party

*LET'S KEEP TO THE ISSUES,  
LET'S AVOID DIVERSIONS!*

by Livio Maitan

It is not my intention to reply point by point to the very long document that Comrade Hansen has thrown into the international discussion, since I do not consider it useful for the debate over Latin America to be dispersed in a number of directions, and since the spokesman of the minority has decided to bring in militants and persons who have nothing to do either in form or substance with the conceptions of the Fourth International and its majority. I will limit myself, consequently, to taking up as briefly as possible certain problems with the aim of demonstrating once again the absurdity of the accusation directed against the majority of having abandoned that Leninist conception of party construction which, according to the claims of Comrade Hansen, are presumably the monopoly of the minority, and of clarifying still further our orientation for Latin America at the current stage.

*Lenin, Trotsky, and the Real Conceptions of the Majority*

1. I want to recall, first of all, that the quotations in my document of October 1970 [September 30, 1970] were not included with the pretention of teaching the comrades something new or of being complete. My aim was to indicate that our orientations were not at all in contradiction with the conceptions and criteria of revolutionary Marxism in this question. This seemed to me to be useful inasmuch as the minority appeared to want to bring into question our "orthodoxy."

The long quotation which Comrade Hansen has taken from *Stalin* is in no way embarrassing to us. In fact, my document summed up as follows the conclusions that flowed from certain of Lenin's essential texts:

"From this we can conclude that Lenin in fact considered armed insurrection, which would be the culmination of a mass mobilization, as the decisive phase of the revolutionary struggle for power. But he did not limit all armed struggle to the insurrection. He foresaw the possibility of a prolonged civil war, even in the industrialized countries of Europe, and he considered guerrilla warfare a necessary method in a given context, more precisely when a revolutionary or prerevolutionary situation was produced or persisted but when a 'big' full-scale battle was ruled out because of a temporary relationship of forces." [P. 12 of the English translation.] If we now turn to the passage by Trotsky, taken from *Stalin*, which Comrade H. reminds us of, we read: "Whoever acknowledges revolution, acknowledges civil war. Finally, 'guerrilla warfare is an inescapable form of struggle . . . whenever more or less extensive intervals occur between major engagements in a civil war.' [Lenin.] From the point of view of the general principles of the class struggle, all of that was quite irrefutable. Disagreements came with the evaluation of concrete historical circumstances. When two major battles of the civil war are separated from each other by two or three months, that interval will inevitably be filled in with guerrilla blows against the enemy. But when the 'intermission' is stretched

out over years, guerrilla war ceases to be a preparation for a new battle and becomes instead a mere convulsion after defeat."

It is clear that Trotsky did not at all reject Lenin's basic conception on guerrilla war, but he stressed that this conception is inapplicable when the movement is in full ebb and a period opens of consolidation of the bourgeois power. The question of deciding as to whether Lenin was mistaken or not at the time of his concrete analysis is secondary in relation to the subject of our debate and we do not see how the quotation which Comrade Hansen has added to ours invalidates the cogency of our conception (I shall return to this point again).

As for the document adopted by the Reunification Congress on the basis of a resolution of the Political Committee of the SWP, I would have had every interest in citing it in fact and I thank Comrade Hansen for having done me the service of recalling it himself. In fact this document does not concern itself with deciding the terminological question as to whether "guerrilla warfare conducted by landless peasant and semiproletarian forces, under a leadership that becomes committed to carrying the revolution through to a conclusion" ought to be characterized as a tactic or a strategy, it does not separate guerrilla warfare and party construction (it says very correctly: this lesson "must be consciously incorporated into the strategy of building revolutionary Marxist parties in colonial countries"), by this very fact opposing both the conceptions aimed at replacing the party by guerrilla warfare and the fetishistic and propagandistic conceptions of constructing the party. It is, moreover, significant that the passage on the "decisive role" that such guerrilla warfare can play is included in a document the aim of which was to specify the theoretical and political basis of the reunification. If one adds that what was said on the subject of guerrilla warfare by the reporter for the majority at the Eighth Congress, which immediately preceded the Reunification Congress, did not meet with any objection on the part of the comrades belonging to the International Committee, it is understandable why we did not expect that the orientation outlined in 1967-68 would provoke tensions with the forces emanating from the Committee.<sup>1</sup> Our conviction was all the more legitimate inasmuch as during the multiple consultations that I had had with the Latin American sections before drawing up the draft resolution for the Ninth Congress, general agreement was reached, including with the overwhelming majority of the comrades who before 1963 had followed the orientations of the SWP and of the International Committee (Hugo Blanco himself at the beginning expressed his general agreement).

2. I have already written on other occasions that we should avoid centering the debate around the problem of whether guerrilla warfare is a tactic or a strategy. The answer depends on the meaning we attach to the words "tactic" and "strategy."

In *Lessons of October*, Trotsky writes, "By tactics, in

politics, we understand, using the analogy of military science, the art of conducting isolated operations. By strategy, we understand the art of conquest, *i.e.*, the seizure of power." In this sense, guerrilla warfare is obviously not a strategy, but neither is party building—the party being the instrument which allows us to attain the strategic goal, the seizure of power. (*The difference, in any case, is that the party—the organized vanguard, linked to the masses—is essential in all situations, while guerrilla warfare is required only within a specific context and under specific conditions.*)

If we look at an important document of the Third Congress of the Communist International, *Thesis on Tactics*, we see that it begins as follows:

"The new international association of workers is established to organize joint action by the proletariat of the different countries which pursue the one goal: the overthrow of capitalism, the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat and of an international Soviet republic which will completely abolish all classes and realize socialism, the first stage of communist society.' This definition of aims recorded in the Statutes of the Communist International clearly delimits all the tactical questions which are to be solved. They are the tactical questions of our fight for the proletarian dictatorship." In this sense as well, guerrilla warfare is obviously a tactic, but civil war and insurrection also fall under this heading.

If in conclusion we turn to military writings, the "classical" von Clausewitz gives us the following definition: "tactics guide us in using our forces in battle; strategy guides us in using battles to achieve our war aims." (Book II, Chapter I)

Going beyond all these more or less pertinent quotations, we might say in form of a summary definition that *the overturn of the capitalist regime via the revolutionary conquest of power is the goal; the party is the essential tool; and armed struggle—of which guerrilla warfare is one of the variants—is the necessary method.* That having been said, only a pedant would try to prevent us from utilizing either strategy or tactics as terms in speaking of party building just as we use either strategy or tactics as terms in speaking of armed struggle, depending on whether we are dealing with general orientations or with particular items. It is not accidental, moreover, that Che Guevara in his book *La guerra de guerrillas* [*Guerrilla Warfare*] devoted one chapter to the strategy and another to the tactics of guerrilla warfare.

Let us try to see, then, if we agree on matters of substance, leaving aside terminological quibbles.

3. Let us return to the quotation from Trotsky already mentioned. As we have seen, Lenin as well as Trotsky reckoned that guerrilla warfare is "an inescapable form of struggle . . . whenever more or less extensive intervals occur between major engagements in a civil war." It is possible that in the period immediately following the first Russian revolution Trotsky's analysis was more correct. But it is also possible that Lenin had a clearer idea from this epoch onward on the perspective that the intervals "between major engagements," favorable for guerrilla warfare, might extend over a longer period than Trotsky allowed for: hence his hypothesis of a "long civil war." But, abstracting from themes which from here on

in will be of more historical than political interest, the essential thing is that during the last decades and notably since World War II, the crisis of imperialism on an international scale and the mounting gangrene within the capitalist system make possible even protracted periods of profound instability in which, even if the revolutionary forces do not succeed in overturning the enemy nor in carrying off a mass insurrection, they can maintain considerable leeway for revolutionary action and can continue to wage armed struggle in the form of guerrilla warfare. It can be argued that the Chinese experience is complex and would require a more detailed analysis; in any event, it cannot be denied that precisely a situation of this sort permitted the appearance of guerrilla warfare for many years in Algeria and Vietnam,<sup>2</sup> nor can it be denied that it today accounts for the persistence and widening of the guerrilla struggle in, for example, Thailand. Moreover, in our document of October 1970 we wrote: "More generally, on the other hand, this worldwide expansion of guerrilla warfare is only a reflection of the revolutionary character of the historical period in which we are living. But, if we want to explain all this and comprehend the potential tendencies for the future, we must understand above all that this spread of guerrilla warfare throughout the world—even in genuinely adventurist forms—is, in the last analysis, the result of the contradictions in this period, of the relations between the forces present." (P. 17) And I explained more adequately in the following section what I was trying to say.

But more importantly, our conclusions on the orientation to be adopted for Latin America flowed from the analysis that a prerevolutionary situation existed on a continental scale and that even the "exceptional" situations (Uruguay and Mexico) were either disappearing or on the road to disappearing. We started from this decisive premise, as well as from the observation that the class struggle had in several countries already reached the level of armed struggle.

At the same time, the majority clarified two essential points—and it is absurd on Comrade Hansen's part to pretend to misunderstand or to suspect us of trying to camouflage something. The first point was that guerrilla warfare is only a phase and a method of armed struggle, that it should develop into a revolutionary war in the proper sense of the term, and, in final phase, independently of ebbs and flows, into a mass insurrection. (If we emphasized guerrilla warfare in 1968 and at the world congress, this was because we were setting up priorities for a particular stage and because we believed that it was especially in this area that our movement needed to clarify its conceptions.) The second point was that even during the phases when guerrilla warfare is the principal focus, as a method of struggle both for dealing blows to the adversary and for escaping from repression, the revolutionary organizations should deal with the problem of their activity among the masses, with a view both to taking advantage of the persistently explosive social potential and to progressively broadening the base for armed struggle. For us it was and remains undeniable that these goals can only be achieved *through the intervention of the party*, the only force capable of developing and putting into practice a coherent political strategy.

Finally, our perspective was not generalized to cover

all countries at the same time. We knew then and we know now that there are countries where, for objective and for subjective reasons, or both together, neither guerrilla war nor armed struggle are on the order of the day now or in the near future. It is no secret to anyone that in our discussions before and during the congress, we had in mind chiefly Bolivia and Argentina.

Does all of this imply that we neglected or obscured the need for party building? It is simply ridiculous to think so. All of this implies, on the contrary, the understanding that without a clear and concrete perspective on the problems of armed struggle—including guerrilla warfare—and without taking practical steps in this direction as soon as the minimum conditions are satisfied, it is impossible to go beyond the stage of small parties or of primarily propagandistic organizations and build in the living struggle, at the level where ever larger vanguards are to be found, the Leninist party, capable of conquering political hegemony among the masses.

#### *Bolivia and Argentina: Orientation and Action*

4. It is useful once again to consider Bolivia and Argentina.

Starting at the close of 1967 our Bolivian comrades outlined an orientation based on a critical balance sheet of Che's guerrilla campaign. They stressed above all the need in any renewal of armed struggle to establish ties with the peasants, a completely realistic step in a country with a long revolutionary tradition, such as Bolivia. They pointed out at the same time that specific forms of armed struggle could be adopted following the first phase in the politically crucial mining districts. Finally, they envisioned the possibility of launching spectacular operations in the cities aimed at demoralizing the enemy and thereby creating the most favorable psychological conditions for expanding the struggle and guaranteeing support for the guerrilla nuclei. We have explained again and again how we were hit severely by repression a few weeks after the world congress. Moreover, we call attention here once more to the fact that it was impossible to implement the projected united front with the ELN. International forces may have influenced the situation; but the decisive factor, according to the best reports, was the adventurist and sectarian orientation upheld by the ELN, an orientation which met its most tragic defeat with the crushing of the Teoponte guerrilla front. Any attempt to blame this defeat on our conceptions would be a flagrant falsehood.

Since the situation in Bolivia shifted with the rise to power of Ovando, and of Torres a year later, the POR, while clearly condemning any impressionistic assessments and any opportunist adaptations, grasped immediately the need to take advantage of the new openings; the resolution of the POR national conference of November 1969, reproduced widely in the press of the International, gives eloquent proof of this. It shows, incidentally, the degree to which the fears expressed by Hugo Blanco in a letter of October 1970 were without foundation.<sup>3</sup> Our comrades continued, naturally, to emphasize the need to prepare for armed struggle, rejecting any purely rhetorical posture or spontaneist conception, and insisting on the specific character of the military tasks in a situation where, to use Lenin's expression, the military question tends

more and more to become "the essential political question." It is over this issue, indeed, that Leninists distinguish themselves from centrists of every stripe in a revolutionary or prerevolutionary situation (in the present case, Lechin and Lora). No one, on the other hand, can honestly accuse the POR militants of bottling themselves up in a "militarist" blind tunnel, lacking any cohesive political orientation. Their contribution of renewing and restructuring the trade unions in the mining districts and in the capital city, their work among the peasant strata, the gains made even in the university sector where they were traditionally weak, and their exploitation of the openings offered by the People's Assembly, all bear this out. (See the article from *Combate* of May 1-15, reprinted in *Intercontinental Press*, June 21, 1971.)

Here is a single quotation which leaves no doubt as to their position:

"We have already said that the path to socialism requires seizing power and that to seize power you need a people's army, armed detachments of the masses. Everyone knows that the side that is armed will take power. Not to understand this is to ignore the dynamics of revolution and class struggle. The bourgeoisie will not hand over power peacefully. It has to be wrested away from them through armed violence. But to defeat the bourgeois army, the working class and the revolutionaries have to create their own army.

"Let us not fool ourselves. The countless massacres have taught us the lesson. After this experience, the POR calls on all workers this May 1 to organize into armed platoons, into proletarian and peasant regiments. In every factory, in every mine, in every peasant community, in the universities, we must organize the armed detachments that will make up the nucleus of the People's Revolutionary Army. Only in this way, in the next crisis being plotted by the fascists, can we smash them decisively, while at the same time attacking the outposts of the capitalist regime. Only in this way can the revolution triumph, opening the way to the construction of socialism.

"Armed and organized mobilization of the masses—this is the path to victory over fascism and nationalist reformism."

The Argentine comrades had to go through severe internal conflicts and often painful ordeals before they sharpened up their orientation and began translating it into practice. I won't repeat what I have already written on this in other documents already published in the international discussion.

The entire International should be elated over the fact that in the period from the end of last year up to the beginning of June 1971—following its own rebuilding and the difficulties faced by other groups—the ERP, founded by the PRT, emerged as the most dynamic of the organizations waging armed struggle in Argentina, capable of unleashing a wide range of actions at an intense pace, with certain effectiveness. Could these be actions which don't fit the criteria of revolutionary Marxism, of Leninism?

Take the expropriations. From the quotation from Trotsky that Comrade Hansen seems to consider the most favorable to his position, it flows that neither Lenin nor Trotsky condemned such actions as a matter of principle. Quite the contrary. In this field, too, they fought against the ideas and the utterances of the Mensheviks. The concern expressed by Trotsky refers to a period of reaction, demoralization, and loss of morale among the



militants, to a situation where "people at large began to confound revolutionists with ordinary bandits." The situation in Argentina today is completely different, and far from viewing the expropriators as bandits, the broad masses sympathize openly with them and even collaborate directly in cases where collaboration is possible and necessary (as in the case of the distribution of consumer goods preceded by, or at least followed by, direct political work). The organizations taking responsibility for such projects gain, in fact, tremendous prestige. Concerning the kidnapping of manufacturer-consul Sylvester, there is a revealing detail on the comrades' style of operation: they turned over to the press the tape on which they had recorded their accusations against the exploiter and the statements he made in his own defense. This material was used by the press. Those who operate in this fashion are clearly concerned above all with generating favorable responses from broad layers of the population. Moreover, the Rosario operation and, more tellingly, the operation carried out at Fiat in Cordoba during the workers' struggle there, demonstrate that our comrades are attempting to link up with the mass movements, integrating their actions into the dynamics of these movements. They have thus been key figures in developments which will certainly draw the attention of other Latin American revolutionaries. *Le Monde's* correspondent wrote: "The revolutionaries of the ERP showed greater maturity than did the other clandestine organizations operating in Argentina." It would be unfortunate if this insight developed by a bourgeois commentator escaped the notice of some members of the Fourth International.

The definition of the ERP as an "organization of the masses for civil war" is significant in itself. But our comrades' views come out more sharply when one reads one of the communiqués issued during the Rosario operation and the lead article from a recent number of their journal.

"The endeavor signaled by this action," says the communiqué, among other things, "is part of the workers' struggles in the form of the Revolutionary Army of the People, put forward by the people and completely at the service of the people. We seek to assist in the organization and revolutionary mobilization of the workers. No victory, not even the slightest, is possible without the active participation of the masses. The people's forces should radiate throughout all arenas of struggle, with the ERP, along with the other armed organizations, as their central axis. New forms of struggle and organization must rise up over the heads of the treacherous existing leaders. There must be ERP commandos inside the factories, clandestine trade-union groups linked to the ERP, and all possible forms of preparation for the people's struggle.

"Comrades! Hunger, misery, and exploitation have sharpened the conditions of struggle. Proconsul Lanusse has declared war on us—let us reply with people's war. Every man and woman of the people, every patriot, has his or her combat post in the Revolutionary Army of the People.

"There will be no chance of achieving justice, jobs, and liberty until the organized, armed, and solidly united people defeat the enemy: Yankee imperialism, the capitalists, and their puppet police and armed forces. Argentinians, to arms, until we turn every citizen into a soldier, and every neighborhood, factory, and university into a fortress."

"Summing up our analysis," states an article in *El Combatiente* (May 17, 1971), "there are at present three forms of deviation capable of shackling or distorting the development of the mass revolutionary movement: syndicalism, militarism, and spontaneism. All three share a common trait: they are typically petty-bourgeois. They reflect the vacillation, the weakness, and the lack of political daring of a class condemned by history to waver forever between the two great actors in the class struggle: the bourgeoisie and the proletariat.

"Militarism, or putschism, reflects petty-bourgeois paternalism, their confidence in their self-sufficiency, and their underestimation of the leading role of the working class in the revolutionary process. It features a tendency to set aside or depreciate the role of the masses in the revolutionary process. They equate revolutionary war with confrontations carried out by armed groups against enemy forces, not understanding that another essential part of that war are the fights waged by the unarmed masses, using the many resources which the people's ingenuity places in their hands. They don't understand that the revolutionary war follows a clear line of development. At first, the struggles of the armed vanguard and unarmed masses proceed along parallel roads, but as the process unfolds both roads intersect one another at many points. Toward the end of the war there remains a single road, wide and solid: the armed people, standing as one man against the class enemy.

"The militarist misconception produces erroneous notions regarding the actual mechanics of waging military action. It overestimates the importance of the ultrasecret, carefully prepared apparatus, and underestimates the importance of the masses, who are the best cover and the best apparatus that revolutionaries have at their disposal. They lack a mass orientation for armed attacks, apart from short-term mobilizations contributing directly to building the apparatus, by securing money, documents, and so on. It is scarcely necessary to say that the war waged by the Vietnamese people is showing which is the correct conception and which the mistaken conception in this matter. . . .

"Reformism errs in the opposite direction, and its most frequent error is syndicalism. This consists of belittling the role of armed struggle, either denying it or postponing it until an uncertain future date. It consists of assigning the role of the party to the trade unions. . . .

"The revolutionary party needs no intermediary to lead the masses with its propaganda, political agitation, and organizing activity. The party does not forsake any of the needs of the masses. It works, lives, studies, and struggles with them, striving for all of their needs. The party takes part in all the organs which the masses put forth to gain their immediate demands, including the trade unions, and it fights to give political orientation and direction to their organizations.

"But the party can afford least of all to fail to meet the greatest need of the masses—which is precisely their need for a vanguard proletarian party which leads and orients them in the struggle for a Workers and People's Government, in the struggle for socialism. A party which renounces itself doesn't deserve to exist.

"The political reformism of the syndicalists has its counterpart in their sectarian and ultraleftist trade-union adventurism. Just as they assign the party's tasks to the trade unions, so they prevent the latter from carrying out their own proper functions. Trade unions and other for-

mations are by nature broad and open. They should seek to organize and lead the broadest masses, carrying them into class combat and raising their immediate demands.

"It is precisely the party's revolutionary orientation which allows it to raise these struggles to a political level, transforming them into true class struggles. At the same time, this revolutionary orientation lets the trade unions utilize the most flexible tactics in gaining their objectives, without giving in to the extreme positions of the bureaucratic layers. The 'revolutionary syndicalists' or 'syndicalist revolutionaries' thus put two roadblocks in front of the mass movement: they belittle the role of the party, seeking to transfer it to the trade unions, and at the same time they prevent the unions from carrying out their specific tasks.

"The third petty-bourgeois tendency within the revolutionary movement is spontaneism. This consists of denying the revolutionary party's historical role by glibly rehashing the argument about the mistakes of the Communist Party. According to this outlook the bureaucratization of the Bolshevik Party, the Third International, and all the Communist parties of the world does not constitute a specific historical phenomenon growing out of concrete conditions in the Soviet Union and Europe in a definite historical period; rather, it is seen as an inescapable part of the development of any party. Hence the organization of the party leads by its nature to bureaucratization, is a sectarian step, and leads to rejection by the masses.

"Such is the conception which basically signifies the petty bourgeoisie's capitulation to the spontaneous action of the masses, and its abandonment of the painstaking task of building a proletarian party, of integrating scientific socialism with the workers' movement."

The Argentinian comrades don't want anyone to exaggerate the importance of the actions they have carried out thus far. As for ourselves, we are convinced that this is only the very first phase of a long battle, and that setbacks and mistakes are always possible, to a certain degree even inevitable. We do not need to call this to the PRT's attention; the comrades are completely aware of the need for constant critical evaluation of the activity and orientation. For them, moreover, it is not simply a "debate," but a *struggle already underway*, in which they risk paying dearly for any future mistake in theory or practical application. The least they can ask for is that no one in the International pass judgment on them without knowing exactly what they are doing and thinking, that no one stick labels ("militarists," "foquistas," "terrorists," etc.) on them that in no way contribute to clarity and merely result in poisoning the discussion.

#### *A Mistake in Methodology*

5. Comrade Hansen fills up his document with a series of quotes that don't, quite frankly, concern us at all. Furthermore, he has to agree himself that the views of Brazilian VPR member Ladislav Dowbor are not shared by Livio Maitan. This doesn't deter Comrade Hansen from utilizing a *New York Times Magazine* interview with Dowbor against me, nor does it keep him from forgetting, or being unaware, that the positions of the VPR are brought out much better in other sources that reflect the lively debate presently taking place in the Brazilian vanguard. At any rate, comrades who are following the international debate will readily notice that the majority's line differs radically from the orientation put forth in the quoted in-

terview. The Brazilian comrades associated with the Fourth International take one of their political and theoretical tasks to be precisely that of critically analyzing the writings of the VPR and of Dowbor. Nor do we have any need to insist on the equally clear difference between our positions and the position taken by Tupamaro members in the source to which Comrade Hansen refers. In passing, the minority spokesman's reference is unfair not only to us, but also to the Tupamaros. In fact, the Tupamaros have taken a whole series of political and even programmatic positions which it is absurd to overlook, and which reflect the advances this movement has made in its political understanding. You can no longer dispose of the Tupamaros with cursory arguments that don't take into account their prestige and mass influence or, as all observers will concede, the way they have deeply shaken their country's establishment.<sup>4</sup>

I shall leave aside the remarks on the points on which Bejar himself was supposedly more correct than the majority by referring the reader to the majority document.<sup>5</sup> Above all else, the reference to Ciro Bustos sheds light on the hodgepodge method practiced by Comrade Hansen. Comrade Hansen must know perfectly well that the two paragraphs he quotes from Bustos are not only *diametrically opposed* to the views of the majority (apart from the possible quibble over strategy and tactics we have already discussed), but they also oversimplify and substantially misrepresent Guevara's own outlook. On what basis, then, can he conclude that the stand of Bustos "enables us to see in two paragraphs where the basic position of the majority on this question ends up logically"? Perhaps his logic is very special. Perhaps he decided to amuse himself with intellectual sleight-of-hand, or indeed with genuine sophistry. Everything the majority has written counts for nothing; what it does is insignificant; the orientation and activities of our Bolivian and Argentinian comrades are not taken seriously. Would you care to have the key to the true interpretation that will enable you to understand and unmask Livio Maitan & Co.? Then read Ciro Bustos and all will become clear to you! And this is a contribution to "defense of the Leninist strategy of party building!"<sup>6</sup>

6. We are on even-solider ground in viewing the quotes that do not even deal with Latin America as an attempt at an amalgam and a diversion. To my knowledge, no one in the International shares the ideas of the Black Panthers or the Weathermen. But Comrade Hansen's way of putting the question interests us insofar as it reflects the concerns of the minority comrades, and it enables us, hence, to grasp the true content of the debate underway in our movement.

There are indeed those who think that, if certain methods of struggle are valid in Latin America, they should be utilized from here onward in other countries also, including the United States and Canada. Some minority comrades seem to believe that such a position follows logically, and that if we advocate guerrilla warfare in Argentina and Bolivia, we should advocate it for the United States as well. The majority of the International does not share such a concept. We see it as totally erroneous from a methodological standpoint. The Marxist and Leninist method does not consist of defining forms of struggle valid for all countries and all periods. It must instead determine forms of struggle and goals as the function of a specific situation that must be analyzed at the outset. Those who think the actions being carried

out today in Argentina or Brazil would have the same impact in the United States or Canada, are completely overlooking the enormous real differences in economic and social conditions and the consciousness of the working class and the masses in general. They fail to see that the problems of revolutionary strategy and armed struggle cannot be viewed as abstract, universal categories. The comrades who, fearing that the "logic" of our orientation for Latin America leads to adoption of the concepts of the Weathermen for the United States, reject the line of the International and Latin-American majority, are committing from a methodological standpoint the same error as the Weathermen—albeit in inverted form. Their position borders on the claim that orientations valid for the United States in this period should more or less be applied to countries with a radically different situation, to a radically different level of the class struggle. Both views fail to apply the dialectical method, which entails understanding that the combined development of the mass revolutionary movement and of our organizations doesn't in any sense eliminate uneven development, and doesn't do away with the specific conditions that must be grasped in order to formulate an orientation corresponding to real needs and possibilities. On a political level, in the present situation, such a mistake on the part of the minority comrades could lead them, independently of their subjective intent, to play a conservative role in the International that would inevitably exacerbate the serious tensions and dangers which we should *all* strive to ward off.

Again in connection with the method of discussion, it is in principle legitimate to tie together different questions and to try to grasp, beyond the expressed positions, their potential tendencies. This is why we don't shy away from any debate. If the minority believes it necessary to discuss entryism, the line of the English comrades, the weaknesses of the Italian section, and even the *Red Mole's* cartoons, the discussion should be carried out. Moreover, it is legitimate to raise the problem of determining to what degree the orientations outlined for Latin America can help us sharpen our orientation in other parts of the world with analogous structural situations and political tendencies. There is in particular the case of certain important countries that the Fourth International could not overlook without placing in doubt its revolutionary vanguard character on a world scale.

But we feel that no clarification will be achieved, and no progress will be made by our movement, if we discuss all questions simultaneously, on the basis of documents that mix everything together, tackling each problem in a cursory fashion. What is worse, this method seems to lead in Comrade Hansen's last document to putting people on trial for their motives, to an attempt—typically factional—to discover everywhere reservations or omissions loaded with significance. A single example: Comrade Hansen denounces as proof of our departure from the Leninist concept of party building the fact the Comrades Germain and Knoeller do not define the role of the party in a chapter of their document. Comrade Hansen is well aware of the contributions, even recent ones, made by Comrade Germain on the question of the party; he knows the contribution these two comrades are making directly to building certain sections in Europe. He ought to know to what extent the European sections adhering to the majority are engaging in close combat with all spontaneist and Maoist tendencies to win

hegemony within the broader vanguard. But that obviously has less bearing than the "oversight" of Comrades Germain and Knoeller in a chapter of their document!

Yet again: according to Comrade Hansen, the basis for the majority at the last congress was formed by young recruits to the European sections and by a sector of the Trotskyist movement in Latin America (let's say the majority sector). All right, can anyone state seriously that party building has been forgotten in Western Europe over the past couple of years? What conceptions could have allowed us to make the substantial progress we have recorded in France, and not only in France? Can it be said, on the other hand, that the Bolivian comrades are "overlooking" or obscuring the primordial need to build the party and reinforce it constantly? Everyone who is familiar with their theory and practice knows that the only reply can be a categorical negative.

In any event, it is on this terrain that we must debate and decide, and not on the basis of declarations by Bustos or supporters of the Weathermen!

#### *Democratic Centralism and Minority Rights*

7. I apologize to my readers for digressing at this point in regard to some polemical assertions that concern me most directly.

The International knows that the Italian section went through a serious crisis in 1968 and 1969. The International leadership—in the presence of representatives of the minority—was kept constantly informed on some developments in this crisis. In the widest international gatherings—including the European conference of December 1969—the Italian comrades drew up a self-critical balance sheet. This balance sheet was discussed at the section's congress of March 1970, at which the minority was present; one chapter of the resolution summarized it clearly. The Italian section, moreover, has not only always had absolutely democratic debates, but it is also the only section where after 1953 a minority favoring the line of the International Committee could express itself freely, to the point of being represented on the Central Committee. The comrades of the minority are invited from here onward to participate and to express their points of view—even in relation to the tactical orientation of the Italian comrades, if they so desire—at our next congress, as well as at the congress that will decide the section's position in the international debate and elect delegates to the world congress. (We have always felt, moreover, that a congress and not a Central Committee has the ultimate authority in this area.)

Since Comrade Hansen too generously considers me "the ideological leader" of the majority tendency, thereby attributing to me a role that goes beyond my personal position, I must concern myself with my record. I shall therefore remind him that my positions on Egypt—to which I won't return here for the methodological reasons I have already explained—had a quite different significance from the one he attributes to them, and they were bound up, moreover, with some methodological gains made by the International prior to the 1953 split. Those comrades who are interested can read over the contemporary debate. But what interests Comrade Hansen is not reopening that debate or grasping its true content. His aim is to show via a supplementary example, referred to repeatedly in passing, how dangerous the "ideological leader" of the majority is! If he wanted to make

an honest evaluation of our performances—and of course of our mistakes!—he should at least make reference to other aspects of our activity—as much in the area of preparation as in that of active intervention. Perhaps the result would be to bring out a less hideous image of certain members of the international leadership, whom some minority comrades try to portray as adventurers, as trainers of terrorists, or as crypto-Maoists who are moving away from the Leninist concept of party building!

8. If the discussion unfolding in the International can be carried out with a correct method, it can lead to an important clarification and contribute to the theoretical and political development of our movement, a considerable portion of whose members have joined since the last world congress. At the same time we can make a test of what Leninist democratic centralism consists of: demanding unity in action does not prevent the fullest debate, and internal democracy does not compromise the effectiveness of intervention in the class struggle. Despite its organizational weaknesses, the Fourth International is in a position to carry on a discussion with the broadest participation of comrades from the different countries. The debate can be organized in such a way that the delegations from the sections and the representatives of the different international tendencies can express their point of view directly, to the leaderships, to the central committees, and to the national congresses. Such a procedure would contribute enormously to the process of homogenization that the substantial renewal of our movement in recent years makes absolutely necessary.

Comrade Hansen has raised the problem of minority rights. This is a real problem, as is the problem of future minorities in sections where the majority supports the international minority. Its solution will be relatively easy if everyone respects the statutory norms, if everyone is guided by the necessary sense of responsibility, if every-

one has a clear understanding of the vital importance of keeping the International's cadre intact in a period when we have already made unprecedented progress and when enormous possibilities are opening up even in the near future.

We have always intransigently defended international democratic centralism. This has always implied on our part not only understanding the irreplaceable role of the most democratic debate and confrontation of tendencies, but also understanding that the International cannot be led exactly like a section. (Many comrades don't make this distinction clearly, but experience at the international leadership level would enable them to grasp it rapidly.) I would add that, as the minority comrades should know, we haven't asked any section to apply the line of the world congress as a matter of discipline. We have stated explicitly, on the contrary, that if a majority of a section is opposed to the international majority this creates political problems that no one would dream of resolving through administrative measures. It would in fact be absurd to ask that a line be applied—especially a line with multiple implications such as that adopted for Latin America by the world congress—by a majority that doesn't share it or hasn't assimilated it. Moreover, in all the history of the International, there is only one case in which this criterion was not respected. Comrade Hansen knows quite well that the two members of the international leadership whom he attacks were completely opposed to this decision.<sup>7</sup> It is true that, from a purely statutory point of view, the expulsion of the capitulationist leaders of the Ceylonese majority in 1964 could also be challenged. But I don't suppose that anyone would seek to put in question the well-founded politics and principle of such an indispensable prophylactic measure.<sup>8</sup>

June 23, 1971

#### FOOTNOTES

1. The reporter—to be precise, Livio Maitan—had said among other things that Peru should be included in this category of countries where "the guerrilla struggle will be able to play a determining role." Here is another detail susceptible of creating difficulties for Comrade Hansen, so preoccupied with establishing the chronology of my evolution!

2. We allude here to the phases that preceded the generalized war and the U. S. intervention.

3. In the same letter Hugo makes a big mistake in assuming that I was unaware of the Peruvian economic changes. Several articles I wrote show exactly the opposite.

4. It does not in any sense flow from what we are saying that we share the Tupamaros' political views, particularly their position on the *Frente Amplio*, which is laden with opportunist dangers.

5. Comrade Hansen forgets, indeed, the criticisms we ourselves made of Bejar. He forgets as well that the congress resolution reaffirming the need for the revolutionary party used Peru as an example and recalled the relevance of Hugo Blanco's experiences.

6. If we wished to follow Comrade Hansen's "methodological" example, we could quote passages from resolutions or articles on Latin America and guerrilla warfare taken from pro-Soviet or pro-Chinese Communist Party publications, and discover similarities with the minority's line of reasoning. Would we prove in that fashion that the "logic" of the minority position is that of the followers of Moscow or Peking?

7. I am obviously alluding to the suspension of the French majority at the beginning of 1952. Within the Secretariat, Comrade Germain and I myself were in the minority on this question, which was pushed through by a slight

majority, the composition of which Comrade Hansen need not be reminded.

8. In regard to La Verdad and Moreno, and what I said in my reply to the SWP Political Committee. I shall limit myself to stressing a passage from Comrade Hansen's document which reads: "The last world congress used a numerical, not a political criterion, to decide

which tendency in Argentina represented the majority." Certainly, if it were a question of deciding who is in the majority in the case of a split, I would not want any other criterion to be adopted. If it were a question of a section being disaffiliated or being recognized, then obviously the political criterion would be primary. These are the elementary norms we have always applied and they were not discovered on the occasion of the "Argentine question."

MAY 16, 1971, LETTER FROM STEIN  
TO THE NATIONAL LEADERSHIP OF THE  
SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY

LIGUE COMMUNISTE

section française de la IVe internationale  
95, rue du faubourg st-martin, paris 10e

Attention Cde. J. Hansen  
To the National Leadership of the Socialist Workers Party

copies to: The United Secretariat  
The Political Bureau of the Ligue Communiste  
(SFQI)

Paris, May 16, 1971

Dear Comrades,

I am writing you this letter as a Brazilian militant, a member of the Fourth International, working with various other Brazilian comrades under the guidance and control of the United Secretariat toward the construction of a section of the Fourth International in Brazil.

This letter, concerning the publication by Intercontinental Press in its March 29, 1971, issue of a document entitled "Concerning a Kidnapping in Brazil" was already being written when we learned of the publication of the same document in the *International Socialist Review* through an article reviewing it in the April 30, 1971, *Militant*. These new developments call for some supplementary remarks, which will be made further on. In brief, we consider it very regrettable that after a long period without anything being published on Brazil by the comrades such a document should be circulated. This leads us to pose a question of principle with you.

Let us commence then with what seems to us to be the most important. The question of principle concerns the article on Brazil that we sent to Intercontinental Press last March 8. The article, entitled "Brazil: seven years of military dictatorship," with a first part on "Torture and 'Economic Miracle'" and a second part on "The Revolutionary Left," was written by two Brazilian militants, members of the Fourth International. This article was published in the March and May 1971 issues of the magazine *Quatrieme Internationale*. I admit that I am ignorant of what the group Ponto de Partida, which authored the article "Concerning a Kidnapping in Brazil," represents politically. But one thing is certain—this group does not belong to the Fourth International and no one has ever heard of it before. Can one therefore ask why Intercontinental Press published the long declaration of this group and not a document written by members of the Fourth International, of whom one can think that they "express the standpoint of revolutionary Marxism" that Intercontinental Press is presumed to present and defend in the first place? The two authors of the document are myself on the one hand (whom both Comrade Jack Barnes and Comrade Pete Camejo have met on their trips here) and another Brazilian comrade who joined the International several months ago after a report made about him at the United Secretariat. The document introduces the analysis that I developed during a report made at the United Secretariat after I spent three months in Brazil in 1970 contacting revolutionary organizations and defending the program and perspectives of the International

so far as I know, no other contradictory analysis on the political conjuncture or on the situation in the revolutionary left in Brazil has been made by members of the Fourth International. As you know, we have no section in Brazil. This article expresses the point of view of Brazilian Trotskyist militants immersed in political work in their country. The decision of Intercontinental Press not to publish it and to publish instead the document of Ponto de Partida thus seems absolutely incomprehensible to me and I fail to see the political reasons for it. Consequently I believe that a statement or a rectification on this point is required.

But I could not write you this letter without utilizing the occasion to inform you of the estimate that we must make as Brazilian revolutionary militants on the document in question by Ponto de Partida. This discourse of a philosophy student is in fact hard for anyone to swallow who has experienced the conditions of revolutionary struggle in Brazil under the military dictatorship. It is obvious that the most prominent revolutionary organizations in Brazil can and must be criticized from a revolutionary Marxist point of view. But the entire reasoning of the Ponto de Partida document is based on the argument that the kidnappings produce a more intensive repression. This is an argument in the purest Social Democratic style, holding that it is the action of the revolutionists that is responsible for the repression by the ruling classes. It is a shameful Social Democratic position—it is lamentable to see this published in the Trotskyist press. Trotskyism has already suffered sufficiently from Posadism in Brazil to let this type of stuff go by. The other criticisms in the document concerning the kidnappings are totally abstract. The author seems not to be aware that the principal aim of the kidnappings is to free political prisoners from the jails of the dictatorship. It is a pure and simple abstraction to say in the concrete situation of total demobilization in Brazil that mass pressure is required to liberate them, if not a word is said on how it would be possible to reconstitute a mass movement able to gain even partial victories without becoming the target of the machine guns of the dictatorship. On this the document is silent. Thus Ponto de Partida, of which no one has ever heard, sets out to give lessons in a way that can never influence a single Brazilian militant. And what self-complacency, what presumption to seek to judge what is Marxist and what is not. The author attacks in a gratuitous manner (a chapter devoted to it) Comrade Ruy Mauro Marini, one of the most eminent Latin American Marxists (Comrade Ernest Mandel, who knows his contributions well, would be entirely in agreement on that). Precisely in this passage, the author of the document, so expert in Marxism, finds that it is absurd to speak of Brazil being subordinated to the USA, to the Federal Republic of Germany, to Japan, and to Switzerland. Marxism recognizes only "interdependencies" among the different parts of the capitalist world. If the author of the document knew anything about Marxism, he would be aware of what imperialism is, the highest stage of capitalism. If he knew anything about Brazil, he would be aware that these four countries are among those in the forefront of the impe-

rialist penetration there. If the relations flowing from that are not of subordination, I admit not being up to date on this new "contribution" to Marxism. This document has meaning only for inactive, gossip-mongering students of philosophy, who prefer to carry on their studies abroad. From an armchair there it is easy to give lessons. But on the concrete problems facing the Brazilian vanguard, not a word is said. Before treating in such a cavalier way the revolutionary militants who are struggling against the dictatorship, Ponto de Partida should show its capacity to advance concrete perspectives and to reply to the numerous questions posed by militants from every side. Because if you want to speak for the political vanguard, the capacity is needed to state in what way it should intervene. Thus it is not sufficient to cite as an example the victorious FIAT strike in Córdoba, Argentina. What is required is to state what this strike implies from the point of view of the organization and of its armed defense for example—the plant was literally encircled with various explosives and other arms. And Ponto de Partida forgot to speak about the intervention of the political vanguard there, which was the subject it began with. That's unfortunate, because precisely in this exact case, those involved were our comrades of the Revolutionary Army of the People (ERP), the armed organization created and led by the Revolutionary Workers Party (PRT), Argentine section of the Fourth International, who are capable of making a criticism on the political level and on the practical terrain of the deviations that certain Latin American organizations can commit in their armed actions. To do that, they have no need of utilizing old Social Democratic arguments nor of giving lessons. They are also certainly much more effective in their criticisms.

As for the article published in *The Militant*, I think that it is regrettable that an American Trotskyist jour-

nal, that claims to be consistently internationalist, publishes nothing on Brazil except an article disavowing the kidnapping of ambassadors, including . . . an American. It is regrettable to see *The Militant* finding itself very far in the rear of the very bourgeois-capitalist *New York Times* in denouncing the repression and torture in Brazil, but ahead of it with regard to condemning the acts of revolutionary militants.

Finally I will make a last remark on a detail, but one that nevertheless appears important to me, concerning the article of Comrade Peter Camejo in *The Militant*. He says: "The Tupamaros . . . asserted that in 'other countries' (not Uruquay) it is possible to 'achieve a revolution' by means of election." The Tupamaros never said that, comrades. According to the Intercontinental Press of March 1, 1971, they declared: "We do not honestly believe that we can achieve a revolution in Uruquay today by means of elections. It is incorrect to transpose the experiences of other countries." Quotation marks must not be played with Comrade Camejo. The article in *The Militant* contains an improper interpretation. The Trotskyists have suffered sufficiently in the past from this type of procedure to make it a duty to refrain from utilizing it against others. Moreover, the declaration of the Tupamaros is sufficiently clear and explicit. To say merely that they support the Popular Front without citing their political considerations and their statement: "regrets, however, that this closing of ranks came specifically for the elections and not before" could lead to confusion.

To return to the principal point of my letter and in view of the question of principle that I have raised, we would ask that the article on Brazil which we sent last March 8 be published in Intercontinental Press. I would likewise ask that this letter be published in the Internal Bulletin.

Trotskyist greetings,  
s/Stein

*JUNE 1, 1971, LETTER FROM  
JOSEPH HANSEN TO STEIN*

Intercontinental Press  
P. O. Box 116  
Village P. O. Station  
New York, N. Y. 10014

June 1, 1971

Ligue Communiste  
Paris, France

Attention: Stein

Dear Comrade Stein,

This will acknowledge your letter dated May 16, 1971, which we received May 27. I am transmitting it to the Political Committee of the Socialist Workers Party in accordance with the way you have addressed it.

At this point, as editor of *Intercontinental Press*, I should

like to take up only one question raised by your letter. You state that *Intercontinental Press* made a decision not to publish the article which you dated as having been written last January and which you included with a letter to us dated March 8. However, we placed it on our agenda along with other articles that we have received from various comrades, for translation and publication.

You state further: "The article, entitled 'Brazil: seven years of military dictatorship,' with a first part on 'Torture and 'Economic Miracle'' and a second part on 'The Revolutionary Left,' was written by two Brazilian militants, members of the Fourth International. This article was published in the March and May 1971 issues of the magazine *Quatrième Internationale*."

We received the March issue of *Quatrième Internationale* — I am not sure now whether it was the latter part of



April or beginning of May—and saw that the first part of your article was included in that issue. As yet we have not received the May issue of *Quatrième Internationale*. But since your letter, dated May 16, affirms that the second part of your article was published in it, we can only assume that through some slipup the comrades failed to send us a copy.

Consequently I would greatly appreciate it if you would airmail a copy of that issue to us by return post.

In view of the importance of your article as an expression of majority opinion on the situation in Brazil, I think it advisable to make sure that the English translation conforms as closely as possible to what is published in *Quatrième Internationale*, thereby taking into account any modification that may have been introduced into the original manuscript by the comrades in charge of editing the material that appears in its pages.

Comradely yours,  
s/Joseph Hansen  
Editor, *Intercontinental Press*

cc: United Secretariat  
Political Bureau of the Ligue Communiste  
Political Committee, Socialist Workers Party  
Editor, *Quatrième Internationale*

*JUNE 15, 1971, LETTER FROM  
STEIN TO JOSEPH HANSEN*

ROUGE  
14 rue du fbg saint denis  
paris 10

Paris, June 15, 1971

Joseph Hansen  
Intercontinental Press  
New York

Dear Comrade Joseph Hansen,

I received your letter of June 1, 1971 all right. While awaiting a political reply to my letter of May 16, 1971,

I would like to make just one remark of a technical order:

For a possible English translation of the article on Brazil (by Pinheiro-Mattos), I would appreciate your utilizing as a basis the copy that I sent you under date of March 8 last. In reality, unfortunately, this article was published in *Quatrième Internationale* with a series of misprints and typographical errors, and words or parts of sentences were left out. The version that I sent you, which is complete, is the one that will be published, moreover, in *Cuarta Internacional*, the U. S. Spanish magazine.

Fraternal greetings,  
s/Stein

JUNE 24, 1971, LETTER FROM  
JOSEPH HANSEN TO STEIN

June 24, 1971

Dear Comrade Stein,

Thank you for your letter of June 15, 1971.

In accordance with your request, we are going ahead and utilizing the copy of the manuscript which you sent us as the basis for an English translation of the article by Pinheiro-Mattos on Brazil.

I am disappointed that you did not send me a copy of the May issue of *Quatrième Internationale* as I requested in my letter of June 1. You stated in your letter of May 16 that the article in question was published in the issues of March and May. As yet neither I nor anyone else that I know of here has received a single copy of the May issue of *Quatrième Internationale* although it is now almost the end of June. It is hard to understand why you decided against airmailing me a

copy.

As to a "political reply" to your letter of May 16, you stated that what was "most important" and what you considered to be a "question of principle" concerned the alleged rejection by the editor of *Intercontinental Press* of the article on Brazil submitted by Pinheiro-Mattos. From your letter of June 15 I gather that you now recognize that you were mistaken in your assumption.

With regard to the objections you leveled in your May 16 letter against making it possible for our own circles to read the contribution of the Ponto de Partida group to the general discussion in Latin America on tactics and strategy ("Concerning a Kidnapping in Brazil"), I assume that since you have submitted your May 16 letter for publication in the Internal Bulletin that possible replies will similarly be submitted for publication there.

Fraternally,  
s/Joseph Hansen

cc: United Secretariat  
Political Bureau of the Ligue Communiste  
Political Committee, Socialist Workers Party  
Editor, *Quatrième Internationale*

JUNE 30, 1971, LETTER FROM  
JOSEPH HANSEN TO STEIN

June 30, 1971

Dear Comrade Stein,

This will acknowledge receipt of a copy of the May issue of *Quatrième Internationale*. It came in today's mail.

I note that the envelope was postmarked June 24, 1971. There may have been a delay of a day or two in delivery because the old address of *Intercontinental Press* was used. We have written twice asking that *Quatrième Internationale*, like the other publications of our move-

ment, be mailed to our new address; but as yet no attention seems to have been paid to our request.

In any case, we finally received a copy of the issue of *Quatrième Internationale* containing the second part of the article on Brazil by Pinheiro and Mattos which was dated as having been written last January. We plan to publish an English translation of this part in the July 12 issue of *Intercontinental Press*. The first part will appear in the July 5 issue, which is now at the printers.

Comradely yours,  
s/Joseph Hansen

cc: United Secretariat  
Political Bureau of the Ligue Communiste  
Political Committee, Socialist Workers Party  
Editor, *Quatrième Internationale*

## IN ANSWER TO COMRADE STEIN

By Peter Camejo

Comrade Stein in his letter of May 16, 1971, addressed to the national leadership of the Socialist Workers Party protests the publication by *Intercontinental Press* of a document entitled "Concerning a Kidnapping in Brazil" written by Ponto de Partida and its alleged failure to publish an article of which he was one of the authors.

Comrade Stein states: "Can one therefore ask why *Intercontinental Press* published the long declaration of this group and not a document written by members of the Fourth International, of whom one can think that they 'express the standpoint of revolutionary Marxism' that *Intercontinental Press* is presumed to present and defend in the first place?"

The quotation "express the standpoint of revolutionary Marxism" is taken out of context to give an exactly opposite meaning from *Intercontinental Press*' policy statement, which reads as follows: "Signed articles represent the views of the authors, which may not necessarily coincide with those of *Intercontinental Press*. Insofar as it reflects editorial opinion, unsigned material expresses the standpoint of revolutionary Marxism." The Ponto de Partida article was signed. Not only that; it was published in the section of *Intercontinental Press* devoted to "documents."

*Intercontinental Press* runs documents and articles of general interest to the socialist movement that do not express the views of revolutionary Marxism. For instance, Héctor Béjar's entire book *Peru 1965: Notes on a Guerrilla Experience* was run in *Intercontinental Press*. Béjar, an ultraleft foquista, who recently capitulated to the bourgeois military dictatorship, certainly did not represent revolutionary Marxism. Recently *Intercontinental Press* ran the full statement of the Tupamaros' declaration of support to the popular front in Uruguay. I presume Comrade Stein will agree that also is not the position of revolutionary Marxism. Since Comrade Stein has never protested these and many other such articles published in *Intercontinental Press* I presume he agrees it is in order for *Intercontinental Press* to make such information available to its readers.

Comrade Stein refers to the authors of the article, Ponto de Partida, as "a philosophy student." He also states: "This document has meaning only for inactive, gossip-mongering students of philosophy, who prefer to carry on their studies abroad. From an armchair there it is easy to give lessons." To characterize Ponto de Partida, either in its composition or politics, in such terms is inaccurate. Such a description does not fit with Comrade Stein's own statement, "I admit that I am ignorant of what the group Ponto de Partida, which authored the article, 'Concerning a Kidnapping in Brazil,' represents politically."

Ponto de Partida is a group of Brazilians in exile all of whom have been active in Brazil. The group came into existence out of common concern to find a solution to a key problem—how can the revolutionary left overcome its present isolation from the masses in Brazil? Rejecting the opportunism of the Communist Party, which does mass work only to betray the workers, Ponto de Partida advocates turning to mass work but with a consistent revolutionary program. Although the Ponto de Partida group are only beginning to clarify their views they definitely consider themselves Trotskyist.

Most of Comrade Stein's letter centers on the content of "Concerning a Kidnapping in Brazil." The Ponto de Partida comrades believe that the concept behind kidnapping is wrong and that as a tactic it is incorrect. Possibly Comrade Stein disagrees with their evaluation and believes kidnapping is a correct tactic in Brazil at this time. Certainly, then, it is important to fully discuss this question.

The charges Comrade Stein makes against the comrades of Ponto de Partida are unjustifiable in my opinion. He begins by stating: "But the entire reasoning of the Ponto de Partida document is based on the argument that the kidnappings produce a more intensive repression." They make no such argument. Their fundamental argument is that kidnappings stem from a general strategy which leaves out the masses and leads to a separation of the vanguard from the masses.

"The imprisonment of hundreds of valiant revolutionists and the breakup of the armed groups require a profound rethinking of positions." Thus Ponto de Partida begins what they refer to as "An Attempt at an Answer." They point out that "What enables the government to act without apparent opposition in Brazil is the absence of organizations through which the exploited masses could express their discontent." Their central thesis is that the revolutionary left has fallen into the error of what they call "vanguardism"; that is, attempting to substitute themselves for the masses.

They point out that the purpose of the kidnappings, to free political prisoners, is not achieved by kidnappings. Speaking of the case of the kidnapping of Elbrick, they say: "This action, carried off in September [1970], achieved its objective. Fifteen revolutionists were released. However, at the end of the year, at least 200 more political prisoners were being held in the jails of Brazil. At the same time in Argentina, the jails were being emptied. Many other more recent examples could be cited such as Bolivia, Peru and Chile in 1970. All of these cases confirm the rule that the only force that can compel a reactionary government to backtrack is one based on the mass movement."

They do not say that kidnappings should be avoided on the ground that they only bring added repression. Although the Ponto de Partida comrades did not make that point, I cannot understand why Comrade Stein should object so vehemently against anyone pointing to the obvious fact that ultraleft actions aimed at terrorizing the bourgeoisie—such as assassinations or kidnappings of individuals—are used by the ruling class to justify and increase repression against the workers movement. But the authors of "Concerning a Kidnapping in Brazil" do not argue from that standpoint; they are concerned with more basic considerations.

Then Comrade Stein states: "The author seems not to be aware that the principal aim of the kidnappings is to free political prisoners from the jails of the dictatorship." The authors are obviously aware of this. Again I quote: "This action . . . achieved its objective. Fifteen revolutionists were released." Various other sections of the Ponto de Partida document such as Section III entitled "Kidnapping and Freeing of a Political Prisoner"

and Section V "Arguments that Reveal a Concept" directly take up and answer whether kidnappings achieve their principal aim.

Comrade Stein's description of and accusations against the Ponto de Partida article being the product of "a philosophy student" or of using "Social Democratic" arguments or of not being "aware" of the "principal aim" are not really serious political considerations against the views presented by them. He does raise one point that is quite important. Comrade Stein says: "It is a pure and simple abstraction to say in the concrete situation of total demobilization in Brazil that mass pressure is required to liberate them, if not a word is said on how it would be possible to reconstitute a mass movement able to gain even partial victories without becoming the target of the machine guns of the dictatorship."

Why is there a total demobilization? Ponto de Partida points out that 51 percent of the voters in some of the big cities cast spoiled or blank ballots against the dictatorship in the recent elections. Could the present strategy being followed by the revolutionary militants have any relation to the "total demobilization"? How did Lenin's party build a mass movement in spite of "becoming the target of the machine guns of the dictatorship"? Why did Lenin's party refuse to engage in kidnappings or other forms of individual terrorism?

Actually the view presented by Ponto de Partida is a repetition of Lenin's views under present conditions. Possibly Comrade Stein believes Lenin's concept of party building is no longer applicable under present-day conditions in Brazil.

Near the end of Comrade Stein's letter he accuses me of misrepresenting the position of the Tupamaros in an article reviewing "Concerning a Kidnapping in Brazil" published in *The Militant*. I was making the point that all basic questions—popular frontism, the necessity for armed struggle, the limits of elections, etc.—are still being discussed throughout the left in Latin America. As an example I cited the Tupamaros on the impossibility of winning in Uruguay through elections. In justifying their contention, the Tupamaros said: "It is incorrect to transpose the experience of other countries." I interpreted this as a reference to Chile although it really doesn't matter which country they were referring to. Everyone else has interpreted that sentence to mean Chile. Doesn't Comrade Stein? Is he questioning the fact that the Tupamaros officially support the popular front in Uruguay? He must be aware that they also support Allende's government in Chile and the "reformist" military dictatorship in Peru. Was it really wrong to use this example to show that the necessity of armed struggle is still not understood?

I cannot understand why Comrade Stein thinks that the statement by the Tupamaros in support of the popular front can lead to confusion unless one adds their statement, "regrets, however, that this closing of ranks came specifically for the elections and not before." It seems to me that a "closing of ranks"—that is, the subordination of the working class to the bourgeoisie in the name of unity against imperialism—is wrong at any time, wheth-

er it involves elections or not. What the statement of the Tupamaros shows is confusion on their part.

Most serious of all, however, is the charge Comrade Stein levels against the Socialist Workers Party. First he states: "It is a shameful Social Democratic position—it is lamentable to see this published in the Trotskyist press." Later on he continues: "As for the article in *The Militant*, I think that it is regrettable that an American Trotskyist journal, that claims to be consistently internationalist, publishes nothing on Brazil except an article disavowing the kidnapping of ambassadors, including . . . an American. It is regrettable to see *The Militant* finding itself very far in the rear of the very bourgeois-capitalist *New York Times* in denouncing the repression and torture in Brazil, but ahead of it with regard to condemning the acts of revolutionary militants."

His assertion that we are publishing Social Democratic positions and "condemning the acts of revolutionary militants" clearly implies that he believes the Socialist Workers Party is bending to pressures from American capitalism and disavowing revolutionary struggles. His statement also implies lack of concern on our part towards the victims of the repression in Brazil.

Comrade Stein is wrong on all counts. We are not publishing Social Democratic, that is, reformist or social-patriotic positions. We are not disavowing any revolutionary struggle directed against American imperialism anywhere in the world, from Vietnam to Brazil. I should like to remind Comrade Stein that when it was a great deal more difficult to speak out against imperialism war, eighteen of the central leaders of the Socialist Workers Party went to prison for their consistent internationalist positions. That was during World War II. Today it is quite popular in broad circles to publicize atrocities in Vietnam or tortures in Brazil. Although it is important to run such articles on the atrocities committed throughout the colonial world, this is not the central question for real internationalists. The key point is how to mobilize the largest possible mass pressure to aid imprisoned revolutionists and help them to advance their struggles for national liberation and socialism.

The campaign mounted internationally, including the United States, that saved the life of Hugo Blanco is a model of the kind of action revolutionists must help carry out. Unfortunately, both in Europe and the United States, our limited forces do not enable us to do all that is objectively possible. But to deny the record of the Socialist Workers Party in such defense efforts or to charge that it is adapting to imperialism represents gross departures from the truth.

Lenin's whole life was devoted to fighting for clarity in politics. Comrade Stein's letter protesting the publication of the document "Concerning a Kidnapping in Brazil" clouds rather than clarifies the political issues touched upon. A further statement by Comrade Stein clarifying his views on terrorism in general and kidnappings in particular, on Lenin's concept of party building and on the importance of defense work for political prisoners would seem to be in order.