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A SCANDALOUS DOCUMENT—A REPLY TO GERMAIN

By Nahuel Moreno

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[This bulletin contains several chapters of a longer contribution to the international discussion by Comrade Nahuel Moreno. The length of the document, and the shortness of time before the world congress of the Fourth International, prompted the author to select several of the most important chapters for immediate publication.]

* * *

INTRODUCTION

While the publication of Comrade Germain's lengthy work "In Defence of Leninism: In Defence of the Fourth International" has broadened the scope of the discussion between the two tendencies that presently exist in the International, it has also increased confusion to an intolerable degree.

Comrades Frank and Germain have said that this polemic seems to be a dialogue of the deaf. After reading Comrade Germain attentively, we have to add that this is because there are comrades who don't want to hear.

An Objective Criterion for Discussion

In every discussion, a responsible leader must begin by understanding how to separate out the main points from the secondary ones. This distinction cannot be made in a subjective or light-mannered way, in accord with the desires, sentiments, or good intentions of the debaters. On the contrary, there must be an *objective* criterion for determining the principal and secondary points of a polemic.

What is this objective criterion? Trotskyist militants are not historians, but rather revolutionary politicians. For that reason, we debate the burning problems posed for us by the class struggle and its perspectives as well as the development of our sections in the present period. This means that the polemic dealing with the past should be limited to the four years between the last world congress and this one, and its purpose should be to clarify the discussion on our political line for this period. Only in this way can the discussion arm every member of the

International politically so that when the congress ends, they will leave better prepared to carry out their tasks in their respective areas of work.

Once the questions under discussion have been determined by means of this criterion, a responsible leader must concern himself with the way they are presented. Here, he must also put an objective criterion first: the *specific nature* of the audience to which the discussion is directed. The majority of our present militants are new. They have joined since the last world congress. The obligation of leaders to be concrete in their political discussion becomes a hundred times greater because of the newness of the International's membership. Knowing how to carry out a polemic to the end is also part of the science and art of leading and educating our cadres in a responsible way.

Comrade Germain Argues Like a Lawyer

What, then, are the problems that our comrades must discuss? Should we discuss whether Yankee imperialism—or a sector of it—was neutral or supported Fidel Castro in 1959 (14 years ago)? Whether or not Moreno advised guerrilla struggle for Bolivia under the Barrientos government (2 years before the last world congress)? Whether Trotsky put forward the line of building a revolutionary army as the fundamental line for China between 1925 and 1927 (47 years ago)? Whether the line of the majority or minority is confirmed in light of Hugo Blanco's experience in Peru (11 years ago)? Whether Camejo defined the characteristics of the Bolshevik Party well or poorly? Whether we correctly interpret a demand or a program? Whether we should take into account the immediate consciousness of the masses as the main factor in formulating our demands and programs? Whether we are for national self-determination and against all nationalism?

The comrade gives enormous importance to one concrete problem: our Canadian section's policy. This also is a diversionary maneuver since, between the last world congress and the coming one, this policy has not been at the center of the debate, nor of the class struggle. Can

we in any way compare Canada in importance with Bolivia or Argentina? For Germain, to judge by his document, Canada is much more important.

Are these the basic questions we have to discuss? *Absolutely not!* These questions relate only indirectly to the major events that have taken place in the class struggle since the last world congress and to the political line we adopted to confront those events. On the other hand, our document "Argentina and Bolivia—the Balance Sheet" represents the proper way to take up the polemic. We start with concrete facts of the class struggle, and we examine the policy of our International and its sections in relation to them. We don't fly off on a tangent.

In raising an infinite number of problems that are tangential to the present development of the class struggle, Comrade Germain argues like a lawyer and not like a serious, Bolshevik, Trotskyist. Let's take one example:

Comrade Germain tries to strike an effective blow by attacking Camejo for his reference to the relationship between a sector of Yankee imperialism and Fidel Castro. He seeks to influence the majority of the present cadres, who have entered the International since the Cuban revolution (and with admiration for it). A serious study of the documents of the period shows that Camejo is correct. It is important to note here how Comrade Germain seeks to gain a double advantage: first, to play on the sentiments of the youth of the International; second, and most important, to misdirect the discussion toward questions that have nothing to do with the present polemic, in order to avoid the central questions, with which, as we shall see, he cannot be especially comfortable.

Trotsky pointed out something very important during the polemic with the antidefensists, which all of us ought to take note of in the present discussion. He warned that workers, because they don't have much time, are only interested in discussing the basic problems of the class struggle, in carrying this discussion through to its conclusion without bureaucratic or disciplinary restrictions. On the other hand, petty-bourgeois types (professors or students, we would add) always want to discuss the whole earth and heavens, because they have all the time in the world.

We must add to this comment by Trotsky that, when approaching a polemic, the same difference exists among our movement's leaders and writers. There are those who discuss everything, especially everything that has little to do with the main events of the class struggle in this period; and there are those who center their discussion around the basic issues.

What Should We Discuss

What then should be the axis of our discussion? Nothing is more supremely important in the class struggle than its two opposite poles: the triumph of the workers revolution or the fascist counterrevolution. According to all the documents of the POR (C), in Bolivia there have been three "fascist" coups, and one of them—Banzer's—was victorious. We don't go along with this definition of "fascist," but we do agree that there have been three ultra-reactionary coups. Those coups were the decisive events in the class struggle in Bolivia in this period. They provide the comrades of the majority—especially Comrade Ger-

main—with a good opportunity to show the correctness of their political line. Why don't the comrades make use of it?

For example, why doesn't *Cahiers Rouge* publish a book containing all the articles in which the POR (C)—and its all-out defenders in the majority—denounced and warned against the "fascist" coups as the greatest threat to the Bolivian workers' movement? Why is Comrade Germain's work so sparing of quotes dealing with the policy of the POR (C) against the coups? Why is the issue of *Combate* (new series, no. 5) dated the first fortnight of May 1971, a few months before the third coup, only referred to in passing? Why are only a few lines devoted to the coup, in contrast to the dozens and dozens he uses for Camejo's interpretation of the Cuban revolution, for Moreno's advice to the POR (C) under Barrientos, for attacking the Canadian section? Doesn't Comrade Germain think that if he were to show that the POR (C) had a correct line in the face of the coups it would be almost categorical proof that the Ninth World Congress resolutions were useful and had prepared us to respond to the reality of the class struggle in Bolivia and Latin America?

The obligation (which the majority does not fulfill) to focus attention on the line of the majority and of the Bolivian section toward the "fascist" coups takes on greater urgency for an additional reason. It is precisely Germain and the IEC majority who feel that the policy of the POR (C) has exemplified the correctness of the Ninth World Congress resolutions and of the entire orientation of the majority. We could almost say that the majority—or at least Comrade Germain—considers the Bolivian section a perfect model, that he accepts only some organizational criticisms. Is it not true that a large amount of money was collected for the Bolivian section after the Ninth World Congress? Do not the European militants who raised it with such sacrifice even deserve a full balance-sheet of the results of this "revolutionary investment"?

The youth in our movement, if they really have the critical spirit and revolutionary enthusiasm that should be characteristic of them, are obligated to demand that Comrade Germain and his client, the sister section in Bolivia, provide abundant proof that they have measured up to the demands of the situation. That is to say, proof that they foresaw and fought against the "fascist" coups—with a correct political line. And in reply to attempts by all the "Germaines" to detour the discussion in order to salvage their prestige as leaders, the ranks must categorically state: We will not have confusion nor diversion. We are discussing our political line from the last world congress to today; *the first points on the agenda must be the major events of the class struggle during that period of time. We will add all the other questions you want* (Camejo's interpretation of the Cuban revolution, Moreno as counselor to González, Trotsky on China in 1925, etc.) *as the final points on the agenda of the next world congress!*

Among the major questions, the Bolivian "fascist" coups, the class struggle in Argentina and in Europe (especially in France) are of special importance. These must be the first points for the congress, and in that order. These form the subject matter of our document.

September 1973

CHAPTER I

BOLIVIA: KEY TO THE PRESENT DISCUSSION

1. The Majority's Predictions on Bolivia

When Trotsky said, "to lead is to foresee," he was stating that without correct projections regarding the immediate future of the class struggle, it is impossible to develop a revolutionary political line. In order to make these correct projections, a Marxist has two points of reference: first, an objective analysis of the real situation of the class struggle; second, to base this analysis on the theoretical arsenal accumulated by the working-class movement during more than 100 years of struggle, an arsenal known as Marxism-Leninism-Trotskyism.

When one turns away from this theoretical and practical tradition, one inevitably falls into incorrect analyses, wrong predictions, and incorrect political lines. This is what happened to the majority comrades in Bolivia.

The majority comrades, and especially Comrade Germain, have thrown overboard all previous learning in order to come over almost unconditionally to a Guevarist theory. What is this theory? Very simple: The Guevarist schema says that in Latin America there is a monolithic unity of the national bourgeoisies and their armies with imperialism. This is what determines the changes in regimes, the bourgeoisie opting for "fascist" or "democratic" governments depending on which is most convenient, but with a general tendency toward fascist regimes. This situation (still following the Guevarist schema) favors the development of armed struggle, because the fascist regimes, by eliminating every possible form of legal struggle or movement, make it inevitable that all protests have to be made with arms in hand. The opposite occurs when regimes of bourgeois democracy are installed: in these cases, the perspective of armed struggle recedes to the vanishing point.

Later on we will show that this reasoning has nothing to do with Marxism and even less to do with Trotskyism. Here we will show how the majority comrades embraced this conceptions, and how this led them to make totally incorrect predictions and to formulate completely mistaken political lines for Bolivia from the Ninth World Congress until today.

Maitan's Predictions

Even before the Ninth World Congress, Comrade Maitan began to apply the Guevarist analysis to Bolivia:

"Given the economic and social situation within the country, *the capitalist regime—whether it is led by Barrientos or any of his possible successors—will only be able to survive through violence of the most systematic sort. This implies that more or less legal preparatory and organizational work will be impossible for the workers and peasants movement. And, in the present context, this also excludes any perspective of the struggle taking the form of an urban insurrection at the outset.* The explosive contradictions remain in the country and dramatic conflicts are still possible." (*Intercontinental Press*, September 2, 1968, p. 706, emphasis added.)

So as to leave no room for doubt, Comrade Maitan explained in another part of the same article:

"This means, more concretely, that the method of guerilla warfare beginning in the rural areas is still the correct method." (*Ibid.*, pp. 706-707.)

To the surprise of the majority comrades, along came first the Ovando government and then the Torres government: a bourgeois government that allowed broad democratic leeway to the mass movement and the left parties. The disarray this unexpected event created among the majority comrades was made obvious in two apparently diametrically opposite predictions by the two comrades, Germain and Frank.

Predictions of Frank and Germain

Comrade Frank, remaining faithful to one aspect of the Guevarist reasoning (a democratic government means no perspective for armed struggle), predicted the following:

"For the time being, but for how long no one can say, *the armed struggle is not today on the agenda in Chile or in Bolivia. . . .*" ("Letter to the SWP Convention" from Pierre Frank, *Internal Information Bulletin*, November 1971, p. 16, emphasis added.)

Comrade Germain was also faithful to an aspect of the Guevarist reasoning—a different one than that followed by Comrade Frank (monolithic unity between imperialism and the national bourgeoisies and their armies means a tendency toward totalitarian regimes). From this he deduced:

"Those who think that because he came to power 'with the support of the left' General Torres 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." (Germain and Knoeller, "The Strategic Orientation of the Revolutionists in Latin America," *Discussion on Latin America* [1968-1972], p. 98.)

As we see, there was a real division of labor and a brisk competition between Comrades Frank and Germain to see who could apply the Guevarist concepts in the best possible way. For one of them, since the Torres (and the Allende) government allowed democratic liberties, the perspectives for armed struggle in Bolivia (and Chile) had disappeared. For the other, the "principal objective" of Torres was "to restore unity in the army" in order later to repress the masses and the left; in other words Torres represented just one variant of this monolithic unity of imperialism with the militarists and nationalist bourgeoisie. These seemingly contradictory prognostications were combined in a higher whole: the Guevarist schema of the class struggle in Latin America.

The United Secretariat Majority's Predictions

After Torres came Banzer. To be sure, the comrades of the majority breathed easier. At last Bolivia returned to Guevarist "normality." Once again we were faced with a regime in monolithic unity with imperialism! Once again

repression returned to beat down the workers and the Bolivian left, which again made armed struggle the order of the day.

"The triumph of the proimperialist coup d'etat—initiated by remote control and coordinated by direct representatives of American imperialism, and led by its principal local agents—represents a tactical defeat for the working masses in Bolivia. But this is not the end of the civil war; rather, it is only the open beginning. *Out of a nascent and intermittent civil war, Bolivia now passes over to open and permanent civil war.*" (Declaration of the United Secretariat "On the Reactionary Coup d'Etat in Bolivia," *Intercontinental Press*, September 20, 1971, p. 798, emphasis added.)

While the majority envisioned all these perspectives, the minority drew completely opposite conclusions, which we will take up at the end of this chapter. The time has come to draw up a balance sheet, with an eye to what really happened in the Bolivian class struggle.

Were these Predictions Borne Out?

The facts all served to disprove the majority's prognoses. Instead of "surviving by means of systematic violence" as Maitan said during the Barrientos period, the regime survived by means of concessions to the masses from Ovando and Torres. Legal activity, which according to Maitan should have been "impossible for the workers and peasants movement," became increasingly possible under Ovando and completely open under Torres. The armed struggle did not take place in the countryside, as Maitan predicted, but rather in the cities (a perspective that was expressly "excluded" by this comrade), and it didn't take the form of "rural guerrilla warfare," but rather of urban insurrection. Nor did it take place under the most reactionary regime (Barrientos), but rather under the most democratic (Torres).

Comrades Germain and Frank didn't do any better than Maitan with their predictions. The first examples of armed struggle since Santo Domingo did not appear in a country with a dictatorial regime; rather they occurred in Bolivia and Chile, countries where, according to Comrade Frank, "armed struggle was not on the agenda." Torres' government had no possibility of "restoring unity in the army" as Germain predicted, nor did he come up with any repressive "surprises" for the masses and the left. Instead: the Bolivian army was never more divided, from the 1952 revolution until the present, than it was under the Torres government; and a military coup eliminating Torres was necessary in order to "restore unity in the army" and launch the repression.

Finally, we have yet to see the famous "open and permanent civil war" which according to the majority comrades, was going to result from the Banzer coup. We have, however, seen that it did not take the Bolivian workers movement very long to recuperate from the defeat represented by the fall of Torres, and that it is developing important defensive struggles. We have also seen how in one of these battles there were large street confrontations in La Paz. And finally, we can safely say that if the rise of the workers' movement and the movement of the Bolivian masses continues to broaden out these defensive struggles, a new "democratic" regime will appear that will again grant rights and concessions to the mass movement;

and armed struggle will again be on the agenda.

The predictions of the majority comrades are only useful if we turn them upside down, that is, if we base our policy on the idea that what will happen is exactly the opposite of what they predict. With such advisers, it would be a big mistake to place the blame for all—or even most—of the mistakes made on the shoulders of the Bolivian section.

2. Ultraleftism and Trotskyism in the Face of the Fascist Danger

Ultraleftism is not a new phenomenon in the world revolutionary movement. Along with opportunism it has been a permanent threat to building the revolutionary party, and it was the axis of some of the most violent political battles waged by Lenin and Trotsky. Two of these battles have left us an especially rich theoretical and practical legacy: Lenin's fight in the Communist International (when he wrote *Leftwing Communism, An Infantile Disorder*) and Trotsky's fight against "third period" Stalinism.

In the present period a new version of ultraleftism has arisen: Guevarism. These three types of ultraleftism have different historic origins and social content. The first, which Lenin combatted in the Communist International, was an ultraleftism reflecting the mood of the radicalized sectors influenced by the Russian revolution and impatient to repeat the same experience in all countries. It was the ultraleftism of the young generation.

The second type of ultraleftism, which Trotsky fought against, was the diametric opposite. It was nothing but a momentary thing, an ultraleft swing by the Stalinist centrists. It expressed the temporary policy of the counter-revolutionary caste which led the world workers movement to the worst defeat in its history, the triumph of Nazism.

Guevarist Ultraleftism

The third type of ultraleftism, the Guevarist variety, more closely resembles the first kind in its historic origins and social content: it is the ultraleftism of the leftist youth repelled by Stalinism. Thus, in historic origins and content it has nothing to do with the "third period" Stalinist ultraleftism, but does resemble the latter in its theoretical postulates and in its mechanical approach to political thought.

We have accused the majority comrades a thousand and one times of having a Guevarist conception and following a Guevarist—and therefore ultraleftist—policy. We still maintain this characterization, and in order to demonstrate it we will begin by spelling out clearly the Guevarist concept and political line.

We will begin by describing the Stalinist "third period" policy that Trotsky fought and the position he took. Then we will see in what way the Guevarist concept resembles that of the "third period," and finally, we will show that it was really this Guevarist concept that the majority comrades used in formulating their political line for Bolivia.

Stalinist "Third Period" Ultraleftism

Before Hitler took power, the Stalinists developed an ultraleft policy, called the "third period." This policy covered

the years 1928 to 1933. By their unwillingness to fight for a working-class united front against fascism in Germany, the Stalinists permitted Hitler to come to power.

It was in a fight to the death against the "third period" ultraleftism that Trotskyism came into being as a structured international tendency. The Trotskyists' breaking with the Third International and projecting the need for a new revolutionary international organization was a consequence of this catastrophic Stalinist policy.

The positions developed by Trotsky and Trotskyism in that era are part of our programmatic heritage, and this is one of the most brilliant pages in our history. We will summarize the five basic aspects of the ultraleftist policy that Trotsky attacked.

a. Not knowing how to distinguish a fascist government—or the danger of a fascist or ultrareactionary government—from other bourgeois forms of government.

Trotsky never tired of pointing out that all bourgeois governments *are not the same*. You have to be able to carefully *distinguish* the different types of governments and determine if struggles exist between factions of the bourgeoisie. Trotsky insisted that if there is a fascist threat, the alarm must be sounded; this has to be highlighted for the workers as *the most urgent and immediate danger*, one that must be fought to the death by every means. To this end, it is necessary to consciously determine whether there are sufficient forces to overthrow the bourgeois government and take power, or else, on the other hand, what must be done is unite the workers in defensive struggles against fascism.

The Stalinists, on the other hand, said the two bourgeois camps (the reactionary and the "democratic") were equally dangerous. They characterized as fascist all governments and political parties, and in particular the other working-class parties (which were called "social fascist," etc.). Finally, when the water had come up to their chins, the Stalinists saw themselves obliged to fight to defend bourgeois democracy and ended up capitulating to it through "popular fronts."

b. Failure to apply a working-class united front policy against the threat of fascist or ultrareactionary governments.

The Communist International during Lenin's time, especially at its Third Congress, had formulated the policy of the working-class united front, principally for defensive needs. Trotsky said that in Germany it was necessary to call upon the leadership and the ranks of all organizations claiming to represent the workers to join together to take up the task of the greatest urgency and the most concern to the workers—self-defense against fascism.

The Stalinists, on the other hand, applied their own ultraleft version of the united front: they called for uniting to take revolutionary action, not antifascist defensive action. And they made this call only to the ranks of the reformist workers' organizations, ignoring their leadership. They called this the "united front from below." In real life, this meant that the German Communist Party did not form a united front with anyone, or at the most, they formed a parody of a united front with their own periphery of sympathizers and the few reformist workers who had already almost broken with their leaders and organizations.

Trotsky maintained until he was blue in the fact that the policy of a workers united front is based on proposing

tasks that are understood by *all* the workers, *principally by the reformist workers*. He also insisted that the proposal for a united front had to be made to the reformist organizations, *beginning with their leaderships*. Trotsky gave the following reasons: If there are still broad sectors of workers who remain within the reformist organizations, it is because they believe in them and in their leaders. Therefore, the simple fact of trying to ignore the reformist leaders ruins any possibility of common action with the workers in these organizations. The same thing happens if, instead of proposing common defensive actions against fascism, you propose joint revolutionary offensive actions. Concretely: a Social Democratic worker understood the danger of Hitler and could agree that his party should join with the Communist Party for defense against him. But this same worker was a Social Democrat precisely because he still did not see the need to overthrow the bourgeois democratic government. Any call to common action for this last task fell on deaf ears among the Social Democratic workers, because *it went far beyond what they understood and knew they had to do*.

Finally, by posing the united front in this sectarian and ultraleftist form, the Communist Party had no opportunity to expose the reformist leaderships and win their rank-and-file worker followers to a revolutionary policy.

c. Creating artificial mass organizations, parallel to the traditional ones (which were led by the reformists).

Such organizational inventions as "red" unions and soviets on demand, dreamed up by Stalinism to advance the revolutionary process, followed from rejection of a workers united front policy. Any mass organization is, in fact, a workers united front, since workers of all tendencies are grouped together there.

Trotsky countered this line of creating artificial bodies by reiterating the Leninist position that called for remaining in and working in the traditional organizations of the workers' movement (unions, factory committees, soviets of the mass movements, etc.) whatever their leadership might be. It was indispensable to remain in these organizations for two reasons: in the first place, for the sake of unity against the threat of the ultraright; in the second, to compete with the reformists for leadership of the mass movement.

d. To propose arming the proletariat as a task in itself.

The Stalinists saw such activity as something independent from the political situation as a whole. We take one specific case that Trotsky analyzed superbly, the case of Spain in 1931. The central political problem, and the one that most interested the masses at that point, were the Cortes (Parliamentary) elections. While the Stalinists said not a word about the elections, they carried out agitation around the slogan "arm the proletariat." Trotsky correctly pointed out that "to counterpose the slogan of arming the workers to the reality of the political processes that grip the masses at their vitals means to isolate oneself from the masses—and the masses from arms." (*The Spanish Revolution*, Pathfinder Press, p. 117.) He proposed, in contrast, that the slogan of arming should form part of a whole political program, one that would take into account the specific situation in the class struggle.

e. Maintaining that the triumph of Nazism opened new and better perspectives for revolutionary struggles and

for development of the party than exist under a bourgeois democratic regime.

For Trotsky this went beyond an "error." It was a suicidal act and an unspeakable betrayal, because the reactionary triumph would set back the revolutionary process to an incalculable degree.

A New Enlarged Edition — Guevarism

We have summarized five basic errors of Stalinism in its ultraleftist "third period" stage. As a conception, Guevarist guerrillism repeats and expands upon these tragic ultraleftist errors.

In the same way that Stalinism failed to differentiate between fascism and reformist Social Democracy, Guevarism made no distinction between the various regimes existing in Latin America. For it, a bourgeois nationalist or an ultrareactionary proimperialist regime were nothing but different governmental forms reflecting the complete convergence between the national bourgeoisies and imperialism, a solid front that tended toward total, fascist or semifascist, monolithism.

In the same way that the Stalinists refused in practice to call for a workers united front against fascism (raising the "united front from below"), Guevarism committed a similar, but worse, error. It didn't call for a united front in any sense at all, and, moreover, it abandoned any attempt to work in the mass movement.

In the same way as the Stalinists, the Guevarists tried to create artificial bodies for taking power, scorning the indigenous organizations of the masses. But again the Guevarists deepened the error because the Stalinists at least tried to duplicate the organizations of the mass movement (soviets and unions), while the Guevarists held up the "guerrilla army" as the organ of power.

In the same way as the Stalinists, the Guevarists have always projected "arming by itself," but they deepened the Stalinist error because they didn't even raise this for the masses as such, but only for a vanguard.

Finally, just as the Stalinists maintained that fascist regimes provided the best objective basis for revolutionary struggles and for building the party, the Guevarists carried this error to the extreme, by maintaining that such regimes provide the best objective basis for the development of armed struggle.

Our majority comrades are worthy disciples of the Guevarist ultraleftists and, as we will see later, these criteria were, and are, the axis of the majority policy for Bolivia.

3. For the POR (C) all Governments Are the Same

We have seen that one of the errors of ultraleftism Trotsky criticized was to put an "equal sign" between all bourgeois governments. For ultraleftists, all governments are "fascist" just because they are bourgeois.

The POR(C) comrades—like the Stalinist ultralefts—don't admit the possibility of different kinds of governments arising from general contradictions between imperialism and the rising mass movement. Thus they fall into dangerous confusion. It is one thing to not have confidence in or give support to any bourgeois government, be it "leftist" or "nationalist"; it is quite another to fail to distinguish such regimes from ultrareactionary

governments, and not develop an appropriate political policy in regard to each type. It was correct to give no support to Torres or to the first Perón government. To fail to see the difference between them and the Banzer or Onganía regimes is incorrect.

Barrientos = Ovando = Torres

That the Barrientos regime was reactionary and an agent of imperialism cannot be doubted. But after Barrientos came Ovando, and the regime changed. Nevertheless, for the POR (C), the Ovando government was the government "of moribund imperialist capitalism which has assumed a 'revolutionary' mask to save itself." (POR (C) Leaflet to the Miners Congress. *Intercontinental Press*, Vol. 8, No. 18, November 15, 1970, p. 434.) Were the differences between Barrientos and Ovando only a "disguise," then, comrades of the POR (C)?

The real situation continued to change: the Ovando regime was superceded by the Torres regime. But the characterizations remained the same. For the POR (C):

"The same 'revolutionary nationalist' tendency that surfaced with Ovando is being continued by the Torres regime. [Torres' concepts place him] within the context of 'desarrollismo' ['developmentalism'] which imperialism is advancing for the semicolonial countries. . . . The opportunists confuse this new role of the military chiefs, which falls in the sphere of modern imperialist tactics, with a revolutionary process, which is a very different thing. . . . As a result, the Military High Command, advised by the Yankee embassy, reached the conclusion that it had to replace the Ovando government." (Declaration of the Executive Committee of the POR, *Intercontinental Press*, November 23, 1970, p. 1023.)

To cap off the characterization of the Torres regime, we read in *Combate*, the official organ of the POR (C):

"During the October political and military crisis the masses were not victorious. *Instead, the victory of General Torres was a defeat for the revolutionary masses and a victory for the army as an army of the bourgeoisie.*" (*Combate*, no. 3, first fortnight of November 1970, in *IIDB*, Vol. X, No. 14, p. 46, emphasis added.)

As we see, from Barrientos to Torres, by way of Ovando, nothing changed in Bolivia in the view of the POR (C) comrades. All were defeats for the masses. Everything was reduced to different tactical combinations, worked out by imperialism and the Bolivian military chiefs, in the antiseptic laboratory of the Yankee embassy, totally isolated from the effects of the class struggle.

Trotsky vs. the POR (C)

Nevertheless, Trotsky had already pointed out in the epoch of the "third period" that:

"The misfortune of the Stalinist bureaucracy is that neither in Spain nor in Germany does it see the real contradictions that exist in the enemy camp." (*The Spanish Revolution*, Pathfinder Press, p. 183.) "In theory (if this word can be used here, it protects itself against opportunist deviations by a general refusal to make any political and class distinctions: Hoover, von Papen, Vandervelde, Gandhi, Rakovsky, all are 'counterrevolutionaries,' 'fascists,' 'agents of imperialism.' But every sudden change in events, every new danger, in practice forces the Stalin-

ists to enter the struggle against an enemy and to kneel before the other 'counterrevolutionaries' and 'fascists.'" (*Ibid.*, p. 185.)

This course, whose direction Trotsky explained, suggests a parallel with our Bolivian section. Didn't the POR (C) begin by characterizing Torres as the agent "of modern imperialist tactics," and later find itself forced to fight at his side and, still later, wind up "kneeling" before him in the FRA?

Paying no attention to Trotsky's teachings, the POR (C) comrades continued to say the following under the Torres government:

"*The workers and their revolutionary vanguard do not have to choose between two feuding bands of officers.*" (Declaration of the EC of the POR (C), previously cited, p. 1024, emphasis added.)

Trotsky, faced with a similar situation, said the opposite:

"*The Bolsheviks did not remain neutral between the camp of Kerensky and that of Kornilov. They fought in the first camp against the second. They accepted the official command as long as they were not sufficiently strong to overthrow it.*" (*The Spanish Revolution*, p. 296, emphasis added.)

A Monolithic Army

To show that this political blindness was not a momentary bedazzlement, *two months before the second Miranda coup*, the POR (C) comrades issued their famous prediction:

"The army, the armed party of the bourgeoisie, still controls the state. If disagreements and frictions between the military chiefs have not disappeared, *they are not yet deep-cutting enough to bring different sectors into conflict and produce ruptures in the command structure.*" (Declaration of the EC of the POR (C), p. 1023.)

From the point of view of the POR (C) comrades, it could not be otherwise: How could a conflict between the "different sectors" or a rupture in the command structure arise if all of them obeyed the orders of imperialism like puppets, and if the military formed an eternal monolithic unity with the Yankee State Department?

The POR (C) Finally Sees a "Fissure"

Some months later — at last! — after a year of open putschist preparations, with the command structure split into a thousand pieces, and after two "fascist" coups, Comrade González timidly observed that: "the fissures in the army are too wide." (*An Interview with Hugo González, IIDB*, Vol. X, No. 14, p. 47.)

But for the POR (C) Banzer Was the Same Thing as Torres

Unfortunately, this salutary change did not bring Comrade González to distinguish between Kerensky and Kornilov, between Torres and Miranda-Banzer: he continued struggling against both, as if both were his immediate enemies. The quotation that Comrade Germain himself gives (to show the opposite) proves us correct:

"For that reason we declare that the revolutionary process in Bolivia is confronted with two dangers. On the one hand there is the threat of a fascist *coup*, nourished

by the Yankee embassy and by the Argentine and Brazilian dictatorships, a *coup* which is being prepared by the divisions of the Bolivian army. On the other hand there is military and civilian reformism, which tries to lull the masses to sleep, and which has transformed itself into an obstacle to the triumph of the revolution." ("Appeal of the POR on May Day 1971," *Combate* new series, no. 5, first fortnight of May 1971, quoted by Germain in *In Defence of Leninism: In Defence of the Fourth International, IIDB*, Vol. X, No. 4, p. 7.)

Here it says clearly that there are "two dangers": "fascism" and "reformism," but it puts an equal sign between them, and it doesn't say that the immediate, evident, objective threat for the mass movement is "fascism." Still less is the contradictory role of reformism indicated, which, according to Trotsky, is not just an obstacle to the revolution, but also an obstacle to fascism. This difference, which is precisely the difference between Kerensky and Kornilov, is what the POR (C) never pointed out. The best demonstration that it failed to distinguish which was the immediate threat and that it lumped all the bourgeois sectors and regimes together, is summed up in this statement, referring to the policy of "the most combative and advanced sectors of the working class," weeks before the Banzer coup: "In reality, they are struggling [for] . . . a workers' and peasants' government that would be definitively and concretely antiimperialist and socialist." (Interview with Hugo González, *op. cit.*, p. 47.)

The POR (C) comrades made assessments identical to those of the "third period" Stalinists: they equated reformists with "fascists," bourgeois nationalists with "agents of imperialism," Barrientos with Ovando, Ovando with Torres, and Torres with the officers who were preparing the ground for the coup. And after all: why bother looking for differences, if the alterations of government are nothing more than changing "masks" and presidents are put in and removed by the Yankee ambassador pushing a button after a discussion with the military?

4. The POR (C) Did Not Warn against the Threat of the Coups, Did Not Call for Struggle against Them, Did Not Raise the Need for a Workers United Front

Making no distinction between the different types of regimes, the POR (C) comrades came to develop the same policy toward all of them. This policy is the subject of another subsection. For now we will see what *was not* their policy. This is very important because it was precisely the comrades of the POR (C) who fell into the typical "third period" type activity that Trotsky criticized: they did not call for a workers united front to confront the "fascist" coups.

Three "Fascist" Coups

To refresh our memory a little, let us recall some dates: Barrientos died in a strange "aviation accident" on April 27, 1969. On September 29 of the same year General Ovando rose to power. Also in 1969 the guerrilla activities were reinitiated, which would end at Teoponte in October 1970 without making any impact. On October 6, 1970, General Miranda made the first attempt

at a "fascist" coup. The Torres government resulted from the failure of this coup. Once again General Miranda rose up in revolt in January 1971 with General Banzer as his second in command. Banzer finally overthrew Torres on August 21, 1971, and still remains in power.

As we see, in the short period from October 1970 to August 1971 there were three "fascist" coups. How did the POR (C) politically prepare the Bolivian masses, the working class, and its vanguard to confront those coups? In our opinion it didn't prepare them at all, because it didn't develop the only possible strategy, that of the workers united front.

The First Coup

Under Ovando, the first "fascist" coup (Miranda's) took place. We have carefully examined the POR (C) material for any mention of the threat of a coup and any call for unity of all working-class parties and currents to confront it. We found nothing. To the contrary, we did find passages like this:

"What is happening with the government? It is forceful and bold in speaking to the people, but unable to confront the antinational right wing which it itself denounces. Or does this right wing act with official sanction? . . . If it is necessary to speak of an antinational plot, this is the only one that exists, draping itself in sheep's clothing in order to disguise its wolf's snout and sink its fangs into the people." (POR (C), *Combate*, no. 1, second fortnight of June 1970.)

The POR (C) comrades not only told the workers that they had doubts that a right-wing conspiracy existed, but also they hinted that this conspiracy operated "with the sanction" of the government itself, which wrapped itself in "sheep's clothing" in order to "sink its fangs into the people."

But there is even more: In the following issue of *Combate* we read:

"From this standpoint, in our opinion the crisis in the armed forces has not broken out of the limits of the ideology of this institution known as the army, whose foundation is anticommunism. Where, then, are the differences among the generals? Do these differences exist? Obviously they exist. But be on your guard! The difference is a tactical one and concerns how to defeat communism and stop the masses from taking power." (POR (C), *Combate*, no. 2, second fortnight of June 1970, partially quoted in *IIB*, No. 3 in 1972, p. 9.)

For the POR (C) comrades, the differences among the Bolivian military men three months before the Miranda coup were not "ideological"; these were "tactical" differences, and they warned: "Be on your guard" not to get confused by making too much of these differences. This is the opposite of warning about the threat of a right-wing coup.

Trotsky's Recommendations

This raises some very important questions for us: Why didn't the POR (C) comrades advise, as Trotsky did, "assuming a defensive position (which) means a policy of closing ranks with the majority of . . . the working class and forming a united front with the Social Democratic and non-party workers against the fascist threat."

(*The Struggle Against Fascism in Germany*, Pathfinder Press, p. 72.) Of course, the POR (C) comrades issued a leaflet at the Miners Congress at Siglo XX. But why shouldn't they have, as Trotsky taught us, presented to the Miners' Congress and to all the unions and workers parties, "a concrete, carefully detailed, and practical program for a joint struggle against fascism and demanded joint sessions of the executives of both parties, with the participation of the executives of the . . . unions (and) simultaneously one should have carried this same program down through all the layers of both parties and of the masses." (*Ibid.*, p. 172.)

When the threat of a "fascist" coup is detected by a Trotskyist organization (and the mere fact of not detecting it is already a grave error), a stage of class struggle is opened up in that country in which *the fight against the coup assumes top priority, a fight utilizing the strategy of the united front with reformist organizations*. To propose that the miners arm themselves, not in order to oppose the coup, but rather to "revive the armed miners' pickets and courageously proclaim militant solidarity with those who are struggling . . . today by means of guerrilla warfare" (leaflet to the Miners' Convention, *Intercontinental Press*, No. 18, May 1, 1970, p. 433) is, and was, a political crime. To tell the miners to arm themselves in order to engage in guerrilla warfare against Ovando, and not to arm themselves in order to oppose the coup that Miranda was preparing *against Ovando*, meant a break, right from the beginning, with every anticoup worker who was not a partisan of the guerrilla struggle. It meant demanding that the working-class movement, which had a great common task—to fight against the Mirandist right wing (including by means of arms)—divide up into pro-guerrillas and anti-guerrillas. The common task was understood by all Bolivian workers; the need for guerrilla warfare was accepted by almost no one. This was shown by the events: the working class mobilized against the Mirandist coup, and for two or three days caused a crisis in the army and the bourgeois institutions; but it didn't respond in any way to the appeals of the POR (C).

A Truly Trotskyist Call

Our proposal should have been Trotskyist and not guerrillaist. We should have said the following to the miners:

"Comrades: although many of you and the organizations that you belong to have not realized the danger, we—the Trotskyists—issue a warning and an appeal: We are confronted with a grave threat of an ultrareactionary coup. We must defend ourselves in a united way. In order to do so, we must form armed picket squads and we must also call on all the unions in the country and the COB (trade union federation) to form such units in order to confront the inevitable coup d'état for which the stage is being set by the reactionaries. The military—as well as the bourgeoisie—are divided as a result of the rise of our struggles. One sector of the bourgeoisie and the army wants to use harsh methods against us; other sectors—on the other hand—want to use milder methods and want to dominate us through negotiations. We disagree with the concepts of Lechín and the Communist parties, in whom many of you put your confidence, and we want to convince you that our revolutionary concep-

guerrilla struggle, categorical assertions that this was the only road for the revolutionists. What was the objective of this torrent of guerrillaist verbiage? To overthrow Ovando and make the "socialist revolution." Not a single word warning of the danger of a right-wing coup. And when the miners are called on to arm themselves, it is not under the discipline of their unions in order to fight in a united front against the right; they are called on to arm themselves through their unions in order to form part (!) of "the rural guerrilla group (the army that began to be built in Nancahuazú)."

In Spite of the POR (C) the Masses Mobilize

The Miranda coup came, the bourgeoisie and the army were in a crisis, there was a two-day power vacuum that was finally filled by Torres. The masses "went into the streets," with their reformist and bureaucratic leaderships; they "defeated the Mirandists," and put in a bourgeois nationalist president. It is worth noting that the masses achieved the two tasks that Comrade González pointed to. But, as the logical consequence of its policy, the POR (C) had nothing to do with it.

The masses didn't go into the streets armed, but the people responsible for that are those who did not tell them that a coup d'etat was approaching and that they had to arm themselves to confront it. The ones to be blamed are those who called on them to arm themselves to go make guerrilla war, those who called for "arming in itself," not to defeat Mirandism. The masses did not impose a workers' and peasants' government, but the people responsible for this are those who isolated themselves from the masses because they were totally "absorbed in armed work" and left the masses at the mercy of their bureaucratic and reformist leaderships.

The masses performed an immense task by defeating the Mirandist right wing through their mobilizations; more than that it was a heroic triumph, considering that the POR (C), the only hope of a revolutionary party, had not alerted them to the threat of a coup, nor called for a united front to confront it, nor called on them to arm for this task.

October 1970: A Defeat of the Masses?

But this was not the conclusion the POR (C) drew from the October crisis. As we have already seen, the POR (C) considered Torres' rise "a defeat for the revolutionary masses" and "a victory for the army." Moreover:

"There are those who still maintain that, as against the armed struggle, it was the direct action of the masses that triumphed, and they call the government of General Torres a victory." (*Combate*, No. 3, November 1, 1970, in *IIDB*, Vol. X, No. 14, p. 45, emphasis added.) "The October crisis demonstrates the limitations of the direct action of the masses. A general strike can lead to workers power only if at the same time a Revolutionary Army exists that has emerged precisely through armed struggle. In the absence of this workers army, the mobilization of the masses only serves to shield a sector of the bourgeoisie, if it doesn't end in a bloody massacre." (*Combate*, No. 3, November 1, 1970, in *IIDB*, Vol. X, No. 14, p. 46, emphasis added.)

With Torres In, Rural Guerrilla Warfare Was Continued

This is how the POR (C) faced the new stage, the period of the Torres government. And it stayed, despite what Comrade Germain said, within its constant policy of "arming in itself," once again calling for rural guerrilla warfare:

"DESPITE THE SETBACKS, GUERRILLA WARFARE CONTINUES TO BE THE WAY TO NATIONAL AND SOCIAL INDEPENDENCE. As in October 1967, the theorists of the failure of guerrilla warfare as a method for taking power have reappeared. . . . Regardless of the fortunes of each guerrilla front, above and beyond the personal qualities of the fighters, in spite of the loss of valuable lives, guerrilla warfare continues to be the road for taking power." (*Ibid.*, p. 45, emphasis added.)

Don't tell us that rural guerrilla warfare is not what they are talking about here. The only "guerrilla fronts" known in Bolivia were rural fronts, and *Combate* is quite clear when it says: "Regardless of the fortunes of each guerrilla front . . . guerrilla warfare continues to be the road for taking power."

From Rural Guerrillas to . . . Arming the Masses

The more and more marked Kerenskyism of the Torres regime, its repeated concessions to the mass movement, the appearance of embryonic organs of dual power, the almost complete legality for the revolutionary and left-wing tendencies, left the guerrilla struggle more and more isolated, condemned to stew in its own juices. This caused a formal readjustment in the POR (C)'s policy of "arming in itself." The sacrosanct guerrilla war was withdrawn from the propaganda of our Bolivian section, and was replaced, as we have already said, with general calls for the arming of the masses. These calls finally took the seemingly correct form of armed union detachments. But these changes, we insist, were formal: the new manner of raising the problem of arming followed the ultraleft line of "arming in itself." Never, never (!) was arming raised as a need tied to the real and concrete class struggle.

In the expanded April 1971 Central Committee Plenum of the POR (C) the following agenda was discussed:

"1. The report on the work of the Fourth International. The present stage of the revolutionary process in Latin America and the role played by the sections of the Fourth International. The situation in Argentina and the struggle being waged by our comrades of the PRT and the ERP.

"2. The national situation. The characterization of the Torres government, the position of the army and its interlocking with the civilian legal structure. The mass movement and its limitations. The left and the deviations to be combated. The permanent danger of a coup d'etat. Perspectives.

"3. Guerrilla warfare. Balance sheet and experiences. The POR's conception of revolutionary war." (*IP*, June 28, 1971, p. 598.)

In the previous chapter we considered the first two of the five recommendations to the leadership of the POR (C) adopted by this expanded Central Committee Plenum. In them, the political axis was the struggle against reformism, with nothing said about the coup d'etat and the need for

a workers united front to confront it. Let's now look at the other three recommendations:

"3. To stimulate the workers to arm by taking the initiative to form armed detachments at the trade-union level.

"4. To intensify at the same time the party's military work and strengthen its military apparatus for the future actions that will be intimately linked with the revolutionary masses.

"5. Mass work and the party's military activity must proceed in a balanced way under one centralized leadership, the leadership of the party." (*IP*, June 28, 1971, p. 599.)

As we can see, of the five resolutions, three refer to the military question. But in none of them is it stated that the call for arming the workers must be made because of the need to fight against the "fascist" coup d'etat. For what reason did the POR (C) propose that the workers organize "armed detachments on the trade-union level"? To be consistent with the two political points in these recommendations, it had to be for the central and sole task of "fighting against reformism." But we do not believe that the POR (C) would have carried its political stupidity that far. It simply raised arming as arming "in itself," without any concrete political objective, except to fight for "national liberation," "socialism," and "building the revolutionary army."

A Truly Trotskyist Agenda and Recommendations

What should the agenda and recommendations of the expanded Central Committee meeting of a Trotskyist party in Bolivia have been at that time? Very simple:

Topics: 1) The threat of the right-wing coup d'etat against the Torres government as the greatest danger to the workers movement and the mass movement. The policy of workers united front against the coup as our central policy. Work by the party in the mass organizations: the unions and the Popular Assembly.

2) The arming of the workers through the mass organizations (unions and Popular Assembly) for the struggle against the coup.

Recommendations: 1) To immediately call for all the workers organizations, especially the reformist ones and the union bureaucracy, to form a united front against the "fascist" threat.

2) To immediately launch a campaign of exposing each and every vacillation or betrayal by the reformist or bureaucratic leaderships as regards this central task.

3) To pose in the unions and the Popular Assembly the need to organize armed detachments in order to struggle against the coup d'etat.

4) To take the initiative in building these detachments in places (unions or workers neighborhoods) where our party has already won the support of the workers for this task.

5) To immediately begin political work aimed at the army rank-and-file, with a slogan for internal democracy, the election of soldiers' and noncommissioned officers' delegates to the Popular Assembly. Keep all the soldiers or noncommissioned officers who sympathize with us in their regiments and orient them toward forming party groups within their regiments.

This was the only correct way to raise the question of arming! This was also the only way of achieving it!

Arming "In Itself" a Few Days Before Banzer's Coup

But unfortunately the POR (C) did not have this policy. Let's return to Comrade Germain's favorite issue of *Combate*—No. 5, May 1, 1971. We have already seen that one of the three fundamental slogans was: "Bourgeois Army, No: People's Revolutionary Army, Yes."

Once again the famous "People's Revolutionary Army" appears, the building of which, according to Comrade Germain, was not the central task and policy of the Bolivian section. Once again the strategy of "arming in itself" is displayed in all its glory. This glory is even more radiant in the last issue of the POR (C)'s paper before the coup (No. 6) which we have already cited. In it, the massive May 1 workers' mobilization is reported with the banner headline:

"SOCIALISM AND ARMS, MAY 1 WAR CRY!"

Once again, the arms will be for achieving "socialism" and not for confronting the danger of the coup, which is not mentioned a single time in the article under this headline. There are only exaggerations, eulogies to the politics and the banners of the demonstration, principally referring to the union contingent controlled by the party:

"Exciting jubilation and loud applause, the Federation of Flour Workers marched with a large banner saying: 'We need a Revolutionary People's Army' and behind it marched selected groups of workers in guerrilla uniforms, with the beret and star of Che, carrying some arms. This is the workers' army that is being born to lead the way to socialism along the only realistic road, revolutionary war.

"The masses are committed to the line of armed struggle, the revolutionary war, and in their midst the embryonic elements of the future Revolutionary Workers Army are beginning to arise."

Once more the revolutionary people's army, the guerrilla "uniforms," and the "workers army" to make "revolutionary war and lead "to socialism" reappear. For the POR (C), the political line of these demonstrators—i.e., not mentioning the danger of the coup, nor raising the call to arms in order to confront it—was absolutely correct. Further on the POR (C) summed up its entire position, saying that it is necessary to: "Press on with the formation of the popular political-military instruments.

"Armed detachments must be brought into being in each union, in the universities, in the countryside, as armed embryos of the future revolutionary military force indispensable for victory over the fascist military and lackeys of imperialism. In the approaching class confrontations arms will decide the fate of the revolution."

What is the purpose of these "popular political-military instruments," of this "future revolutionary military force" into which the armed detachments of the unions, the universities, and the countryside should be incorporated. For the first and only time it would appear that the POR (C) posed the question of arming in the appropriate way—to defeat the "fascist military and lackeys of imperialism." But, unfortunately, this was only a slip, one lucid point in the midst of an article where arming is repeatedly proposed for the sake of "waging revolutionary war" for "socialism." Which of these two reasons did the POR (C) really give to the workers when it called on them to arm themselves? This was of no importance to the POR (C). Either served its purpose: a call to arms

for socialism or to fight Banzer was the same thing. A call to arms for revolutionary war or to defeat the fascist military was the same thing. The main thing was to call upon the workers to arm themselves. And this policy, a shining example of "arming in itself," is what the POR (C) continued to push in its last paper before the "fascist" coup.

However much Comrade Germain tries to obscure the facts, they remain. All the calls to arms which the POR (C) viewed as the central task in Bolivia at every moment, whether under Barrientos, Ovando, Torres or Banzer, were for one single objective, which was not even political but organizational—building the "Revolutionary Army." At times they were for rural guerrilla warfare, other times for a "Workers' Army," still other times a "Workers and Peasants Army," or a "Revolutionary People's Army," or the "Revolutionary Military Force." If this is not having one and the same policy (or strategy) for every situation in the class struggle and for any type of regime; if this is not the ultraleftist line of "arming in itself," we ask the comrades of the majority, and especially Comrade Germain, to explain to us what it is.

6. The POR (C)'s Policy of Creating Artificial Bodies ('Revolutionary Army') and Underestimating the Mass Movement Led It to Failures

We have seen how—facing "fascist" coups and under all the governments—the POR (C) never centered its policy around a united front against these putsches. The POR (C), under all the governments and in the face of all the coups, had one and only one policy: "building the revolutionary army," without fighting to get the mass working-class organizations to unite and arm against the coup.

The POR (C) Disregards the Mass Movement

The real basis for this policy was complete underestimation of the possibilities of the mass movement. Comrade González tells us:

"An insurrectionary mass mobilization, no matter how broad, will end up being defeated by modern armies functioning as the political parties of the bourgeoisie. Mexico City and Córdoba are examples of this. . . . The mass insurrections in Mexico City and Córdoba and the COB in Bolivia were defeated because they lacked two elements. . . . b) *An armed instrument or military organization . . . prepared, trained, and capable of taking on the capitalist army at the level of armed force.*" ("The Ovando Government . . .," p. 43, emphasis added.)

Although not clearly formulated, there is a well-known guerrillaist argument concealed here: the old armies could be taken on by the mass movement and a correct political line, but not the modern ones. This argument is false to the core. The new imperialist armies are different from the old in that they have planes, tanks, atomic arms and rockets. Today it is still more impossible than in the past to build up a people's army against the bourgeois army that could take on the forces of the state in a military confrontation. In order to confront modern armies, a mass movement and a correct line are more necessary than ever. All attempts to put up your own army against

the reactionary army rather than oppose it with a mass movement based on a correct line are doomed to failure precisely because of the nature of the modern armies.

This argument is constantly repeated:

"If the revolutionary army is lacking, *it cannot be constructed solely by the heroism of the masses.*" ("Our Role in Battling Against the Military Coup," Hugo González M., *IP*, November 1, 1971, p. 936, emphasis added.)

This tremendous pessimism of the POR (C) comrades about the potential of the mass movement explains their perpetual line under all the governments: the "building of the revolutionary army." The impotence of the masses is constant, eternal, permanent, under any type of government, whether Barrientos, Ovando, Torres, or Banzer. All distinctions blur: the differences between governments, between an advance or retreat of the working-class movement. The burning political problems the workers face and whose consequences they suffer—for example the menace of "fascist" coups—are obscured. After all, why bother yourself about determining stages, characterizations, slogans, etc., if everything can be simplified by means of a universal panacea—the "revolutionary army"—that the masses cannot build?

Thus the proposal of the POR (C) to the Miners' Congress, calling on it to take up arms in order to "solidarize itself with the guerrilla struggle" is clarified. Also clarified is the position, at the beginning of the Torres government, of creating "a [Workers and People's] Revolutionary Army. This is the essential instrument for taking power." (Declaration of the EC of the POR, *IP*, November 23, 1970, p. 1024.)

In summary, the ultraleftist syllogism is once again presented in a perfect, although useless and false manner. Major premise: the great mass struggles always culminate in armed struggle against the army; minor premise: a modern army can only be beaten by another army. Conclusion: let's immediately begin to build the revolutionary army, since this takes years. The obvious conclusion to be drawn is a moral, not political one: "Only those who have arms and are determined to use them, *relying on their own strength*, can take power." ("The Ovando Government. . .," p. 43, emphasis added.)

The taking of power is no longer a question of correct politics, of the objective situation, of relations between class, of struggle and "confidence" in the mass movement; it is instead converted into a moral-military question: to take up arms be ready to use them.

The organizational implication of the POR (C)'s line has two sides: first, the fabrication by the party of artificial bodies (once again something Trotsky criticized ultraleftists for), in this case the "Revolutionary Army"; second, disregard for the indigenous organizations of the mass movement, in this case for the unions and the Popular Assembly. We will treat this second question in the next chapter. Here we will deal with the artificial body fabricated by the POR (C), the famous "Revolutionary Army."

The conception that at this stage in Latin America our main task is to build these "Revolutionary Armies" completely alters our Transitional Program and our Marxist conception, because it means that building revolutionary parties, Bolshevik and Trotskyist parties, has ceased to be our main task. Comrade Germain makes a game of words about all this: he says that the party is built

by building the army or by proposing armed struggle to the masses. Comrade González is more precise when he says that the only way to build the revolutionary army is "through armed struggle." But this is not what we are discussing. We are discussing whether the revolutionary army "is the essential instrument for taking power," instead of soviet-type organizations and the revolutionary party, as put forth in the Transitional Program.

This discussion goes much deeper than it appears; it has to do with the strength of the working class and with its weaknesses and needs. For the POR (C), the basic need is the "revolutionary army"; for us, it is the revolutionary party and a correct revolutionary policy.

This is what our teachers always stated. That is why the Communist International at its Third Congress resolved:

"We may be obliged in the space of a few days to mobilize the party for an armed struggle; to mobilize not only the party but its reserves, to organize its sympathizers and all the rearguard, that is to say the unorganized revolutionary masses. At such a moment, there can be no question of forming a regular Red Army. We will have to win without having built an army beforehand, with only the masses guided by the leadership of the party." (Third Congress of the Communist International, Thesis on the structure, methods and actions of the Communist Parties, Maspero, 1971, p. 122.)

For Lenin and Trotsky, and for us, the workers are capable of anything—yes, anything!—including defeating the bourgeois army without having previously built an army of their own, as long as they follow a correct political line, have a revolutionary party at their head, and providing they have thrown off the bureaucratic and sell-out reformist leaderships. The defeat of the Bolivian workers was due to something much simpler than failure to build an army. It came about because they did not succeed (or rather, *that we, the Trotskyists, have not succeeded*) in getting rid of their old leaderships and building our party with mass influence.

Trotsky and the Armed Struggle

This is Trotsky's conception of armed struggle. He never called for building "revolutionary armies," despite the fact that he was the main builder of the Red Army. Trotsky pointed out, above all, the need to arm the masses with correct *politics*. Only in this way would it be possible to arm them in the strict sense of the word and build workers militias. And it was only possible to win by destroying, again by means of correct *politics*, the armed forces of the regime from within, carrying the class struggle into them, *politically* winning and organizing the workers, students, and peasants in uniform.

Thus, just as Trotsky, before the outbreak of the revolution, never proposed building any kind of army as a central and permanent task, neither did he state that the correct policy was to constantly call on the masses to prepare themselves for armed struggle. Just as no one can put forth the general strike as a perpetual slogan (except for Posadistas)—because it would not occur to anyone that the general strike might be the daily task of the masses from now until the victory of the socialist revolution—neither can one pose armed struggle in this

form, because armed struggle is the response to a certain stage of the class struggle, and is not a permanent task of the exploited masses or of their revolutionary party. Just as calling for a general strike at a time when there is no reason to do so isolates us from the masses and prejudices the possibility that they will throw themselves into the strike at the proper time, permanently calling for armed struggle "in itself" or for preparing for it by building "revolutionary armies," "means," we insist along with Trotsky, "isolating oneself from the masses and the masses from arms."

This was the tragic error of the POR (C) in Bolivia; because there it did have a road to arming the masses. This road was to convince them to form a united front and arm to fight the coup. The POR (C) chose the other path, the road of assembling a small group of POR (C)—or ELN—militants and dedicating itself to creating an artificial organization, the famous "army." For eight years now they have been doing this, and such an "army" is still nowhere to be found—unless you want to give the name "army" to handfuls of militants who every once in a while, as in Teoponte, are massacred by the Bolivian armed forces. Meanwhile, a colossal revolutionary situation was missed.

Our Transitional Program says exactly the opposite of what Comrade González maintains: "When the proletariat wills it, it will find the road and the means to arming. In this field, also, the leadership falls naturally to the sections of the Fourth International." (*Transitional Program for Socialist Revolution*, Pathfinder Press, 1973, p. 86.)

Although the majority comrades claim that they say the same thing, that the proletariat has to have the will and take up this task, what this sentence really means is that *the working class can arm itself at any time, when the conditions are ripe*. This is exactly the opposite of asserting that arming should be a permanent task of the masses, or the party.

It was Trotsky who asserted that:

"It is neither locks nor walls which separate the proletariat from arms, but the habit of submission, the hypnosis of class domination, and nationalist poison.

"It is sufficient to destroy these psychological walls—and no wall of stone will stand in the way. It is enough that the proletariat should want arms—and it will find them. *The task of the revolutionary party is to awaken this desire and facilitate its realization.*" (*Whither France*, Merit Publishers, 1968, p. 36, emphasis added.)

Work in the Army

This propagandistic task—"to awaken this desire and facilitate its realization"—is complemented by another task, that of destroying the bourgeois army from within. The opportunists, and their "ultra" twins, feel this last task is impossible, because you can't do anything against the modern armies.

"We reply [Trotsky said]: behind every machine there are men who are linked not only by technical but by social and political bonds. When historic development poses before society an unpostponable revolutionary task as a question of life or death, when there exists a progressive class with whose victory is joined the salvation of society—then the development itself of the political

struggle opens up before the revolutionary class the most varied possibilities—as much to paralyze the military force of the enemy as to win it over, at least partially." (*Whither France*, p. 37.)

When we accuse the POR (C) (and the PRT (C)) of not working on the bourgeois armies, Comrade Germain elegantly evades the question, saying that the first things that have to be built are workers militias. No one disputes this, although we leave aside the difference between "workers militias" and the phantom "revolutionary armies." But this does not invalidate the fact that the POR (C) and the PRT (C) have not worked in the bourgeois armies, on the contrary, they have called for deserting from them, for abandoning the barracks in order to go over to the "revolutionary army." This is a typical anarchist, guerrillaist policy; a position that is incompatible with remaining in our ranks, and its best exponent is, once again, the POR (C): "In this new army there can be a place for officers and soldiers of the bourgeois armed forces who *break from this organization*, and who really want to fight for Bolivia's liberation. . . ." (EC of the POR (C), October 1970, emphasis added.)

Since when has individual desertion been a Marxist and Trotskyist position? Is it a coincidence that both the POR (C) and the PRT (C), both official sections of our International, held it? Or, on the other hand, is this not the logical consequence of the ultraleftist and guerrillaist policy adopted at the Ninth World Congress?

The POR (C) comrades never understood that one cannot build artificial organizations for armed struggle (or for any other kind of struggle); they never understood that armed struggle (like any other kind of struggle) must be posed as part of the immediate and concrete needs of the mass movement, provoked by the immediate situation of the class struggle; thus the POR (C) came to the coup without understanding that: "The armed organization of the proletariat, which *at the present moment coincides almost entirely with the defense against Fascism, is a new branch of the class struggle.*" (*Whither France*, p. 93, emphasis added.)

Six Years of Guerrilla Activity as Against One Day of Mass Action

And what happened with the famous artificial "Revolutionary Army" invented by the POR (C) when the coup came? Let's see what Comrade González himself tells us: "The struggle was fierce and heroic: more than 5,000 fighters—but 90 percent of them unarmed.

"At the last moment an assault on an army depot captured 1,300 old Mauser rifles left over from the Chaco war. . . ." (González, "Our Role . . .," *IP*, November 1, 1971, p. 936.)

No one will ever be able to bury the "Revolutionary Armies," and with them the policy of the POR (C) (and of the majority), as definitively as Comrade González does in these few lines. Since 1965, with the enthusiastic agreement and financial and moral support of the majority comrades, the POR (C) had been preparing for the inevitable armed struggle, for the "prolonged war." Moreover, the ELN (Ejército de Liberación Nacional—National Liberation Army) had been doing the same things since the guerrilla struggle in Nancahuazú, and with the support, at least at the beginning, of the Cubans.

Both of them, the POR (C) and the ELN, had taken up building the "Revolutionary Army" as a strategic task. And when the supreme moment arrived, after so many years of intense "preparation" for "armed struggle," day-by-day building the army that was going to confront and defeat the bourgeois army; between the POR (C), the ELN, and all the groups on the left, only 500 arms had been assembled (one each for 10 percent of 5,000 fighters). Meanwhile, the masses, in a single day, got 1,300.

Something is wrong here. Comrade Germain asserts that the political line of the POR (C) was a model. The IEC resolution on Bolivia assures us that only organizational shortcomings existed. We ask: do the majority comrades consider the results of this "correct" political line satisfactory? Don't they think that it is a little paltry to obtain so few arms after so many years of applying a "correct" line?

The Majority Blames the Masses

Instead of assuming responsibility, the majority of the United Secretariat—just as Trotsky said ultralefts would do—places the blame on the mass movement's lack of understanding or on the reformists. The IEC majority says not a word about the fact that since 1965 our section had supposedly been preparing itself for the armed struggle and that, therefore, it is responsible for the results.

"The Bolivian experience bears out the illusory character of all the conceptions that hope a vigorous mass upsurge might, solely through its breadth and strength, hold in check the appetite of the 'gorillas' in Latin America. If such a mass movement *doesn't understand* the imperious need to prepare itself for armed confrontation with the bourgeoisie, for arming itself and disarming reaction, it will be driven back and wiped out in a moment by violence, as happened once again to the mass movement in Bolivia." ("Declaration of United Secretariat," *IP*, September 20, 1971, p. 799, emphasis added.)

Now this is an insult to the working masses. Here it is said that "if they don't understand" the need to arm themselves they are destined to be massacred. And what did we do so that they "would understand"? Perhaps we explained to them that our main enemy was the "fascist" coup d'etat and that they had to unite in order to defeat it? Perhaps we proposed that they should be armed by their own organizations, the ones they recognized, the unions and the Popular Assemblies? Nothing of the sort. We told them that there was no difference between a Torres and a proimperialist coup and that they shouldn't "choose between two feuding bands of officers." We told them they should arm themselves, not to confront the coup, but rather to confront the bourgeois regime (which at that time was represented by Torres), which means that we told them that they should arm themselves *against Torres*. We told them that they should form an artificial organization, the "revolutionary army," not that they should build armed branches of their organizations, the unions and the Popular Assembly.

And to top it off we have the impudence to upbraid the Bolivian workers by saying they didn't understand the need to arm themselves! It was the POR (C), the official section of the Fourth International in Bolivia, that didn't understand the need to arm the workers, despite all its "armed struggle" propaganda, despite its "technical prepara-

tion" of the party, and despite the "Revolutionary Army" it had dreamed up.

7. Preoccupied with Building the Revolutionary Revolutionary Army (an Artificial Organization), the POR Had No Consistent Policy toward the Popular Assembly (an Organ of the Mass Movement)

Just as one side of the POR (C)'s "arming in itself" policy—its refusal to apply the policy of workers united front—was its impotent attempt to build an artificial organization (the "revolutionary army"), the other side of the coin was disregard for the indigenous organizations of the working-class movement. For those organizations constituted a *de facto* united front of all working-class political tendencies. This kind of united front appears continually in the unions, and it took form in the Popular Assembly.

Fighting sectarian tendencies, while proclaiming the need to work in the mass organizations and rejecting any artificial organization, is a distinctive feature of Marxists. One of the basic purposes of such activity is to put us in a position to compete with the opportunist heads of the workers movement and mass movement to take the lead of those organizations, putting ourselves forward as an alternative, revolutionary leadership. We are in the unions and stay there so that every day the masses can verify for themselves that as against the opportunists only our policy and leadership are correct.

The POR (C) Did Not Participate in the Political Command

Because of its ultraleftist policy, the POR (C) was unable to develop a consistent policy with respect to the Popular Assembly. It began by failing to join the Political Command when this body waged its fight against the first Miranda coup, causing a "two-day power vacuum." Comrade Germain has said that it was correct to not join the Political Command since some bourgeois sectors participated in it. This is an unacceptable confusion between a committee for joint action for a specific objective (the struggle against the Miranda coup), and a united front. It was Trotsky who pointed out that for the purpose of action—at a time of struggle against reactionary coups—you have to unite with even the devil and bourgeois politicians. These are momentary and specific agreements. Trotsky—in contrast to the "third period" ultraleftists, who saw them as concessions to the bourgeoisie—said these agreements were not only permissible but *obligatory*. And the POR (C), by not taking part in the Political Command, closed a very important road for winning influence in the mass movement, since this Political Command was to be the organizer of the Popular Assembly.

The POR (C) and the Popular Assembly

The POR (C) continued its ultraleft course by giving no importance to the Popular Assembly as a mass organization. The Popular Assembly "should be a body that would discuss national problems and solutions for them but *would leave the power in the hands of the mass organizations* (unions and *popular militias or people's army*)."

And further: "In the present situation . . . its perspectives *are extremely limited*. An acute political crisis might revive it, but that is not certain. The POR comrades in the People's Assembly . . . had no illusions. They are using the People's Assembly as a forum, as a platform. That is all." (Hugo González, "An Interview . . .," *IIDB*, Vol. X, No. 14, p. 48, emphasis added.)

That characterization is very bad. To create artificial bodies instead of participating in those that the masses have created and recognize is just as bad. Putting the (nonexistent) "popular militia" or "people's army" on the same level as the unions as organs of power, and on a higher level than the Popular Assembly (both of which represented great gains for the mass movement), is a typical ultraleft blunder. The POR (C) wanted to use the Popular Assembly, an existing body—full of defects, but still real—as a "forum," not as an organizer of the masses. At the same time it wanted to use the "people's army," a non-existent body—or one existing only in its guerrillaist imagination—as the organ of power.

Some weeks pass, and the POR (C), with no coherent solution, assures us that "the *Asamblea Popular* can have no role except as an organ of dual power. . . . [It] must become a workers' and peasants' government, and we must fight both inside it and outside it to achieve this." (*IP*, June 21, 1971.)

The "forum" without possibilities, had become a body that we had to fight inside of and outside of to transform into a "workers and peasants government."

But there was no cause for rejoicing, the ultraleftist and guerrillaist virus of the Ninth World Congress was too strong for this correct formulation to remain uncontaminated.

"In this process, a political-military instrument will grow up alongside the assembly which can serve as the power it lacks to enforce its decisions." (*Ibid.*, p. 575.)

That is to say that the "political-military instrument" (the "revolutionary army") grows "alongside" the Popular Assembly, not as a subordinate branch of it. The militias are not subordinate bodies of the unions and the Popular Assembly, but are parallel organizations.

This parallelism is typical of the guerrilla conceptions, which always hold that some military body will decide the struggle, not the mass organizations and their subordinate military organizations. The armed militias which characterized the Russian revolution were not parallel to the soviets, but rather bodies subordinate to them. They were not political-military bodies, but rather subordinate military bodies of a political organ. They were the military arm of the soviets.

What We Said

We projected a political line for Bolivia during the same period which I will repeat verbatim since nothing needs to be added.

"The Popular Assembly is a victory, a product of the mass upsurge. The fact that it lacks a revolutionary leadership should not confuse us. Aside from the inspiring perspectives, we can only say that it is an *embryo of dual power*. Nothing more. If the Bolivian masses and vanguard take this body as their own, if they set it up on regional and area levels and through it centralize and develop their struggles, demanding all national and re-

gional political power for the Assemblies, if they call on the revolutionary soldiers, noncommissioned and commissioned officers to join it, if they form workers' and popular militias, we will be face to face with Bolivian soviet power." (*La Verdad*, May 30, 1971.)

The POR (C) did not have, nor did it consider, this approach to the Popular Assembly. It should have attempted this in the neighborhoods and rural villages and mines where it had influence. A single, really democratic Popular Assembly anywhere in Bolivia, united and prepared for action, with armed picket squads subordinate to it and to the workers and peasants unions, would have been an explosive example for the rest of Bolivia. Despite its limited influence the POR (C) could and should have done this. And even if it couldn't do it, it should have tried to.

The correct policy in the face of this task was to proclaim the need to take up arms in order to fight against the coup, systematically denouncing the Torres government for its inability to do so. We should have, and could have, been the champions in the development of the Popular Assembly as a workers united front.

But the POR (C) never forgot its famous "revolutionary army." The unsuccessful attempt to build an imaginary body prevented them from developing a correct policy in the most advanced organization of the Bolivian masses, the Popular Assembly. The POR (C)'s good memory when it came to its "army" (which was nothing more than a good memory for the Ninth World Congress resolutions) produced complete forgetfulness of one of the key definitions of Marxism: "with the masses everything, without the masses nothing."

8. The POR (C) Failed to Combat the Bureaucratic and Reformist Leaderships of the Bolivian Workers Movement

Every ultraleftist political orientation sooner or later presents its opportunist face. This also happened with our Bolivian section, which didn't give battle in the mass organizations against the bureaucratic and reformist leaderships of the Bolivian working-class movement.

Comrade Germain has used the number of POR (C) delegates in the Popular Assembly as an argument. He says there were twelve; we and the comrade from the French section who visited Latin America say there were six. But it isn't a question of numbers, it is a matter of policy. We Trotskyists intervene in the mass organizations with three objectives: the first is to mobilize them; the second is to win the masses to our politics by means of the most patient education; the third is to expel the sell-out and opportunist leaderships of these organizations, implacably denouncing them and putting ourselves forward to replace them as the leadership.

In order to achieve these three tasks, our policy, as we have tirelessly repeated, is to put forward the necessary slogan, raise the correct task for each period of the class struggle, and denounce the reformist leaderships for not being capable of achieving it.

The Fight Made by the POR (C)

Unfortunately the kinds of tasks and discussions raised by the POR (C) comrades in the mass workers organiza-

tions did not flow from the above approach.

"The COB thesis remains silent on this question. In the congress, through the tricks of the presiding committee, the university students and other working-class delegates were prevented from developing this point. Collusion among the opportunists, agents of the government, and partisans of pacifism prevented discussion of a *strategy for seizing power on behalf of socialism*, which in the present concrete conditions of Bolivia is *armed struggle and guerrilla warfare*. But the vanguard fighter, with arms in hand, in the mountains, the cities and the mines, will fill this gap in the Workers Program." (*Combate*, No. 2, July 15, 1970, emphasis added.)

Thus the POR (C)'s battle against the leadership of the COB, three months before the Miranda coup, was centered on discussing the "strategy for seizing power on behalf of socialism," which was "armed struggle and guerrilla warfare"! And besides, they complain that the presiding committee used tricks in order to prevent this discussion! Did the POR (C) comrades ever ask themselves why the presiding committee's tricks had such crushing success? Was it perhaps because our comrades were raising completely general and abstract questions unrelated to the class struggle and not understood by the Bolivian workers movement? Don't they see that if they had proposed a discussion of the threat of a coup d'etat, of the need to unite in order to fight it, of the need to arm through the unions and the COB itself, the presiding committee would have had much more trouble dispensing with these questions through "trickery," since these matters were understood by the Bolivian proletariat?

The Battle the POR (C) Did Not Wage

But this is only the preliminaries. Let's go back to the Popular Assembly. Comrade Germain criticizes Lora's POR (Masas) for believing that General Torres would fight the reactionary coup. I hope Comrade Germain won't bite his lip should he find time to take up the self-criticism of Comrade González, which of course he would censure in the same tone and with the same forcefulness. In this statement, Comrade González says that armed actions were put off "because we frittered away our time waiting for the COB and Popular Assembly leaderships to decide to fight, even though we knew that they would be unable to overcome their vacillations and false conceptions." ("Self-Criticism," *Combate*, No. 9, January 1972.)

This was exactly the same position as that of the POR (Masas), with one difference: Lora relied on General Torres; Comrade González on "the COB and Popular Assembly leaderships." And Comrade González did this knowing that these leaderships "would be unable to overcome their vacillations and false conceptions"!

When and where did the POR (C) put itself forward as an alternative revolutionary leadership in the mass organizations and implacably attack the bureaucratic leadership. *Never and nowhere*. What policy did the POR (C) have for exposing Lechin and the sinister bureaucracy of the PRIN and the CP in the unions and the Popular Assembly? *None*. Let's look at the facts.

The POR (C) published a leaflet with an entire political program for the Miners' Congress of April 1970 in which it did not criticize Lechin nor did it propose a revolutionary, nor even class-struggle alternative to the reform-

ist and bureaucratic leadership.

According to all reports about the Popular Assembly, the POR (C) voted for Lechín for president, while Lora voted for the CP candidate. Possibly these facts are wrong, supplied by enemies of Comrade González. All the witnesses, and the POR (C) comrades themselves, say that the POR (C) did not run its own candidates against Lechín and the CP. Why didn't it? Why didn't it hammer home the fact that with this leadership the workers movement was heading for disaster, toward the almost inevitable triumph of reaction?

Neither in the Popular Assembly, nor in the unions, did the POR (C), as the only leadership capable of carrying it through to the end, present and fight for a program of arming and mobilizing the working class, peasantry, and students. By acting this way the POR (C) committed an historic error. Comrade González is right when he says the POR (C) became enmeshed "in Byzantine discussions over the Popular Front." But he draws the wrong conclusion: they should have discussed clear proposals for arming the working class and for unity against the coup d'etat; and in conjunction with this goal, they should have raised as the main slogan for fighting the bureaucratic leadership: Expel Lechín and his line from the leadership of the COB and the Popular Assembly; because such leaders with such positions can never carry out this program!

9. Comrade Germain Falsifies the POR (C) Line

Up to now we have not been polemicizing mainly with Comrade Germain. There are two reasons for this: in the first place the line applied in Bolivia is the POR (C)'s and we had to direct ourselves to that line; in the second place Comrade Germain has repeatedly falsified the POR (C)'s policy to be able to defend it in the international discussion despite its obvious failure. We shall examine some of these falsifications.

Comrade Germain falsified the policy of the POR (C) during the Ovando regime when he said:

"The Bolivian section of the Fourth International, which had begun to prepare its cadres for armed struggle during the period of the Barrientos dictatorship, and had centered its orientation towards guerrilla warfare under that dictatorship, understood the necessity of making a turn as soon as the Ovando dictatorship allowed a semi-legal margin for working class activities." (*In Defence of Leninism*. . . . p. 7.)

The IEC majority resolution on Bolivia exaggerates the POR (C)'s supposed change in orientation under Ovando even more by hinting that they were, in fact, against the guerrilla orientation of Peredo. It's a beautiful picture but . . . nothing could be more false!

We have already seen that Comrade González was telling the truth when he said that under Ovando the POR (C) operated "in completely clandestine conditions" and were "totally absorbed in armed work." Moreover, we add, they were absorbed in preparation for rural guerrilla warfare, as we demonstrate in the numerous quotations in subsection five. Aside from some formalities (publication of the newspaper and the leaflet to the Miners' Congress) this was the POR (C)'s orientation.

A Newspaper Every Other Month!

Let us look more closely at the question of the newspaper. The majority makes only organizational criticisms of the POR (C): one is that the paper did not appear regularly. In fact one must say that between June 1970, when number 1 of *Combate (new series)* was published, and June 1971, when number 6 was published, 12 months passed, which means that they published a paper every two months. We don't know when numbers 7 and 8 were published since we don't have them. But we know that number 9 was published in January 1972, which means that the interval increased even more. But a newspaper is our main instrument for relating to the mass movement—even more so during periods of semilegality, as under Ovando, or full legality, as under Torres. Did publishing a bimonthly newspaper represent the "turn" to the masses by the POR (C) that Comrade Germain proclaims? No one can tell us there was no money to put out the paper since large sums were collected in Europe for the Bolivian section. If that money was not meant for publishing a paper, we presume it was intended for buying arms, since the POR (C) did not make the kind of "expropriations" carried out by its Argentine colleagues in the PRT (C). Does it seem to Comrade Germain that devoting the bulk of the party's finances and organizational resources to this kind of activity can honestly be called a "turn" by the POR (C) to mass work?

The Rural Guerrillas

As to the claim that the POR (C) did not participate in Inti Perodo's guerrilla adventure, it is enough to remember that in their leaflet to the Miners' Convention, they called on the workers to follow Che's example and to support Inti, just as in the June 15, 1970, *Combate* they spoke of "the guerrilla struggle of Che Guevara, of Inti and that [which] today the ELN and POR are carrying out."

Comrade Germain also falsifies the POR (C)'s policy when he says that under Torres it never called for rural guerrilla warfare. In subsection 5 we reproduced the quote from *Combate* where it was insisted that: "Regardless of the fortunes of each guerrilla front [and the only ones that had existed in Bolivia were rural] . . . guerrilla warfare continues to be the road for taking power."

Comrade Germain is correct when he says that under Torres the POR (C) was moving away from rural guerrilla struggle, but as we have already shown, they continued as always to put forth the policy of "arming in itself" and of building a people's army in the same isolation from the Bolivian class struggle that had marked the guerrilla struggle.

Before Banzer's Coup

Finally, Comrade Germain maintains that the POR (C) systematically denounced the Banzer coup and understood how to apply a line which "while encompassing a whole series of immediate and transitional demands (including a whole programme for agrarian revolution), was centred around three key demands:

"1) Transformation of the Popular Assembly into a real

power organ of the workers and toiling people, through the establishment of local assemblies (i. e. soviets), which would elect the delegates to the national assembly and could recall them.

"2) Immediate arming of the workers and the peasants.

"3) Extension of the revolutionary process to the countryside." (Germain, p. 7.)

We don't know if this is another falsification, since Comrade Germain doesn't say where or when the POR (C) published such a program. But we have seen that the actual program of the POR (C) was also centered around three demands: 1) to create a Revolutionary Command based on those who support socialism and believe in armed struggle, in order to combat reformism; 2) to create a revolutionary army; 3) to develop "a body representative of the masses, through which they can express all their revolutionary power. . . ."

This last slogan is the only one that has anything at all to do with the Popular Assembly, and much less than Germain might claim, because the POR (C) did not participate in the Political Command which became its organizer. The first demand mentioned by Germain is totally falsified because the body assigned the task of taking power was the "Revolutionary Army," not the Popular Assembly.

We have noted that the POR (C) was modifying its positions and that some of the slogans that Germain claims represented a consistent policy under Torres did appear in print. But we have already shown that these slogans didn't go beyond that, beyond the printed word, because they had nothing to do with the concrete and real political activity of the POR (C) under all the regimes: building the "Revolutionary People's Army."

How and Why the Need to Arm

In any event, the program Germain attributes to the POR (C) is not much better than the one it really had.

It is possible to pose the same questions to Comrade Germain that we posed to the POR (C) comrades in subsection 4. Why doesn't Comrade Germain follow Trotsky's recommendation to present slogans with an "internal cohesion" and a "sequence that should flow from the logic of the development of the masses"? Why does Comrade Germain insist on "counterposing the slogan of arming the workers to the reality of the political processes that grip the masses at their vitals"? Doesn't he agree with Trotsky that this "means to isolate oneself from the masses — and the masses from arms"?

Was there any aspect of the class struggle at the time that posed the *necessity* of arming? If not, wasn't it an error to raise the call for arming? If the need existed — and it could only be owing to the threat of a "fascist" coup d'etat — why was the need to form a workers united front and to arm the workers *against the coup* also *not even mentioned* in Comrade Germain's program?

The reason is that Comrade Germain supports the POR (C)'s political line in general and in particular, and this, it must be noted, is consistent with the line adopted at the Ninth World Congress. At that time rural guerrilla war and the "strategy of armed struggle" (of arming "in itself," as Trotsky would say) was adopted for a whole period in Latin America.

An Infantile Argument

Only one question remains to be clarified: As his ultimate argument against the charge that the POR (C), and the majority, were unable to make a distinction between the different regimes that succeeded one another in Bolivia, Comrade Germain presents the fact that the POR (C) comrades fought on Torres' side against Banzer. This, he says, is clear evidence that they did see the difference. This is an infantile argument. We are examining a political line, not which side the militants fought on when the flood-tide of events inexorably swept them, along with Torres, into the torrent.

Using Comrade Germain's criterion, the Stalinists had a correct policy when they capitulated to Chiang Kai-shek in China because their militants ended up fighting and dying in armed struggle against Chiang's coup. That tragic end does not diminish, but rather confirms, the Stalinist crime. We can imagine Stalin saying: "How can the Trotskyists dare to say we capitulated to Chiang when we were fighting and dying in the front lines against him"?

This is not a political argument, it is a sentimental one. Right now, following the fall of Allende, the Argentine Stalinists — and, we suppose, the European Stalinists as well — are exhibiting their dead comrades in Chile to hide the fact that their policy of confidence in the Chilean armed forces led to disaster for the entire workers movement, and for their own people along with it.

Perhaps the nearest example would be the German Communist Party. Can Comrade Germain picture German Stalinism maintaining that it had a correct policy in the face of the Hitlerite danger, using the sole argument that its militants were massacred in the struggle against the fascist regime? One can imagine it, and this is what happened. Does it not seem to Comrade Germain that this way of arguing is curiously similar to his?

Germain's argument is no better than those the Stalinists used to justify the disasters in China, Germany, and Chile. What is to be considered is the general line adopted, not the inevitable readjustments in this line provoked by harsh collisions with a reality not foreseen in the majority's definitions. In order to fight against Banzer when the moment of the coup arrived, it wasn't necessary to have a political line, just a simple instinct for self-preservation.

10. The FRA: A Front with the Bolivian Police and Army

According to Comrade Germain, the Banzer government is "reactionary"; according to the POR (C) it is "fascist." How then can the majority concur with and defend the policy of the POR (C)? This is one of the many mysteries of the majority, in whose ranks all sorts of different definitions and political lines coexist. So, Comrade Germain approves the POR (C)'s policy for dealing with the "fascist" Barrientos and Banzer regimes instead of the policy provided by our Transitional Program for fascist countries (basically to carry out propaganda, since in such cases there is a general downturn). He summarizes it this way: ". . . the POR (C) . . . acted illegally under Barrientos and Banzer, following an orientation

of preparing armed struggle by smaller contingents." (Germain, p. 13.)

Under Banzer, Return to the Guerrillas

This quote admirably summarizes Comrade Germain's anti-Marxist and guerrillaist concept. In a period when the masses are in retreat, he says, you have to take on the entire regime with only the vanguard ("smaller contingents"). He also considers the present period (Banzer regime) to be a time of greater struggle than under Torres, for with the pro-imperialist coup d'etat, "out of a nascent and intermittent civil war, Bolivia now passes over to open and permanent civil war" (already quoted). All this is said despite Trotsky's warning:

"Assuredly, the course of the political life of a country cannot be altered by every group armed with revolvers, at any time. Only those armed detachments which are the organs of specific classes can play a decisive role under certain conditions." (*Whither France*, p. 123.)

Germain's position was expressed and adopted by the United Secretariat majority in its statement on the Banzer coup:

"And already the revolutionary vanguard, especially our comrades of the POR, the ELN, the Zamora wing of the pro-Chinese CP, and others, are continuing the struggle by organizing guerrilla war." (*IP*, September 20, 1971, p. 799.)

For its part, the POR (C), acting as though nothing had happened, as though no new Kerensky type regimes like Torres's could appear, asserted:

"The people have no alternative but to seize political state power through armed struggle in an extended and prolonged war, in which the people will participate armed and organized in a popular army representing the highest expression of the political struggle of the exploited masses." (*Combate*, special issue, August-September 1972, p. 5.)

Whoever Is for Armed Struggle Is a Revolutionary

As we know, in Comrade Germain's view the Latin American vanguard is divided, not on the basis of different political programs, but rather between those who favor and those who oppose armed struggle. If we combine this concept with the previous one (a vanguard fighting alone, arms in hand, against the "fascist" regime) we come up with the FRA [Frente Revolucionaria Anti-imperialista—Anti-imperialist Revolutionary Front]. Since General Torres, Major Sánchez, and all the military men and police who follow them are in favor of guerrilla struggle, they are also part of the vanguard. Since the vanguard is determined by "for or against armed struggle," and we align ourselves with those who are "for," we are also in the FRA, together with Bolivian officers, police, and the guerrilla vanguard.

Thus the degradation of Trotskyism reaches abject levels. Thus our Bolivian section ends up "kneeling" before a sector of the Bolivian bourgeoisie and military. Although it makes us indignant, it should not surprise us. This reminds us of what Trotsky predicted when he said that Stalinism, after its "third period" policy, after placing an "equal" sign between fascists and reformists, after rejecting the policy of a working-class united front against the

reactionary threat, would end up capitulating to the "democratic" sectors of the bourgeoisie. Stalinism did this through the "popular fronts." The POR (C) did this by entering the FRA—although by this we do not mean to imply in the least that our Bolivian section is in any way tinged with Stalinism.

The ground collapses beneath Comrade Germain's feet, and to defend himself, he brings up his heavy artillery: he conceals very grave political facts from the ranks of our movement.

The POR (C) Accepts the FRA's Discipline

We have presented documentation which proves that the POR (C) carried out an unconditional entry, involving total political and organizational submission to the FRA. Comrade Germain says, in passing, that the comrades of the Fourth International have a right to discuss past history. But he makes one of his typical polemical maneuvers: in order to attack Camejo he quotes from the *International Socialist Review*, but doesn't even allude to the fact that in the same magazine there is an article signed by Nahuel Moreno on the FRA. There we said that the FRA is, in fact, "a very monolithic party with iron discipline" (*ISR*, February 1973, p. 38), as its resolution shows:

"The highest political-union-student commission constitutes the leadership of the FRA, and the political parties and organizations must subordinate themselves to it in executing the line determined by the Front. . . . In elections of any kind, the Front will present common slates. . . . (*ISR*, February 1973, p. 37, emphasis added.)

Remember who makes up the FRA: the two CPs, a group of officers from the armed forces, Lechín's PRIN, Lora, and a Socialist Party, along with the POR (C). This means that our Bolivian section will politically subordinate itself to all of them. It means, for example, that if there are elections in the unions we will be in a common slate with the bureaucrat Lechín. Or if there are national elections, we will be in a common slate with the bourgeois reformist General Torres, whom we were denouncing until yesterday as a threat to the Bolivian masses on a par with Banzer. This plainly and frankly means the liquidation of Trotskyism in Bolivia. This is recognized by the POR (C) which, in contrast to Germain, honestly affirms: "we must forget our party slogans in order to operate in a *solid front*." (POR (C), *Combate*, August-September 1972, p. 7, emphasis added.)

The FRA: A Front or a Party?

What is this "solid front"? An anti-imperialist front or, perhaps, a workers front? For the POR (C), and for Lora, it is an anti-imperialist front. But in this case, we cannot surrender our political independence within it, as we could not if it were a workers front. The Fourth Congress of the Third International is categorical in this respect. On the other hand, if the objective is to make the working class independent of every bourgeois sector, I can't see how we could achieve this if "we must forget our party slogans."

For us, the FRA would be an anti-imperialist front if, as in any front, all the organizations that participated in it maintained their total political and organizational

independence.

Since this is not the case, but just the opposite, the FRA is not a front. It is a new "party" with a more or less anti-imperialist program. Comrade Germain is very cautious in defining it, he defines it negatively. He says the FRA is not a popular front for three reasons:

1. The program (not the manifesto) is "explicitly socialist in character and purpose. . . . The line of this Charter is substantially that of the theory of Permanent Revolution." (Germain, p. 14.)

2. "the 'revolutionary armed forces' under Major Sanchez state that they are in favour of a socialist revolution and adhere to Marxism-Leninism." (Germain, p. 13.)

3. "That the FRA, contrary to the 'Political Command,' is not a coalition with the bourgeoisie, as not a single bourgeois party participates in it." (Germain, p. 13.)

The FRA's Program of "Permanent Revolution"

We will look at each of these arguments to lay bare the great fraud. The four sentences that lead Comrade Germain to say that we have here a program of permanent revolution are:

"1) The Bolivian people . . . [are prepared] for the struggle for socialism as their political aim.

"2) all the revolutionary sectors . . . unite themselves under the banner of the fight against fascism, for national liberation and the *building of socialism*.

"3) Our patriotic position, publicly open to an alliance with the progressive sectors, does not imply any hedging over our class position, as the alliance which we establish and which will be in the forefront of the struggle for national liberation and *socialism, expresses the ideology of the working class*.

"4) Bolivia will have to reach the culmination of its historical process of liberation and of the *building of socialism*, within the framework of a revolutionary development on a Latin American scale." (Germain, p. 14, emphasis added.)

The Third International warned the Communist parties against the threat of bourgeois nationalist movements that took up Communist phrases and slogans in order better to trick the masses. The phrases we have quoted fall within this category. If this is the program of permanent revolution, all the large Argentine bourgeois parties and all the major political figures are "socialists" and "Trotskyists," not to mention the native Stalinists. Perón is even more to the left: in a letter to Hecker when he was exiled he said that it was necessary to destroy "the bourgeois army and create workers militias." He always said it was necessary to fight for socialism. The Stalinists regularly repeat that their historic objective is to build socialism in an Argentina under working-class hegemony.

A program of permanent revolution is not two or three phrases to live up on holiday occasions, but rather political slogans drawn from the reality of the country's class struggle. In Bolivia it is not possible to have any program of permanent revolution that does not clearly take up the question of the government and the armed forces: one must categorically say that governments like Torres's must never again govern Bolivia, that it is necessary to impose a government of the workers' organizations, supported by the peasantry, and based on liquidating the

bourgeois armed forces. This must be the program because this is the most recent and immediate experience of the masses. A program of permanent revolution must say that the "crisis of the Bolivian revolution is the crisis of its leadership," of all the Lechíns, both CPs, the Socialists, Torres, Lora, Sánchez, and it must say that what is needed is to build an authentic Trotskyist party. If this is not said, all else will be demagogic playing to the masses, polishing up the images of these traitors.

Furthermore, the program must take shape in a concrete policy applied in action. As far as we know, the FRA has never propagandized around this program. The official pamphlet in which the FRA sets forth its positions does not include it; although the manifesto which clearly states it is for a popular government, not a workers' government, is included.

Is more proof needed to show that these "Trotskyist" phrases are a typical case of the bait a bourgeois nationalist movement dangles before the masses to get them to swallow the hook? By characterizing these phrases as a "program of permanent revolution," isn't Comrade Germain showing that he has swallowed the hook?

Major Sánchez: A New "Marxist-Leninist"

Comrade Germain's second argument is that the Revolutionary Armed Forces [FAR] of Major Sánchez "are in favour of a socialist revolution and adhere to Marxism-Leninism." The FRA pamphlet we mentioned includes an open letter by the FAR and another by Major Sánchez. Apparently they won the approval of the POR (C), since it published them in a prominent place in its newspaper *Combate* (unless publishing them was required by the discipline of the FRA). This means that Comrade Germain must also be aware of them. Let's listen to Major Sánchez:

"Declarations and designs that I have no connection with are being slanderously attributed to me. Sometimes it is said that I am a member of the ELN, or that I have asked to join that organization; they claim that I favor dissolving the Armed Forces and replacing them by armed militias: they assert that I plan to Vietnamize the country. . . . *Nothing could be more false.*" (*Combate*, No. 9, January 1972, p. 14, emphasis added.)

Do you hear, Comrade Germain? Nothing could be more false! Major Sánchez is for maintaining the armed forces and against armed militias—what a strange example of "Marxism-Leninism"! But there's more:

"Never, before now, have army barracks, *the patriotic shrines of Bolivian youth*, been converted into jails, where these youth are tortured and shot. *Never before has the national army been used like that.* . . ." (*Ibid.*, p. 13, emphasis added.)

Now our "Marxist-Leninist" has forgotten the assassination of a disarmed and wounded prisoner, Che Guevara, in this "temple of patriotism." Doesn't it make you nauseous to lie so much to the new cadres, Comrade Germain? But there is much more:

"My struggle has no other objective than to achieve a perfect union between the Armed Forces and their people. . . . We are living in a historic period and I want to take this opportunity to tell you that by a spontaneous and patriotic decision the political instrument of unity that will carry us to victory has been organized. It includes all the political forces of the left—the trade-union,

university, and popular movements; the Revolutionary Armed Forces; and the *Bolivian Police*. . . . Our struggle is not *antimilitarist*, it is basically anti-imperialist. No revolution will be able to go forward *without the aid and the efforts of the Armed Forces*, an institution that springs from the very heart of the people for the service of the people." (*Ibid.*, p. 13, emphasis added.)

As we see, our "Marxist-Leninist" now discovers that the Armed Forces are an "institution that springs from the very heart of the people" (not the armed wing of the bourgeois regime), and that "no revolution will be able to make progress without [its] aid" (and even less progress, we might add, if it aims to destroy the armed forces).

In this crystal-clear exposition by the "Marxist-Leninist" Major Sánchez there is also the answer to Comrade Germain's third argument—that the FRA is not a popular front because there are no bourgeois parties in it. Major Sánchez takes it upon himself to tell us that the "Bolivian Police" are in the FRA. The FAR statement, on the other hand, is no less explicit:

"One is either with those who *betray the armed institutions*, allying themselves with the MNR which is alien to the Armed Forces, or one is with the national majorities; one is, in the end, either with those who commit crimes *compromising the prestige and honor of the Armed Forces and the Bolivian Police*, or one is with the fatherland." (*Ibid.*, emphasis added.)

But there is more, much more:

". . . like all the men and women who are fighting against the bloodthirsty antipatriots who are staining *our institutions* with blood, each of us—military men and police—must make our own decision. . . . For our people, *for our institutions*, we must fulfill the duty of every Bolivian: To die rather than live as a slave!" (*Ibid.*, pp. 7-8, emphasis added.)

However much Comrade Germain may regret it, these neophytes of "Marxism-Leninism" state their intentions without subterfuge: in Bolivia, the Banzer massacres are "staining" their "institutions" (the armed forces and the police) "with blood" and "compromising [their] prestige and honor"; therefore they have the mission of saving this prestige and honor and, at the same time, their "institutions." Put in another way: with the barbarities that Banzer is carrying out, the Bolivian masses will never again trust the armed forces and police as they did under Torres; the FAR is fighting to avert such a danger to the bourgeois system.

The Army and Police Are in the FRA

Next, the high military and police officers who are in the FAR tell us why they are part of the FRA. Anyone who believes Comrade Germain must suppose that his "Marxist-Leninists" are in the FRA in the name of the working class at least. Not at all:

"From the underground and from exile, we inform all our comrades in the *Armed Forces and Bolivian Police* that it is in our capacity as members and representatives of both institutions that we have joined the FRA." (*Ibid.*, p. 6.)

This is the truth and one must recognize their honesty. Not only do they provide political insurance for the bourgeoisie, but they also provide insurance for the military and police caste: they are the guarantee the FRA needs in

order to impose, just as the declaration indicates, a new bourgeois Bonapartism in Bolivia.

When they say there is no bourgeois sector in the FRA, the majority comrades, as always, forget what they said yesterday. They have been insisting for years that the bourgeois parties have virtually ceased to exist in Latin America, and that the military party, in other words the armed forces, have taken their place.

It is partially true, as we see it, that the armed forces tend to play the role of a strong reserve party for the Latin American bourgeois regimes. This is due to the low degree of democratic tradition of our countries. But there is no truth at all in the idea of their "monolithic unity with imperialism." The frictions between the national bourgeoisies and imperialism explain why Bonapartist governments "*sui generis*" arise—Perón's first one, or Ovando's, or the beginning of Torres's—which base themselves on the working class in order to guarantee bourgeois rule, in the final analysis, in behalf of imperialism.

For the majority comrades, the military men who go along with the FRA apparently have ceased to be military men, since they have broken from the famous "monolithic unity." For us, even when they take a nationalist tack, posing no other condition than their survival as institutions, the armed forces politically uphold the system. Thus, the military men in the FRA are only the "nationalist" wing of the Bolivian bourgeois armed forces, the "left" wing of the military party. The fact that, in a specific situation, they might be in the opposition and in exile does not change their character.

The military men and police who are in the FRA themselves prove us right when they say they are in the front precisely to preserve the armed forces and the police as "institutions."

Therefore, when Comrade Germain asserts that there are no bourgeois parties in the FRA, he is partially correct. There are no bourgeois parties in the FRA; only the Bolivian army and police themselves are present through their left political representatives. But, definitely, the latter are representatives—or shadow representatives—of the Bolivian bourgeois armed forces.

We have one last question for Comrade Germain: If it is true that there are no bourgeois sectors in the FRA, if it is true that the military men and police who are in it have come over to Marxism-Leninism, if it is true that the FRA has a program of permanent revolution, if it is true (as we have shown) that it has a centralized leadership and iron internal discipline, if all this is true, why don't we propose to the FRA that it join the Fourth International as an official section? What condition of membership does it fail to meet?

No Doubt Remains

From here on in, no one can claim to be confused by the international discussion. *You are either with the minority's Trotskyist program*—struggle to the death against the imperialist and capitalist system; against all its institutions; against all the reformist bureaucracies and national bourgeoisies in the leadership of mass movements or workers states. *Or you are with the majority's program*—monolithic front with the political representatives of the Bolivian police and army, "forgetting our party slogans." Making the choice doesn't depend only on your prin-

ciples, but also on your stomach and nose. That's how far the comrades of the majority have carried their ultra-leftism, which is the other face of opportunism — unity with the most putrid institutions of the bourgeois regime.

11. Moreno, Advisor of the POR

Comrade Germain's section entitled "Comrade Moreno, Advisor of the POR" must be one of the "bombs" he thinks will make the greatest impact. Only this can explain why he wasted so much space with it (it is one of the longest in the document). But in all those lines he doesn't answer one basic question: Was Moreno right or wrong? Should we have entered OLAS or not?

The Ninth World Congress resolution says exactly the same thing as Comrade Moreno: "working as an integral part of the OLAS." (*Draft Resolution on Latin America*, reprinted in *IIDB Discussion on Latin America* [1968-1972], p. 10.) If Comrade Moreno was mistaken, the Ninth World Congress resolution was also wrong, very wrong. If Moreno was right, if his analysis was correct in its general line, one must give him due credit, and then criticize him for having changed his position without there having been a change in the situation. But Comrade Germain doesn't do anything of the sort.

Moreno Was Wrong; So Was the Ninth Congress

We won't beat around the bush: we maintain that Moreno was mistaken in the general policy he developed in the document quoted by Comrade Germain. We also maintain that the Ninth World Congress was mistaken in adopting the Latin American resolution. Moreover, we maintain that Comrade Germain knows perfectly well that Moreno was against our Bolivian section embarking on preparations for guerrilla warfare under the Barrientos regime. The document that Comrade Germain cites is an internal document which was held to for five months, from November 1967 to May 1968. In contrast, Moreno's position on the line we should take under the Barrientos government was laid out by him in a letter dated November 20, 1965.

We will not oblige Comrade Germain by taking up the polemic backwards, as he does. We are not going to begin from a line that was held for five months, we will start from all the other work by Moreno and the minority dealing with Bolivia under the Barrientos government. Only after having shown what policy was projected for Bolivia during all those years will we take up the task of explaining the reason for the document quoted by Comrade Germain, a task that would not have been necessary if the comrade had acted in good faith, that is, put the document in the context of the life of our International.

The Real Position of the Minority

We will begin, then, with the November 20, 1965, letter which was published several times (therefore we say that Comrade Germain cannot be unaware of it), with slight modifications in form. In it Moreno said to Comrade González:

"You repeatedly define the government as fascist in *Lucha Obrera*. As can be seen in our resolution, we disagree with your characterization. We believe it is a reactionary Bona-

partist government, an agent of the Pentagon, a product of a semi-counterrevolution, but we don't think it is fascist. . . . In short: the prerevolutionary stage in Bolivia has not been closed by the triumph of fascism, rather it has been sharpened by the triumph of an ultrareactionary, Bonapartist government, which has not yet succeeded in crushing the mass movement, and which is unable for the moment to achieve a mass base in order to crush the workers movement."

Since at that time the Barrientos government had not yet crushed the mine workers movement, we had an essentially correct line:

"This is the key to the present Bolivian situation and an entire policy clearly flows from it. This can only be: to prevent an isolated struggle by the miners and to organize the rest of the workers to fight together with the miners. If we can achieve this, the defeat of the military junta is assured. . . . [Then we asked] through which organizations will we aid the miners? [And we answered] we especially favor reorganizing the COB through underground union defense committees, and we should concentrate all our efforts on propagandizing and carrying through this colossal task."

The Workers' United Front

Comrade González maintained that it was not necessary to fight for a united front with the workers' and popular parties at that time because the working class was beginning to follow him and his party. We disagreed because we thought that the reformist parties would continue to hold influence in the workers movement. We maintained that we were obliged, therefore, to put forward a policy of united front with them for concrete tasks. Such a united front was, for us, tied to the question of power:

"We believe the main slogan that answers the question of power is DOWN WITH THE MILITARY JUNTA. All of us agree on this demand. And in saying all, I mean all the grass roots and all the parties with influence among the people, from sectors of the Falange to the MNR, the two CPs, the PRIN, the POR, and the underground COB. The problem arises when we have to answer the following questions: How to overthrow the Military Junta? Who should overthrow it? Why should the Military Junta be overthrown? We are going to begin with the answer to the last question: why overthrow it. If we have to guide ourselves by your newspaper we must overthrow it in order to establish socialism, 'the only real alternative, which is socialism,' 'it is a question of the confrontation between the bourgeois program and the socialist program.' We believe that you are committing a grave error in method, which is to confuse your aspirations with those of the masses and the class dynamic, and to confuse the methods with the great tasks that the masses have posed, which are three intimately related but not identical aspects of the situation. For example, the great tasks of the Russian Revolution were democratic, although its methods and its class dynamic were proletarian. We are convinced that the present great task which unifies all the Bolivian workers, which unifies the proletariat with the peasantry and the urban middle class is to overthrow the government in order to call free and democratic elections. And not, as you propose, to overthrow it in order to inaugurate socialism. This task, much more modest than installing

socialism, requires the proletarian leadership and insurrectional methods in order to achieve it. This is the 'how' to achieve it. We now have to answer the question of 'who' we should propose as the winner, or put another way, what kind of formation do we propose to replace the Military Junta we want to overthrow. *We believe that we should call for the formation of a front whose main base would be the COB, in a united front with the student, teacher, and peasant organizations, with the support of all parties that are against the government, and have a popular base and are calling for absolutely free and democratic elections within 60 days. That is, we believe that the May military coup has increased, not decreased, the need to call for a united front.* We do not doubt that the petty-bourgeois parties, as well as the union bureaucracy, will sabotage this united front and will not accept the leadership of the COB and the workers movement. But we also have no doubt that this will serve to expose them in the eyes of the mass movement, if we make this call for the united front along general Trotskyist lines, not only to the ranks but also to the leaderships with a mass base."

The Armed Militias of the COB and Trade Unions

Foreseeing that the miners would be massacred, which was what actually happened, we proposed a specific armed-struggle task:

"We completely agree with you that the great problem is to prepare ourselves for the inevitable armed struggle that will open against the Military Junta. This question has different facets. *First, the relationship with the heroic fighters who, following the lessons of Castroism, want to organize guerrilla struggles. We have to try to tie these comrades into our basic strategy and tactic of winning the certain and armed support of the miners' movement. In this sense we must urge them to coordinate their action with the underground union organizations and especially the COB. We don't expect much from these comrades; the big task of preparing ourselves for armed struggle will be accomplished through organizing an armed self-defense apparatus of the COB and its component unions and, parallel to that, through the united bodies of the front, which will be neighborhood, peasant, or urban organizations.* Our party must begin, where it can, to carry this policy out in practice. It must reorganize united armed-defense committees of three or four comrades and wherever possible centralize and discipline them. This task, which is the fundamental one, *is intimately linked to another that is as important, that is work aimed at the rank-and-file of the army.* If we combine and organize all these tasks we will accelerate the crisis of the regime and its defeat will be on the agenda in the short run. If, on the other hand, we leave the masses to act on their own and at their own risk, very possibly the regime can defeat each sector."

Utilization of Legal Openings

"From our characterization of the regime flows the possibility that at specific moments legal opportunities will appear. Our justified hatred of the military dictatorship must not make us forget that *we have the obligation to utilize those legal opportunities. We must utilize them*

them to call for wage increases or for minimum demands, as unifying as possible, which would accelerate the regime's crisis. The same thing we said about the wage increases could be said about every opening within the recognized 'yellow' trade unions or a future phony national election. *Before declaring a boycott of those openings we must carefully take the pulse of the situation in the class struggle and call for such a course only if optimum conditions exist.*" (N. Moreno, "Letter to Hugo González," 1965; *Revista de América*, no. 6-7, July-October 1971, pp. 40 and 43. Emphasis in original.)

An immediate objective of this line was to keep the miners from being crushed. It was put forward in a letter polemicizing against the Bolivian comrades' intentions, especially Comrade González's, to go off to engage in guerrilla warfare. As we see, all the current differences were already expressed in this letter.

The same line continued later on. When the first news of Che's guerrilla struggle began to filter out, our newspaper (*La Verdad*) pointed out that we supported it from the standpoint that these were massive guerrilla struggles, within an insurrectional, not guerrillaist strategy. Throughout 1967, *La Verdad* insisted that the perspective for the Bolivian revolution would be insurrection, not guerrilla war.

What "La Verdad" Said in March 1971

The same method of analysis and elaboration of a political line again brought us into disagreement with the POR (C) comrades over the Torres government. Remember that they considered Torres an agent of imperialism, his regime a tactical variant worked out between the Bolivian military and the Yankee embassy, and his rise to power a defeat of the masses by the army. On the other hand, our opinion: "The October 6, 1970, strike made possible the defeat of the most reactionary wing of the army and the rise of Torres to power; it did not eliminate the pro-imperialist forces or anything like that." "It is a fact that sectors of the right wing continue to exist inside and outside the army." "Torres, whom we have defined as the Bolivian Kerensky, oscillates between the workers movement and the bourgeois and imperialist forces." ". . . the Lora group falls into the same opportunist sin (it acts as though the Torres government were a working-class government, with the excuse that the COB is bureaucratized), *it does not demand that the COB take power, nor that the unions be the groups to arm to fight against the reactionary danger.*"

And seeing the threat that was hanging over the Bolivian proletariat as a result of the "Trotskyist" policy of Lora and González, we said: "Unfortunately, we don't see any party in Bolivia taking up the strategy of the Russian revolutionaries." (*La Verdad*, No. 254, March 9, 1971, emphasis added.)

We are not going to pile up quotations; we only want to show that from Barrientos to Torres, and at present, we have always held to our strategy of forming a "party taking up the strategy of the Russian revolutionaries." We have always been against the guerrilla policy, we always proposed arming the mass organizations, and we always were against the famous "revolutionary armies." Moreover, we always said that the mass organizations, under the leadership of a revolutionary party, were the

ones that had to take power and that work among the rank-and-file of the army was essential for this.

The Reason for Our Guerrillaism

Now we can deal with the document quoted by Comrade Germain which, we repeat, was an internal document that was in force only between November 1967 and May 1968, although it was published as an analysis of the situation!

What happened toward the end of 1967 to make us change our opinion and turn us into guerrillaists and followers of the Cubans? Why did we drop everything in favor of entry into OLAS? Did a whole leadership and a whole party go crazy? We'll leave these psychological explanations to Livio and Germain, who are specialists. We will stay on the level of revolutionary politics and the class struggle.

What happened is known to everyone, although Germain now suffers from amnesia. The Cubans opened up a very sharp polemic with the Latin American Communist parties. Their public position was to extend the socialist revolution to our entire continent by means of guerrilla warfare. It is true that the Cubans, since their triumph, had materially and morally aided all sorts of guerrilla groups, but without directly intervening. There was a qualitative change—a plan for direct intervention by the Cuban state and the Cuban leadership in this new course. On the other hand Yankee imperialism was more and more engaged in its escalation in Vietnam. It was logical to think that this escalation would soon be extended to Cuba.

The Cuban leadership thought that way. Their policy of promoting revolution on the continent was the best way to paralyze, and in the end, defeat imperialism. The Cuban leadership did two things that showed us the seriousness of the new course: Che left Cuba to initiate guerrilla warfare on the continent; OLAS was founded. For the whole Fourth International this new course of the Cuban leadership was progressive and deserved our support. This did not mean support to the guerrilla strategy, but rather to the course toward opening up the socialist revolution on the continent. For our entire International, including the present majority and minority, what was involved was supporting the new course in order to bring the Cubans toward our positions as the struggle they were undertaking unfolded.

Cuba, OLAS and the Continental Civil War

Put in an even more categorical manner: our entire International believed in 1967 that the Cuban leadership, with the Cuban state behind it, was throwing itself totally into developing guerrilla warfare in Latin America as a defense against the attack that imperialism was very likely going to launch. If this were the orientation of Fidel and Che, a stage of continental civil war would be opened up on our continent similar to the one on the Indochinese peninsula. Che's guerrilla struggle would be the beginning of this continental civil war. And like the whole International, we believed we had to participate actively and in the front line in this civil war promoted by the Cubans, in order to combat their purely guerrillaist

orientation.

This is why Comrade Germain, in his extensive quote, forgets to give the quotes from the same document where we criticized the Cubans' political orientation regarding OLAS, and he forgets notably to point out that our entry into OLAS was to be under its military, not political, discipline:

"Our 'entryism' in OLAS must not be entry basically into its political organization but rather into its military apparatus. Our party is obliged to take up as its number one task developing a technical apparatus strictly subordinate to the discipline of OLAS for the purpose of carrying out such technical tasks as OLAS may set, pursuant to its strategy of struggle for power. Our entry into OLAS can have no other significance." (The Document quoted by Germain. Nahuel Moreno, "La revolución latinoamericana y argentina . . .")

Nothing could more clearly show that our position was the prevailing one in the International than quoting a letter from Comrade Maitan, one of many, written in the crucial year of 1967.

"I have noticed that *La Verdad* has stressed the positive evolution of the Cuban attitude. We know from a reliable source that the Fidelista leaders now think that the attack on us at the end of the Tricontinental Conference was a mistake. . . . We think that *we will now have to stress what unites us with the Cubans*. We are not unaware of the fact that there is still a tendency among them to overgeneralize on the tactic of guerrilla warfare, and the book by Debray that they are playing up is quite bad (I am in the process of writing a reply). But today it is more important to discuss *the concrete cases that face us in this stage, i.e., Venezuela, Guatemala, Columbia, and Bolivia, and here I believe that we are in agreement with the Cubans.*" (Letter of May 5, 1967.)

We Were Consistent with a Line Supported by the Entire International

Comrade Maitan's visit at the end of 1967 strengthened this general agreement and led to the document that Comrade Germain quoted. It was our way of preparing our party for the line that our entire International held at that time.

Concretely: we supported the position of the International and we were preparing the party for the civil war that Cuba, with its OLAS, was preparing to immediately open throughout the continent. For us, the Cubans' intention of starting up a continental civil war merited our support, although we considered it mistaken from the tactical point of view. This was a development independent of our will; like a workers strike, in which, regardless of whether it was launched at the right or the wrong moment or with or without sufficient preparation, we would participate (disciplining ourselves to carry out the task that its leadership fixed, but not their political orientation), because it represented a confrontation between our class and the enemy class.

The report of the comrade from the United Secretariat indicated that a kind of development similar to that in the Indochinese peninsula had opened up in Latin America. Our class (the Cuban state), with its paramilitary organization (OLAS), was going to confront imperialism,

the national bourgeoisies, and their armies. It wasn't a matter of a guerrilla adventure by a handful of radicalized and desperate petty-bourgeois, or of militants demoralized or disappointed with work in the mass movement. There was only one possible policy: we had to fight with and under the "military, not political, discipline" of the Cubans and OLAS.

Our position, although incorrect, shows better than ten volumes of discussion bulletins that when the comrades of the minority say we favor guerrilla struggle in specific periods of the class struggle, and are against transforming it into an absolute method or a strategy, we are telling the truth. If Cuba, through the intermediary of its state and its army, had thrown itself into a continental civil war against Yankee imperialism, guerrilla struggle in Bolivia might or might not have been correct. But though it seemed to us an error, we had the duty to support it. But then, and only then.

The Differences Begin

Comrade Maitan's return visit in 1968 was sufficient for us to realize that he held a guerrillaist conception of armed struggle. At the same time, we saw that the Cubans weren't throwing themselves into a continental civil war. For us, this was the objective face that could have transformed the guerrilla struggle in Bolivia into an objective fact in the class struggle, rather than a voluntarist adventure by a handful of brave people.

Thus, our position of unconditional support for the Bolivian guerrilla struggle, with its organizational corollary of entry into OLAS as the military coordinator of the armed struggle in Latin America, lasted for the period of time that transpired between the two visits of Comrade Maitan. One visit opened the period, the other closed it. There were a few months of support to the guerrilla struggle as a tactical aspect of the continental civil war that the Cubans were going to launch against Yankee imperialism through OLAS. That's all.

The present division in our International began at that time. For similar reasons to ours, the SWP began to question the line—which they had also supported—of our whole leadership and our movement in relation to OLAS. This change by our two parties was due to an objective fact of fundamental importance: Under the impact of Che's failure, the Cubans completely changed their general strategy of promoting revolution in Latin America. This shift went beyond any question of the form of that strategy. They began to draw closer to the USSR and its policy of peaceful coexistence, leaving OLAS to its own devices.

The Differences Deepen

While the present minority drew the logical conclusion that, owing to this change by the Cubans, there was definitely no possibility of continental civil war in the short run; the majority went ahead with the Cuban strategy and analysis, but without the Cubans. They tried to substitute our International for the Cubans, not realizing that while Cuba is a factor of tremendous objective weight, we are a weak subjective factor. This methodological error of wanting to replace an objective political factor, the policy of the Cuban state, with a subjective factor, our will and our party, was extended from the Latin American scene to all other parts of the political world, widening the breach between the majority and the minority.

Despite this explanation, my policy was an error. Naturally, I made a public self-criticism, as in the case of all the other errors committed in my political career, errors that almost always have originated in a wrong estimate of objective reality, not from a kind of applying abstract formulas to the real situation ("strategy of armed struggle," building the "revolutionary army," and such) to which the majority has accustomed us.

Which Advice by Moreno Was Correct?

Today, with a situation similar to that under the Barrientos government unfolding in Bolivia, the Bolivian comrades and comrades the world over can profit by comparing the different positions of Comrade Moreno and those upheld by the majority. Which advice from Moreno to the Bolivian section was correct? The advice which agreed with the resolution of the Ninth World Congress to carry out guerrilla warfare and enter OLAS? Or the advice that you shouldn't expect anything from the guerrillas, nor prepare for guerrilla struggle; the advice that we had to limit ourselves to work in the mass movement, within the existing organizations, using all the legal openings and, in this way—not in any other—organize the masses for political and armed struggle?

The facts give a most categorical answer. After eight years the Bolivian guerrilla struggle has achieved nothing and OLAS is dissolved. The great armed battles have been fought by the masses in the cities, with their traditional organizations, the parties and the trade unions.

Therefore we can do no less than recall Moreno's public self-criticism. This confirms that the worst error for a Bolshevik is to continue with an analysis and a political line that have been shown to be incorrect by the facts.

CHAPTER II

ARGENTINA: THE DEFINITIVE TEST OF TWO LINES

I. The Facts Speak against Comrade Germain

Comrade Germain asserts in his document that since the second Cordobazo, the PRT (C) has had an incorrect line: trying to develop a people's army. Before that statement, he makes a series of comments designed to show that in regard to perspectives the PRT (C) was correct before the first Cordobazo and we were wrong. As usual, he dissolves a concrete problem into a matter of historical perspective. It is of little interest to know if someone predicted the possibility of an insurrection a year or two in advance (how would we classify Lenin, who didn't foresee how close he was to the Russian revolution!). What is really important and decisive is determining when an insurrectional or semi-insurrectional situation has arisen, and whether in that situation a correct political orientation has been adopted. Comrade Germain doesn't even deign to answer the questions that were put to him in our "Argentina and Bolivia — The Balance Sheet."

● *First fact: the Cordobazo*

We contend that *we foresaw the Cordobazo and were for it, while the PRT (C) did not foresee it and was against working for it*. Proof is at hand: we already provided it in the "Balance Sheet." In the section entitled "Two Views of the Cordobazo" we selected two exact quotations to show that one month before the Cordobazo we predicted the upsurge that was shaping up and how it was going to manifest itself ("mass demonstrations, occupation of school departments and buildings, resistance to the repressive forces. It is necessary to extend and coordinate these actions." [IIDB, Vol. X, No. 1, p. 33]), as opposed to the PRT (C) which, a few days before the Cordobazo, said the opposite: "*it is suicide to confront the police and other repressive bodies empty-handed*" (Ibid.), *advising against mass mobilizations for a long time yet, not until the masses were armed*. Who was right, Comrade Germain?

● *Second fact: the workers' conflicts*

It is the same with all the "evidence" Comrade Germain presents to disprove our assertion that the guerrilla line caused the PRT (C)'s isolation from the real class struggle actions. We have shown that during all of 1971 (a year of workers' conflicts) the official organ of the PRT (C) published only three general articles relating to the unions, *and nothing about these actual conflicts*; as against the 250 articles of this kind published in our paper. Comrade Germain responds with unknown facts: "It [the PRT (C)] publishes several special factory and union caucus papers" (*In Defence . . .*, p. 17). Which ones, and where, Comrade Germain? We know of only one issue of one paper.

Of course, Comrade Germain doesn't even deign to answer our charges that in its leadership meetings, the PRT (C) didn't take the workers' struggles into account

and had no policy toward them, and sometimes didn't mention the general strikes that came one after the other in unbroken succession. In Tucumán there was a general strike that paralyzed the province, preceded by several days of student agitation: a miniature French May. In commenting on these events, the official organ of the PRT (C) ignored the general strike, because the student agitation was more "violent." It was said that Tucumán went through intense struggles . . . up to the day of the general strike, which was not mentioned. For them everything ended on that day. Absolutely nothing happened in the province (which was paralyzed for two days). It was exactly as if, in analyzing the French May, we were to say that after the night on the barricades everything returned to normal in Paris and in France, when actually everything had just begun. The same thing happened with all the general strikes, starting with the one that led to the first Cordobazo. We don't know what partial strikes the PRT (C) led. Perhaps there were some. In any case, very tiny ones, because all the important strikes, the best known, were led by the Stalinists, the pro-Chinese, the Partido Comunista Revolucionario, or us, in some cases supported by Política Obrera [Lambertists] or other far-left groups, including the PRT (C). Which strikes did the PRT (C) lead?

● *Third fact: Sitrac-Sitram*

We can say the same thing about SITRAC-SITRAM. No one here knows anything about the chairwoman of the SITRAC-SITRAM plenary sessions referred to by Comrade Germain. The chairman was always the same person: "Viejo Pedro" ["Old Pedro"]. In one of the sessions a very young woman comrade belonging to the PRT (C), a delegate, who was an exceptional orator, spoke. And her intervention in the session impressed the audience. Is Comrade Germain referring to her? But she wasn't the chairwoman, Comrade Germain. The political leadership of the SITRAC-SITRAM plenary sessions was in the hands of the pro-Chinese and the Partido Comunista Revolucionario (both tendencies were in the leadership of SITRAC-SITRAM) and ourselves (leaders of almost all the conflicts and of the most important class-struggle internal commissions of Greater Buenos Aires). This is the whole truth. The PRT (C) did not appear as an important element in those plenary sessions.

● *An objective criterion: compare the two organizations*

There is no better way to compare the effectiveness of the respective lines than to compare the present state of both organizations. We shall start with the 40,000 registered adherents. Comrade Germain correctly states that these are not members. It is precisely for this reason that we call them adherents and not members. But Comrade Germain minimizes their importance as an index of

political influence: the adherents must be registered as such before a judge and the election officials. It's not simply a question of a signature on a petition asking for legality; rather one must fill out a card stating adherence to the party and its program. We are the only left organization that has been able to fulfill this requirement, and we doubt that any other, with the exception of the CP, could do so. But Comrade Germain, besides minimizing the importance of the number of adherents, completely ignores the opening of local headquarters: more than 50 have been opened throughout the country. And this has been accompanied by a growth in the number of members (not "adherents") of the party and the youth group, an average growth of about 400 per month since the election campaign. This compares favorably with the largest sections of the Fourth International. But the most important thing to note is the rate of growth and increase in activity. We now have 100 full-time party workers. We held a rally of more than 10,000 people at the final election campaign windup meeting.

To all this, the PRT (C) counterposed a full mobilization of its forces, in alliance with the Peronist left and with Tosco, at its home base in Tucumán (with train and bus travel from all parts of the country paid for by the PRT (C)). They managed to get only 1,500 to attend. We by ourselves, without an agreement with any other tendency, had a meeting of 4,000 militants and sympathizers in Buenos Aires. Two thousand of them were rank-and-file working-class leaders, and only those with cards were allowed to enter the hall, which means that the meeting was a direct result of the party's work. In Córdoba, a plenary meeting held by all the left tendencies brought together some 40 delegates and working-class leaders. Another, held by us, had 80. Today, in Córdoba we are the strongest left tendency in the most important factories. This is the present situation of both organizations, a consequence of the situation that already existed during the SITRAC-SITRAM period.

2. Our Supposed Capitulation to the Electoral Fraud and the Military Government

According to Comrade Germain, the PST published "several platforms both for its own campaign and its proposals for the mass movement. In *none* of these was the fraudulent character of the elections . . . denounced. This led to the sad spectacle of *Avanzada Socialista* interviewing the trade-union leader Tosco, just released from prison, asking him what he thought about the idea of a workers' slate in the elections, and receiving the answer from Tosco that first of all one had to say that these were fraudulent elections. Trotskyists being taught such an elementary lesson by a C.P. sympathizer. What a humiliating experience for Comrade Moreno!" (*In Defence*. . . , p. 28, emphasis in original.)

Where did Comrade Germain find this lesson that Tosco is supposed to have taught us? In the interview he cites, just the opposite took place.

● A falsification: Tosco's "lesson" for Moreno

Let's check the quotes. The reporter's first question was whether Tosco was in favor of "power to the working class" and "building a workers' party" as the way to win "national

and social liberation." Tosco evasively replied that he was not, saying he was for a "union of the popular forces with a program of change and revolutionary content." We will quote the second question in its entirety:

"AS: The electoral solution proposed by *the dictatorship is a trap laid to detour mass upsurges taking place in Argentina. Do you agree with this?*" (Emphasis added.)

(In passing, we would point out that "trap" [*trampa*] is a stronger term than "fraud" [*fraude*] and that it more precisely defines the content of the electoral maneuver staged by the Argentine bourgeoisie.) Tosco's reply agreed with what we said in the question, i.e., the elections were a trap by the dictatorship. Other questions unrelated to what we are discussing followed, until the fifth question, which Germain cites:

"AS: Our party, through its official organ *Avanzada Socialista*, has announced that it has put the ballot status it won on a national level at the disposal of working-class candidates. That is, that we support a slate of the Toscos, the Gregorio Flores's, the Meras and the best of the workers vanguard that have come forward in the last three years' process of selection. We call this the Workers and Socialist Pole, because socialism is the historic need of the workers. Do you think this is realistic, and if so would you be prepared to run?"

Germain says that Tosco answered, "first of all one had to say that these were fraudulent elections."

In *Avanzada Socialista*, No. 31, September 27, 1972, where this report was published, Tosco says:

"I understand that we workers are marching toward a Socialist Argentina. But since I try to act responsibly, *I cannot answer this type of question*. Naturally, we are fighting for Argentine national and social liberation and our march is toward a socialist fatherland." (Emphasis added.)

In other words, Tosco's again evasive response to our question has nothing to do with the words that Germain puts in the mouth of this centrist leader.

This case of a quotation falsified to make it look as if Tosco was giving us a "lesson" is important for defining Comrade Germain's polemical method. But if the purpose were to define our party's policy, then the constant campaign by AS denouncing the elections as fraudulent or its campaign promoting a struggle to legalize the CP and other left parties would be much more important.

● Another falsification: our "silence" regarding the dictatorship

But the falsifications don't end here. In his document he accuses us of "remain[ing] silent about the existence of the dictatorship—under the pretext that in this way you 'gain' the possibility of legal propaganda. . . ." (*In Defence*. . . , p. 28.)

Of course, after having "proven" that we committed this deed, he declares us guilty of "an unacceptable concession to electoralism." (*Ibid.*) Can it be that Comrade Germain doesn't read our material or, more probably, that he reads it selectively? We cannot quote here each and every time we denounced the existence of the dictatorship in *Avanzada Socialista*, in our leaflets, or in the public interventions of our comrades. It would be a long and tedious task. Comrades who read Spanish can easily check these. Unfortunately the majority of the comrades in the International don't read Spanish. Therefore, we call attention

to the first and second questions put to Tosco in the AS interview when he was released from prison. And we point out that defense of the political prisoners, the call to struggle for their freedom, and denunciation of the dictatorship's repression were regular themes in our press and electoral campaign.

Finally, we will recall that in the midst of the campaign to gain legality we said the following in two issues taken at random from this period: In a banner headline in our paper, we said: "Against Lanusse's candidate, Workers and Socialist Candidates" and in a box with this article, under the title "The Proscription Game," we asserted:

"The San Nicolas speech, which does not surprise us since we have been denouncing the intentions of the 'Acuerdo' [The "Great National Agreement" between Perón and the military] in these columns, must not make us lose sight of the fallacies in General Lanusse's previous speech where he maintained that in the process of institutionalization, only those who choose to voluntarily proscribe themselves will be proscribed. We now know that those who don't accept the rules of the proposed game will be left by the side of the road. But even if this were not so, what about people who, by dint of law 17.401, which punishes the espousal of ideas—protected by their own constitution—are unable to acquire legal status and must abjure open public activity? Is this by their choice? What about the functionaries, professors, and teachers who, through application of this law, have been forced to give up their means of livelihood and in some cases go off in search of a better atmosphere in other places, is this by their choice? What about the thousands of exemplary sons of the *working class and people who are sitting in the jails of the Republic by the sole will of the Executive Branch, is this by their choice?* What about those who are serving sentences imposed by the laws that limit freedom of thought, generously applied by the 'Chamber of Terror'? What about the political groupings that have not even been able to obtain the minimum opportunities allowed by the police-state law regulating the activity of the political parties? *Will the parties that do not agree to enter the capitulatory agreement offered by the dictatorship be said to proscribe themselves by their own choice?*" (*Avanzada Socialista*, June 7, 1972, emphasis added.)

"The workers have shown their combativity a thousand and one times. Particularly from 1969 on, the workers and popular movement has given practically no respite to the military dictatorship, and the struggle has forced a change in heads of government and in political plans. The urban explosions, the strikes and the mobilizations have been constant in these last four years. That the victories have not been even greater *is due not only to the brutal repression by which the dictatorship defends the interests of the regime*, nor to the maneuvers it carries out by begrudgingly doling out concessions. There is another factor in the dictatorship's favor, one more powerful than the repressive apparatus: the shackling, police-type control exercised by the union leaders who have Perón's authoritative endorsement." (*Avanzada Socialista*, September 20, 1972, emphasis added.)

There is no need for more quotes. This campaign centered increasingly around constant denunciation of the dictatorship. Our whole campaign was against it, against the bourgeois parties and Peronism, especially against General Perón.

Comrade Germain, we don't think that the best way to educate the new members of the sections of the International in the methods of Trotskyist revolutionary Marxism is by obscuring and evading the facts. We should put behind us all procedures that don't contribute to a clear and serious debate of the political positions being discussed.

3. Have We Capitulated to Peron?

After accusing us of not having denounced the government's fraud, Comrade Germain charges that we capitulated to Perón and Peronism. What does he base this charge on? On our entire electoral campaign, which lasted more than 6 months? Not at all. If Comrade Germain had reviewed those 6 months he could have done nothing else but recognize that, in addition to our denunciation of the military dictatorship, our attack on Peronism from a Marxist and proletarian point of view was the second central axis of our electoral campaign. Dozens of articles and headlines from the first page of our paper reveal this.

● *A tactic taken out of context*

Comrade Germain centers his accusation on a tactic of ours that was used for a month—beginning with Perón's return to the country. It consisted of calling on the left Peronists to demand that Perón agree to put 80 percent working-class candidates on his slate. We were calling on the Peronist left to effectively mobilize for this objective and to force the acceptance of a "*program of struggle*" (the latter aspect is curiously "overlooked" by Comrade Germain). If the Peronist left would accept this condition, and the condition that the working-class candidates be elected by the rank-and-file, we were prepared to critically support their struggle.

Once again, Comrade Germain separates one element from its historic context in order to make a criticism. This is a serious error, because there are no slogans that are by nature good or bad at all times. There are few transitional demands as good and as useful as workers control. But this same demand, raised during the French general strike as a substitute for struggling for power, was transformed into a demand that held back the masses, that sidetracked the proletariat from the real immediate task before it, to direct it into a blind alley and make it lose a historic chance for victory. During the "third period," Trotsky tirelessly criticized the Stalinists for using the slogan of soviets (the most important one in the Transitional Program) at a time when the masses couldn't carry it out. On the other hand, a milk-toast demand traditionally considered non-Marxist, such as the call for peace, proved to be revolutionary in the concrete situation when the Russian bourgeoisie and the Czar were unable to grant it and when peace was an immediate imperious need of the masses. The same thing can be said about land distribution, a petty-bourgeois demand, which in 1917 became a revolutionary demand.

Thus it is clear that the worth of a demand depends strictly on the concrete situation in which it is formulated. This is the case with our demand, and this is what Comrade Germain leaves out. What was the concrete situation in which we raised this demand or, put another way, what was the analysis of the reality we considered in raising it?

● *An analysis of the dynamic of Peronism*

We maintain that our tactic was correct for the simple reason that it was based on an analysis of the dynamic of Peronism as a political phenomenon. Our analysis of Peronism indicated that this movement had made a commitment to the military government to impose a reactionary program, that is, its dynamic was to not make any concessions to the workers' movement. It was this dynamic that we pointed out to the Argentine workers, when we told them, as Germain quotes us, that: "We believe that . . . Perón defends the employers and accepts the agreement consciously." (*Avanzada Socialista*, November 15, 1972, quoted in Germain, *In Defence*. . . , p. 29.)

With this dynamic, it was absolutely impossible that he would accept, not just 80 percent working-class candidates chosen by the rank-and-file and a program of struggle; it was impossible that he would accept a single class-struggle worker on his electoral slate. On the basis of this analysis our tactic was a logical and correct one: to propose to the Peronist vanguard a goal it knew to be justified but one that could not be achieved within the Peronist party. If the Peronist vanguard had taken up this goal, its efforts would have been in contradiction to the dynamic of the Peronist party and Perón; it would have gone through a rich experience, and would have ended up breaking with Perón and his party:

"Let us demand from Perón a plan of struggle for a wage increase of 50,000 pesos and a minimum wage of 120,000 pesos, readjusted every two months, and against unemployment!

"Let us ask him that he keep open 80% of the candidates of the Partido Justicialista so that the workers themselves can elect their candidates!

"If the fault doesn't lie with Perón, we shall thereby help him to break the encirclement by the bureaucrats. If unfortunately things are *like we believe them to be*, the workers themselves should impose the plan of struggle and workers candidates." (AS, cited by Germain, p. 29, emphasis added.)

The task of forcing the acceptance of workers candidates and a program of struggle within the Peronist movement was not invented by us. It was the aspiration of a sector of the Peronist working-class movement, its most radicalized wing. We believed that at that historic moment Perón couldn't accept this demand and that this situation could lead to the break of this sector with Peronism. That was the reason for our demand, to encourage these elements to achieve this task.

● *Our tactic was successful and weakened Peronism*

As we foresaw, Perón did not accept the proposal, and as a result part of the Peronist union leadership in Tucumán broke with Peronism, maintaining very good relations with us. Recently the most consistently left-wing political sector of Peronism raised a very similar demand. When Perón failed to respond, a de facto split occurred.

Did this tactical maneuver—which was only one among the many we carried out within the framework of our electoral strategy for confronting the dictatorship and Perón—concretely benefit Perón and Peronism? No one can point to anything like that. Quite the contrary: the maneuver weakened Peronism, it caused a serious split in a key province and opened a favorable perspective for our party and for the workers' movement.

● *And if we had been wrong?*

But suppose we had made a terrible error in our analysis, and that the Peronist party and Perón had been able to meet these demands raised by the Peronist vanguard. Suppose that the existence of a deep-going tendency in the workers' movement and in the vanguard to build a working-class party had escaped our notice, a tendency strong enough to win a majority in the Peronist movement, but still too weak to reach the critical point of breaking with Perón and his party and building an independent working-class party.

Clearly such an organized proletarian force would be progressive, because it would be the materialization of the existing progressive tendency in the workers' movement and its vanguard. The negative factor would be Perón's countermove of making concessions while trying to assimilate this tendency within his party in order to neutralize it.

In that case our party would have had to make a self-criticism for having erred in analysis. It would have had to point out the progressive aspect of this phenomenon, as well as its limitations. It would have had to criticize itself for having proposed such an objective to the Peronist vanguard. It would have had to put more emphasis on the limitations of winning this demand within the Peronist movement, and it would have had to go forward with its electoral policy of running class-struggle and socialist working-class candidates. It was in perfect position to do the latter, since it had made no pledge of support to the Peronist movement.

● *With 80 percent worker candidates the Peronist movement would still be a bourgeois party*

That is all it was; a simple tactical maneuver that brought good results. We never pretended that a bourgeois party like the Peronist party would cease to be bourgeois because 80 percent of its candidates were from the working class. Moreover, we agree with Comrade Germain that the character of Peronism wouldn't change even if it had 99 percent working-class candidates, or if it had a program of struggle, or candidates elected by the rank-and-file. It would not change because those candidates, although elected by the rank-and-file and with a program of struggle, would still maintain that they had to stay in the Peronist party, with Perón. This single political fact, the presence of Perón, and the fact that the candidates believed in him and in the need to be allied with him, would be decisive; and this shows that the problem is not one of numbers. It does not have to do exclusively with the proportion of working-class candidates, rather it is political. It is political because it has to do with their belief in the need to ally themselves with Perón, an old agent of the Argentine bourgeoisie. Even if only Perón remained in the Peronist party as the most influential leader, and the rest were all workers, the Peronist movement would continue to be a bourgeois party.

● *An orthodox Trotskyist conception that the majority does not share*

It is unfortunate that our orthodox Trotskyist conception of parties, fronts, etc., isn't shared by Comrade Germain, the rest of the majority comrades, or the leadership of the French section. If Comrade Germain thought it was a capitulation for us to call on the Peronist vanguard to fight for 80 percent working-class candidates on the

Justicialista [Social Justice] slate and to commit ourselves to support their struggle for this objective (we didn't commit ourselves to support the Peronists electorally), we don't understand why he doesn't criticize the French comrades for giving electoral support to the Union of the Left.

We don't understand why in Comrade Germain's opinion a front with 99.9 percent workers' candidates (Socialist and Communist), .1 percent bourgeois candidates, and a "reformist program"—which is the case with the Union of the Left—ceases to be a popular front, if the Peronist movement with 80 percent workers candidates and a "program of struggle," would still be a bourgeois party. In our opinion, the first was still a popular front, and the second a bourgeois party. The French comrades evidently did not consider the Union of the Left a popular front, inasmuch as they never denounced it as such, but rather classified it as a "reformist project overall."

● *A front with the "political shadow" of the bourgeoisie*

We don't understand the reasoning used by the French comrades—that political unity with the bourgeoisie is not political unity with the bourgeoisie when there are only a few bourgeois individuals involved. In the same way that the Peronist movement with 99 percent worker candidates plus a program of struggle and Perón would still be a bourgeois party, the Union of the Left, with 99.9 percent worker candidates, .1 percent bourgeois candidates, and a reformist program was still a "popular front." The big difference between our policy and the French section's is that while we did not compromise by supporting the Peronist movement even under the best of conditions, the French comrades went around criticizing the Union of the Left, but they ended up supporting it.

The French Union of the Left was something similar to the Spanish Popular Front: there was no important sector of the bourgeoisie in the Spanish Popular Front, only the political shadow of the bourgeoisie. But Trotsky never tired of denouncing the Spanish Popular Front, and would not tire of denouncing the Union of the Left as a popular front also.

Why is it that popular fronts continue to be popular fronts even when strong bourgeois sectors do not participate in them, but only a political shadow of the bourgeoisie? Very simple: because the Stalinists put together their popular fronts with those bourgeois forces who want to build them at the given moment. In France, as in Spain earlier, those bourgeois forces were not many; well, they built a front with those few bourgeois forces.

● *The French Union of the Left: embryo of a popular front*

Looked at from another angle, just as we made our analysis of the dynamic of the Peronist movement and foresaw that it would not accept worker candidates elected by the rank and file and a program of struggle, we presume that the French comrades also made an analysis of the dynamic of the Union of the Left. This means that they no doubt asked themselves: what are the historic perspectives for this front? What is its future? We do not know their final answer to these questions. We do know what our answer is.

To our way of thinking, the dynamic of the Union of the Left is to build itself into a full-fledged popular front as soon as it has favorable objective conditions, a front with every bourgeois party that would like to enter it.

Do the French comrades agree that this is the Union of the Left's perspective? If not this, what is it?

We say that the French Union of the Left gives advance warning of its dynamic for converting itself into a real and open popular front (not into a popular front with the political shadow of the bourgeoisie as it now is). This definition starts from the general historic Stalinist policy. And this policy is none other than to build popular fronts, or national unions with the national bourgeoisies, in order to hold back revolutions and obtain governments friendly to the USSR. Do the majority comrades know of any other historic objective of Stalinism? If they do, they should spell it out with full clarity.

● *The majority was drawn into supporting the French Stalinists' popular front*

We Trotskyists believe that the historic objective of Stalinism is none other than we have just said. If so, the French Union of the Left is solely a tactical electoral step in the Stalinist strategy of building popular fronts. Moreover this tactic of building electoral popular fronts as stepping stones to bourgeois-democratic popular-frontist governments is a worldwide Stalinist tactic.

The French comrades' decision that the Union of the Left was not a popular front because there were few bourgeois forces in it was a serious analytical error. This error in definition led them to make a more serious mistake: they fell into opportunism and were drawn into supporting the French Stalinist popular front policy.

● *The question of the Uruguayan Frente Amplio*

Therefore, we can only wonder that with such a policy in France the majority comrades make such a scandal of our month-long electoral tactic toward the Peronist movement. But the scandal is not limited to this: the comrades of the majority also accuse us of having given in to bourgeois and Stalinist pressure in Uruguay, by supporting the Frente Amplio [Broad Front] in the last elections.

We held that we should have pulled out of the Frente Amplio when voting for Seregni and other bourgeois candidates became a condition for staying in, and that at the same time we should have raised a big hue and cry. We think that it was a good move to enter the Frente Amplio because it helped our work in the mass movement. The error of the Uruguayan comrades was not that they entered, but rather that they did not leave at the right time, as soon as the bourgeois leadership tried to impose discipline on us.

But we say that it was a serious error, not a betrayal, because the Uruguayan comrades, as Comrade Hansen has shown with an abundance of quotations, carried on a principled denunciation of the Frente Amplio.

● *A comparison: the Uruguayan section and the French section*

The Uruguayan comrades committed their error in the context of this alternative: remain in the Frente and vote for its candidates (the incorrect orientation), or be obliged to leave it, raising a big hue and cry (the correct orientation). The Uruguayan comrades' opportunism had, at least, a weighty rationale: *their work against the Frente Amplio from inside it*. The French comrades' opportunism

was, by contrast, gratuitous: they supported the Union of the Left from outside, without even the excuse that that support was formally necessary in order to work to destroy it from within.

Now we shall examine what the French section did. In France we were not constrained by tactical requirements of any kind, given that we were never inside the Union of the Left, nor were we practicing entrisism in any of the reformist parties. We would have risked nothing if we didn't vote for the Union of the Left. Not voting for the bourgeois candidates would have solved everything. Despite this we voted for the Union of the Left.

These two errors, the Uruguayan comrades' and the French comrades', are serious errors, but are not a betrayal in any way. It would indeed be a betrayal to electorally support a popular front or a bourgeois nationalist movement without denouncing it as a betrayer of the workers' movement. That is: voting in itself is for us a tactical and not a principled question; what is principled is the political policy, and this must be to *implacably denounce any popular or nationalist front in which the working class finds itself as a betrayal by the reformist workers parties that promote it.*

The Uruguayan comrades amply carried out this principled policy. We, in Argentina, also carried out an implacable campaign denouncing the Peronist movement and the aborted popular front that the local Stalinists tried to form with the Alianza Popular Revolucionaria [Revolutionary People's Alliance]. Did the French comrades do the same?

The French comrades (with the support of the majority comrades) have carried out a campaign of denouncing the Union of the Left at all levels. This is very correct. The only level on which they defaulted (and this also with the unconditional support of the majority) was in not denouncing the Union of the Left as a potential popular front, an organization antagonistic to the interests of the working class.

● *To be able to criticize, one must begin with self-criticism*

If our definition of the Union of the Left's dynamic is correct, if it is nothing but an electoral tactic of the French CP within the framework of its strategy of building popular fronts, if our French section did not warn of this dynamic which the Union of the Left is assuming, if it supported it in the elections (as it did), we can unfortunately draw only one conclusion: in France we have voted for the electoral tactic of the popular front strategy without denouncing it as such. This opportunism had the support and encouragement of the majority comrades. Doesn't it seem to Comrade Germain that before he criticizes a secondary facet of our electoral policy (even if he were right), he ought to begin by making a self-criticism for having defended the blunders we made in France?

But there is something else. Comrade Hansen made a public criticism of the Uruguayan comrades' electoral tactic. He did this over our objection that before criticizing them publicly he should criticize the Bolivian comrades or, better yet, not make any public criticism. Does it not satisfy Comrade Germain that the Uruguayan comrades accepted this criticism? What more does he want? We hope he will adopt an attitude similar to Comrade Hansen's with regard to the French section's electoral tactic.

4. Should We Participate in the Elections and Take Advantage of Legality or Not?

According to Comrade Germain, we have acted in Argentina as if we were in "pre-1914 Britain or the United States in 1938 or 1946." (*In Defence . . .*, p. 16.) He thinks the situation in our country is similar to that of Spain and France in 1936. All analogies are dangerous. There is an acute contradiction in the situation of the Argentine proletariat and, in the final analysis, in the Argentine objective situation. Perhaps it is unique, but in any case it makes comparison with the countries that Comrade Germain lists impossible.

● *What is this contradiction?*

The Argentine workers' movement is Peronist and recognizes a bourgeois leader — General Perón — as its principal political-labor leader. Nevertheless, at the same time it has a high degree of combativity and union organization. To overcome this contradiction, that is, to bring the political development of the working class up to the level reached by its union organization and its struggles, is the main task of revolutionists in Argentina today. This means that the great historic task of this period is to win political independence for the workers' movement. This task was not posed in any of the countries Comrade Germain named (in the period he indicates), since the proletariat already had its own class political organizations.

Of course, political independence for the workers' movement can only be achieved by the mobilization of the class. But this does not mean we cannot utilize elections and bourgeois legality in order to support and, to the extent possible, lead these two combined, but not identical, processes: achieving working-class political independence and mobilizing the workers.

● *A better analogy: Spain in 1931*

We repeat: analogies are dangerous, because they put the emphasis on the similarities and leave aside the differences which can be more important than the similarities. Conscious of the risk, we venture to make an analogy: The present situation in Argentina seems more similar to Spain in 1931 than Spain or France in 1936. Trotsky pointed out that a revolutionary period had opened, but, since the masses still had great confidence in the bourgeois parties and parliament, it was imperative to take part in the elections and accompany the masses in their apprenticeship in bourgeois parliamentarism, participating in the "Cortes." The fact that the situation was revolutionary or prerevolutionary was no obstacle to intervening in the elections. On the contrary, it had become more necessary. The Stalinists opposed Trotsky's position by calling for the arming of the proletariat.

"To counterpose the slogan of *arming the workers* to the reality of the political processes that grip the masses at their vitals means to isolate oneself from the masses — and the masses from arms." (*The Spanish Revolution*, p. 117, emphasis in original.)

● *Should one run in elections in the middle of the Bolivian revolution?*

But there is an analogy Comrade Germain doesn't even think to mention — Bolivia between 1952 and 1956.

During those years workers' militias existed in Bolivia. The possibility of a workers' and peasants' insurrection that would give "all power to the COB with its militias" was raised. It was a much more critical situation than the one existing in Argentina since the Cordobazo. The Bolivian masses had finally completely defeated the military dictatorship through an insurrection and had kept their arms. In that kind of situation, much more revolutionary than the one in Argentina, the leadership of our International persistently called for participating in the Bolivian elections. The Fourth Congress of the International, with Comrade Germain's approval or with his pen, advised the following for Bolivia in 1954:

"[A] campaign for general elections with the right to vote for every man and woman over 18 years of age in order to elect a constituent assembly, and the running of workers' slates from the COB in these elections." (Resolutions of the Fourth Congress, June 1954.)

This analogy extends to June 1956, when the POR ran in the elections despite their fraudulent character.

These analogies are quite illustrative. Nevertheless, the comrades of the majority refuse to categorically answer our question of whether we should or should not have participated in the elections. For them, running in the elections is not the decisive thing. The decisive thing is the policy with which we run in them. This is the wrong way to approach the question.

● *Without participating in the elections it is not possible to have a correct policy*

What is the significance of Trotsky's statement, which we already quoted, that one should not launch slogans isolated "from the political processes that grip the masses at their vitals"? Does this mean perhaps that because the masses might have illusions about the elections we should allow ourselves to get caught up in electoralism? Trotsky never called for that. What Trotsky said was that it was only by basing ourselves on these real political processes that we could give concreteness to our political line.

When the masses have illusions about elections, when they are being discussed in all the workplaces, when mobilizations are even called off (as was the case in Argentina) in the expectation that the elections (or the Peronist party winning them) would solve all problems; when all these things occur, *the only way to formulate our policy is to start with the question of an alternative in the elections that have monopolized the attention of the mass movement.*

Do the most general slogans of the period change as a result? No, they don't change, but now we can only formulate them from the standpoint of the elections. The obligatory starting point for denouncing the elections, for pointing out that the only road is mobilizing and for insisting on the need for a workers party independent of the bourgeoisie is developing an alternative in the elections. If we don't participate, our political dialogue with the mass movement is cut off. We can say exactly the same things without participating in the electoral process; but the masses, swept along by this process, will not listen to us.

Therefore, *participating in elections is an obligation for revolutionists as long as the masses have confidence in them.* It doesn't matter what stage of the class struggle

we might be in. This is the first thing one must decide; this is the basis for developing a correct political line.

● *What happened to the Argentine sects?*

In our country there were several Marxist organizations (Política Obrera, the Maoists, the Partido Comunista Revolucionario, the ERP), who said, as we did, that elections and parliamentarism were a fraud and that it was necessary to go ahead with the mobilizations. But they didn't say it within the context of the electoral process that the masses were engaged in, but outside of it. The results can be seen: these organizations could not make themselves understood by the masses nor by the workers' vanguard. They seemed like Martians who spoke with a different language and about different subjects than the masses were discussing; they came out of the elections much weaker than before, and on the verge of political liquidation. On the other hand, while we generally said the same thing they did, and in addition explained the need for an independent workers' party (made concrete by our slate of working-class candidates), the elections were a key to the development and growth of our party, they meant a qualitative leap for us.

● *The majority reasons like the Argentine sects*

Here lies the error of the majority comrades. They reason like the Argentine sects that we mentioned: the important thing is the general line; participating in the elections is a secondary question. For us it is exactly the reverse. At that concrete moment, we could formulate our policy only by participating in the elections: *if we had not participated we could not formulate any correct policy* because we would have isolated ourselves from "the reality of the political processes that grip the masses at their vitals." We could have said the same things but we would have transformed ourselves into a sectarian propaganda grouplet, isolated from the concrete, immediate, present problem of the Argentine masses. And, worse yet, we would have left the masses to be dragged along by the bourgeois parties without any opposition. We would have left them without a class position on the most important question facing them at that moment, the electoral process.

Therefore we insist: it was not possible to formulate any revolutionary policy in Argentina if it didn't start from participating in the elections. This was the strategic question that we had to resolve first, and we resolved it. Now we shall look at the tactic we used in the elections.

● *Our electoral tactic and the mobilizations*

Comrade Germain has made serious charges against our organization. The principal charges are: one, that our central activity, in a prerevolutionary stage marked by workers and popular mobilizations, was electoral and not based on the mobilizations. Thus he says that the PST made "the question of independent working class candidates in fraudulent elections under a decaying military dictatorship and not the question of how to overthrow the dictatorship (how to generalise the Cordobazos into an Argentinazo), the main axis of its political activity." (*In Defence. . .*, p. 29.)

We don't know where Comrade Germain gets this from. Let's examine our electoral documents (published in a pamphlet) and our electoral platform. In the document

adopted December 17, 1972, there is an entire chapter entitled "Utilize the Elections to Explain the Need for an Argentinazo." There we said that: "This is why the main slogans in our electoral campaign must be: Free the political and social prisoners! For democratic rights, for the repeal of all repressive laws! Down with the present military government! Down with the new bourgeois government! Let's make an Argentinazo to definitively free us from imperialism and capitalism!" ("Revolutionary Strategy in the 1973 Argentine Elections," Education for Socialists bulletin, September 1973, p. 17.)

And we explained further on: "We do not want the dead or wounded that the Cordobazos cost us, but we must be prepared for this since it is inevitable—the exploiters will see to that." (*Ibid.*, p. 17.)

● *Our electoral platform and our utilization of television*

In line with the party resolution of the same date, the electoral platform consisted of seven points. This resolution received wide publicity and was published in the pamphlet mentioned before. The seven points were:

● Freedom for those imprisoned for political and related reasons.

● For democratic rights; repeal the repressive legislation.

● Down with the military government.

● Out with the next capitalist government.

● Oppose imperialist and capitalist repression with an Argentinazo that puts a workers and popular government in power.

● Don't vote for the military, the trade-union bureaucrats, professional people, or bosses, vote for your own compañeros, vote for Workers Candidates.

● Don't vote for the bosses' candidates Coria or Miguel." (The two most important and best known union bureaucrats at this time: Coria in the construction union, Miguel in the metal-workers. *Ibid.*, p. 19.)

In compliance with the provisions of the election law, the government gave us two hours of television time. These two hours focused on a single idea: everything we have we owe to the Cordobazo and to the workers' and popular mobilizations (the exposition was accompanied by the showing of films of these mobilizations); therefore, the elections are a fraud that lead us into a dead-end, and what we must do is make an "Argentinazo," a workers' and popular insurrection overthrowing the government.

● *Our electoral campaign and the workers struggles*

But there is something much more important and much more concrete. During the electoral campaign, the collective labor contracts were being negotiated. The party predicted that the most important workers' mobilizations would occur around these negotiations. The conclusion was obvious: keep the elections from diverting the working class from its struggles, which was the plan of the bourgeoisie and the union bureaucracy. Obviously we took the situation of the class struggle into account. There are a multitude of quotations; we select one from among many. In the document entitled "We Must Wage a Revolutionary Socialist Campaign," we said:

"The party's major national slogan should at this time be: Let's prevent the elections from diverting the working class from the struggle for good labor contracts and

for a substantial wage increase." (Emphasis in original, p. 29.)

"The principal point of our election campaign should be precisely this: the election campaign serves to produce a generalized intoxication that enables the bosses to divert the workers from an immediate, imperative, urgent struggle, a struggle for wages to enable them to overcome their current hunger. . . ." (*Ibid.*)

And in a chapter entitled "The Election Campaign and Workers' Conflicts," we added:

"This is the essential axis of our election campaign, with its practical consequences: we will have to intervene in all conflicts or preparations for conflicts over labor contracts that arise during this period. Electoral activity should not be a reason for removing ourselves from conflicts; on the contrary, the campaign should allow us to discover and participate in many more conflicts than usual. If we take this approach our campaign will not be electoralist. If we don't, in spite of all the revolutionary language we use, we will be turning away from the real experiences and struggles of our class to propagandism. . . ."

"In summary, we can say that the election campaign does not mean that the party's usual activity in the concrete struggles of the working class, ranging from salary increases to the Cordobazo, will be abandoned, but rather that the huge experience we have in this kind of struggle will be broadened and expanded." (*Ibid.*, p. 30.)

In the election campaign these resolutions were applied to the letter. In the course of the campaign, the party's ties with the workers' conflicts multiplied enormously. Our militants played a clear role in the struggle for the contracts, as well as in innumerable partial battles in factories and trade unions. We will cite only a few of the many possible examples. In the metal workers' union, a very important mobilization developed opposing the union leadership's inclination to accept a reduction of the raises agreed to by the bosses. Our party was in the forefront of this mobilization that embraced numerous factories. In the most important steel plant in the country, SOMISA in San Nicolás, our party's candidate for treasurer headed up an occupation of the plant, defying the strong-arm methods of the union bureaucracy. A leader of the party was elected to the strike committee in the large walkout at the Panam plastics factory in Tucumán, even though he wasn't a worker in the plant. It was not an accident that the biggest figure in the trade-union bureaucracy, the secretary-general of the CGT, José Rucci, sent our presidential candidate a telegram violently attacking him, something that he didn't do to any other candidate.

● *We want an answer: should we have participated in the elections or not?*

It is now clear that we did not make participation in "the elections . . . the main axis of our political activity" (already cited) as Comrade Germain asserts. On the contrary we used the election campaign as one more weapon in the class struggle. The problem is political, but Comrade Germain doesn't respond to it. He does not even raise it. Was it obligatory for an Argentine Trotskyist party to utilize the legality and the elections to the fullest extent possible? Should it have run in the elections? Comrade Germain answers with evasions and generalities:

in general and in principle it is not wrong to participate in elections. The question is: in the concrete case of Argentina, should one have done it nor not, Comrade Germain?

Since this is a concrete situation, one must give a concrete answer.

One of the basic policies of a Trotskyist party is to utilize legality and elections. Did we apply this basic policy or not, Comrade Germain? Was the PRT(C) right or wrong in not applying it? Only after giving a forthright response to these questions can we begin discussing our electoral tactic and our slogans. Only then can we discuss whether it was good or bad to center the electoral propaganda on denunciation of the dictatorship and the need to overthrow it, on the repeal of repressive legislation, and on the need for an "Argentinazo"; whether it was good or bad to center our activity on the class struggle, subordinating the election campaign to it and combining these two types of work.

Because, if we were wrong in running in the elections, the slogans and the focus of our work around those elections also must have been wrong. Whether these slogans and this orientation were correct in themselves does not matter. But if we were right, if we should have run in the elections, then we were correct in the decisive thing, in the concrete response to a concrete situation, although perhaps we may have erred in the slogans and in the focus of our work, which were the very same focus and slogans Comrade Germain proclaimed to be the correct ones.

5. The Majority's Guerrilla Policy

While we oriented ourselves toward taking advantage of legality and participating in the elections, in order to better intervene in the mass movement, the PRT(C) developed a radically different orientation: urban guerrilla struggle and terrorism. In this orientation, they had the enthusiastic support of the majority of the International.

● *The criticism comes very late*

Now, when it is already evident to the whole movement that this orientation led to disaster, Comrade Germain tries to criticize it retroactively. He now tells us it was an error for the PRT(C) to have devoted itself since the second "Cordobazo" to building a revolutionary army. Comrade Germain, then, thinks the PRT(C)'s line began to go wrong after the beginning of 1971. Nevertheless, the leaders of the majority applauded this line at every point, and were unable to criticize it at the right time. Listen to Comrade Maitan who, together with Comrade Germain, is a leader of the majority tendency. He said: "The strategic perspective the Argentine comrades are following is the one laid down by the Ninth World Congress of the Fourth International—elaborated and made more precise by the last two national congresses of the PRT." (*IP*, April 26, 1971, p. 388.)

The national congresses the article refers to were those that, several months before the second Cordobazo, voted to build the Revolutionary Army of the People, a resolution Comrade Germain today, three years later, finds incorrect.

● *An enthusiastic balance sheet of the ERP's activity*

To leave no doubts about the position of the majority regarding the orientation the official Argentine section gave to its activity, we will quote, from the same article,

the summary of the actions that the PRT(C) carried out in the period of the great Argentine mass mobilizations:

"These actions, which have come in rapid succession since the start of the year, especially in February and the first half of March, and which have made a very great impression on the daily and weekly bourgeois press, can be categorized as follows:

"a. Actions aimed at acquiring funds by expropriations carried out in the old Bolshevik tradition (the most spectacular stroke was the one in Córdoba which, according to the Argentinian press, brought its organizers 121,000,000 pesos [350 old pesos equal US\$1].

"b. Actions aimed at acquiring arms and medical supplies (the most spectacular stroke in this area was at a clinic in Buenos Aires).

"c. Actions designed to win the sympathies of the most deprived strata by handing out food (meat, milk, etc.) taken from big distributing firms.

"d. Actions linked to workers' struggles (the most important so far was the one carried out by an armed detachment which invaded the FIAT factory in Córdoba and held a meeting there)." (*IP*, p. 388.)

This representative of the majority was unable to contain his enthusiasm over such a balance sheet:

"All these actions have effectively achieved their objective of armed propaganda. At the present time the ERP is the best-known revolutionary organization and has won very broad sympathy—in some big plants, too." (*Ibid.*)

And this was published in the era of the second Cordobazo, i.e., when the PRT(C) had already taken an incorrect orientation, as Comrade Germain has now come to discover. Incorrect orientation? Undoubtedly. But the majority cannot deny its share of responsibility for this orientation and its total support for it. Let's take three examples from the three principal leaders of the majority, after the second Cordobazo, to show they only just lately started criticizing the PRT(C) and the ERP.

● *The three most important leaders of the majority eulogize the PRT (C)*

In June 1971, months after the second Cordobazo, Maitan wrote:

"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?" (*Discussion on Latin America*, [1968-1972], p. 182.)

Pierre Frank, too, made his general evaluation of the PRT's political line months after the second Cordobazo. In August 1971 he wrote:

"Concerning the activities of our comrades of the Argentine section, the PRT, and its armed organization, the ERP, we don't look at them as being ultra-left. We think that their policy corresponds largely to the present needs of the class struggle in their country." (Letter to the SWP Convention, in *SWP Internal Information Bulletin*, No. 6 in 1971, p. 15.)

In April 1972, a year after the second Cordobazo,

Germain was still declaring his agreement with the PRT's general orientation toward armed struggle. Here is what he wrote:

"Next, while affirming our agreement with the PRT's general orientation of developing the armed struggle, we express the hope that our comrades will find the means to link this struggle in the most intimate way to the development of the mass struggle, with a clear political orientation toward the socialist and proletarian revolution, opposing any concept of a revolution by stages." (*La Gauche*, April 21, 1972.)

● *According to the majority, the "armed struggle" of the PRT surpassed Santo Domingo*

Finally, Maitan, Germain, and Frank summarized their evaluation of the PRT-ERP in the resolution adopted in December 1972, more than a year and a half after the second Cordobazo. They characterized the actions of the PRT-ERP as having raised the level of "armed struggle [to] the highest level attained in Latin America since the Cuban revolution, inasmuch as they represented an attempt to integrate armed struggle into the concrete dynamic of the mass struggle." ("The Political Crisis and Perspectives for Revolutionary Struggle in Argentina," *IIDB*, Vol. X, No. 6, p. 18.)

Frank, Maitan, Germain, and the POR(C) (which adopted a resolution to "support *all* the actions of the PRT and the ERP" at a central committee meeting held in Bolivia in April 1971) think the PRT-ERP attained a higher level of armed struggle than the Dominican masses when they resisted the invasion by 30,000 U.S. marines, or than the armed struggles of the Peruvian mass peasant movement led by Hugo Blanco.

The above is documentary proof of the positions held by the leaders of the IEC majority tendency on the PRT-ERP's "armed struggle" after the second Cordobazo.

6. The Present Political Line of Comrade Germain: From Guerrillaism to the Ultra-leftist Revolutionary Syndicalism of the General Strike 'In Itself'

Today Comrade Germain is trying to extricate himself from these failures by putting the responsibility for the old enthusiasms for the PRT(C) on Comrade Maitan. He also washes his hands of the problem of whether or not it was correct for us to run in the elections. In spite of these ambiguities, he indirectly gives us an answer and a program for our country.

● *Comrade Germain's program for Argentina*

"But in a prerevolutionary situation, a revolutionary Marxist does not tell the workers that to have workers candidates in general elections is a step forward. He should tell them the following:

"If the dictatorship is retreating, it is as a result of your powerful extra-parliamentary struggles, as a result of six Cordobazos and of the appearance of groups committed to armed struggle. Continue along this road. Build up local factory and neighbourhood committees to organize in a permanent way for your mobilisations. Start to draw together all radicalised unionists, students, women and militants who are ready to join in these preparations. Coordinate nationally the class struggle factions in the

unions and tie them in with the vanguard committees. Start to arm yourself. Beware of a continuation or a quick return to sharp repression and confrontation. Don't give in to parliamentary illusions. Argentina capitalism cannot grant you a significant increase in your standard of living. That's why the class struggle is sharpening every day. That's why you have to continue on the road of the Cordobazos. Whatever retreat the army will undertake today will only be temporary. Large-scale clashes with the army are unavoidable. Don't go towards it spontaneously and in an unorganized way. Prepare and organize yourselves for it. Prepare an insurrectional general strike.'" (*In Defence* . . . , pp. 16-17.)

This program, so carefully laid out, has nothing to do with our country. It doesn't say a word about the CGT and the unions, with their rotten and traitorous leaders. Not a word about Peronism, about Perón, and his candidacy in the elections. Not a single mention of the fact that the working class believes in Perón and will give his candidacy massive support in the elections.

● *The program on the one hand, Argentine reality . . . on the other*

Unfortunately for Comrade Germain, Argentine reality does not coincide in any way with his schema. The workers' movement is solidly organized in unions and on the political level it follows Perón. When Comrade Germain speaks of the Cordobazos (and we assume he includes the mobilizations in Rosario, Tucumán, and Mendoza, since we don't know how else he could arrive at six), he forgets that *these struggles originated in strike calls and meetings organized by the traditional organizations of the workers' movement—the unions and regional bodies of the CGT*. These mobilizations were the product of a special combination of circumstances, one of the most important being that Perón, sectors of the union bureaucracy, important sectors of the bourgeoisie, and the whole middle class were opposed to the military governments. This opposition was also reflected in a division in the ranks of the army. When Lanusse came in, these bureaucratic sectors and the whole bourgeoisie oriented toward elections, drawing along the middle class and the working class. As a result, the Cordobazos were on the wane and no longer repeated themselves with the same acuteness as the first ones. The question of the leadership of the workers movement began to come to the fore. The extremely favorable combination of circumstances ended, especially the total repudiation of the bourgeois government, as represented by the military regime, by the middle class and the proletariat. Before the elections a period of renewed confidence in bourgeois governments or, at least, in bourgeois electoral machinery, was opened up because of the confidence enjoyed by Perón.

Here Comrade Germain can find an answer to the contradiction he attributes to us with his question: "How was Argentina ripe for generalised insurrection in May 1970 and not ripe in the beginning of 1972?" (*In Defence* . . . , p. 29.)

The circumstances changed. Perón (the undisputed leader, we should not forget, of the Argentine masses) joined the electoral game and, in this way, diverted the masses away from extraparliamentary confrontations with the

regime toward electoral confrontation.

Of course this does not mean that the situation has changed on the historic scale. The change is conjunctural, since the molecular process continues. But if we want to help this process to mature, we will have to accompany the mass movement in its new period of learning, until it has exhausted the experience of "its" government and "its" candidate, Perón. There is no other road.

● *An "insurrectional general strike" without objectives or organization*

The most striking thing about Comrade Germain's program is its character of being exclusively centered on the question of organizing and preparing the general strike, without demands or proposals of any type, unless one considers general programmatic observations or traditional lessons of the class struggle to be such.

Who is going "to prepare the general strike"? For what objectives? To overthrow the government? Who will replace it? Are we to "organize" and "prepare" a general strike without any kind of demands related to the class struggle in the country? If the general strike should have been against the electoral fraud, should it have been called to demand that Perón be allowed to run in the elections, since the military government did not allow him to? If so, why isn't this stated clearly? If not, should a general strike have been called for any other objective, ignoring the reality of Peronism and the elections? In that case, would Comrade Germain be so kind as to tell us what precisely the objective might be that could mobilize the proletariat for an insurrectional general strike passing over its union organizations and its political leadership? But if the general strike is an insurrection to replace the government, the problem of how to win the middle class to our side or neutralize them arises. With what slogans? Do we leave the middle class to its own devices?

Perhaps the objective should be power to the local factory and neighborhood committees? But as for such committees, one has to start by building them (as Comrade Germain himself tells us), and we can attest to the fact that they have not been built anywhere, nor are there any traces of this new organizational form. So what is to be done? Call on these nonexistent bodies to "prepare" the way for, and launch the insurrectional general strike, or wait until they have come into being and gained strength before assigning them such a task? Meanwhile, what do we do with the only workers' organizations that do exist: the CGT and the unions? Do they have any role to play? Inasmuch as the class-struggle factions in the unions are very weak, can they directly call the insurrectional general strike? Or must they first struggle against the bureaucratic and traitorous leaders for leadership of the unions and the masses?

● *A contemporary version of anarchosyndicalism*

And as for the insurrection, who will lay the groundwork? Who will lead it? Isn't it shameful to put forward this line without posing the need for armed workers' picket squads? An oversight? Isn't it unpardonable to forget this slogan, which is so fundamental for the preparation of the general strike? Is it enough to give the workers only general advice (in Spanish we say "*perogrulladas*"

[truisms]) such as: "Large-scale clashes with the army are unavoidable . . . prepare and organize yourselves for [them]" (In *Defence*. . . , p. 17), instead of specifying the kind of organization suitable for this objective?

The secret lies in the fact that Comrade Germain's proposal is syndicalist, not Trotskyist. It presents preparing the way for a general strike as a suprahistoric task, as a universal panacea, unrelated to the stages of the class struggle, without demands of any type (much less political demands), without taking into account the *real* level of consciousness and organization of the workers' movement, nor its needs at each moment, and without calling for the organization of armed pickets. That's exactly what the anarchosyndicalists proposed.

7. The Official Section Breaks with the International

The majority criticizes us by stating that we do not have clear and proper perspectives. We believe the opposite is true: it is the comrades of the majority who never make a correct prediction and don't have a clear perspective. As proof of this, nothing serves better than the line taken toward one of the main sections of the majority: the Argentine section. The whole International knows it was one of the pillars of the majority tendency in the area of Latin America since the Ninth World Congress.

Now it has left the International, accusing the International of being petty-bourgeois and having an incorrect program. When did the majority comrades predict that this would be the probable course of the Argentine section? And what measures did they adopt to block such a course and combat it? For years, one heard nothing but eulogies of the Argentine section. It was constantly put forward as an exemplary applier of the line adopted. The result is plain to see.

● *Who knew how to predict that the PRT (C) would break with the International?*

Here again, the majority wants to cover up its responsibility with retroactive criticisms. The paper of the British section, *The Red Weekly*, which reflects the positions of the majority, published a note on the death of Joe Baxter (a leader of the PRT (C)), in which it declared that Baxter, Pujals, and Bonnet recognized the "populist tendencies and ideological confusion" within the PRT (C) (No. 13, July 1973, p. 17). Obviously this must have happened at least by September 1971 since Pujals was assassinated in that month.

The admission that leaders of the PRT (C) had long been concerned about the deviations of this organization is very important. Didn't the international leaders of the majority feel the same concern? And, if they did, what did they do to prevent the growth of these deviations? Nothing. Quite the contrary: they continued supporting and defending the policy of the official section which led, with an iron logic, to a break with Trotskyism.

When the split took place in the PRT, we denounced the anti-Trotskyist character of the wing that was recognized as the official section. The majority, through Comrade Maitan, projected a theory that this group's Maoist deviations in the theoretical field were the consequence of the

education that Moreno had given them. Moreno in theory and politics was pro-Maoist, and the leaders of the official section had been educated in this school. To those trying to make such a case, it was of no interest that the official organ of the section had characterized Moreno as a Trotskyist monomaniac. The false imputation had a veneer of seriousness thanks to old quotes (taken out of context, as usual) from a document written when Moreno was in prison, based on rough notes and comments. But it was important to build a theory in order to show that the official section was made up of true revolutionary Marxists and that their differences with the International were a consequence of their ("Morenoist") past and did not imply a danger for the future.

● *The majority hid the real positions of the PRT (C) from the rank and file of the International*

Anti-Trotskyist positions were developing rapidly, and the comrades of the majority continued explaining them as the heritage of Moreno. But, with the aim of defending the official section (while it was being "educated"), they committed the worst crime one can commit against the rank and file of our International: they did not tell the International the real positions of the official section and, instead, deceived it by concealing these positions.

The publication of the "Red Book" ("The Only Road to Workers' Power and Socialism" in *Discussion on Latin America [1968-1972]*) was blocked on the pretext that it was not the official position.

Later, when the leadership of the section demanded that it be published, the United Secretariat did so although only in English and not in French. But, even then, the rank and file weren't informed that the section was continuing to attack Trotskyist positions and that it questioned the role of the International in its official organ. Only after the PRT (C) broke with the majority did the International publish the "Red Book" in French.

● *Comrade Germain prettifies the PRT (C)'s positions*

In his document, Comrade Germain makes two criticisms of the section: it's pro-Cuban and pro-Maoist positions in international questions and its strategy of building a people's army. Of these two criticisms, the second is emphasized as the most important, with the international problem relegated to second place. But he doesn't just reduce the international positions of the PRT (C) to secondary importance, he prettifies them, which is much more serious. According to Comrade Germain:

"The comrades of the PRT correctly understand that the Fourth International today is only the initial nucleus of the future revolutionary mass international." (*In Defence* . . . , p. 18.)

However, the PRT (C) comrades said publicly time and again since 1970:

"We ratify our adherence [to the Fourth International] with the intention of contributing to the proletarianization of the International, to its revolutionary transformation, and struggling to orient it toward the formation of a *new international revolutionary party based on the Vietnamese, Chinese, Cuban, Korean, and Albanian parties.*" ("Resolutions of the Fifth Congress of the PRT (C)" in *IIDB*, Vol. X, No. 5, p. 25, emphasis added.)

Where did Comrade Germain read that for the PRT (C) "the Fourth International today is only the initial nucleus

of the future revolutionary mass international"? According to him, "For the PRT leadership this fusion is envisaged with all those forces engaged in objectively revolutionary struggles throughout the world. . . ." (*In Defence* . . . , p. 18.)

Filling this in with what we know the PRT (C) leadership says, we come to the conclusion that, for Comrade Germain the Chinese, Korean and Albanian Communist parties are "engaged in objectively revolutionary struggles."

● *Who had a correct characterization of the PRT (C)?*

We won't follow Comrade Germain over the tortuous path he constructs in order to prettify the positions of the PRT (C). There is one single truth that the comrades of the majority have been attempting to obscure: for years the PRT (C) comrades have been attacking our International, saying that it is not revolutionary, that they consider it merely an element of secondary importance in constructing a new international based on the pro-Chinese Stalinist parties which, according to them, are the real revolutionary forces.

And, during all those years we have differentiated ourselves from the majority by holding the opposite attitude: we have tirelessly denounced the revisionist character of this populist organization and warned of the inevitability of its final break with the International. In 1968, when the split in our party took place, we said that the *Combatiente* faction was an unprincipled combination, that it would break up into a thousand pieces. We weren't wrong: since then there have been more than eight major splits. We made a class characterization: we said that this group reflected petty-bourgeois sectors driven to desperation by the endless crisis of the Argentine economy. We said that they had to be fought politically (while respecting them and defending them as fine and honest revolutionaries), and that it was necessary to defend our International and the heritage of Trotskyist revolutionary Marxism. At the last IEC, we proposed to Comrade Germain a united front for defense of our International in the face of the public attacks and the inevitable break. Who was right? Events have not been slow in delivering their verdict.

● *The majority is responsible*

According to the majority, the two factions into which the PRT was divided in 1968 had a common congenital defect: Trotsky-Maoism (the dreadful and repudiated "Morenoism"). The PRT (C) and the PRT (V) had, then, a common background. Well now, *El Combatiente* was linked to the majority and has ended up by breaking publicly and violently with the International. *La Verdad* on the other hand, was linked to the minority and continues to call itself Trotskyist more vigorously than ever. It remains and will remain in the International.

If one accepts the premises of the majority, this dynamic is incomprehensible. Of the two organizations with a common origin, the one they "educated" is precisely the one that has walked out and slammed the door.

The explanation is simple if we abandon the majority's premises. Once we do that, two very clear reasons appear. On the one hand, we were not undercover Maoists, but orthodox Trotskyists, who link ourselves with the tendency that consistently defended Trotskyism in the International (the minority), and through this tie we strengthened our Trotskyist orientation. On the other hand, *El*

Combatiente was an unprincipled combination of various sectors, whose main nucleus reflected the desperate petty bourgeoisie in the interior of the country. It united solidly with the majority, because the majority was headed toward throwing the Trotskyist heritage overboard in favor

of guerrillaist populism. But this union lasted only as long as unprincipled unity can last: *El Combatiente* found more powerful forces (especially in Cuba) than those to which it had been linked and the idyll ended with a noisy break.

CHAPTER IV

TWO COURSES

1. The Majority Falsifies Our History

At the December 1972 IEC meeting the comrades of the majority adopted a resolution on Argentina which raised serious questions about our organization. Our entire history was dealt with in a few lines in two of the theses approved. Surprisingly, despite the fact that no documentation was presented, and no attempt was made to prove what was asserted, this "history" was adopted.

Something similar happened with the European document was passed. By voting favorably for the strategy of "entryism *sui generis*," they approved, without evidence or documentation, the nearly twenty-year-long course of Comrades Germain, Frank, and Livio.

Guerrillaism inside the International?

Putting these questions for a vote is a little bit like using "guerrilla" tactics in the internal life of our International. Both were presented without warning, no one had been informed that they would have to vote for or against our party's history from its inception or for or against a "strategy" that is already part of our International's past. With this method the majority comrades have established a grave precedent: resolutions concerning history can be voted on without any kind of preparatory discussion, and without documentation. Moreover they violated one of the reunification agreements, an agreement to deal only with questions concerning political line and not with questions of the history of our movement.

Finally, by voting on an historical question that has nothing to do with our present policy or with the present situation in the class struggle, the majority comrades have broken with a tradition of the Trotskyist movement. Although lamentable, the resolutions we mention have been adopted and we are obliged, against our wishes, to take them up.

The Majority's Reasons for Recognizing the Posadas Tendency as the Official Section

Point 13 in the resolution on Argentina contains gratuitous statements or insinuations against our organization: we will rebut them in summary fashion so as not to turn this question into the subject matter of one or two books.

In 1951 the leadership of the International and the world

congress recognized the Posadas group as the official Argentine section. Referring to this recognition, the 1973 document says: "The choice in favor of the Posadas tendency was determined fundamentally on political grounds. The Moreno tendency was characterized at the time by a completely false analysis of the Peronist regime and by a sectarian attitude toward the mass movement led by the Peronists. ("The Political Crisis and Perspectives for Revolutionary Struggle in Argentina," in *IIDB*, Vol. X, No. 6, p. 19.)

This was not the case. There is no written proof, but comrades who have left the movement and are neutral will sooner or later confirm who is telling the truth. The resolution would be correct on one point if it said that until 1948 (not 1951, when Posadas was recognized) we had a sectarian position toward Peronism. All our writings about the history of our party recognize this fact.

The Real Politics of the Posadas Tendency

But one has to include other, much more important, facts. In the first place, the Posadas tendency was inside the pro-Yankee Social Democracy, with no worker members and isolated from the Peronist mass movement when that movement arose. In the second place, our sectarianism did not lead us to ignore the Peronist mass movement; on the contrary, we were the first organization on the left to enter (with a good deal of success) the Peronist unions. (This resulted in our being called pro-Nazi by the whole Argentine left which, led by Stalinists, called Peronism a fascist movement.) In the third place, as a result of our successes in the Peronist unions, the Posadas tendency made a sharp turn toward the Peronist union movement two years after we did. In the fourth place, that turn represented, from its very beginning, a total ideological capitulation to Peronism, a totally and absolutely opportunist position, exactly identical to the one they maintain today (in the March and April election, the Posadas group supported FREJULI [the Peronist electoral formation] and Perón).

Full documentation of the Posadas group's politics at the time of its recognition does exist. But this documentation was not published by the majority comrades before calling for a vote on their resolution, nor afterward. If they had done so, their claim would have been shown groundless.

The Official Section-to-be Supported Yankee Imperialism against North Korea

At the time of the Posadas group's recognition, our organization was denouncing the Peronist government with all our strength for the ultrareactionary position it had taken against North Korea, Argentina being the first country in the world that supported Yankee imperialism in its aggression. The Posadists, for their part, supported the Peronist government with all their might—saying it had liberated the country from imperialism—and waged an intense campaign of agitation in favor of South Korea against North Korea.

We brought up this question with the corresponding documentation at the world congress. Pablo, who was the official International Secretariat reporter supporting the recognition of Posadas, stated that this group was being recognized not for its political positions, since its positions on the Peronist government as well as North Korea were wrong, but rather because of its proletarian character. This supposed proletarian character made them disciplined, and not the pretentious, petty-bourgeois types we were supposed to be, defending our positions to the death and refusing to recognize "errors." What was this great display of discipline? Posadas, when he received a communiqué from the IS against his position on Korea, instantly changed his position, as if by magic. This acrobatic and obsequious elasticity (the IS called it "discipline") in making a 180-degree change of line on the most important revolutionary struggle going on in the whole world at the time was supposed to guarantee that the real objective of the IS would be achieved: unification of Argentine Trotskyism!

What "Violent Polemics" Did We Provoke in the International Committee? Who Was Right?

Let's look at the second claim made by the majority comrades:

"During the period of the split, the Moreno group established ties with the International Committee but on several occasions took positions that were not shared by other members of the IC and which provoked violent polemics, especially in Latin America." (*Ibid.*, p. 19)

It is absolutely true that some of our positions were not shared by the rest of the International Committee, and provoked "violent polemics." But that is no sin. Why don't the majority comrades describe these positions and say who was right? Why do they obscure the question with the term "violent polemics"? We shall say what these polemics, which are well documented, were about.

1. A discussion with Comrade Luis Vitale over whether or not the slogan "All Power to the COB" should have been pushed in Bolivia; about the workers' and peasants' militias and whether or not dual power existed when the proletariat and peasantry were armed in militias under COB discipline. Comrade Vitale said no, we said yes. After an argument, and a heated one at that, Comrade Vitale realized he had been mistaken.

2. A discussion about the Moller group in Bolivia with the tendency led by Comrade Luis Vitale. The Vitale tendency thought they were the most progressive of the Trotskyist groups; we thought that they were revisers of Trotskyism and the worst group in our movement. The

comrades of the Vitale tendency made a self-criticism.

3. A very heated discussion with the same comrade and his tendency about the role of Yankee imperialism. Luis Vitale maintained that it was not aggressive, and had not colonialized Latin America; we thought that it had. Comrade Vitale made a self-criticism, accepting our positions.

4. A very harsh discussion with the Lambertists over their slowness in changing their support from the MNA to the FLN in Algeria.

5. A new discussion, the most heated one, with Comrade Luis Vitale about Castroism and the role of Cuba. Comrade Vitale thought that the Cuban revolution was of no importance, that it did not change the relationship of forces, that it did not open a new stage in the Latin American class struggle. We thought the opposite.

6. Parallel to this, another discussion on armed struggle and guerrilla warfare took place. Luis Vitale maintained that this question did not fall within the bounds of orthodox Trotskyism; we said that it did, and that it was necessary to incorporate guerrilla warfare into the transitional program, under the general heading of armed struggle.

7. A discussion about entry into the 62 Organizations [a Peronist trade-union group]. Comrade Luis Vitale maintained that this tactic of ours, especially since we did not have an independent organ, was opportunist. We maintained that it was an indirect, tactical entryism in the Peronist workers' movement for a short period. We entered the 62 Organizations, i.e., a politico-trade-union organization, where the best elements of the working class were to be found and which led all the struggles against the regime put in by the "Liberating Revolution" (the pro-imperialist coup d'état that overthrew Perón). We did not have to submit to any political discipline in order to put our positions forward publicly because the only requirements were formally accepting the discipline of the Consejo Superior Peronista and taking off our jackets in the union meetings (whence comes the name "shirtless ones" for Peronist activists).

These were the main differences, all completely documented, that came up in the International Committee. Out of the seven discussions, our opponents made self-criticisms in three, the reality showed us to be correct in three others (Algeria and the two on Cuba), and we maintain that we were correct in the last one, about our entry tactic in the Peronist 62 Organizations. But even if we were wrong in this last one, as the majority comrades say; were we wrong to carry on these discussions and to defend our positions? Were we the guilty party in the "violent polemics" that broke out? Do the comrades of the majority know of any other "violent polemic" that we have not mentioned? If they do, they should say so and provide the relevant documentation.

The Context of Our Theoretical-Political Mistakes: We Were Isolated from the International for Refusing to Follow the Orders of a Madman

In addition to the two charges we have already noted, they make other charges against us, of a political-theoretical type. Some of them were spelled out in the Domingo letter: "attitude toward the Peronist movement, eventual role of the middle class, policy of alliances, characterization of the 1938 Transitional Program, characterization of the leadership of the Chinese CP and of the Cul-

tural Revolution." The only thing we have to say is that obviously we have made many political and theoretical mistakes in the course of our party's development, and that we have made self-criticisms for all of them. But for the comrades of the majority to criticize us for those errors, without putting them in the political context within which we developed, is a great disservice. Especially since they were the ones responsible for that political context.

We had to train ourselves in everything and absolutely alone. For years and years the doors of our International were hermetically sealed against us for one basic "sin": we refused to capitulate to the madman the comrades of the majority designated in 1951 as Viceroy of the International in Latin America — Posadas.

Posadas was an integral part of the leadership of our International, with the unlimited support of Comrades Pablo, Germain, Frank, and Livio. This madman did as he pleased for years and years. Posadas brought Latin American Trotskyism to a total state of insanity, putting forward demented positions and carrying out wild maneuvers. These maneuvers and his positions had the unconditional support of Comrades Pablo, Germain and Frank. Because we refused to pay homage to such a maniac we were isolated from the International. Failure to bring out these facts means failing to place our course—with its political-theoretical errors—in the political context in which it developed.

On the other hand, the political-theoretical errors for which we have criticized ourselves are not quite as serious as the resolution states. But, as with all theoretical questions, they merit a serious discussion that would take them up in the perspective of our overall contributions; certainly not just the passing mention in a few lines of a resolution that the comrades of the majority have devoted to them.

Finally, there is a consistent charge against us: that we have capitulated to Peronism. It is absolutely true that, beginning with our entryism, and especially with the publication of *Palabra Obrera*, our organization suffered from serious opportunist deviations. All these deviations had a common origin: capitulation to Peronism and the union bureaucracy. Furthermore, capitulationist tendencies existed in the leadership of our organization for long periods of time.

But those who make those charges against us forget to point out that there were big tendency and faction fights against the groupings that had a capitulationist line toward Peronism. They don't say that Comrades Ernesto González and Nahuel Moreno formed all kinds of factions and tendencies and wrote many internal documents against the tendencies that capitulated to Peronism. They don't make it clear that this factional struggle meant they were not in the leadership of the party and held only formal positions. We have all the documentation the comrades of the International might need to show this. Do the comrades of the majority approve of our struggle against the opportunist and capitulationist deviations toward Peronism, a struggle carried to the end against the old majority leadership of *Palabra Obrera*? Or do they make us responsible for the errors and deviations of this leadership? Do we Trotskyists approve of Lenin's struggle against the opportunist errors of the old Bolsheviks? Or do we put the responsibility for them on him?

A Question the Majority Comrades Cannot Answer

It is very important for the comrades of the majority to answer this question, because the previous guerrillaist tendencies, and the latest one (the PRT (C)), were nurtured precisely by these old opportunist sectors. It is even more important because our present party is the product of the deepgoing factional struggles that were waged against them. That is why we think the comrades of the majority cannot answer this question unequivocally even though we demand it at the top of our lungs. If they reply that they do not approve of our struggle against the tendencies that bent before Peronism, they have to support the capitulationist political line of these tendencies (which they attribute to us). If they respond that they approve of our struggle, they will be endorsing, in general, our course and our present party. Therefore (although they are perfectly aware of them) the majority comrades conceal these tendency struggles and the position that we took in them.

The purpose of this document is to demonstrate that all the concrete political charges against us as regards the most recent period are false. We are not getting into thoroughgoing discussion of all our political-theoretical errors for the reason already stated: a theoretical debate must be carried on in a serious way and with documentation; it can't be settled by a resolution. But something very important remains to be said.

One Virtue of Which We Are Proud: In Spite of the Majority We Are Still Trotskyists

Despite all our political-theoretical errors, our party is today the only party in Argentina made up of Trotskyist cadres. The two official recognitions made by Comrades Germain, Frank, and Livio (and Pablo the first time) have had unfortunate results for our movement on a world scale. Today Posadas and the PRT (C) are mortal enemies of the Fourth International. The real history of our country for the last 30 years shows that the only consistent Trotskyism has been in our organization.

This is our greatest virtue, and we are very proud of it. But the majority comrades seem more like censors than comrades who stand with us today in the same organization. They should have said: "In its past history the Argentine party has committed many political-theoretical errors. We have frequently disagreed with it, and there are still many concrete political questions on which we disagree. But we defend to the death its course. We defend it because, in spite of our mistake in giving recognition to Posadas and isolating the comrades from the International (thus providing fertile soil on which errors can grow) until Posadas became an enemy of the Fourth International, and despite the fact that we made another error in giving recognition to the PRT (C), until the PRT (C) became an enemy of the Fourth International. Despite all this, the comrades of the Argentine party have remained Trotskyists and have defended our World Party to the death, and today, in the midst of a sharp polemic, they continue to defend it. We, the majority of the International, did everything possible to induce the Argentine comrades to turn their backs on us and our movement. Despite this the Argentine comrades are today more

Trotskyist than ever, they are more firmly with the Fourth International than ever, while those we supported yesterday are our enemies today. For this fact alone we defend the course of the Argentine comrades."

But the comrades of the majority do not say anything like that. On the contrary, they have made themselves into real Catos of our organization. They are on the verge of excommunicating us. What political right have they to assume this role? Is it true that the comrades of the majority in their role as the leadership of our International have followed an impeccable political course, studded with great decisions? They must think so since, as against our almost obsessive scrupulousness in uncovering our own errors and making public self-criticisms, we are aware of no important self-criticism by the majority comrades.

However, it is curious that the December 1972 resolution we are discussing hardly touches our political positions on the great events of the international class struggle. This is truly unfortunate since it is a Marxist norm that the political character of any organization or tendency is best defined precisely by its international line. This is a drawback also because the problems with which the comrades who have recently joined the International (the great majority of its cadres) are most familiar are precisely the international questions, inasmuch as a discussion of national problems requires a long and tedious explanation of the multitude of factors that determine the proper political response at any given time, factors unknown to the rank-and-file comrades of the International.

We maintain that there is no better way to demonstrate the opportunism of any organization than by showing its failure to measure up to great international events. And we also maintain that the comrades of the international majority have been incorrect in their analysis, characterizations, predictions, and political line on the majority of these great international events. We maintain that in the great majority of cases the policy we proposed was the correct one, while our critics, Comrades Germain, Frank, Livio & Co., fell into opportunism. This is what we are going to show.

2. The Majority's Course: Incorrect Political Predictions and Conclusions

The European document of the majority comrades predicts that it will be "four or five years before the decisive battles are fought." ("The Building of Revolutionary Parties in Capitalist Europe," *IIDB*, Vol. IX, No. 5, p. 11.) And in all the documents by the majority comrades, but especially in those of Comrade Germain, the future is seen as more or less in the terms of the rise of fascism or Nazism. The comrades of the majority think we risk seeing fascism triumph in Latin America and in the world if we don't embrace their strategy. On the other hand, if we accept it, at least we will not fall under the fascist heel without a fight. This truly wild attraction to incorrect predictions has been a constant factor in the political course followed by Comrade Germain and the best known majority leaders. We shall be obliged to deal with a bit of history to corroborate this statement.

If we were required to point to a few of the most important economic and political events of the last 25 years,

we certainly would pick, among others, the following:

1. The imperialist postwar economic boom and the colossal resurgence of the German capitalist economy;
2. The transformation of Eastern Europe into "deformed" workers states;
3. The Chinese revolution;
4. The USSR's consistent policy of peaceful coexistence with imperialism. Imperialism's inability to initiate a world war in the 1950s;
5. The Stalinist course and nature of the Chinese and Yugoslav Communist parties, with the corresponding need for political revolution and for building Trotskyist parties;
6. The sharpening of the class struggle in the colonial world, reaching the point of uprisings in many countries (Algeria, Congo, etc.);
7. The Cuban revolution and its repercussions on a world scale;
8. The Yankee imperialist aggression in Korea and later in Vietnam;
9. The appearance of an international antiwar movement against Yankee imperialism's intervention in Vietnam, with strong support in the United States;
10. The radicalization of youth throughout the world;
11. The upsurge of the mass movement in Europe since the mid-1960s, with epicenters in France, Northern Ireland, Greece, and Spain;
12. Armed struggle, with aspects of civil war in two specific Latin American countries since Santo Domingo—Bolivia and Chile;
13. The bloody end to Allende's reformist experiment in Chile.

All these facts are much better known to the cadres of the International than each country's tactical problems. The majority comrades make an "error" by not trying to demonstrate our opportunism and erroneous method by taking these examples. This is unfortunate, moreover, because we have had profound differences on many of these crucial points. On others our movement as a whole held a seemingly common assessment. But recently some of the majority's documents have made us doubt that this was the case. Leaving aside these most recent documents, we have disagreed with or criticized the following analyses by Comrade Germain or his comrades in the majority.

A. The imperialist postwar economic boom and the colossal resurgence of the German capitalist economy.

Most of our movement, with Pablo and Germain in the lead, maintained that Yankee imperialism was heading toward its greatest economic crisis in 1946-1948, and that the European economy would continue to stagnate and decay.

"The revival of economic activity in capitalist countries weakened by the war, and in particular continental European countries, will be marked by an especially slow tempo which will keep their economies at levels bordering on stagnation and decay.

"The American economy will soon experience a relative boom, since the U.S. is the only country capable of satisfying the immediate needs of the world market. This fact will facilitate the full functioning of its productive apparatus.

"However, this increased production will in a short while run up against the limited capacities of the domestic and

world markets.

"The United States will then head for a new economic crisis which will be more deep-going and widespread than that of 1929-33, with far more devastating repercussions on the world economy." (Resolution adopted by the April 1946 International Conference of the Fourth International, *Fourth International*, June 1946, p. 170, emphasis added.)

For the same period, Germain and his friends predicted that Germany would be kept at the level of a backward country and they were energetically opposed to "the plans of transforming this industrial heart of Europe into an agricultural half-desert." (*Ibid.*, p. 179.)

Two years later as the Marshall Plan was getting into full swing, they insisted: "It should be recognized that the policy the victors have desired and applied in a consistent manner (from the 'Morgenthau Plan' to the Potsdam agreements) has been to partially destroy this potential, to transform the German people into a 'nation of farmers', definitively eliminating their industrial potential." ("The Ruin of the German Economy," E. Germain, *Quatrième Internationale*, January 1948, p. 31.)

But no one should think Comrade Germain limited himself to explaining to us the imperialist plans for Germany; he tossed us another of his "celebrated predictions" in this same article: "Consequently, the tendency of economic change is clearly toward a dissolution of the 'classical' capitalist market, and progressive pauperization. Paralyzed by the dismemberment of its very body, and despite the doses of oxygen given it by American imperialism, the German economy will not be capable of a noticeable recovery." (*Ibid.*, p. 39.)

At the Second World Congress almost a year after the Marshall Plan began, Comrade Germain proposed a draft resolution for the Germany of 1948. There he said that Germany would continue to be held at the level of a backward agricultural country.

Between 1946 and 1948 a tendency made up of the English majority and our party was formed in our International in opposition to these fatalistic conceptions regarding the imperialist economy. We quote from the first of the documents that formed the basis of the tendency:

"All factors on the world and European scale indicate that the economic activity in Western Europe in the coming period cannot be characterized as 'stagnation and decay' but rather as a period of recuperation and expansion." (*QI*, December 1946, p. 46.)

The resolution that we, as a tendency, proposed to the Second World Congress was rejected, while Comrade Germain's line was approved. The same thing did not happen with his draft on Germany however. That was rejected by the congress, which adopted a counter-motion of Pablo-Roura-Moreno. We cite all these facts because, with the exception of the debate between those favoring and those opposing defense of the Soviet Union, this polemic on economic perspectives was the most important tendency struggle between the prewar period and the Second World Congress.

(It is useful to know that despite our agreement with the English majority on this question, we did not form a political tendency with them. Moreover, we voted for the British minority's policy of entry into the Labour Party—the British minority being Pablo-Germain partisans. We voted

for it for different reasons than were presented by these comrades. We voted for it because we maintained that it was the correct policy in view of a period of quiescence that was opening up in the British labor movement as a result of the Labour Party's betrayal and the economic reconstruction.)

B. The transformation of Eastern Europe into "deformed" workers states.

In 1946, Germain and his friends maintained that the Soviet bureaucracy, because of its "class nature," defended "private property" and "state capitalism" in Eastern Europe.

In April 1946 they said the policy of the Soviet bureaucracy was: "by the intent inherent in its class nature, to combine in some way the system of private property with a system of state capitalism, once its own control over the state has been assured." (*QI*, December 1946, p. 39.)

This is how the leadership (Pablo, Germain, Frank) raised the idea that there could be no basic change in the social structure of the Eastern European countries without a revolutionary mobilization of the masses.

In 1948, without our foreseeing it or understanding it, the Soviet bureaucracy carried out a structural change in the buffer zone. It caused a profound shock in our ranks: Pablo and Hansen, along with us, began the theoretical struggle to demonstrate that new "deformed" workers states had arisen, especially in Yugoslavia, where this development was the result of a mass movement. Comrade Germain, who held firmly to the characterizations we summarized above, was the leader of the other tendency. He held that rather than being workers states the Eastern European countries were still capitalist. Comrade Germain made a self-criticism and changed his position only after a sharp polemic.

C. The USSR's consistent policy of peaceful coexistence with imperialism. Imperialism's inability to initiate the world war.

The majority comrades maintained that a world war was inevitable by 1954.

"It is precisely for this reason [Comrade Germain said in July 1951] that imperialism has thrown itself into military preparations for the war, in order to carry it out as soon as possible after the military apparatus has reached a certain level (at most two or three years from now). No international revolutionary victory, save that of the American revolution, can stop this drive toward war by Wall Street. . . . War has again become inevitable precisely because of this peculiar polarization of forces: the extreme weakness of international capitalism and the overwhelming potential of American capitalism. The American bourgeoisie has come to understand that if it delays any longer after the completion of its present armament program it runs the risk of introducing a revolutionary crisis into its own bastion." (Faux Fuyant et Confusion, ou: de l'art de couvrir la retraite, *Bulletin de La Verité*, July 1951, pp. 5 and 7 respectively.)

Against Mandel we maintained:

"Despite the belief of some Marxists who jump to conclusions, a world war in one or two years is not the only alternative for the imperialists. Whether or not they make war depends on many factors, one of the most important being whether the leadership of the noncapitalist states, above all the Kremlin, are firmly inclined to come to an

agreement with imperialism. Given the counterrevolutionary and opportunist character of the bureaucracy that dominates the USSR and China respectively, this second alternative is always possible. Faced with the dilemma: either lose their privileges by aiding, or making concessions to, the mass movement, or keep the privileges by making a pact with imperialism; we believe that the bureaucracy has to opt for making a pact with imperialism." (*Frente Proletario*, December 5, 1953.)

"Under these general conditions it is impossible at this time for Yankee imperialism to carry through or declare a world war." (*Frente Proletario*, December 12, 1953.)

D. The Stalinist course and nature of the Chinese and Yugoslav Communist parties, with the corresponding need for political revolution and for building Trotskyist parties.

In 1954 Comrade Germain was of the opinion that the Yugoslav and Chinese Communist parties had ceased being Stalinist, and had become centrists "drawing close to revolutionary Marxism." This is the author's characterization in his own words:

"Spontaneity of the masses, empirical leadership, first advances in consciousness toward revolutionary Marxism: these characterize the first phase of the worldwide revolutionary wave. These three characteristics can be summed up in a single formula: the first phase of the world revolution is a centrist phase. The term is imprecise and vague: it joins together, *de facto*, all the working-class political phenomena that have gone beyond reformism and traditional Stalinism and are closer to revolutionary Marxism. In this case, Tito and Mao Tse-tung, Bevan and the leaders of the left currents of the Japanese Socialist Party, the leaders of June 17, 1953 [East Berlin uprising], and the leaders of the Vorkuta [Soviet labor camp] strike, the first leaders of left oppositional currents in the mass CPs (Marty, Crispim, etc.), find their place within this heterodox assemblage of centrists. . . . This is a completely different centrism from the centrism of the 1930s, the centrism of tendencies that were moving away from revolutionary Marxism during the downturn in the revolution. *This is, on the contrary, the centrism of tendencies coming closer to revolutionary Marxism under the pressure of the advancing revolution.*" (*Cuarta Internacional*, July-August 1954, p. 41.)

This analysis of the Yugoslav and Chinese parties was carried over to their respective states and to our political orientation, with the obvious conclusion: neither the political revolution nor the building of Trotskyist parties was on the agenda.

"While the Chinese CP and, to an extent, even the Yugoslav CP are really bureaucratic centrist parties, they are still under the pressure of the revolution in their countries, and *we do not call on the proletariat of those countries to build new revolutionary parties or to prepare a political revolution in those countries.*" (*Quatrième Internationale*, special issue, December 1957, p. 54.)

We shall pay a little more attention to this point than to the previous ones because in the same way that the majority comrades are attacking us on the national level by centering on our entry into the 62 Organizations; on the international level they center their attacks on our characterizations of Maoism and our policy regarding it. We don't quite understand the reason for those attacks since, as opposed to the comrades of the majority who saw Mao-

ism evolving toward Marxism, we have always systematically maintained that Maoism was a petty-bourgeois and bureaucratic current that could not become a revolutionary Marxist one.

So as not to bore our readers, I will limit my quotations to those dealing with the period of our unification with the FRIP led by Santucho. This is the period the majority comrades attack most. We raised as the *sine qua non* for unity with Santucho the acceptance by these comrades of our 1963 International Theses. The comrades accepted. I quote from these theses:

"*Maoism is qualitatively different from Trotskyism because in its program and activity it ignores the essence of Trotskyism: the struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat on a world scale—a world strategy, program, and organization.*" (International Theses, *Palabra Obrera*, 1963, emphasis in original.)

One of our positions, taken out of context as always, may have confused the majority comrades about our characterization of Maoism. We called the Chinese, as well as the Yugoslav and Cuban CPs, "revolutionary." We did this because we believed that Cuba, Yugoslavia and China fit into Trotsky's concept that in some countries and in exceptional cases an unresolvable objective situation could possibly push petty-bourgeois parties into taking power, breaking with the exploiters, and installing workers' and peasants' governments. We used the term "revolutionary" to describe those petty-bourgeois parties that have made a revolution. The Second and Fourth Congresses of the Third International used the same term to describe bourgeois or petty-bourgeois nationalist movements that fought against imperialism. The Communist International called the bourgeois nationalist movements that collaborated with imperialism "reformists," and those that fought against it were called "revolutionaries." Though we may have used this term badly, we never said, as did the majority comrades, that those parties could evolve toward revolutionary Marxism. We said the exact opposite.

The second matter is whether political revolution is called for in China and Yugoslavia. We have already noted the majority comrades' opinion that it was not. We thought it was, but we made a distinction between the character of the governments of those countries and the Russian government, as well as in the stage of political revolution called for in each.

"The Russian state resulted from a socialist economy and socialist state that had represented a victory for the masses, whose political power and economic control was snatched from them by a counterrevolutionary bureaucracy. The Chinese state is different, it is not a highly contradictory unity of revolution-counterrevolution, as is Russia, but rather the product of a unique incomplete revolutionary process, which did not give rise to organs of workers' power and revolutionary Marxist parties and leaders. China, as well as Indochina, Korea, and Cuba, and possibly Yugoslavia and Poland, are revolutionary processes still in transition, still dynamic, within the context of a worldwide process of permanent revolution. From this flows our definition of them as workers states in transition with workers' and peasants' revolutionary dictatorships, that is, petty-bourgeois dictatorships." (Cited Theses.)

Concretely, we placed an equal sign between Cuba and China. Insisting on the differences between the latter and

the USSR, we said:

"We believe that the diametrically opposed nature of these two governments and states should lead us to make a cautious readjustment of the theory and program of *the political revolution in both countries*. Above all we must point out that the dynamic and the stages of the political revolution must inevitably reflect the profound differences in the structure of the two states and governments."

Then we tried to specify the situation in China and Indochina:

"The character that will be assumed by the process of *political revolution in China and Indochina* has never been specified. . . . Concretely, those countries are going through a political stage in transition between already completed February revolutions and the October Revolution, the dictatorship of the proletariat. A very slow dynamic is projected for this stage owing to the absence of the objective and subjective organs of the dictatorship of the proletariat: organs of power, as well as revolutionary Marxist parties and leaders." (Cited Theses.)

Finally, we summarized our entire position: "*The political revolution we call for in Russia is qualitatively different from the one we call for in China*. In the first case we insistently call for an immediate, sweeping liquidation of the present governmental system. In China we call for carrying forward the revolution now in progress and through this process firming up and advancing a form of workers power. This will permit us at the next stage to call for establishing a dictatorship of the proletariat through a struggle that would continue to develop the objective and subjective elements needed to make such a dictatorship possible." (Cited Theses.)

On this question, too, we fail to see why the majority comrades attack us. We said there had to be a political revolution in the "deformed" workers states, China for example, and they said, there didn't. It is true that we confused the struggle for workers democracy, that is political revolution, with the expression "dictatorship of the proletariat." What we have in fact maintained is that the political revolution in China would take a different form, with different demands, than in Russia.

Lastly, a third question on which we have been attacked: we have held that the Maoists are great theoreticians and practitioners of rural guerrilla warfare, and that a few of their military teachings should be incorporated into the Transitional Program (in the same way Lenin incorporated the teachings of a petty-bourgeois current, the populists, into his concept of the party).

On these three theoretical questions—the character of the Chinese, Yugoslav, and Cuban Communist parties; the question of the political revolution and its stages in the deformed workers' states, and the question of guerrilla warfare in relation to the Trotskyist program—our International still does not have a fully satisfactory theoretical answer. Many of our assertions are debatable. Is it correct to call petty-bourgeois parties that make a revolution "revolutionary"? Is it true that China, Yugoslavia, and Cuba went through a democratic, February-revolution stage? Should we incorporate rural guerrilla warfare into the Transitional Program? How do we do so?

These theoretical questions continue to arise, and these were our earlier contributions for discussion in the process of developing a scientific and definitive theoretical answer. But, returning to history, there are two clear facts: The

majority comrades said the Chinese and Yugoslav Communist parties were moving nearer to revolutionary Marxism, and we said that they were bureaucratic petty-bourgeois currents that were prevented from moving in this direction simply by their class nature. The majority comrades maintained that political revolution was not on the agenda in China and Yugoslavia; we maintained that it was.

E. The upsurge of the mass movement in Europe since the mid-1960s, with epicenters in France, Northern Ireland, Greece, and Spain.

Germain and his friends maintained that there would be no important problems in France and Italy during 1968 and 1969.

We can see how they prepared themselves to intervene in the famous French May:

"In capitalist Europe, the most important problems are found on the one hand in the oldest capitalist country, England, and on the other in Spain and Greece, because the aggravation of the economic situation in Europe, where the number of unemployed has presently reached 3 million, has reduced capitalism's room for maneuver in the poorest countries." (IEC resolution, February 1968.)

Far removed from the European arena, we did not foresee what might happen. Undoubtedly this was a shortcoming of ours. But what can the majority comrades say? What name do we give to those who weren't able to foresee events that in one week's time spectacularly changed the reality in which they themselves were immersed? What does one say of theoreticians who go around making four- and five-year prognoses and don't know how to look ahead two or three months? And they criticize us for not having predicted the Argentine situation one or two years in advance!

F. Armed struggle, with aspects of civil war in two specific Latin American countries since Santo Domingo—Bolivia and Chile.

In 1971 Germain and his friends said there was going to be armed struggle in all of Latin America, except in Bolivia and Chile.

The majority has insisted, time and time again, that armed struggle was on the agenda for our entire continent. In practice there was no country where it wouldn't be necessary to tactically apply the strategy of "armed struggle" so dear to Comrade Germain. But in 1971 there were countries where this armed struggle, according to the comrades of the majority, was "not on the agenda."

Less than two months before the fall of Torres, Comrade Frank asserted:

"For the time being, but for how long no one can say, the armed struggle is not today on the agenda in Chile or in Bolivia." (Letter to the 1971 SWP Convention, Internal Information Bulletin, November 1971, p. 16, emphasis added.)

When the Torres government came in, Comrade Blanco, expressing the opinion of the minority, said the exact opposite:

"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." (Letter from Hugo Blanco to Livio Maitan, October 17, 1970, Discussion on Latin America

G. The bloody end to Allende's reformist experiment in Chile.

In 1971 Germain and his friends held that Allende and imperialism would move by mutual agreement toward a democratic alternative.

The best way to see how the comrades of the majority characterized the Latin American bourgeois nationalist governments and their relations with imperialism is to reread Comrade Mandel's article, "Imperialism and the National Bourgeoisie in Latin America."

"It is in this change in economic interests that one must seek the explanation for *the peculiar complacency that American imperialism has displayed up to now with respect to the nationalizations of General Velasco, General Ovando, and even those prepared by Allende. . . .* Indemnify us and permit the reinvestment in our country's manufacturing sector: that is all we ask." (Mandel, *Revista de América*, July-October 1971, p. 33, emphasis added.)

"Military reformism' acting as the last barrier to 'anarchist' or 'Castroist subversion,' this is the strategic line that American imperialism seems to have adopted since the Rockefeller report." (*Ibid.*, p. 34.)

And, referring to the Allende government in particular, *La Gauche*, an organ closely connected to Comrade Germain, said:

"Nationalization of the copper mines has been the most spectacular of these measures. But this type of action is no longer an affront to the imperialists. In view of the ever-growing threat of the revolution in Latin America, which threatens to definitively overturn their interests, the imperialists have decided, after Rockefeller's tour, to modernize the forms of penetration in the area.

"Now imperialism is withdrawing from the extraction of raw materials, which was the principal and crudest form of plundering the third world. *Such a turn permits a seeming liberalization of the economy and social life, for limited sectors, from now on.* That is why the atmosphere appears to be loosening up in Latin America. *Imperialism has new perspectives, the 'left' military regimes have the wind in their sails. And with this perspective Allende could very well offer a democratic variant that would be in perfect agreement with the plans that neoimperialism has for Latin America.*" (*La Gauche*, January 8, 1971, emphasis added.)

While the comrades of the majority were making this kind of characterization, we had exactly the opposite opinion:

"At the moment the Chilean bourgeoisie is uniting behind the Allende government in support of expropriating the copper mines, *a situation of great friction with the United States is being created. . . .*" (*La Verdad*, October 27, 1971.)

"The continuation of the workers and peasants upsurge in Chile, and the maneuvers and pressures of the bourgeoisie against Allende's populist concessions, *and of imperialism against the nationalist measures,* are going to be raising the pressure in the cauldron despite the best intentions of the government and the brakes that are being applied by the reformist parties and the union bureaucracy." (*La Verdad*, November 10, 1971.) "The only road toward socialism for the Chilean workers is revo-

lution. The worker, student, and peasant vanguard, without making concessions to the reformism of the *Unidad Popular*, must expand the mobilization and organization of the masses for their economic and political demands. With this understanding and with class struggle methods, and without giving the slightest confidence to the Allende leadership, the vanguard must be in the front line in the defense of the Allende government *against the attacks of the right wing and an imperialist bourgeois coup.* This is the only way to guarantee what has been won; Allende's way sets the stage for defeats like those of Perón or Torres." (*La Verdad*, December 15, 1971, emphasis added.)

We have related the most important points on which there were differences between ourselves and the majority. It would be unfair on our part to deny that, along with their big mistakes, the comrades of the majority have been on target on some important questions, like their propaganda and activity in the course of the Algerian liberation struggle, and having supported the Castroist guerrilla struggle in Cuba from the beginning, as soon as the first news of its existence was received, as well as their denunciation of Yankee aggression in Korea and Vietnam, the recognition of the new youth vanguard, etc. But on these questions they weren't totally correct, either. The policy of "entryism *sui generis*" was also reflected in these areas (not as much in Cuba, where we had no forces, as in Algeria, where a group belonging to our International existed). In Algeria this policy took the form of a change in axis of the entry: it was no longer into the Stalinist parties, as was the case on a world scale, but into the FLN [Algerian National Liberation Front]. The result was political bending to this petty-bourgeois movement, with our comrades ending up as something like advisers to it. Our participation in the Algerian process did not achieve the minimum result of building a strong section of our International.

In order to relate this history, we have presented relevant documentation in each chapter. That is, we have complied with a fundamental methodological requirement that the majority comrades failed to meet in circulating their false histories of our organization in the International.

Nevertheless, despite its being documented, and despite our being able to bring forward at any time any additional documentation that is demanded of us, we are not going to fall into the second methodological error of the majority comrades: we are not going to propose that any body of our International vote on this history of the majority's course, as they have voted, without documentation and without prior notice, on the history of our organization. If our International wants to continue being the world revolutionary party of the working class, it will have to return to the tradition of voting only on political resolutions that arm all its cadres for the class struggle; never on historical balance sheets of the past political course of any organization or tendency.

The objective of this chapter is to indicate which points we disagree on, as well as which side was right and which side wrong in more than 25 years of struggle to build the International. The new cadres of our movement are now in a position to draw this balance; and it indicates that the bulk of the errors were the responsibility of the comrades who are today leading the majority tendency. The time has come to ask why they made so many errors.

3. Impressionism Is the Cause of the Errors

What caused these errors? There are several possible reasons.

A. In journalistic commentaries in 1946-48 it was held that Germany and Europe in the postwar period were exhausted and that a Morgenthau Plan existed to keep Germany at the level of a backward country. Comrade Germain wrote all the absurdities that we've seen because he devotedly believed in the efficacy of imperialism's plans, especially the Morgenthau Plan. He didn't think, as we did (or as any good Marxist would), that the "rational," subjective plans of imperialism in the economic sphere are rarely, if ever, achieved, because the "irrational," objective laws of capitalism and imperialism prevail. On the contrary, Comrade Germain translated his belief in the plans of imperialism into Marxist language and drew the general conclusion that Europe was condemned to stagnation and decay, and Germany to being an agricultural country forever.

B. In the face of the rise of the mass movement, the Stalinists made attempts at conciliation with imperialism and Eastern European capitalism. Those were its "plans." But the plans of the bureaucracy could not overcome the objective laws of the class struggle either. Comrade Germain, forgetting the social character of the bureaucracy, drew the conclusion that conciliation with capitalism and private property in Eastern Europe was an "eternal quality" of the Stalinist bureaucracy. This position was a total revision of the Trotskyist analysis of the social base of the Soviet bureaucracy. The bureaucracy, as the *bureaucracy* of a workers state (and precisely "for reasons inherent in its social nature"), could not live with (nor combine with) "private property," much less with capitalism (state or private) and imperialism in the countries the Red Army had entered.

C. Then came the cold war and the United States armed to the teeth to attack the USSR, while all the journalists in the world were saying that only a miracle would be able to prevent a third world war. Comrade Germain, in accordance with Pablo's view, forgot one detail (the same one the bourgeois journalists overlooked in their descriptive and mechanical analyses): the class struggle on a world scale. He came up with a theory that war was inevitable once the United States had fulfilled its plan for arming (once again a "plan" appears here!). The class struggle taken as a whole was powerless to influence this "plan" of the imperialists. For Germain, as for the bourgeois journalists, only a miracle (he said the American revolution) would be able to prevent a world war in the short run.

D. Tito had broken with the USSR and Mao had led a great revolution, the greatest since the Russian revolution. One had to explain these phenomena. Comrade Germain forgot that, for Trotskyists, when a petty-bourgeois or bureaucratic leadership is compelled by circumstances to lead a mobilization (from a strike to the seizure of power), it does not therefore cease to be petty-bourgeois or bureaucratic. In this case, he applied a revisionist concept, a regular practice of the majority comrades (as the SWP comrades have fully demonstrated), one that

can be summarized this way: "Every reformist or bureaucratic party that leads the masses to power ceases to be reformist or bureaucratic." Comrade Pablo's conclusion, supported by Germain, was that Tito and Mao, and their parties, had ceased being bureaucratic and Stalinist; that they were drawing close to revolutionary Marxism, and that a political revolution was therefore not called for in Yugoslavia and China. The majority comrades now again propose the revisionist concept of 1953-56 for China.

Pablo and his friends thus ran the course of their analyses of the great postwar revolutionary wave without having been correct in one single serious prediction.

E. Then came a new European upswing, the one that began in the 1960s. Comrade Germain, an assiduous reader of economic reports and addicted to drawing his conclusions from these reports, did no better than before. England, Spain, and Greece were the three countries facing the "most serious problems" because they were in the worst economic situation. Thus he repeated his economist error of 1951, when he had based his prediction about the outbreak of the war on the American armament plan, and not on the class struggle.

Instead of looking at the class struggle in all its manifestations, and at the economic factor as an important element to be taken into account, Comrade Germain did the exact opposite. He took the economic factor as the fundamental element, and practically the only one. If he had used the Marxist method, he would have taken into account that the student movement could blow up at any time; that France was just getting over serious colonial problems (such as the war in Algeria) that were combined with the war in Vietnam, and that there was a leftist tradition in the French student movement; that, in the final analysis, the new rise had to go through the old experiences again; and, finally, that the French and Italian workers and revolutionary movement had been the most powerful in the immediate postwar period, and that logically would have to be heard from again. Comrade Germain took none of this into account when he made his February 1968 predictions for Europe in the IEC resolution.

F. The rise of the European student movement filled our ranks with enthusiastic admirers of Guevarist guerrilla warfare and of Fidel Castro's Cuba, and the Guevarist theses began to become fashionable in our circles. One of these theses maintains that the more reactionary a regime is, the better are the conditions for armed struggle; and, inversely, the more democratic it is, the worse these conditions become, to the point of their practically disappearing. True to their tradition of following, and having our International follow, the fashions that pop up among the European intelligentsia and in the student movement, the majority comrades transmitted this Guevarist thesis into our ranks. This is how Frank, in the name of the majority of the United Secretariat, could write the letter to the SWP in which he asserted that the only Latin American countries where possibilities for armed struggle did not exist were Bolivia and Chile, where "coincidentally" the regimes with the widest margins of democracy existed at that moment—a prediction exactly the opposite to what happened.

G. Finally, the appearance of bourgeois nationalist regimes also took Comrade Germain and his friends by surprise. They had just said there was no perspective for regimes of this kind, which would make economic and democratic concessions to the mass movement. But when these regimes made their appearance and bourgeois journalists began to speak of them, they could do no less than accept their existence.

But "how to explain them"? The minority explained them on the basis of the frictions between the national bourgeoisies and imperialism and the pressure of the rising mass movement. The majority could not be satisfied with these simple reasons based on the situation in the class struggle. So they turned again to an erudite study of imperialism's plans, in this case the "Rockefeller Report." They came up with the new category of "military reformism" and they deduced that those reformist governments, and particularly Allende's, "may very well offer a democratic variant that would fit in perfectly with the development plans that neoimperialism has for Latin America." It is unfortunate for the authors of such a prognosis, and much more so for the Chilean masses and for Salvador Allende, that the imperialists did not pay as much attention to the "Rockefeller Report" as did the majority comrades.

Our Proposal: A Joint Declaration by Germain and Moreno

The furthest thing from our minds is to want to convince the new comrades that we never made mistakes, or that we want to put to a vote a resolution justify-

ing all of our past policies. Posadas used to always sneer about the fact that in all our oral and written reports in our party we proceeded very slowly, explaining the mistakes we had made, so we could come to a conclusion. At the beginning we were an isolated, new, and inexperienced leadership which logically had to make many mistakes. What happened was that, all things considered, we made fewer mistakes as we went along.

What distinguishes us from the present majority is our recognizing our errors and the fact that they have not been of a consistent nature.

This is why we propose an agreement to Comrade Germain, a dear comrade for 25 years in this hard struggle to build our International. Let us sign a joint declaration for the new cadres of the International. In it we should say: "The signers suggest that you scrupulously study all our past positions, which are filled with all kinds of errors. We do this because we want you to avoid repeating these mistakes, because the only thing in which we take pride is the general course we have followed, not this or that position. There was a weighty reason for our errors: we are a leadership formed, not in the midst of a colossal rise of the mass movement in our countries, but rather during the economic boom and the retreat of the mass movement in the cold war period."

Do you accept this, Comrade Germain? If so, we will make you a concession; in the postscript you can add a clarification: "I make it clear that in his political lifetime Comrade Moreno has said a few more stupid things than I did." Although we would consider it a false statement, we would promise not to form a tendency or faction to correct it.

CHAPTER III

THE EUROPEAN DOCUMENT AND THE FRENCH SECTION

Comrade Mary-Alice Waters has indicated the serious errors in methodology and orientation contained in the majority's European document. In spite of the fact that we are not European specialists and that we consider the European comrades' opinion to be indispensable, the document raises a series of questions for us which we think it necessary to state. That is the purpose of this article, and that is why the questions we shall ask will be greater in number than the definitive responses we can supply on the subject. These questions, which we raise with no great pretensions, can help to explain why we consider the European document unsuitable to arm our European sections in the development of their activity.

1. Has Western Europe Become an Island?

The majority's European document cannot be faulted for lack of audacity in analysis when it says our sections must prepare themselves for "the socialist revolution (which) is once again on the agenda . . . from a conjunctural point of view." ("The Building of Revolutionary Parties in Capitalist Europe," *IIDB* Vol. IX, No. 5, November 1972, p. 9.) Neither can it be accused of modesty in the perspective it sees ahead when it insists on the need "to prepare the masses of the European proletariat for any attempt at counterrevolutionary intervention against a *socialist revolution winning victory first in a single country of capitalist Europe*, preparation that must be undertaken in advance and in a systematic way as the proletariat returns to its internationalist traditions." (*Ibid.*, p. 26. Emphasis added.)

This ethereal formula sums up a large part of the majority comrades' thinking and, taken together with the rest of their document, obliges us to pose what seem to us to be five important questions.

First Question: Who is going to lead the socialist revolution in capitalist Europe?

The majority document asserts that "the socialist revolution is once again on the agenda . . . from a conjunctural point of view." Even more, it lays out a political line for "a socialist revolution winning victory first in a single country of capitalist Europe. . . ." Our first question is, Who will lead this "first socialist revolution"? There is only one Trotskyist reply to this question: "In the first place, only a Trotskyist party that has become a party with mass influence will be able to guarantee a victorious socialist revolution in any country."

But the document asserts that the perspective of building mass Trotskyist parties is excluded at this stage of the class struggle in Europe. We can only deduce that, as the majority comrades see it, it is possible that the proletariat, without our leadership, will take power in some European country. That would amount to saying that we must revise our entire analysis and program.

If this is not the case, if the comrades think we will be able to build a mass Trotskyist party in some Euro-

pean country that will lead the masses toward "a first socialist revolution," then we are faced with a second contradiction: The mere existence of such a party would signify a complete change for the entire International because it would signify the possibility for building similar parties throughout the world, or at least throughout Europe.

Whatever may be the majority comrades' reply, it will destroy the basis of their entire document. If a socialist revolution is going to take place without our leadership, we have to begin by revising Trotskyism altogether, something the document does not propose to do. If we are going to lead the revolution, the possibility of building Trotskyist parties with mass influence is posed in an immediate way for all of Europe; but in this case the rest of the document is purposeless since it is based on the opposite premise.

Second Question: Does Western Europe have nothing to do with Eastern Europe?

According to the majority's document on Europe it would seem that Western Europe has become an island having no connection with the rest of Europe. The document is directed toward building revolutionary parties in "capitalist Europe" and preparing the masses for the victory of a socialist revolution in some capitalist country; but without preparing them for the victory of a political revolution in some East European country.

Any document that enlarges upon theoretical hypotheses should point out that the one possibility is as likely as the other. The expansion of trade between East and West is going to provoke serious crises in the East European workers states. Although this increase in trade may alleviate to a small degree the intensity of the crisis in the West—which we do not believe to be the case—it most certainly will give an impetus to the crisis facing the bureaucratic regimes in the East by strengthening restorationist tendencies and rapidly bringing the internal contradictions to a head.

There are many reasons for this. Without the counterweight of democracy and constant mobilization of the working class, increased trade between the capitalist West and the bureaucratized workers states strengthens the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois tendencies of the most privileged sections of the bureaucracy and the middle class that gain inspiration from the higher economic level of imperialism. At the other pole, the need for the workers to defend the workers state comes to the fore.

A great revolution can be provoked by a serious threat and a brutal offensive unleashed by reactionary forces. That is why we must pay close attention to the general trends in the East European workers states, especially Yugoslavia and the USSR. Situations can arise in these countries that will hasten the revolutionary process in the West through the establishment of fraternal support to the political revolution by workers in the West.

But, as in the earlier case, a political revolution in

one of the East European workers states can only come about if there is a mass Trotskyist party in the lead. Such a development would bring on the conclusive crisis of Stalinism and would portend a colossal leap forward on the mass level for all our sections in Europe (and in the world). The mass Trotskyist party that would have led the political revolution would become the central core of our International.

A European document worthy of the name would have to include an entire section on Eastern Europe and would have to present a full transitional program for the political revolution in these countries. This program, which ought to start from elemental democratic slogans and the minimum economic demand for reduction of the bureaucracy's privileges, is completely absent from the majority's European document.

The absence is a serious error for two reasons: First, as we have already seen, there is nothing that allows us to predict that the socialist revolution will triumph in a West European country before the victory of the political revolution in an East European country. Second, the European revolution's high degree of organic interconnection ever since the French revolution. This latter factor means that the European revolution will be a unique process from the historical as well as conjunctural point of view; and wherever it begins, in the East or in the West, it will extend itself almost instantaneously, like a burning trail of gunpowder, throughout Europe.

This document is worthless in reference to the building of our parties in capitalist Europe. This document itself, even if it were accompanied by another on building parties in Eastern Europe, one that had a specific program, would still have to encompass the great tasks that would face the proletariat of capitalist Europe if the political revolution in some East European country were to be achieved first. If it does not put forward these tasks and the corresponding slogans, any analysis of the European situation and any political line based on such an analysis will not hold water.

Third Question: What is to be done after the seizure of power in some country? Continue the offensive, or go over to the defensive?

The third question suggested by a reading of the European document has to do with the following, apparently correct, phrase: "To prepare the masses of the European proletariat for any attempt at counterrevolutionary intervention against a socialist revolution winning victory first in a single country of capitalist Europe. . . ."

It is clear that a first socialist revolution will run the risk of attack by the bourgeoisie in the rest of Europe, and by the whole imperialist world. It is also proper for us to call upon the European and world proletariat to defend such a revolution. But is this our strategy?

According to the theory of the permanent revolution, if the revolution is victorious in one European country, the task that comes to the fore immediately is the unfolding of the revolution in the rest of Europe; an offensive, not a defensive program.

According to the theory of socialism in one country, should the revolution be victorious in whatever country in the world, the Communist parties must dedicate themselves to defending this revolution as their most important task rather than attempting to extend the revolution

to all other countries. This is the theory that meant turning all the Communist parties in the world into agents of the Kremlin's diplomacy when it was put into practice by the Soviet bureaucracy. It finally destroyed the Third International.

This formulation in the European document is extremely dangerous because it coincides formally with the Stalinist formulation. The first thing that must be said from the viewpoint of Trotskyist theory is that a revolution in some European country poses before us the offensive task of extending it to the other countries, not a defensive task as is suggested in the document. If this defensive task is a part of a strategic offensive, Trotskyism teaches us, it is correct and proper; when it is raised as the only task, as in the European document, it is, at the very least, dangerous.

Fourth Question: Why does the "Socialist United States of Europe" not figure among the ten central tasks?

We are led by the hand to the fourth question by the omission of Eastern Europe and the formulation of an incorrect defensive policy to be applied after the seizure of power in some capitalist European country. The slogan "For the Socialist United States of Europe" does not figure among the ten central tasks of this period and is mentioned only as a secondary axis for propaganda. However, when Trotsky formulated this slogan he did so on the basis of a theoretical conception and on concrete reality (the theory of the permanent revolution, especially its international character, and the specific organic coherence of the European revolution).

This latter characteristic has been reinforced during the last decades by the ever greater unity of European capitalism.

The triumph of a political revolution in the East or a socialist revolution in the West would mean for Trotskyists that the task brought to the fore is the permanent unfolding of the revolution, extending it to all the countries of Europe. And what slogan do we have for this except the European Federation of Socialist States? The absence of this slogan from among the ten central tasks posed in the majority's European document is a clear example of the perils that lie in wait behind the other obscure or incorrect formulations. If we hold the view that from now on Western Europe has nothing to do with Eastern Europe and that following the seizure of power in some country the main task is to defend, not extend the revolution, the fact that the slogan for the European Federation of Socialist States does not figure among the central tasks follows as an inevitable consequence.

Fifth Question: Is there no relationship between the European revolution and the revolution in the colonies and semicolonies of European imperialism?

This question stems from the fact that the European document pays no attention at all to the organic relationship that exists between the European revolution and the revolution in European imperialism's few colonies and many semicolonies, nor in those that it may yet conquer.

We do not refer here to the general relationship that exists among all revolutionary processes, whether or not they are colonial. We refer, for example, to the relation that exists between the European revolution and the cur-

rent heroic guerrilla struggle in the Portuguese colonies against Portuguese imperialism and European imperialism in general. Also, we refer to the guerrilla groups or mass movements in the French colonies and semicolonies against French imperialism. We refer to the concrete, specific relationship between the national liberation struggles in all colonies and semicolonies of the various European imperialists on the one hand, and the European socialist revolution on the other.

That is, as far as we are concerned, there is no possibility for building revolutionary parties in capitalist Europe if basic demands against European imperialism are not constantly raised and agitated for. The underpinning of European capitalism is imperialist exploitation of its colonies and semicolonies, and the only way to destroy European capitalism is to destroy it as it is—imperialist capitalism. Almost any kind of party could be built in capitalist Europe without raising a central demand against European imperialism, but not revolutionary Trotskyist parties.

2. Is Western Europe No Longer Imperialist?

The most conspicuously weak section of the document is precisely the first section. Here the economic and social crisis of "neocapitalism" is taken up, but not one line—not to speak of a chapter—is dedicated to the crisis of European imperialism; to the relationship between the metropolitan center and the colonies and semicolonies. If we are to go by the economic and social analysis in the document, European capitalism exploits only the working class in its own countries. We cannot deny that this is consistent to the letter with the workerist nature of the entire document, but reality is different. European imperialism exploits the working class in its countries and it exploits its colonies and semicolonies. Between Europe and the countries it exploits there is an economic, as well as social and political, dialectic that the document does not indicate.

Just because the European imperialist countries are lesser imperialists does not mean that they have ceased to be imperialist. In form they have been transformed into the junior partners of Yankee imperialism. As a result of the colonial revolution they have changed the form of their domination, imitating the Yankees, but the domination continues to exist. The European colonial empire has in large part become semicolonial, its dominions are no longer colonies but rather are dependent and semicolonial countries. Historical shifts have caused a transformation in the colonial revolution from a struggle against political subjection into a struggle for national, economic, and political liberation. Imperial domination has become more subtle, but no less important because of that.

Some Hypotheses Not Foreseen

If the European countries have been transformed from colonial into semicolonial empires, we should attempt to make the current situation and its probable dynamic clear in a hypothetical and general document. Will the European imperialists go to the point of armed intervention in their semicolonies when their dominion is in danger (as does Yankee imperialism)? Are the interventions in Ireland,

Chad, and the Portuguese colonies the last interventions, or are they an indication that intervention is more likely in the future?

As for us, we have no doubts: Ireland and the Portuguese colonies are indications of the future for European imperialism unless the workers succeed in tying its hands. French imperialism is right now instigating coups and interventions in the countries it dominates.

The document predicts inflation and unemployment for the West European workers and the possibility of decisive battles between the working class and capitalist reaction within four or five years. Will not this increasing misery and unemployment, as well as the tendency toward reactionary governments and decisive struggles, be expressed in a much more brutal way in the relations between the European imperial centers and the colonial and semicolonial masses? We say, yes, definitely. It is in keeping with the logic of imperialist domination to try to unload its crisis onto the colonies and semicolonies. There will also be brutal reactions on the part of the colonial masses if the strike movements in Mauritania, South Africa, and Rhodesia, or the guerrilla movements in Angola and Chad are any indication.

The majority comrades' European document neither foresees any of this, nor even deigns to touch upon it in passing.

A Dangerous Deviation?

We see some contradictions between the European document and some general assertions in *Rouge*. In *Rouge*, No. 200, it is said:

". . . the Fourth International assumes its responsibilities for supporting and actively participating in protests against the imperialist stranglehold on the black continent."

But there is not even a note in the majority's document on Europe about this solemn promise. However much we have read and reread the document, we have not come across even a single phrase similar to the *Rouge* statement. Neither do we find this task among the ten central tasks. Given that we are talking about a document for Europe, the basic demand that is lacking is: "For the self-determination of all the colonies and semicolonies of European imperialism."

The absence of these demands; the fact that the struggle for self-determination for the colonies and semicolonies of European imperialism is not considered a central task of the European workers and masses; and the fact that it is considered possible to "build revolutionary parties in capitalist Europe" without raising the demand for self-determination, clearly constitute a dangerous ideological deviation. If we were not aware of the fact that in their daily practice our European sections and militants carried on a real struggle against imperialism, this deviation would give us reason to fear that it could lead to objective political capitulation to European imperialism.

3. A Document That Stands Mute before the Vietnam of European Imperialism, the Portuguese Colonies

The program put forward by the majority in their document leaves out a fundamental point that reflects their evident forgetfulness about the imperialist character of

Europe. They say nothing about European imperialism's Vietnam: the guerrillas and the national liberation movements in the Portuguese colonies. This silence, this muteness, would be inexcusable even if the Portuguese colonies were directly and exclusively oppressed only by Portugal. The silence is made far worse since the Portuguese colonies are such only formally; in reality, they are colonies of European imperialism as a whole, mainly of Britain, Germany, and France in company with Belgium, the United States, and Japan.

In fact, Portugal is a sub-metropolitan center, or sub-imperialism. It is the poorest country of Western Europe and its economy is controlled by foreign, particularly British, investments.

The Portuguese Colonies: A Real Vietnam.

Financed and armed by Yankee and European imperialism, especially by the latter through NATO, Portugal has launched a tremendous wave of repression against the liberation movements in its colonies. When the brutality of this repression became known it horrified world public opinion. In the year 1961 alone, when the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) opened up guerrilla struggle, the imperialist war resulted in nearly 50,000 deaths.

Among the NATO countries, Germany, Britain, and France are the ones that supply the most arms for the war against the people of the Portuguese colonies. The case of France is the most extreme. It has placed no restriction on its supply of arms and has refused to vote for any kind of sanction against Portugal, either in the United Nations or in the Council of Europe. And since 1970 it has not permitted representatives of the liberation movements to enter France.

The war in the Portuguese colonies now has the same characteristics as the war in Vietnam. Of the 150,000 NATO Portuguese soldiers that were in Europe, only 10,000 remain; the rest have been sent to Africa. The Portuguese are attempting to raze the liberated zones and relocate the peasant population in fortified hamlets, which are actually concentration camps. Communications between the urban centers has to be maintained almost exclusively by air since the guerrillas are in control of the main overland routes. This is the reality of the class struggle in the Portuguese colonies; it is truly the Vietnam of European imperialism.

'Solidarity' Is Not Enough

Despite all this, the majority's European document says not a single word about this struggle. We cannot make up for this silence by saying that we are going to maintain "solidarity" with anti-imperialist struggles in general. It is not enough to speak of "solidarity" when the very countries in which we live are massacring an entire people. It is not possible to speak of "solidarity" when we owe a part of our high standard of living to the exploitation of those who are being massacred. It is completely inadequate to speak of "solidarity" when the only way our class brothers in the Portuguese colonies can triumph is for us to mobilize against the imperialism of our own country and our own continent. It is even more inadequate if we are conscious of the fact that victory for the guerrillas

would be a great advance for the European workers. Does it seem to the majority comrades that it is enough to speak of "solidarity" in general without even naming the guerrillas in the Portuguese colonies?

"Solidarity," stated in passing in one sentence of an entire document, is not what is required here. Something much more important is needed. In this case, denunciation of and struggle against "our own imperialism" is our principal task on the historic scale. If the working masses of our continent or our country are poisoned by imperialist chauvinism and do not understand that their countries are imperialist, we must denounce imperialism every day and every hour and never consider this attack and this struggle as a secondary task that deserves no more than passing mention in a single sentence.

Do the majority comrades perhaps believe they can "build revolutionary parties in capitalist Europe" in this period without giving primary importance to the struggle against European imperialism, the assassin of the African people? Are they sure that such parties would be "revolutionary"?

Or, do the majority comrades perhaps believe that this omission can be remedied by carrying on a campaign of solidarity with the anti-imperialist struggle of the Irish people? Is it certain, on the other hand, that the majority document seriously proposes such a campaign? It does not appear so to us since it does not say that right now a specific campaign should be launched around the demand, "British Troops Out of Ireland Now!" Perhaps this is not one of the basic agitational demands we should direct to the British and European proletariat in general? What do the "solidarity" campaigns amount to without this demand? Absolutely nothing.

What Happened to the Love for 'Armed Struggle'?

Things are even worse with regard to the Portuguese colonies. Ireland enjoys the privilege of being part of Europe. At least it is mentioned in passing in the majority's European document. But the Portuguese colonies are not even mentioned.

Is it not notable that those who defend guerrilla war and armed struggle for Latin America do not even mention the heroic guerrillas in the Portuguese colonies? How can it be explained that they do not raise the need to defend these guerrillas against the brutal attacks of European imperialism? How is it to be understood that armed struggle is proposed for an entire period on a whole continent dominated by Yankee imperialism and not a single word is said about the armed struggle in countries dominated by their own imperialism? Is it not strange that those who defend the ERP in Argentina vote with both hands for a European document that does not take a political stand toward the only people who are today engaged in civil war with European imperialism itself—the people of the Portuguese colonies?

We should not lose sight of the fact that this European document, which does not center in on the only two places in the European empire where there is, or could be armed struggle, has the same authors and is the other side of a document that proposed armed struggle for an entire continent: The Latin American resolution of our International's Tenth World Congress.

4. Rouge in the Face of French Imperialism

In the same way that the majority comrades consider the Bolivian section the model for Latin America, the former French section wins the blue ribbon in Europe. Can this perhaps be because the former French section provides a clear reflection of the inconsistency of the European document in the face of that continent's imperialists just as the Bolivian section applied (with catastrophic results) the Ninth World Congress resolution? We have reason to suspect that this is the case since *Rouge* is characterized by the lack of a *systematic* policy to denounce French imperialism or European imperialism in general. It also fails to raise, as a permanent, central demand, self-determination for the colonies and semicolonies of these empires.

Rouge and the Portuguese Guerrillas: Mentioned Three Times in Two Years

We shall begin with European imperialism and its Vietnam, the guerrillas in the Portuguese colonies. *Rouge*, which was the official organ of the former French section, devoted only three articles to this struggle during the entire year of 1972 and the part of 1973 up to this writing.

The first article was entitled: "Halt the arms shipments to the Portuguese colonialists!" It appeared in No. 164 and says:

"The French bourgeoisie, which has considerable holdings in Portugal itself and in the Portuguese colonies, actively participates in providing military (and other) support to the Portuguese colonialists, above all by furnishing arms for the Portuguese army.

". . . France is one of the most important suppliers of the Portuguese army. . . .

"Halt the arms shipments to the Portuguese colonialists! Long live the struggle of the peoples of Angola, Mozambique, and Guinea!" [Emphasis in original.]

The second article was a statement by the Political Bureau of the Communist League that took up half a column in the "International Notes" section of No. 167. It asserted: "We call on the French and Portuguese workers to arouse public opinion and strengthen their unity against Portuguese colonialism and against the French government's support to Lisbon."

"The third article was dedicated to the guerrilla struggle in the Portuguese colonies and took up one page in No. 216. It said:

"French revolutionary militants should bear in mind that a number of French corporations are taking part in the pillage of Mozambique, and that only a few months ago [Finance Minister Valéry] Giscard d'Estaing was there on a 'safari.' We must also demand the right of leaders of FRELIMO, MPLA, and PAIGC to enter France. Finally, we must participate in solidarity actions like those held by our comrades in the IMG when [Portuguese Prime Minister Marcel] Caetano came to London."

The Reason for a Default

That is all. Our French comrades are not so dazzling when they deal with a national liberation struggle whose historic importance for European imperialism is almost as great as that of Vietnam for Yankee imperialism. Never-

theless, these three quotes are enough to demonstrate that they do not lack the courage to denounce their own imperialism. Why, then, is there no systematic campaign of denunciation? Simply because the majority comrades in the leadership of the former French section give it the importance they think it merits; the same importance that can be discovered by reading the European document: for them, it is a completely secondary task.

It would be good for each French comrade to compare a collection of *Rouge* with a collection of *The Militant*. They could then study the systematic campaign of our American comrades on an analogous question: the Vietnamese guerrilla struggle against the American empire. There is not one single issue in the entire *Militant* collection that does not indicate the fundamental importance of defending the guerrillas and denouncing U.S. imperialism. But, as we already know, this is "archeo-Trotskyism" to the comrades of the majority.

French Imperialism

The comrades in the leadership of the ex-Communist League might reply to us by saying that if they mentioned the Portuguese guerrillas only three times during two years it was because the colonies belong to Portugal and are not colonies or semicolonies of their own, French imperialism. We have already said this is not the case, that the Portuguese colonies are also colonies of European imperialism in general, and in addition, of Yankee and Japanese imperialism. But, let us see what is happening with French imperialism.

If we seriously analyze French economic reality we discover that French imperialism continues to exist and continues to exploit its former colonies, even though the majority of them are now politically independent countries. Treaties like OCAM establish a semicolonial relationship with these excolonies. The first and second Yaounde treaties extended this relationship to the European Common Market. The Evian Treaty brought the countries of the Maghreb under French and European dominion. If this is not sufficient, there are the Djibouti and Malagasy military bases, which have units to be lent out to "intervene" at the "call" of governments friendly to France, as was done in Chad in the attempt to crush the uprising led by the Chad Liberation Front (Fronilat).

French imperialism clearly exists and is relatively powerful.

A Promise from the ex-Communist League

When we started out to track down the policy held by the comrades of the former French section toward their own imperialism we came across a promising beginning. The "CC at the end of August" in 1972 launched "a campaign against French colonialism, for the acquittal of Courbain (a leader of the Martinique liberation movement) and to present proposals on these questions to the French revolutionary organizations." (*Rouge* No. 170)

Even more promising was the denunciation in *Rouge*: "French imperialism, 'our' imperialism, occupies a select position in the olympiad of colonialism: after Portugal (of which, by the way, it is one of the principal arms suppliers), France is today the number-two direct colonial power in the world." (*Rouge* No. 174)

The promise appeared to be materializing when *Rouge* told us: "Revolutionaries fighting inside the metropolitan center are *duty bound to carry out permanent propaganda against colonialism*. Against chauvinism, against ignorance; it is up to us to show the true fact of French colonialism." (*Rouge*, No. 176)

Not a Single Word about the Semicolonies

The French comrades have told us that France is the number-two direct colonial power in the world. We should add that it is the third or fourth indirect colonial power; that is, it maintains semi-colonial relations with its ex-colonies as we have seen. Further, France acts as a junior partner of Yankee imperialism in the exploitation of some of the latter's most important semicolonies, as is the case with Argentina.

During our search through *Rouge* we many times came across the demand for independence for the colonies. But we did not find the demand for political and *economic* self-determination for these colonies. Neither did we find the demand, "Out with French imperialist monopolies in the semicolonies!" Nor, "An Immediate break with the semicolonial treaties!" Nor, "Out with French monopolies in the colonies and semicolonies of other imperialists!"

This is extremely serious since the bulk of French imperialism's foreign investments are not concentrated in its colonies, but in its semicolonies and in those of other imperialists where France acts as a junior partner. It is worth noting that the French comrades do not attack the fundamental base of French imperialism, which is not its colonial but its semicolonial dominion.

The Unfulfilled Promise

At any rate, taken in by the promise of a "permanent propaganda campaign against colonialism," even if only one-sided, we went through the 86 issues of *Rouge* that appeared between January 6, 1972, and October 19, 1973. We came away sorely disappointed. We found 23 articles in all, one article every four issues. That is, the ex-Communist League comrades denounce their own imperialism once a month.

The vast majority of these articles are of a descriptive nature, they do not constitute a permanent campaign and are not held together by any central demand. With few exceptions, these articles are signed by correspondents or are declarations of national liberation movements; that is, they are not official positions of our former French section.

The 86 issues of *Rouge* we went through contained 1,548 pages. The colonial problem took up 11; that is, the denunciation of French colonialism took up much less than 1 percent of the ex-Communist League's former official organ. Finally, out of the 23 articles we discovered, two fill two pages each, four take up one page each, and three take up a half-page each. The other 14 articles take up less than a half-page each; that is, they are completely secondary in relation to the newspaper as a whole.

The Program: The ex-Communist League Central Committee and Congress in the Face of French Imperialism

The paucity is not limited to *Rouge*. One has to work

very hard to find any mention of colonial and semicolonial France in the analyses as well as in the program of the former French section.

The last former Communist League congress was opened with a document approved by the Central Committee: "What the Communist League Calls For." The former League's leadership does not analyze the crisis of French imperialism either in this document, or in any of its documents. It is as if Martinique, French Guiana, the Ivory Coast, and Togo were nonexistent. It is as if there were no millions of French francs invested by French monopolies in their colonies and semicolonies, and in the colonies of other imperialists for whom they act as junior partners. The national resolution of the ex-League centers on an analysis of the crisis of capitalism and the "neocapitalist system." It devotes not a single line, not to speak of a paragraph or chapter, to French imperialism.

The programmatic part of this document is a little better than the analytic part since it incorporates the immediate recognition of ". . . the right to self-determination and independence for the so-called TOM and DOM [Overseas Territories and Overseas Provinces] . . ." and support for "the struggles for national independence" (p. 167) and for "the unconditional independence of the TOM and DOM" (p. 161).

This is said in passing and without calling for the liquidation of semicolonial pacts such as OCAM, Evian, etc. Finally, the importance given to French imperialism can be measured by the fact that all references to it in the entire document fill only two pages out of 171. We shall leave this document behind and go on to see to what degree the leadership of our former French section is preoccupied by the fact that its country is imperialist. The Central Committee meeting of January 8 and 9, 1972, decided on four campaigns. Education on "The socialism we desire and how to win it"; Vietnam and the Indochina Solidarity Front; for the release of three French comrades imprisoned in Spain; and denunciation of General Massu (assassin of the Algerian war). Apart from this last point, which dealt only very indirectly with the problem of French colonialism, not a word was said about the subject.

The August CC meeting decided, finally, on a campaign which, as we have seen, was not systematically carried out in the official organ. The ex-Communist League congress did not raise the demand for national self-determination for the French semicolonies. The May Day Manifesto did not mention European or French imperialism. The political resolution approved by the congress did not speak of French imperialism, let alone national self-determination.

The Electoral Campaign of the ex-Communist League

We still had a little hope: the election campaign. This was a beautiful opportunity since it gave us a chance to spread our propaganda to much broader sectors of the population. Here we discovered what Krivine said against French imperialism in Martinique, a French colony. But we were disillusioned by what is referred to as anti-imperialist propaganda in the heart of imperialism, that is, on French territory.

Weber, apparently in the name of the party, explained in a programmatic article on the election campaign, the

"real transitional program for socialism" in France in the following way:

"For our part, we say to the Communist workers: a genuine workers government would not limit itself to nationalizing thirteen new trusts and instituting a phony form of workers control. It would nationalize, without indemnity or repayment, the main capitalist corporations in order to assure that the public sector really becomes the dominant sector of the economy. It would at the same time nationalize foreign trade in order to remove the economy from the unchecked control of the world capitalist system. It would place the publicly held corporations under workers control and would give supervisory committees, which would be made up of workers delegates who are elected and can be recalled at any moment, real power and the real means for supervising their factories. In the factories in the private sector, it would institute workers supervision over production, recognizing and protecting the workers supervisory committees. The power of the workers over the entire economy would be exercised through the democratic elaboration of an economic plan that would be debated in every workers council and approved by their national congress. The realization of such an economic program by a government that, moreover, would have at its disposal a new state apparatus, would genuinely promote a "new logic of development," assuring a prodigious growth of the productive forces. But this would require something quite different from an electoral victory. It would require the existence of a "mass movement of an unparalleled breadth," which alone would be capable of expropriating the bourgeoisie and dismantling its state. In short, it would require a social revolution."

Not a word about the liquidation of French imperialism, giving economic and political freedom to the colonies and semicolonies, that is, the right of national self-determination. Is this not a curious lapse for one of the ex-League's main leaders?

Is the Union of the Left Pro-Imperialist or Anti-Imperialist?

The lapse is not accidental. Comrade Weber's article is in keeping with the concept found in the European document and in the leadership of the former French section: denunciation of and struggle against their own imperialism is not one of the central tasks of the revolutionary party of the French proletariat.

For the same reasons the CC of the former French section has characterized the Union of the Left as a "thoroughly reformist formation" and not a popular front. We don't want to spend time on this matter here, we want to take up something more serious: At no time has the Union of the Left been defined as a pro-imperialist formation, as Trotsky defined the popular front in Spain and France. What do the majority comrades think? Is the Union of the Left pro-imperialist or anti-imperialist? Care should be taken in replying to this question because in a metropolitan center like France to be anti-imperialist is the same as being anticapitalist. And if it is a "reformist" formation that is under discussion, it could hardly be anticapitalist. But, if the Union of the Left is not anti-imperialist, how can the leading comrades of the League explain why they have not denounced the

pro-imperialist character of the Union of the Left?

This oversight contrasts strongly with the fact that in the same document "Indochina work" is singled out as an important task, and a united front with the Communist Party on Indochina is proposed. That is to say, the only anti-imperialist work proposed is that which has to do directly with a different imperialism, Yankee imperialism; and nothing is said about French imperialism, or about its colonies and semicolonies.

"Three Axes": Not One against Imperialism

As a whole, the election campaign committed the same "oversight." Its "three axes," as we read them in *Rouge*, are very clear, but denunciation of French imperialism does not figure among them.

"In the first place, it must be an intense *campaign of denouncing capitalism*. . . . This means denouncing capitalist exploitation, oppression, and waste in all their forms. . . .

"Second, our campaign must be a *campaign of demystifying the Common Program and the Union of the Left*. . . .

"Third, revolutionaries should use their campaign to expose *bureaucratic 'socialism'* which, no matter what he says, Georges Marchais still supports. . . ."

Finally, the ex-League's electoral manifesto neither mentions that France is an imperialist country nor deigns to say that it has colonies and semicolonies.

How profoundly different from the comrades of the SWP! They have never held a convention that did not take up the struggle against their own imperialism as one of its most important central points. Never have they carried on an election campaign which did not include as part of the campaign the denunciation of their own imperialist empire and call for a concrete struggle against it. It is not of interest here whether they used the correct tactics. Here we are dealing with principled, not tactical questions. The entire political history of the SWP has shown it to be Trotskyist and Leninist to the core; before everything else, denouncing its own imperialism. The ex-Communist League, with a confused and abstentionist orientation, has been incapable of denouncing in a consistent way the imperialist role of its own bourgeoisie, in spite of the fact, we repeat, that it has shown no hesitation on the few occasions it has done so. We are also well aware of the practical activity of the French comrades against their imperialism. Unfortunately, this practice is not consistently reflected in their organ and is not reflected at all in the European document.

For anyone who considers the task of denouncing European imperialism as something more than a task of secondary or tertiary order, it is clear that the conceptions of the European document have something to do with this incorrect political line.

5. Ten Commandments, or One Single Correct Policy?

At the beginning of this chapter we pointed out the five serious defaults of the European document. We have treated one of them extensively; the lack of a consistent policy against imperialism. But these are not the only observations we have to make.

Ten Central Tasks and No Basic Political Axis

According to the document there are today in Europe ten central tasks that "are the tasks whose achievement will stimulate the dynamic of mass struggles and the growth of class consciousness. . . ." (*IIDB* Vol. IX, No. 5, p. 17)

The authors assert that these tasks have a profound internal connection. We believe the opposite: it seems to us that it is, rather than a program, a list that could be taken in any order, from top to bottom or from bottom to top, because the result will be the same. It is like a catechism of ten commandments, all extremely important and none more important than another, from "workers control" to "systematically popularizing" the "socialist model."

What is the core of this programmatic scaffolding for Europe? It is impossible to determine, because the document contains no response to this question. It doesn't respond because it can't; the central axis varies from country to country, with each European country having a specific class-struggle situation that requires specific demands. By saying this, are we saying that we should not attempt to make an analysis of the European situation as a whole? Not at all. That kind of analysis is very important as a point of departure for analyses of national situations. If we should say, for example, that there were one or two vanguard countries that pointed to a tendency for all of Europe to enter a prerevolutionary situation, the general analysis would be indispensable for formulating an immediate political line for each country. But if we limit ourselves to the general analysis, we will not be in any position to formulate a political line for each country.

We do not mean to imply that the document should consist of a long list of countries with a specific political line for each one. The correct way to proceed is to define the essential lines of a policy for the countries that find themselves in a similar situation. What is the line for Ireland, which is going through a very special situation? What is the line for France and Italy, which are facing great defensive economic struggles? What line for Greece or Spain, which suffer under fascist or semi-fascist dictatorships? These are the concrete questions the European document does not answer.

A Document that Does Not Arm the Militants.

Political documents should serve the purpose of educating all our militants so that, after reading them, they will know what to do in their factory, their college, or in the streets the day afterward. That is to say, all the militants should leave the world congress armed to throw themselves on the following day into the revolutionary tasks of mobilizing the masses and defending and strengthening the party.

Does the majority comrades' European document serve this purpose? Does it make it possible, as Lenin put it, for the militants "to grasp the first link in the chain"? Where should a worker militant in Belgium begin? By "supporting the daily struggles of the masses," or by defending "a series of transitional demands centered around workers control"? Or a Spanish militant? Should he or she begin with "systematic popularization of our socialist model," or by "re-educating the working-class vanguard

on the need for armed self-defense"? Or the British militant? Should he or she begin with "international propaganda in solidarity with the anti-imperialist struggles," or by "educating the masses in non-electoralist and non-parliamentarist views"?

Many of the ten tasks are correct, but if we give the same importance to each one we will find ourselves obliged to carry out all ten tasks at the same time. If this is not the case, how will the militants in each European country know which is the most important task for them to begin with? Clearly they cannot tell, because the class-struggle situation in each country is different and requires a distinct task to work toward. That is why we say this document does not arm the militants and therefore is not a useful political document for the development of the class struggle or for our International.

In addition, some extremely important tasks do not appear in the list of ten.

First Important Omission: Economic Demands

According to the document there will be increasing unemployment and a lowering of the standard of living in Western Europe in the coming months and years. This means that at this moment the bourgeoisie has the offensive in its hands in the majority of the European countries and this is the reason for the upset of the equilibrium. This reality is the source of nearly all the current working-class struggles. The European masses are now developing important *defensive* economic struggles; they are fighting to defend their jobs and their standard of living and not to win new economic concessions from the bourgeoisie.

If this economic offensive against the working-class movement does exist, if the workers have begun to mobilize themselves in their own defense, why is there not one single demand relating to this question in the entire European document? This question is not touched upon. Only in passing is it said that we must intervene in economic struggles, even the most modest and reformist ones. This is very good. But what demands do we raise when we intervene? If we limit ourselves to intervening without raising any general demand that will mobilize broad sectors, are we not falling into syndicalism? Why not raise our transitional demand for "a sliding scale of wages and hours," or some tactical adaptation of it? Why not raise the demand suitable to this entire period, "stop the capitalist offensive against the workers movement and its standard of living and working conditions"? Why not begin by pushing the line for a workers united front to halt this offensive? If we don't apply the line of the workers united front, won't we condemn these economic struggles to remain where the reformists and bureaucrats want to keep them, within their original reformist framework?

Maybe this first omission has some relation to the latest five-year tactic voted for by the majority comrades: to direct our work basically toward the vanguard and not toward the mass movement. But, wherever it comes from, the absence of defensive economic demands disarms us in the face of the concrete struggles now being carried on—and those that will continue to unfold in the immediate future—by the workers of important countries on the European continent.

Second Important Omission: Democratic Demands

The bourgeoisie's economic offensive will inevitably be accompanied by a political offensive; a tendency toward reactionary governments, the curtailment of democratic rights, an attack on the most exploited working-class sectors, etc. That is, a *defensive* political stage will also open where it will be the bourgeoisie that destroys the equilibrium and, at the beginning, the working-class and other exploited sectors that will try to maintain the equilibrium. Each new "toughening" by some government will press upon the masses the need to mobilize to regain their lost democratic rights or to defend those under attack.

The European document does not prepare our sections for this kind of situation. The document's failure to raise the demand, "British troops out of Ireland, Portuguese out of the colonies!" shows its indifference to basic democratic demands. This indifference leaves the Spanish, Greek, and Portuguese sections abandoned to semi-fascist regimes that have destroyed all democratic rights.

What do we tell the workers in those countries? That they should struggle for "workers control" or for our "socialist model"? Would it not appear much more correct to the comrades of the majority for us to put forward some specific democratic demand (constituent assembly, free elections, freedom for political prisoners, legality for political parties, or some other more suitable demand) as the main political demand for those countries?

The oversights grow over into historical amnesia when the old demand of our International for the unification of Germany in a soviet and socialist Germany is not raised. The biggest democratic task posed in Europe, much more important than independence for Ireland, is the restoration to the German people of their right to form a united nation with a unified and socialist state. This is a task that takes on both imperialism and the Stalinist bureaucracy, and one that can only be completed by overthrowing them, by making a socialist revolution in the West and a political revolution in the East. Nevertheless, the majority comrades ignore it.

Third Important Omission: The Workers and Peasants Government

The European document goes into the possibility of a victorious socialist revolution in some country of Western Europe in the near future, but it does not call for a "workers and peasants government" as the central demand. Nevertheless, for most European countries—or at least for a very significant number of them—this socialist revolution will be carried out by means of an alliance of the working class with the peasants and the impoverished sectors of the urban petty bourgeoisie.

If the revolution is to triumph, the proletariat must win the leadership of all the other classes that will participate and must, therefore, have a policy for winning over these classes. Our party, as the historical representative of the proletariat must, therefore, provide a transitional program for these classes or sectors of a class. We do not understand how it can be proposed that we popularize our socialist "model" when the alliance between the working class and the peasantry does not figure in the model.

A leadership that does not call for this alliance, that

does not provide a transitional program that aids the peasantry and the poor middle class in the cities and puts the working-class at their head, has all the marks of a workerist orientation that would make the seizure of power impossible. This alliance, which is summed up in the call for a workers and peasants government, is not mentioned in the majority's European document.

How can we be asked to vote for a document that on the one hand says there will be "a first socialist revolution" in the next few years while, on the other hand, it does not include among its ten central tasks the call for a workers and peasants government—the only form this socialist revolution could take? Although we are flexible, there are some things we can't understand. We hope the majority comrades will explain them to us.

6. The Program for Immigrant Workers

Two of the European document's deficiencies affect the way it approaches the question of the immigrant workers. These are the absence of democratic demands and the right to national self-determination. To the extent that immigrant workers are a sector of the European proletariat that suffers economic, social, and political discrimination, the demands for this group are basically democratic demands. Since many immigrant workers come from European imperialism's colonies or ex-colonies, these demands are also related to the national question.

Immigrant Workers: A Pillar of the European Bourgeois Economy

Immigrant workers are not a small marginal sector of European bourgeois society and economy. Just the opposite, they are one of its pillars.

In France one out of every four manual workers—the backbone of the workers movement—is an immigrant worker. This fundamental sector of the working-class movement represents, in a certain way, a distorted expression of the colonial problem because so many come from the colonies and ex-colonies. The resolution of this problem in the European document is to resign itself to pointing out in a subsidiary clause of one of the ten central political tasks that we must organize campaigns of "solidarity with immigrant workers (in opposition to any form of racism and antiforeignism)."

Once Again, 'Solidarity' Is Not Enough

The term "solidarity" means to us that, in a certain way, it is somebody else's struggle. Put in another way, it is not the task of our European parties to provide a transitional program for this sector, they need only express their "solidarity" with its struggles as if they were taking place in some foreign country. The best proof that this really is the judgment of the resolution is that it is mentioned as part of our international tasks and not as a part of the national program for each section. It accompanies solidarity with "anti-imperialist struggles," "workers struggles in other European countries," and "antibureaucratic struggles in the Stalinized workers states." All of these taking place outside any particular country.

There are other things that demonstrate that the Euro-

pean resolution does not understand the fact that immigrant workers are an integral part of the working class in each European country. It does not point out that many of them are from the colonies or semicolonies, especially in France. This situation causes a dialectical, unequal, contradictory relation *inside* the working class of these countries, but this is not considered either in the document's analysis or in the program for Europe.

A Basic Area for Our Activity

One of the main areas, or perhaps the main area, of our work for the period immediately ahead in many of our European sections is among the immigrant workers. This work could—and will—provide the basis for "unity-outflanking" maneuvers with the reformist organizations that ignore the immigrant workers. This will be the sector most cruelly punished by unemployment and misery, as well as by the political toughening of the regimes. This process will take place parallel to the colonial process because of imperialism's attempt to escape from its crisis by taking advantage of these inequalities. Further, in addition to colonialism, these immigrant workers are a source of super-profits for European capitalism, and in this sense help provide the material base for reformism. This is an economic-social aspect of the problem that the European document, as well as its French disciples, have not brought up. Neither have they pointed out the road to its solution.

In addition, there is another national and colonial question intimately linked with this sector, a question the document does not even mention. Do the immigrant workers

have the right to maintain their own nationality neighborhoods, communities, beliefs, languages, schools, or the right to choose their own communal representatives on the basis of their neighborhood communities? Can, or must these colonials be a part of the colonial revolution? Or should they be forced to integrate into the culture, language, and customs of the imperialist country? Is it not time to add to our program that they have the right to do as they wish, that we, the Trotskyists, are the only ones prepared to respect their will—that is to say, their national self-determination—even if they represent only 1 percent of the population? If so, why does the European document say nothing about it?

The Former French Section's Glorious Experiences and Past Course

Despite the fact that it does good and intensive work among the immigrant workers and that its press pays serious attention to this problem, the former French section did not consider the immigrant worker question of importance either in its national resolution or in its electoral program. Even worse, it did not raise the demand, "Down with the Fontanet Decree!" in the election campaign. Especially at its last congress, it dedicated itself even less to the immigrants and the colonials.

Nevertheless, the French section has a glorious past experience and course in this regard: our work with the Indochinese and Algerian workers. The new Trotskyist generation should study this work, for it permitted us to replace the Stalinist leadership of the Indochinese and Algerian workers in France.