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DOCUMENTS FROM THE DISCUSSION IN SECTIONS OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

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Editorial Note

Every section and sympathizing organization of the Fourth International is conducting an internal discussion on the issues before the Fourth World Congress since Reunification (Tenth World Congress). As with the discussion in the Socialist Workers Party, only a small portion of the documents written as contributions to the debate will be submitted to the International Internal Discussion Bulletin. However, many documents from other sections and groups will have a general interest and value to SWP members. Knowledge of these documents will help comrades to understand the context of the debate and clarify the issues being discussed throughout the International. From time to time we will publish selected documents from the discussion in other sections in order to make this information available to the membership of the SWP.

The International and Its Tenth World Congress

By Marc, Martine, Walter, Rudi, Tantalus

[The following document was submitted to the pre-world congress discussion in the Belgian section of the Fourth International (Revolutionaire Arbeiders Liga — Ligue Révolutionnaire des Travailleurs) by the five members of the Belgian Political Bureau who signed the tendency declaration published at the end of the document "In Defence of Leninism; In Defence of the Fourth International," by Ernest Germain (IIDB Vol. X, No. 4, April 1972).]

* * *

At the Ninth World Congress differences emerged, essentially on two questions: the resolution on Latin America and the resolution on China.

These differences on China seemed to be of a secondary nature: should the Chinese Communist Party be termed a Stalinist party or not?

What was the extent of the mass mobilizations that took place during the "Cultural Revolution"?

Did these end by establishing a military dictatorship? etc. . .

Most of the differences (except the exact definition of the term "Stalinist party") have in the meantime been resolved by subsequent events.

The same thing didn't happen with the differences that arose over the resolution on Latin America. At first the differences seemed to turn on the question of whether "armed struggle" is a "strategy" or a "tactic"; additionally, whether some of the strongest sections (in fact, the Bolivian and Argentine sections), which had already declared in favor of such a "strategy" before the Ninth World Congress, should prepare organizationally for armed struggle and begin to put it into practice.

But it soon became apparent that discussion begun around these questions would at the same time develop in several directions. The present state of affairs can be described as follows:

1. An international minority (centered mainly around the North American comrades and the Moreno group in Argentina, supported without any doubt by the majority of the Australian and New Zealand comrades, and bent on winning other sections to its ideas) accused the majority of advocating rural guerrilla warfare in the main countries of Latin America; of having thus brought about a disastrous course for the Bolivian and Argentine sections; of beginning to extend the "guerrilla strategy" to other countries around the world and therefore threatening to involve the whole International in a "terrorist" and "Bakuninist" course.

It believes that the main danger in the International is presently constituted by the repeated concessions the leadership and the majority of the International have made to ultraleft adventurism, with the "guerrilla strategy" and "terrorism" the main examples of this.

2. The majority considers this accusation unfounded. It feels that the main problem confronting the International is that of transforming our sections from propaganda groups into political organizations in the process of becoming rooted in the working class and already capable of taking political initiatives having repercussions on a national scale. The majority thinks that the turn at the Ninth World Congress in this sense corresponds to a change in both the objective and subjective situation since 1968: a new rise in the world revolution centered on the increased weight of the industrial proletariat (Western Europe!); appearance on an international scale of a new vanguard of a massive character (young and also already working class) that no longer follows the traditional bureaucratic apparatus and is capable of going into action in a massive way.

The ability of our sections to win hegemony within this vanguard in the framework of the dynamic of the class struggle and the general political struggle. There are half a dozen examples where our forces were capable of such initiatives (France in May 1968; U.S.: the antiwar movement; Spain: boycott of the union elections; Ceylon: launching of a mass struggle against the repression; Bolivia: preparation of mass resistance against the threat of a fascist coup d'etat in 1971; Belgium: high-school struggle against the VDB plan; France: the struggle of high school students against the Debré plan. For the majority of the International, the adoption of an orientation toward armed struggle by the Bolivian and Argentine sections corresponds not to some abstract position, but to the objective needs of the class struggle felt by the broad masses.

This is only one example among others of initiatives in the sense just mentioned (which even include a massive hunger strike in Ceylon conducted by a million men and women).

It is not a question of applying a universal strategy of guerrilla warfare, and still less of falling into terrorism. What is involved is to determine in each sector of the worldwide class struggle, and in each country, the most appropriate initiatives to put the vanguard into motion, and the political and organizational weight of our sections within this vanguard.

The thesis of a "universal ultraleft danger" and of an "implied universal turn toward guerrilla warfare and terrorism" that the international minority is determined to maintain is especially called into question by the adoption of the theses on the construction of revolutionary parties in Europe by the majority of the International leadership at the last IEC [International Executive Committee] (December 1972). No one can pretend that we're talking about theses oriented toward guerrilla war or "terrorism." The fact that the international minority has, nonetheless, rejected these theses indicates, in our opinion, that underlying the differences on Latin America are some more profound

ones:

— on the nature of the period, the minority outlining the thesis of a downturn in the revolution as a result of the "Washington-Moscow-Peking détente" (which has already led to differences in interpreting the consequences of the cease-fire in Vietnam), and underestimating the depth of the social crisis that is shaking the capitalist world and the relative autonomy of the mass mobilizations in relation to the bureaucratic apparatuses;

— on the priority of our tasks, the minority advances in fact a "propagandistic" conception of the construction of the party, opposing the "interventionist" turn of the Ninth World Congress.

— on the nature of transitional demands, which the most right-wing elements of the minority tend to lump together with immediate and democratic demands without distinguishing between them ("everything stemming from the given level of consciousness of the masses"). They run the risk of falling into the trap of right-wing, opportunist tail-endism, particularly obvious in Canada and Argentina (Moreno group).

Finally, differences of an organizational nature are beginning to be combined with political differences. The international minority judged it necessary to publicly denounce certain actions of the Argentine section. It tends to put into question the degree of international democratic centralism, nevertheless already greatly relaxed, adopted by the statutes prepared by the North American comrades for the Reunification Congress in 1963. The only way they conceive of an international leadership is as an administrative center, coordinating actions accepted on the basis of free collaboration among the national sections.

The international majority insists, in opposition to this, on the necessity of a strengthened international center, first of all a center for elaborating policies. It holds that the differences now appearing within the International reflect most of all the differences arising from the uneven development of the class struggle in Western Europe and the U. S. The resurgence of workers struggles is growing in Europe and provoking a deeper and deeper social crisis, which permits us to envisage prerevolutionary crises in several countries, while the American proletariat is seriously lagging behind the new revolutionary upsurge throughout the world. In these conditions, the growth of our movement is following a rather swift rate in Europe (where our forces have grown considerably since the last world congress, not only in France but also in Germany, Great Britain, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Belgium, Luxembourg), while in the U. S., the organization is meeting growing difficulties on the road of expansion and is even retreating in important areas such as the student sector. This unevenness in the objective unfolding of events—which without doubt will be only temporary, the American working class being compelled sooner or later to go back into action as a result of the growing economic difficulties of U. S. imperialism—inevitably results in a difference on the immediate tactics to follow which the American comrades extrapolate and tend to incorrectly generalize in relation to areas of the world where such tactics would run counter to the possibilities open to construction of our movement.

This is precisely why a permanent political leadership for the International is so necessary, overcoming the risk

of each section theorizing on the basis of its own national experience of party building.

This situation is complicated by the fact that in Argentina—a country where the number of militants adhering to Trotskyism is one of the highest in the world, numbering several thousand and following right behind France and Great Britain—the official section, the PRT, has also followed an orientation that breaks with the line of the Ninth World Congress on several essential points. It is characterized by a populist-Castroist deviation, while Moreno's sympathizing group is characterized by a right opportunist deviation. The PRT tends to conceive of armed struggle as proceeding through the creation of an autonomous army created by the party, independently of the development and needs of the struggles of the masses.

It tends to make important ideological concessions to Castroism (approval of the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia), and to minimize the political and programmatic foundations of the Fourth International that separate it from the tendencies growing out of Stalinism such as Maoism, the Vietnamese Communist Party, and the North Korean Communist Party. It underestimates the importance of forming Trotskyist cadres, educated in the spirit of the Transitional Program, capable of frustrating the maneuvers of the Peronist apparatus and oriented toward creating organizations of workers power based on the Soviet model.

Thus, the international majority, refusing an unprincipled bloc with a group such as this on the question of Argentina, will defend a position that is different from that of the PRT and of the Moreno group, while the international minority has made a tight bloc with the Moreno group.

At present, the two tendencies have organized themselves as such for the discussion leading up to the Tenth World Congress, in conformity with the statutes. The programmatic basis of the majority is Comrade Germain's article "In Defence of Leninism, In Defence of the Fourth International," the theses on the construction of revolutionary parties in Europe, and the resolution on Bolivia adopted at the last IEC. The programmatic basis of the minority—as announced up to now, it's possible that it will be expanded—is the document: "Bolivia and Argentina—A Balance Sheet." All the sections will discuss these two platforms before the Tenth World Congress and will elect their delegates to the congress according to the political votes cast for them (the right of any section to adopt in whole or in part a "third position" is, of course, implicit).

While the political differences that have appeared are important, they in no way justify a split in the International.

There is complete programmatic agreement, and the disputed questions are all of a nature that can be clarified by experience over time. Carrying out the fullest and most democratic discussion before the world congress, enabling the majority that comes out of the congress to apply its line so that it can be judged in practice—these are the prerequisites needed to maintain the unity of the International, which each side seems ready to abide by.

April 1973

Marc, Martine, Walter, Rudi, Tantalus

Contribution to the International Discussion

By Marcel

[The following article is a contribution to the internal discussion in the *Revolutionaire Arbeiders Liga—Ligue Révolutionnaire des Travailleurs* (Revolutionary Workers League), the Belgian section of the Fourth International.]

* * *

Since I find myself in disagreement with several important points in the document "Introduction du débat international par les camarades belges de la Tendance Majorité" [Introduction to the International Discussion by the Belgian Comrades of the Majority Tendency], I am presenting a document explaining my positions.

I. EUROPE

I support the majority resolution on Europe because I think it offers a correct assessment of the situation and its probable development, outlining perspectives that seem to me to be correct.

I consider the minority's voting against this document as a vote of no confidence in the majority, a lack of confidence that arises from the disastrous policy that the majority has followed in Latin America.

As for the objections the minority has made to the European document ["The Building of Revolutionary Parties in Capitalist Europe," *International Internal Discussion Bulletin*, Vol. IX, No. 5, Nov. 1972], they seem to me to be either limited (although often correct, as in the case of Ireland), based on misunderstandings (as in the case of their opposing workers' control and the sliding scale of wages), or on misinterpretations of the majority's positions (e.g., the decisive historical defeats that might occur in four or five years). Thus, I think that it is wrong to reject the European document as a whole.

I think that the discussion must be carried further on several points by both tendencies.

II. LATIN AMERICA

When we reread the Ninth World Congress Resolution on Latin America, we see that the majority made two errors:

1. On rural guerrilla warfare being the main axis of revolutionary struggles for the coming period.

" . . . civil war will take manifold forms of armed struggle in which the principal axis for a whole period will be rural guerrilla warfare. . . ."

This has been refuted by the urban mass movements in several countries (Bolivia, Chile, and Argentina, to mention only a few).

2. On the possibilities for the mass movement developing before a decisive confrontation takes place with the

army. The actual experiences since the Ninth World Congress in Bolivia, Argentina, and Chile demonstrate that the bourgeoisie can be forced to retreat before the mass movement and offer democratic openings enabling a revolutionary leadership to organize the masses solidly—as well as arm them—before a decisive confrontation takes place. This is what the Bolsheviks did between February and July 1917, when they blocked Kornilov's attempt at a coup d'état.

On these two points a critical balance sheet is needed. That is the least that can be said.

Where do the differences lie?

The essential thing in the discussion on Latin America is to try to locate the real differences.

Is the minority opposed to the very principle of armed struggle, and does it underestimate the tasks of revolutionary Marxists in arming the masses?

The answer to this question can only be "no," when we read in the minority report on the European resolution:

"As in every other aspect of the struggles of the masses, we play a *vanguard* role. We take the initiative *within the masses* on such questions as the formation of strike pickets and workers militias or, in certain situations, guerrilla units to defend the mass struggles of the peasants. We take these initiatives as members of the *mass* organizations, and in the name of the *mass* organizations, even if initially few besides ourselves are involved. The course followed by Hugo Blanco in Peru and the course followed by the Trotskyist leaders of the 1934 teamsters strike in Minneapolis offer instructive examples." [*IIDB*, Vol. X, No. 3, March 1973, p. 26.]

The minority, thus, is not against the principle of armed struggle, nor against revolutionary Marxists taking initiatives in this area. But perhaps it only sees armed struggle as the culmination of a whole revolutionary process leading to a situation of dual power on the national level. Does the minority preclude all armed struggle until the eve of taking power?

Reading the chapter on armed struggle in Hugo Blanco's book will impel every comrade to answer "no" to this question.

Where, then, do the real differences lie?

We find an element of the answer in the quotation given from the minority report on the European resolution, when it continually stresses that initiatives in arming the masses or in guerrilla warfare must be made by comrades as "members of *mass* organizations, and in the name of these *mass* organizations."

A different position is upheld by the majority when it talks about "armed detachments of the party" (majority

tendency document) and "a minimum application" of armed struggle.

It is true that you have to do some fancy sifting through the majority document to find this. But this is exactly the sort of maneuver contained in all the documents of Ernest Germain. Unlike Livio, he does not argue for guerrilla warfare (either rural or urban) but for "armed struggle." This has two objectives:

1. This shifts the axis of the debate on the Ninth World Congress and without saying so explicitly insinuates that the minority is against "armed struggle."

2. Most importantly, this line of argument comes to the same conclusion as Livio. Armed detachments of the party are needed, as well as "a minimum application" of armed struggle.

What does this lead to? It is clear that if such activity does not lead to arming the masses, it will turn into isolated rural or urban guerrilla warfare, without any organic link with the real mass movement.

The real question is not whether the masses *understand* these armed actions by armed detachments of the party but whether they are ready to *join* in this struggle. In other words, the question—and this is where the difference lies—is *whether this activity by small armed detachments of the party leads to arming the masses.*

The answer can only be "no."

The way to arm the masses is not by exemplary actions external to the mass movement but through the actual experience of the masses under the leadership of revolutionists working in the traditional mass organizations as well as those thrown up by the struggle.

Two complementary quotations, the first from Lenin and the second from Trotsky, demonstrate that this was also their opinion:

"Precisely because a step like the transition to armed street fighting is a 'tough' one and because it is 'inevitable sooner or later,' it can and should be carried out only by a strong revolutionary organization which *directly* leads the movement." (*Complete Works*, VI, p. 262, emphasis in the original.)

"Tasks such as creating a *workers' militia, arming the workers*, preparing for a *general strike* will never get off the drawing board as long as the masses do not take up the struggle themselves through bodies that take the lead. Only such action committees born out of the struggle can create a real militia, comprising not thousands but tens of thousands of fighters." ("Front Populaire et Comités d'Action," *La Mouvement Communiste en France*, p. 540.) [See *Writings of Leon Trotsky* (1935-36), p. 58.]

When the revolutionary organization does not "*directly*" lead the movement, the armed actions of "detachments of the party" do not lead to arming the masses but to guerrilla warfare which may or may not be understood by the urban or rural masses. Such guerrilla warfare conducted by our Latin-American sections (which, moreover, are still far from being mass parties) is leading to a situation where, when the masses move, our organizations, because of their guerrilla line, find themselves either physically decapitated or politically disoriented.

These assertions can be backed up by concrete evidence.

Argentina

The PRT-Combatiente [Partido Revolucionario de los

Trabajadores (Combatiente)—Revolutionary Workers Party] has lost a great many cadres, either fallen in combat or imprisoned.

This criticism would be unjustified if these losses were inevitable. But in Argentina there is:

(a) One of the most powerful trade-union movements in the world, which the military dictatorship has not succeeded in destroying. The regime has managed largely to co-opt the trade-union movement, but these unions still have nothing in common with vertical unions of the Spanish type. Plant committees exist in all the factories.

(b) A powerful mass movement.

(c) A major radicalization in the trade-union movement.

Revolutionists had an opportunity to build their organization without isolating themselves from the masses, without exposing themselves to the selective repression that has fallen on the guerrilla groups.

The PRT leadership—in agreement with the majority—made another choice, with the result that the organization now finds itself physically decapitated and politically disoriented at a time when the question of whether or not the workers will break from Peronism is to be decided in reality. These are the real historic stakes in Argentina.

Bolivia

In Bolivia, under the Barrientos dictatorship, the POR [Partido Obrero Revolucionario—Revolutionary Workers Party] was making preparations for guerrilla warfare in concert with the Castroist ELN [Ejército de Liberación Nacional—National Liberation Army]. Although it did not turn to guerrilla struggle, the POR—which proclaimed that it was going to do so—came under the repression exercised against the guerrilla groups. Military work absorbed a very large part of the organization's energies.

As a result of this, the POR was unable to play its full role when the rise of the mass movement began under the Ovando regime.

We raise this question: Is it by chance that the POR has not had a congress or even a Central Committee meeting since 1966? Is it by chance that mass work was neglected? Is it by chance that the newspaper appeared very irregularly? Is it by chance, or is there a contradiction between this and "technical preparation" of armed detachments of the party?

Moscoso himself gives an answer. He demonstrates that the POR persisted in its errors under Ovando: "Under the Ovando regime the party worked in conditions of total clandestinity and found itself completely absorbed in armed work. Since last November, after Torres came to power, we have been able to resume our legal work in the unions but also among the peasants and the students, where we had done very little before."

Here Moscoso contradicts the document of the majority tendency which claims that the POR engaged in mass work to the fullest extent under Ovando.

But the POR persisted in its errors even under the Torres regime. In November 1970, after a semi-insurrection by the masses prevented General Miranda from coming to power, *Combate* [the POR newspaper] ran the headline: "Despite the defeats, the road to national and social liberation is still guerrilla warfare." In this article, one could read: "A general strike cannot lead to workers' power unless at the same time there is a revolutionary army,

and this arises precisely out of the armed struggle itself."

This guerrilla line could only lead to deficiencies in the struggle to win the leadership of the masses. The majority will reply that our comrades nonetheless led three unions and that POR comrades participated in the Popular Assembly as trade-union representatives (the POR as such was not represented). This only demonstrates that great opportunities existed for revolutionists. According to Moscoso himself, much more than this was possible.

But the quotation from *Combate* is instructive on another account. It demonstrates once again that for Moscoso as well as for Livio, what Ernest Germain always discreetly terms an "orientation toward armed struggle" or an "armed-struggle line" means guerrilla warfare.

Furthermore, the document on Bolivia adopted at the last IEC [International Executive Committee of the Fourth International] once again sets such a perspective:

" . . . the culminating stage of the revolution when large masses of workers and peasants mobilize will be preceded by other stages where armed struggle will be the task of sectors or nuclei of the vanguard. Thus the need for this specific form of armed struggle which is guerrilla warfare." [*International Internal Discussion Bulletin*, Vol. X, No. 6, p. 11.]

We state that if the POR repeats the error it made in the Barrientos period and throws itself into guerrilla warfare during a phase of retreat by the movement, it risks being destroyed and disoriented, or having to start from scratch when the masses start to move and it is faced with the need to play its leading role to the full. The "armed-struggle orientation"—in reality the "guerrilla strategy"—stands in contradiction with building the revolutionary party, mass work, and thus with arming the proletariat.

To counter this conclusion, the comrades of the majority raise a question: "Was it necessary to wait for the masses to move under Barrientos? Is it necessary to wait for them to move under Banzer?"

To be sure, revolutionists do not fold their hands in a period of ebb. But the tasks in a time of retreat are different from those when the movement is on the offensive. Trotsky refers to them in *The Third International After Lenin*. In discussing the 1923 defeat in Germany, he says:

" . . . the Opposition persistently repeated that the revolutionary situation was already missed; that sail had to be taken in, in expectation of contrary and unfavorable winds, that it was not the insurrection that was on the agenda, but defensive battles against an enemy which has assumed the offensive—uniting the masses for partial demands, creating points of support in the unions, etc." [p. 250]

You can't call that "waiting." And history demonstrates that it is possible to make gains in conditions even worse than those in Germany after 1923, where the organization is driven completely underground, as the Bolshevik party was and as the POR is now. But Trotsky would have called throwing the revolutionary organization into guerrilla warfare during such a phase, as the IEC proposes to do, by its right name—revolutionary adventurism.

III. A QUESTION OF METHODOLOGY

In the discussion in the Political Bureau, the com-

rades of the majority raised an important question: "Do the standards of party building serve as the measure for determining the political line?" To this question, they answered: "No. The political line must be determined by the objective needs of the class struggle."

This is a strange procedure completely counterposing two dialectically linked elements.

We know that the basis of the Leninist conception of the revolutionary party is the theory of the development of revolutionary consciousness. The task of the revolutionary organization consists in bringing the consciousness of the decisive sectors of the working class into consonance with the objective situation and making them aware of the tasks that flow from this situation. In order to achieve this, the revolutionary organization puts forward a transitional program which it endeavors on all occasions to put into practice.

The task of the revolutionary organization consists of raising the level of consciousness of the working class, and it draws its strength from this process. It is only when this task is accomplished and when the revolutionary organization takes the leadership in action that the objective needs of the class struggle can be met.

Raising political consciousness, strengthening the revolutionary organization, and responding to the objective needs of the class struggle are indissolubly linked.

IV. AGAINST HASTY GENERALIZATIONS. AGAINST FALSE DEBATES.

Both tendencies draw more general conclusions from the differences that have appeared on these points.

The minority considers that there is a crisis in the Fourth International because of "ultraleft or opportunist deviations or a combination of both" on the part of the majority.

The majority considers that important differences with the minority exist on the character of the period (the minority believing that the revolution is on the ebb), on the main tasks before us (the minority having a propagandistic conception of party building), and on the nature of transitional demands (the minority tending to confuse them with immediate ones). Furthermore, the minority is supposed to have a right-opportunist character.

It would be wrong to oppose the tendencies carrying the discussion further to arrive at more general conclusions. It is true that this is sharpening the differences, but to resist it would represent a fundamentally anti-Marxist moralistic attitude. The discussion on the background of the differences and on methodology is important and everyone must participate in it.

But, on the other hand, the generalizations must clarify the discussion. And in order to do that, they must be based on real differences and on definitely established facts. Otherwise, they act as smoke screens obscuring the discussion and diverting it from the real problems.

The so-called debate on "armed struggle" is obviously diverting the discussion from its real subject—guerrilla warfare. The majority's other generalizations are hasty and ill founded. At the present stage of the debate, it still has not been demonstrated that there is any major difference over the period. On Latin America—the principal object of the debate so far—in any case, none has ap-

peared. The differences on Vietnam do not justify concluding that the minority thinks there is a general ebb in the world revolution. Reproaching the minority for a propagandistic conception of party building seems at least exaggerated, when you realize that in its orientation to the antiwar movement the SWP was the first section to make an "interventionist" turn. Moreover, very often we hear the opposite accusation: The American comrades are supposed to have a "tendency to chase after every mass movement." On the conception of the Transitional Program, Joseph Hansen's article in the *International Socialist Review* [October 1971] seemed entirely correct to me.

Finally the discussion over which is the main danger, right opportunism or ultraleftism, seems to me to be a false and dangerous debate, inasmuch as it threatens to blind both tendencies to perils within their own current. In fact, both dangers exist. While the majority's arguments concerning the Canadian section seem convincing, the threat of ultraleftism definitely exists in the majority tendency. Enough has been said on Latin America. But besides this the English section has certainly set out on an ultraleft course. The proof of this is the following quotation concerning the general strike where these comrades raise the strategic objective of revolutionists as an argument for opposing any intermediate aim: "The aim of such a decisive clash as a General Strike cannot be posed as some reform. Even if the strike should start round more limited aims it is the task of *revolutionaries*

to attempt to turn this into a decisive struggle for *power* — not to pose its aim as some gain *within* the bourgeois state." ["The Left and the Tory Government," by Alan Jones, *Red Mole*, March 3, 1973.] Other examples can be given, such as the ultraleft tendency that has appeared in the Ligue Communiste, the tendency represented by Jebracq.

On the other hand, I do not think, contrary to the minority, that these ultraleft tendencies are reflected in the European document.

On this point, my conclusion is that an international leadership must remain on guard against both dangers, against left as well as right opportunism. To the extent that the tendencies engage in a debate over which is the "main danger," there is a threat that this will not be done. That is the danger.

V. CONCLUSION

My position is, thus, intermediary between the two tendencies. Since I consider that the differences on Europe are not so basic as the ones on Latin America, I think that the latter remains the principal issue at stake in the world congress. It is, therefore, essentially on Latin America that I will carry on a discussion in the Belgian section.

As for general conclusions and methodology, I defer my answer until the discussion is further advanced, among other things, on Europe.

April 17, 1973

Why We Have Joined the International Majority Tendency

By Mintoff and Sonja

[The following is a translation of a contribution by two members of the leadership of the Gruppe Internationale Marxisten (German section of the Fourth International).]

* * *

Although it is perfectly "normal" in the functioning of a democratic-centralist organization, the formal creation of tendencies always signals the existence of deep differences of opinion that involve more than practical matters. Thus the differences between the two tendencies in the Fourth International transcend episodic controversies and touch on nearly all the problems of party-building today, not just in one or a few countries but on all continents. Is the orientation of the International Majority towards armed struggle in Latin America a concession to the ultralefts, the currents among radical youth that glorify guerrilla war, as the Minority ("Leninist-Trotskyist") Tendency maintains? Has this concession to the ultra-left currents been extended "geographically and programatically" to the European document, as is maintained in the declaration of the Minority? Does the Majority neglect systematic mass mobilization on the basis of the method of the Transitional Program in favor of illusory attempts to find a shortcut to power through ultraleft adventurism?

These are a few of the questions that have been raised by the Minority Tendency's polemic. The only Leninist method of resolving such differences is through broad, democratic discussion of all positions, in all sections and, all branches of the International. As for the membership of the German section, it has been at a great disadvantage in this respect compared to the English-speaking sections because, with few exceptions (and these concern contributions that appeared some time ago and that deal solely with Latin America) most of the documents of this discussion have not been available in German up till now, and therefore only a few comrades have been able to note the real scope and essence of the differences.

The first necessary step to change this situation is the distribution of all documents of the International debate among the members of the GIM in German. A whole number of contributions of both tendencies will shortly be available. But as we see it, this alone will not be sufficient to lead the German section out of its role as passive observer in this extremely important debate. In order to really be able to assimilate the lessons of the discussion, and profit from it for the GIM's own discussion of strategy, *the active participation of German comrades* in the debate is absolutely necessary. This, in turn, is

of course only meaningful if the disputed questions have real relevance for the present-day situation of the German section. If it were "only" a question of this or that alleged mistake of a Latin American section, then the discussion in the GIM would become the exclusive concern of "specialists." We agree with the Minority Tendency on one point, however, that their position on armed struggle in Latin America cannot be looked upon separately from their conception of the character of the Transitional Program and conversely that the method employed by the author of the European document is of course the basis of the majority position.

In the belief that the present international debate is of greatest importance for the GIM as well, and that the active participation of German comrades is the best precondition in the GIM for carrying out intensive preparatory discussion for the Tenth World Congress, the undersigned members of the Political Bureau have joined the Majority Tendency.

We have taken this step against the advice of the other members of the Political Bureau. They felt that the entrance of members of the GIM leadership into one of the existing tendencies was premature in the present situation, did not correspond to the state of the discussion in the German section, and would provoke the formation of countertendencies that were unjustified precisely because of the relatively underdeveloped state of the discussion. We don't think that this is a convincing argument. As we have said above, we believe that, on the contrary, it is precisely the formation (even in embryonic state) of such tendencies in the GIM oriented around the international debate that can prevent the German section from languishing on the periphery of the political life of the International and that such tendencies can only enrich the discussion—e. g., about applying the European document to German conditions.

But behind the reluctance of the other Political Bureau comrades there stands more than such practical considerations. Behind it stands the rejection of the Latin America policy of the Majority, which they reject with very much the same arguments as those employed by the Minority, although they declare themselves in agreement with the Majority "on all other questions." Thus they are attempting to separate the Latin America debate from the other points of contention. Unfortunately, these comrades have not yet laid out their position on armed struggle in Latin America in a positive manner. We agree with them in many of the criticisms they have expressed orally: we too consider, for instance, the political orientation of the PRT-Combatiente, the Argentine section, to be a devia-

tion from Trotskyism (and, naturally, from the orientation on Latin America decided on at the Ninth World Congress.)

We, however, clearly take our position with the Majority on a question that, in our opinion, constitutes the essence of the international controversy: Does the building of a Leninist party, whether in Western Europe or Latin America, merely mean patient propagandizing around transitional demands, or is not the task of the revolutionist above all to go beyond this propaganda, to undertake organized initiatives that show the masses and especially the vanguard *in practice* the answers to the concrete problems they face at a given time? Assuming that the answer to this question is affirmative—and if one supports the European document, it must be affirmative—another question naturally arises: is the problem of armed confrontation with the bourgeois state *concretely* posed for the insurgent masses in most of the countries of Latin America at the present time, i.e., do they face repression with every upswing in the mass movement or not, and, if so, what position should the sections of the Fourth International take on this question? Isn't it the duty of these sections in such situations as the Torres episode in Bolivia or under the Allende regime in Chile to go beyond a propagandistic dissemination of the general truth that in the last analysis capitalism must be toppled by force? Isn't their duty to begin to organize the workers and peasants in various forms, depending on their strength, for armed action, including rural guerrilla warfare?

Those who, like the "Leninist-Trotskyist tendency" call this orientation a concession to ultraleftism are themselves making concessions to the reformist illusions of a section of the Latin American labor movement. Those who claim that armed struggle is not on the order of the day in Latin America because the mass movement has not attained the level of maturity that alone can justify armed struggle, that therefore propagandizing around transitional demands in the mass movement must be the sole priority of the Trotskyist movement, fall victim to the reformist illusion that relatively prolonged phases of bourgeois democracy are possible that will offer the conditions for a continuous organic development of the mass movement—a supposition that is directly contradicted by a Marxist analysis of the explosive state of class antagonisms that has been reached in Latin America.

But this is not all. The thesis that underlies the Minority's criticism—that the subjective consciousness of the Bolivian and Argentinian masses is not ripe for armed struggle and that an armed struggle orientation will only isolate us from the mass movement points to another difference of opinion that is organically related to the disagreement on Latin America: the Minority's conception that transitional demands must always take their point of departure from the subjective consciousness of the masses and have as their goal raising the consciousness of the masses to a higher level. We, however, are of the opinion that it is rather the objective *tasks* of the moment and the *concretely posed problems* from which the transitional method takes its point of departure. It is the revolutionary-Marxist solutions to the problems and tasks that must be formulated in demands and slogans that are understandable to the masses at their given

level of consciousness. The subordination of the revolutionary goal to the "biggest possible mass mobilization" will sooner or later take its revenge in the form of an absence of mass mobilization itself when the conjunctural situation changes—precisely because the stabilization of the *political* base was neglected.

An instructive example of this is afforded by the Vietnam solidarity movement. With the central demand "Out Now" the U.S. antiwar movement, strongly influenced by the SWP (the core of the international Minority), succeeded in mobilizing hundreds of thousands, even millions against the U.S. intervention in Indochina. This demand was without a doubt completely correct. The European solidarity movement continually made this demand central to its mobilizations as well. However, European revolutionists at the same time advanced the slogan "Victory to the NLF" or something similar in the mass movement, a slogan that, as Comrade Waters correctly noted, is not a demand directed towards anyone, but rather a declaration of solidarity aimed at raising the consciousness of the masses participating in the solidarity actions beyond the level of mere moral protest. The American comrades have criticized this, maintaining that the slogan "Victory to the NLF" excluded thousands of pacifists and similar people from the movement and thereby reduced its impact. Well, the European demonstrations were often mass demonstrations of tens of thousands anyway—but the decisive point is what happened *when the signing of the cease-fire accords and the withdrawal of U.S. ground forces had largely removed the "moralist-pacifist" base for the mass mobilizations. The Vietnamese revolution naturally continued and further solidarity actions were necessary.* But when the symbol of the South Vietnam puppet regime, President Thieu, visited the USA in April of this year, there were only sorry crowds of a few hundred anti-imperialist demonstrators to meet him—even in the largest cities: 300 in San Francisco, 200 in San Diego, 120 (!) in Washington, D. C. in front of the White House, 300 in New York. . . . (all figures are from *Intercontinental Press*). In Europe, by contrast, there were tens of thousands in Italy and more than 6,000 in Bonn! The simple explanation for this is that in the period of spontaneous mass mobilizations—of pure *protest*—the European solidarity movement and particularly the sections of the Fourth International intervening in it, in contrast to the SWP, did not neglect to introduce into the spontaneous movement an element of consciousness that was not present at first—the consciousness of *unconditional solidarity with the Indochinese revolutionists* and was thereby able at least minimally to immunize the masses against Nixon's tactical maneuvers.

In the framework of this declaration we cannot go more deeply into the theoretical differences between the Minority Tendency and the Majority. The Majority document "In Defence of Leninism: In Defence of the Fourth International" goes into them in detail, and we hope that we ourselves will be able to make contributions in the further course of the discussion. What we wished to make clear here by illustration is the fundamental difference in method between the two tendencies: the propagandistic approach of the Minority, which idealizes the mass movement, versus the method of pushing the mass movement forward through independent initiatives by revolutionists. This is

the difference that explains the different positions in the Latin America debate, not any "Guevarist," "Castroist," or "ultraleft" current in the United Secretariat of the Fourth International.

Such illusions must be cleared away. As members of the Majority Tendency we see our principal task as representing and applying the *real* positions of our tendency, including criticisms of *real* ultraleft deviations (ERP), in the GIM. To this end we will organize the speedy trans-

lation and distribution of its documents (naturally under the supervision of the entire national leadership), write contributions ourselves, and organize internal discussions in the GIM with representatives of our tendency. We invite every comrade and every branch of the organization that wishes to discuss the Majority position to call upon us.

May 10, 1973

Mintoff, Sonja

Why We Did Not Sign the International Majority's Tendency Declaration

By Karl, Nico, Albert, Heinrich, Emanuel,
Hartmut, Karew, Juan, Oskar, Richard, and Werner

[The following is a translation of a collective statement by some members of the leadership of the Gruppe Internationale Marxisten (German section of the Fourth International) on the Latin American discussion.]

* * *

1. *On the Establishment of the International Majority Tendency in the German Section*

At the December 1972 IEC plenum, two tendencies were formed—one representing a majority of the United Secretariat—grouped around Ernest, Livio, and Pierre—the other, a minority of the United Secretariat—grouped around comrades of the SWP and the LSA/LSO.

A number of leading members of national sections and sympathizing organizations responded affirmatively to the call of the IEC majority to form a tendency, expressing their support in the following statement: "We respond to the call launched by 19 comrades of the December 1972 IEC and we decide to constitute a tendency on the basis of the general line of the document 'In Defence of Leninism: In Defence of the Fourth International.' (Note: by Ernest.) We consider that the theses on the construction of revolutionary parties in Europe, as well as the resolution on Bolivia, adopted by the last IEC in December 1972, which correspond to that general line, likewise constitute part of the political basis of the tendency. The tendency will elaborate other documents to be submitted to a vote at the Tenth World Congress (Fourth Congress Since Reunification), particularly on Argentina, on the basis of the general line adopted at the last IEC."

This declaration of tendency has since been signed by the following GIM comrades: Georg (IEC), Sonja (PB, CC), Mintoff (PB, CC). These circumstances require us to explain why we did not likewise join the International Majority. To this end, we offer the organization an appropriately brief reply.

We do not deny that *internationally* the discussion had reached a stage ripe for forming these two international tendencies. At the same time, we must take note of the fact that the GIM has lagged lamentably behind in this international debate, since the discussion here has as yet by no means been conducted in a proper or structured manner—a circumstance which is not the fault of the international bodies but rather of the GIM itself and its national bodies. Under these conditions, for comrades in the leadership of our organization to join the inter-

national majority was rather artificial. For the internal development of the GIM it would certainly have been better if this tendency had been established in the context of a discussion within this organization. This tendency has been formed in the GIM at a time when the documents upon which it is based are known to very few comrades and thus this step and our reaction to it are scarcely comprehensible to the ranks.

Despite the reservation we have outlined here, on a political basis we of course approve the step these comrades have taken in joining one of the international tendencies. This stems from our acceptance of the character of the Fourth International as the nucleus of a world party, which means that it is something qualitatively more than a federation of national organizations. At the same time, we approve of this step as a possible attempt by these comrades to stimulate the process of forming opinions within the GIM. We approve of it in complete confidence that these comrades will make allowance for the concrete conditions governing the discussion in the GIM, that they will make use of their international backing, their contacts and information, in a democratic fashion for the benefit of the entire organization. We have complete confidence, moreover, that in conducting this debate within the GIM they will give especial consideration to the fact that up to now the International Minority has not been represented.

We declare our readiness to discuss the disputed questions freely and openly with these comrades, and with the International Majority and Minority as well. It is our goal to resolve these differences within the GIM and not let them become factionally hardened. It is our intention not to let these differences on the question of Latin America interfere with collaborating and cooperating with these comrades on other disputed questions within the GIM.

2. *Fatal Alternatives*

It would be fatal if the current international debate were to be presented to the GIM as though the only choice was between the international majority and all of its positions en bloc and the international minority and all its positions—or even more crudely, between the SWP and the Ligue Communiste or Ernest Mandel.

The International Majority and its representatives in the GIM will have to accept the fact that there are comrades who find themselves in agreement with the Majority on most theoretical and practical-political questions,

but who, however, are opposed to retaining the present orientation for Latin America.

It is legitimate, of course, for the International Majority to express explicit agreement with the European document in their declaration of tendency, especially since the International Minority voted *against* this document in the IEC.

But we wish to caution the comrades of the Majority in the GIM against elevating the European document to the central point in forming their tendency. We are firmly convinced that agreement with the European document is considerably broader in the GIM than agreement with the positions of the International Majority as a whole.

We would caution against bringing more and more questions in, going beyond the situation in Latin America, to widen the basis of this tendency. This method would not correspond (a) to the actual course of the international debate, whose focus is clearly the Latin-American orientation of the Ninth World Congress, a debate which is too important to be buried under a welter of other controversial subjects, and (b) to our work in Latin America and the fate of our sections there, for which this orientation is no mere pawn in maneuvers for winning majorities at congresses but quite literally a matter of life and death. (We agree with Livio that this debate must be geared to the needs of our work in Latin America and not to the demands of internal tendency struggles.)

We will not allow ourselves to be put in a position of having to agree with all the positions of the International Majority en bloc or else renounce our previous views. It is understandable that for tactical purposes the comrades would want to achieve the *broadest* possible majority by broadening the themes, but this could just as easily cause the opposite of the desired effect. Besides this has a logic that implicitly confirms the argument of the International Minority, which the Majority has rejected, that the European document is an extension of the Latin American strategy by other means.

Therefore, we are going to insist somewhat stubbornly on centering this debate on our Latin America strategy, and we are not going to be prepared to "substitute" a discussion of the LSA position on Quebec or various adaptations of the Transitional Program. Even if you are of the opinion that the Latin America strategy may not be viewed in isolation from the overall positions of the Majority, that makes it all the more imperative to scrutinize the soundness of this strategy, if necessary, right down to its last details.

Another fatal alternative would be to conduct the debate around the dubious question: "What is your position on armed struggle?" We proceed from the assumption that this does not need to be debated and that for every comrade in the Fourth International the necessity of armed struggle is self-evident.

We do not see the slightest grounds for the notion that the comrades of the International Minority take another view. In view of the overt violence of the whole capitalist society in the USA we consider it absurd to think that the comrades of the SWP believe in the possibility of a "peaceful road to socialism."

If it is only a question of affirming the necessity of armed struggle, the World Congress document of 1969 and the present discussion would be superfluous—unless one were of the opinion that the Fourth International

had become politically so degenerate that it needed to make such a general reaffirmation of armed struggle.

What was decided on and what is at issue here is rural (and, according to more recent modifications also urban) guerrilla warfare as a strategy (!) for all of Latin America for an extended period ("rural guerrilla warfare for a prolonged period on a continental scale.") The Tenth World Congress will have to evaluate and decide anew upon this "strategic orientation."

3. *On the History of the Debate*

What is striking about the course of the debate so far is that the analysis of the *objective* factors retreats further and further behind the presentation of the subjective, behind personal debates and factional gossip. Without identifying ourselves with the content of the Minority documents, we are of the opinion that so far only the International Minority has contributed a comprehensive analysis of the experience with the orientation of 1969 in Latin America, and that those documents of the Majority known to us so far can often be characterized less as honest balance sheets than as defensive and sometimes hair-splitting reactions to the documents of the Minority.

Clearly, what comes up short in this kind of debate is clarification of the facts, the establishment of the concrete relationship between the application of the Ninth World Congress strategy and the actual dynamics of the revolutionary process in Latin America.

As one of the poorly informed sections (even if by its own fault), what the GIM needs most of all are documents that rise above the polemical duel and clarify the issues, that lay out in an objective manner the development of our sections in following this line, their positions and splits, documents that indicate the real relationship of forces on the left in these countries and in the workers movement, etc. (The publication of the PRT-ERP documents in the "International Internal Discussion Bulletin" was an initial important step in this direction.)¹

4. *General Reservations on the Latin American Line*

This position statement can in no sense substitute for a document on the Latin American discussion. Such a text can only be worked out in the course of the elaboration in the international debate and the development of the discussion in the GIM. As the discussion in our section gets under way, moreover, there may well be contributions and documents reflecting differences among the "non-signers" of the Majority declaration. We intend to present here only a rather small list of objections that serve as a common denominator.

(a) Guerrilla warfare as a strategy: Forms of work and struggle such as distributing leaflets, demonstrations, strikes, campaigns, use of arms, etc., do not in themselves constitute a strategy but rather are means to the end of carrying out a given strategy, even if in specific situations they can take on strategic functions. But to attempt to prescribe the use of one particular method for a whole continent and for a long period ("rural guerrilla warfare for a prolonged period on a continental scale") is, to say the least, dubious. Naturally, "armed

struggle" in its most general sense, is also a strategy, in that it is a part of the strategy of the revolutionary seizure of power, just as the strike as a revolutionary mass strike is part of the strategy for revolutionary seizure of power; and in this general sense it is just as important for Germany as for Bolivia and is thus useless as a designation for a specific strategy for Latin America. Quite obviously what is in question here is not completing the process of the revolutionary seizure of power through the use of armed struggle in all Latin America but rather no more than creating the elementary subjective preconditions for this. And in this sense it is impossible, in our opinion, to proclaim guerrilla struggle as the general strategy in Latin America: at most it is possible only to assign it a tactical value.

(b) Background of the 1969 World Congress line.

In the International Majority there have coexisted from the beginning two different principal motivations for this line, which, however, never have been clearly expressed in the (joint) documents: that of Livio, most clearly expressed in "An insufficient letter": rural guerrilla war as the possible means for a quick breakthrough, for a short cut to the seizure of power, to the early establishment of the first workers state in which our influence has played a decisive role ("The rest will follow"). Livio's point of departure is primarily an *offensive* one; and on the other hand, that of Ernest: The repression under the dictatorships in Latin America is so great that every wave of workers and mass struggles will always be drowned in blood; rural guerrilla warfare as a strategy for survival of the revolutionists, in order to secure a sound base of operations vis-à-vis the repressive apparatus. Hence, the starting point here is primarily *defensive*.

The experiences since 1969 (which are not conclusive) have tended to refute both lines of argument more than to bear them out.

Both revolutionary opportunities in this period (Bolivia and Chile) were the result of the power of mass struggle of the "traditional" subject of revolution, the working class. In neither instance did guerrilla struggle play a role worth mentioning. In Bolivia precisely the application of the World Congress line led to a situation where our section (POR-Combate) was unable to utilize this great revolutionary opportunity. Chile, fortunately, was from the very beginning exempted from the "continental" guerrilla "strategy" (here, in the last few months, a promising regroupment of our forces has taken place).

The dictatorships have without exception proven themselves more capable of liquidating the rural and urban guerrillas (Guatemala, Brazil, Uruguay, Argentina, Bolivia) than the "traditional" struggles (Bolivia, Argentina). One has to search for what remains of this kind of armed struggle in Latin America today. It has been demonstrated that the military relationship of forces between modern army and repressive apparatus on the one hand and the more or less isolated guerrilla troops on the other is too unfavorable to the latter for it to survive.

If anyone should choose to counter with the argument that the ERP has stepped up its activity in recent weeks, you would have to take account of the ambiguous character of the period of transition between the election and Cámpora's taking office.

On the other hand, the crushing of class struggles in important instances (Argentina, Bolivia) has *not* led to

the result that was claimed to be inevitable; on the contrary, the possibility of broad, and to some extent, even legal trade union and political work can no longer be disputed.

A total defeat and atomization of the Bolivian working class after the Banzer coup was not prevented by guerrillas, but rather by the capacity of resistance of the working class, which was able to maintain a certain balance of forces and initiate a new offensive.

(c) Conditions of armed struggle.

Armed struggle must fulfill a specific function in historically specific situations. These flow from a concrete context of mass consciousness and mass activity. This is different from saying that it is only justified when the masses themselves are taking up arms, which is too narrow a formula.

In any case, as a general "method of revolutionary education" for the masses, armed struggle is unsuitable; it makes them passive observers of heroic actions, and tends to demoralize them through the ultimate failure of such actions. You cannot prepare the masses for armed struggle simply by starting one up yourself. The ability to prepare the masses for armed struggle is inseparably linked to the weight of the subjective factor, that is to say, to the building of the party. When an organization that is still very weak takes up an isolated rural or urban guerrilla struggle, it cannot at the same time go forward with the building of the party: it is compelled to concentrate its weak forces essentially on the guerrilla struggle, if it wants to take it seriously. The repression largely eliminates its general opportunities for work, the legal ones in any case; its organizational ties to the workers movement are cut off, etc.

This process in turn rebounds on the organization itself: its political orientation, membership criteria, its social composition, the composition of its leadership. That can lead, in the event of certain military successes, to moving away from the revolutionary-Marxist program and to military deviations (PRT/ERP), and, in the opposite event, to decimated ranks that are unable to play a significant role either in armed struggle or work among workers.

In our opinion, even given all of the differences between individual countries, the classical concept of military work from the time of the Comintern—the parallel apparatus—corresponds more closely to the demands and conditions.

This means that the military aspect is interrelated with party building, that military measures are coordinated with the political struggle and the mass work of the party; the party retains the initiative in combining both sides (and does not merely play the part of an armed defense guard whenever a militant workers struggle develops). Educating the masses as to the necessity of armed struggle therefore follows the rhythms of their own struggles. The primacy of political work and security of the party are maintained.

What is decisive in the last analysis, of course, is not the military concept, but correct politics. *False politics*, of course, even with a correct military conception, leads to defeat (the Reval uprising, Hamburg uprising).

(d) Effects on our sections.

The attempt to apply the line of the Ninth World Congress led, in our opinion, wherever it was undertaken—in Bolivia and Argentina—to political defeats for the Fourth International and hindered our taking advantage of many objective opportunities.

The PRT/ERP has become an overwhelmingly military organization. Its conception of a connection with mass work ("base committees") necessarily remained on paper. Its military actions consist of kidnappings and ambushes. A dynamic leading to the fusion of this activity with the workers struggles and party building can be neither observed nor inferred. Its Trotskyist foundation is overlaid with Maoist, Guevarist and generally centrist theories. The gun is in command of its politics. Its political insufficiency was demonstrated anew on the occasion of the elections ("Neither elections nor coup d'etat—revolution!"). In this constellation, splits were inevitable. A strong section, not split by a guerrilla orientation could have played a significant role in the powerful upsurge of class struggle that preceded the electoral maneuvers and the return of Perón.

In Bolivia in the pre-Torres period, our section tried vainly to initiate rural guerrilla war. This—pending a further examination of the facts—led to their being largely isolated from the class struggle during the decisive phase of the rise of the revolution and their failing to play a role in the crucial stages of the revolutionary process, even though the situation urgently required an alternative revolutionary class leadership; and such a party, if it had been integrated into this process, would have had great opportunities. At the same time, the relationship of forces within the left shifted to a considerable extent against us (and not least of all to the advantage of Lora). Our party was already gearing itself for the "defeat" of the revolution (in order, then, as the letter from Moscoso printed in the October 1971 *Was Tun* says, to take up the guerrilla war for which they had been preparing for so long), at a time when what had to be done was to struggle for victory.

In view of this outcome, it is getting off into secondary questions to discuss whether they advanced the correct slogan in this or that situation or the vicissitudes of their acceptance into the Asamblea Popular, etc. What is decisive is why they got into a situation where all of this was fundamentally irrelevant to the course of things, why for example, they had to appeal for admittance to the Asamblea Popular only after everyone else was already represented.

We shouldn't try to pretty up these facts by belittling the *significance* of the revolutionary events themselves, or concocting hairsplitting theories to rationalize such actions, as for example: The POR-Combate was *right* not to participate in the Comando Politico of the COB [Central Obrera Boliviana—Bolivian Workers Federation, the united front formation that preceded the Asamblea Popular] because, as a result of the participation of the MNR [Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionaria—Revolutionary Nationalist Movement], the latter was a "popu-

lar front."²

The results of the Latin-American orientation adopted at the Ninth World Congress show that it does not conform to the needs of a proletarian class line; it has separated our sections from the class struggle and has not furthered the process of party building. This, moreover, has occurred not during a lull but during an upsurge in the class struggle that went all the way to a revolutionary crisis. The Tenth World Congress should reexamine this line and establish one enabling our parties to carry out their tasks and seize the opportunities in a new revolutionary upsurge.

5. *Our Responsibility*

The German section shares equally in the responsibility for the guerrilla strategy of the Ninth World Congress, and we are prepared, for our part, to accept that responsibility. This orientation certainly is not the product of a conspiracy nor is it the work of a "chief architect," but rather it is the result of a concrete and positive development which the world revolution and thus, fortunately, the Fourth International also passed through.

It is indeed not for nothing that there are so many quotations from comrades Joe Hansen, Moreno, and others that fit so well into the Latin American line of the present majority.

The Cuban revolution, the Vietnamese revolution, May '68 in France, these were landmarks of an upsurge of world revolution so stormy, which thrust forward the reality of revolution so tangibly, that a living revolutionary movement could not but cast about for the stoutest club with which to lay capitalism to rest.

One has to try to think back to what it was like in that period and to recall why OLAS, why Che Guevara, why Vietnam made such a gigantic impression, that *anything* seemed possible.

The Fourth International as a whole takes credit for the successes of the last few years; it must likewise bear collective responsibility for the mistakes and defeats which were unavoidable after such a period.

At the same time, at any rate, it is our opinion that the necessary rectifications must be made with a certain timeliness; otherwise the course of events will accomplish this task in spite of us and there will be nothing left to correct.

May 10, 1973

Karl (PB, CC); Nico (PB, CC); Albert (PB, CC); Heinrich (PB, CC); Emanuel (CC); Hartmut, Speyer (CC); Krew, Hamburg (CC); Juan, Heidelberg (CC); Oskar, Heidelberg (CC); Richard, Hagen (CC); Werner, MA (CC).

Supplementary Statements:

Karew: I consider the details of point 4 to be insufficiently worked out, in particular the blanket statements in item (b) concerning the guerrilla experiences. Perhaps a short formulation would have been more meaningful. I therefore support point 4 in its main thesis but not in its specific statements.

1. Note by Karl: In this context, I believe that the policy of the International in disseminating information should be criticized, even though it is partially understandable for security reasons. My impression is that information is frequently passed out according to the demands of the tendency struggle (and is withdrawn or contradicted as necessary); that information—whether coincidentally or internationally—has been disseminated privately (comrades who happened to take a trip to Paris have often been better informed than the official leaderships); that in the debate on Latin America comrades and sections can be divided into two classes—the informed and the uninformed—and that in discussions at the international level or with comrades from the International the uninformed are left to wonder in amazement at the rabbits the experts of the two tendencies alternately pull out of their hats. Subordinating the debate to tactical considerations is necessarily at the cost of clarity. When, for example, at the December 1972 IEC representatives of the International Majority time and time again centered their con-

Hartmut: I agree with the general line of this statement without being able to take a position on every detail. I consider it necessary that a third voice finally make itself heard between the Majority and the Minority in the present discussion—a voice which, without sharing the position of the Minority on other questions, criticizes the guerrilla strategy of the Majority on Latin America. The intent of my signature is to try to prevent this international debate from becoming dangerously overheated.

tributions on the person, past, vacillations and idiosyncracies of a single comrade (Moreno), this could only be described—with all due respect to the role of the individual in history—as a diversionary maneuver.

2. Note by Karl: According to this line of reasoning the "Comando Politico" of the ADGB (Allgemein-deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund—German Trade-Union Federation) when the Kapp putsch was defeated by a general strike would also have been a "popular front," because represented in it, alongside the "yellow" unions (Hirsch-Dunckersche), was even the arch-bourgeois Democratic party. What an astounding rationalization after the fact for the ultraleft position held at the time by the USP (Unabhängige Sozialdemokratische Partei—Independent Social Democratic party), which consisted of rejecting the ADGB's slogan of a workers government based on the trade unions which was advanced through this "popular front."

The Axes of the International Debate

By Jebrac

[The following article is translated from the Bulletin of International Sociology, No. 1, February 1973, the internal discussion bulletin of the French Communist League dealing with the questions under debate in the Fourth International.]

* * *

This document is based on a report to a cadre school of the Parisian leaderships in September 1972. This report was two-sided:

1. To supply comrades with a series of historical and current facts that they are demanding.
2. At the same time to construct a framework for understanding the discussions for the Tenth World Congress as they open up.

Several problems will be on the agenda of the World Congress or taken up in the course of preparing for it: building sections in Europe, a balance sheet of the Ninth Congress position on Latin America, the youth radicalization.

On all of these points disagreements have already appeared in the discussion with the SWP comrades in particular, or in positions reflected in our respective press organs.

Is it merely a question of differences lacking an overall meaning? Or rather can a characteristic common to these differences be divulged, one that reflects a central problem that the Fourth International must currently resolve?

The central problem appears to us to be to politically and organizationally bring the Fourth International, as it leaves behind a long ebb in the world revolution, into contact with the new vanguard that has arisen out of struggles within the specific context of a joint crisis of imperialism and Stalinism.

Europe, Latin America, Africa, the countries of the East, offer just as many concrete variants of this same problem.

I. THE SOURCES OF THE PROBLEM

1. The revolutionary post-world-war expectations were rapidly dissipated. The Stalinist system, far from dissolving, appeared to have become stronger. Imperialism was reaping enormous profits from reconstruction. The cold war that brought imperialism and the Stalinist movement into confrontation left little room for revolutionary Marxism. The international revolution by-passed the developed capitalist countries, where the Fourth International had its primary forces, to unfold in the colonial world. Compelled to find a political answer to this new situation, the Fourth International was divided, its political references splintered: the 1953 split was the result of this isolation.

2. On the other hand, the reunification in 1963 corresponded to a new expansion of the world revolution. Symbolically it can be stated that at the beginning of the

1960s the SWP grasped the importance of the Cuban revolution and its meaning for an entire generation of militants; against a countercurrent in the USA, it organized support for this revolution. And it was this campaign that laid the way for a new growth in the party, and it was from here that most of the present young leaders of the SWP came. In Europe, the PCI [Parti Communiste Internationaliste—Internationalist Communist party] grasped the importance of supporting the Algerian revolution, as opposed, for example, to the Lambertists who had latched on to the coattails of the MNA (Mouvement National Algérien). Both cases reflect a common understanding of the dynamics of the colonial revolution, the internationalist meaning of support, and the change in the international relationship of forces that can be affected as a result. This common understanding of the dynamics of the colonial revolution at the beginning of the 1960s extended in other respects to a shared interpretation of the Twentieth Congress of the CPSU and the uprisings in Poland and Hungary in 1956. This objective rapprochement was consciously expressed at the time of the reunification in the document known by the title "Dynamics of World Revolution Today" (Special issue of the magazine on the Reunification Congress).

3. The reunification revealed two kinds of answers suggested by the components of the Trotskyist movement on the problems of linking up with the broad vanguard and the masses. The Lambertist current responded to the isolation of the Trotskyist movement by hardening its dogmatic crust, by remaining aloof from the concrete forms the radicalization was taking out of fear of becoming corrupted, to the extent of not recognizing, in Algeria or Cuba, the contradictory dynamics of the permanent revolution at work. The Pabloist current, on the other hand, sought to resist the isolation by linking up with the organized workers movement by using the entryist approach and by unconditionally devoting itself to supporting the Algerian revolution, to the extent of bowing to its leadership. And especially to the extent of raising entryism to a strategy and expecting an internal regeneration of the Stalinist movement after the Twentieth Congress (support that was finally only slightly critical of Gomulka) and of staking all the vanguard's forces on hypothetical openings (Algeria) that it felt would provide a political and organizational shortcut for building the party. It is significant that the basis for the 1963 Reunification was on the one hand laid by the split between the SWP and the Lambertist current, and on the other hand it precipitated the departure of the Pabloist current, which was officially expelled in 1965.

4. What was behind these redivisions of the Trotskyist movement? A different understanding of the way the crisis of Stalinism concretely weighed on the conditions of birth of the new vanguard. The inability of the Lambertists to understand the dynamics governing the Cuban revolution: partial split with Stalinism, led by an empirical

leadership. Again their inability to grasp the objective role of the Vietnamese revolution and its subjective role from the point of view of the emergence of the vanguard. Blinded by dogmatism, they only saw the mixed ideology of the Vietnamese leadership, its way of compromising with the framework of Stalinist thought in which it was formed, and not the reality of the struggle and its dynamic which is unsettling the international status quo and, as a result, the Stalinist system. And which, carried to its end, assumes above all a political maturation that partially carries with it a conscious degree of breaking with the Stalinist tradition. Another example: the analysis of the student movement and its radicalization. One of the heated conflicts with the Pabloists in the PCI touched on their desire to keep the political battle in the UEC [Union des Etudiants Communistes—Union of Communist Students] on the level of democratic themes without getting to the heart of an analysis of Stalinism which would have had the dynamic of a break with entryism. The Lambertists, for their part, until 1968 and even until the barricades went up and afterwards, subordinated the student radicalization to their policy of pressuring the apparatuses of the traditional workers movement, thus revealing their lack of understanding of the uneven and combined development of the crisis of Stalinism.

The '63 reunification thus marked the first demarcation, still not very explicit and conscious, as regards the dogmatic, sectarian opinions of the Lambertists, and the capitulationist opportunism of the Pabloists. It showed a real effort by the living Fourth International to turn itself toward the real vanguard of the struggles, and to win it to revolutionary Marxism while enriching it by their experiences.

II. REBUILDING THE SECTIONS IN EUROPE

1. *The factors in the Sixties*

The situation in the European workers movement in the course of the sixties was influenced by two fundamental phenomena. On the one hand, the role of the Sino-Soviet conflict, which shattered unity in the Stalinist movement and ended the possibility of submitting it to a single orthodoxy. The breach was of importance. Through it the youth radicalization was to surge, even though at first it was to the benefit of the Chinese pole. The other phenomenon was the crisis of parliamentarism, the movement toward a strong state in several countries, within the context of establishing the Common Market. The result was a necessary reconversion by the classical Social Democracy which saw its traditional parliamentary game seriously compromised.

A series of sporadic crises within the traditional workers movement flowed from this: small pro-Chinese splits in the CPs in Spain, Belgium, France; the crisis of the youth movements in France and Italy; the split of the SDS [Sozialistischer Deutscher Studentbund—German Socialist Student Federation] from the SPD [Sozialdemokratischer Partei Deutschlands—Social Democratic party of Germany] after Bad-Gottesberg; and at the end of the sixties, the cracks that opened up in such CPs as the Swiss, Austrian, Finnish, and Portuguese (split with the FPLN [Portuguese Front of National Liberation]).

This challenge to the traditional leaderships of the work-

ers movement came essentially from the youth. It found its support mainly in a profound transformation in the student milieu and movement. The university boom, whose clearest reflection is the fast rate of growth of the student population, a result of the 1950s economic boom, the speed-up in technological innovation, the changes occurring in the division of labor. The appearance of a massive student milieu, combined with the crisis of the educational system and bourgeois ideology, released a considerable amount of energy that fed the new emerging vanguards. The evolution of UNEF [Union Nationale des Etudiants Francais—National Federation of French Students] in France, the temporary success of MUBEF [Mouvement Universitaire Belge d'Expression Francaise—French-speaking Belgian University Movement] in Belgium, the rise of the FUDE [Federación Universitaria Democrática Española—Spanish Democratic University Federation] in Spain from 1965-67, and the growth of SDS until 1968 are several symptoms of this process.

However, the central contradiction of this period, from the viewpoint of building a party, is the lack of meshing between the student and workers radicalization. The latter, signaled by the Belgian strike in 1960-61, did not really gain any breadth until the middle of the sixties: workers upsurge in Spain in 1967, general strike in France in 1968, creeping May in Italy in 1969, and then a new wave of struggles once again in Spain, the appearance of important strikes in England and Germany, and even in Sweden.

For a while this lack of meshing between the student and workers radicalization left the student radicalization relatively isolated. This presented the vanguard with the painful choice of staying away from a youth movement devoid of solid proletarian links, or of becoming its leadership at the risk of cutting the moorings of Trotskyism and drowning in the populist and spontanéist wave that was to characterize the ebb in the student movement.

2. *An Empirical Break With Entryism*

The appearance of new struggling social forces, the student movement and the appearance of a combative working-class youth made it absolutely necessary to make a conscious break with the entryist tactic and *a fortiori* with its Pabloist strategic interpretation. The dynamic of this break was already implicitly included in the 1963 reunification. Yet, if a trend in this direction proved to be irresistible, one cannot say that it was consciously guided. The pragmatic character of this reorientation caused many false steps and cost a high price in certain sections.

When one considers that the French situation up to now has been the most successful and has paid off in the existence of the League, one can in retrospect weigh the risks incurred and realize that the gains are not all due to the particular clearheadedness of the leadership, but to a not insignificant extent to the political conditions themselves. On several occasions wavering could be seen in regard to the break with entryism and its outcome. In 1965 our leaving the UEC [Union des Etudiants Communistes—Union of Communist Students] was not so much chosen as forced by the hard-line Stalinist leadership of the French CP, different in this respect from the Italian CP's temporizing and procrastinating leadership.

The proof of this is that the PCI was caught relatively off guard and discussed until 1965 if a JCI [Jeunesse Communiste Internationaliste — Internationalist Communist Youth] directly subordinated to the PCI should be created or a JCR [Jeunesse Communiste Révolutionnaire — Revolutionary Communist Youth], a vanguard youth organization. Even though in 1968 the question of entryism was again posed in certain European sections, including the PCI, the dynamic of the student movement, the forces it swelled the vanguard with, posed the question sharply. This was reflected at the national conference of the JCR in April 1968 concerning the evaluation of March 22. In the end, the break with entryism was above all viewed somewhat "by stages," that is, going through a centrist experience, prior to directly building a revolutionary Marxist party. It was this approach that was behind the MR move at the height of May 68, fortunately swept away by the ebb of May.* On the other hand, the JCR's experience was only able to succeed thanks to its understanding of the decisive elements in the specific situation.

First on an international scale, it understood the key role of the Vietnamese revolution and the impact of Guevarism on the youth radicalization. Next, its understanding, in contrast to that of the Lambertists at that time, of the period as one of rising workers struggles marked by hard struggles such as Le Mans, Mulhouse, Caen, Redon, and translated in the electoral arena by the thrust of the left toward the legislative elections in 1967. Finally, it had a correct understanding of the role of the student movement in relation to the workers struggles, one distinct from Maoist populism that rejected the very scope of the student movement, and distinct from Lambertist syndicalism that subordinated the student movement to the bureaucratic apparatuses.

The JCR constituted the organizational point where the following factors came together:

1. The continuity of Trotskyism carried into its midst by a leadership belonging almost as a whole to the PCI.
2. The continuity and the experience of the French workers movement, partially assimilated especially by those comrades who had been members of the PCF youth organizations or who were in them as a result of practicing entryism.
3. The radicalization of a young vanguard drawn toward Guevarism and the Vietnamese revolution.

In spite of the confusion and possible setbacks, if the JCR was able to resist the post-May 68 spontanéist frenzy, it was because of the first two factors in particular. These, in fact, provided it with political and ideological backbone and with the link to the workers movement that saved most of it from the wandering and mishaps that many groups fell into at that time.

3. A Difficult Transition

In Italy and Germany the break with entryism did not have such favorable conditions.

In 1965-66 the Italian section looked like the most

[In May-June 1968, there was a proposal that the JCR set up the MR, Mouvement Révolutionnaire, to regroup CPers on their way out of the CP and others on the left. It was never implemented.]

advanced section in the entryist experience. It controlled certain sectors of the Communist Youth and even took the liberty of publishing, through the Milan Communist Youth, a newspaper, *Falcemartello*, clearly differing from the positions of the Italian CP. At the same time, it envisioned the development of a rather united centrist pole around the independent newspaper *La Sinistra*, in which several far-left currents participated, with Feltrinelli as benefactor, to take up where entryism left off in the Italian Communist Party. Whereas the Italian CP's porosity and capacity to absorb and recuperate enabled it to avoid resorting to a crude solution "à la française," among the youth, the student and youth radicalization in general was becoming too vigorous to be content with organizational poles consisting of a united publication lacking membership structures and entryist work in Italian CP organizations. Having failed to offer an independent organizational solution to this radicalization, certain leading comrades around *Falcemartello* themselves adapted to the very forms of the radicalization, by grouping together on one plane all those who struggle: from Guevara to Mao, from Giap to Kim Il Sung. From then on, neo-Stalinist degeneration was almost inevitable.

The Italian section in this way produced many leaders of the student movement, among whom were the best-known leaders of the UCML and Vanguardia Operaia, but it lost nearly all of the students it had implanted in industry and lacked such a base when the large workers struggles opened up, out of which we could have built a tremendous party if we had had then (in 1969-70) youth who had been successfully implanted in the preceding years.

We can see by way of this example that a delay in breaking with entryism, combined with the greater flexibility of the Italian CP in comparison to the PCF, which had clamped down on us, resulted in serious consequences that we are still paying for dearly.

In Germany, in a somewhat similar way, we remained relatively outside the great upsurge in the student movement, expressed through the SDS, until its peak between February and April '68 (Berlin demonstration, demonstration protesting the attack on Dutschke).

When the Social Democratic students split with their party, the SPD, after the Bad-Gottesberg congress in 1962, the German comrades continued to work inside the SPD and with its youth group, the Falken. That was the logical continuation of entryism: remain within the organized workers movement and leave the risky adventure of the student organization aside. This orientation was stubbornly followed, particularly in Berlin, in spite of the growth of an especially interesting SDS around Dutschke, by comrades who were to split following the Ninth World Congress and found the IKD [Internationale Kommunisten Deutschlands — International Communists of Germany]. One of the results was their total lack of participation in preparing the Berlin demonstration.

After the success of the demonstration a way was thought of, although certainly delayed, to connect up with the student movement. The means was to be the launching of the newspaper *Was Tun*, which was not originally the section's organ, but an independent publication whose editorial board included the Trotskyist comrades in Mannheim, Berlin (Peter Brandt), and the Berlin SDS group (especially Dutschke).

Unfortunately this initiative came too late and, as a result, inopportunistly. In fact, after having missed the ascending phase of the student movement, we came out in the open in its declining phase (SDS crisis after Easter 1968) without a concretely fixed or defined organizational answer. Even though *Was Tun* achieved a relatively high circulation, it had no membership structures to offer that would allow it to stem the decline and dismemberment of SDS or at least to win an important part over.

Here again the setback weighed heavily at a time when the beginnings of workers struggles were providing broader and more fertile fields of intervention.

It is possible that the specific conditions in Italy and Germany complicated these experiences. The fact that the continuity of the workers movement had been severely disrupted by the Nazi and fascist period made it harder to educate the new young vanguard in its relations with the workers movement. The delayed political centralization in these countries, the fact that they have no political center that plays a dominant role like Paris in France, was also a handicap for organizational centralization and for setting up stable national leadership teams.

Finally we notice that some of the Greek comrades are also posing the question of drawing a balance sheet on entryism. Indeed, even though the comrades who were intervening, especially in the Lambrakist youth, foresaw the danger of a coup d'etat to a certain extent, the absence of an adequately developed autonomous organizational structure was an obstacle in confronting the situation and carrying the struggle forward. Therefore the problem is to decide if the break with entryism in Greece shouldn't have been made earlier, at the beginning of the 1960s, through the appearance of an independent youth organization.

4. *Balance Sheet, Lessons, Problems*

In the three years since the Ninth World Congress, sections or sympathizing groups have been built or have grown throughout Europe. Only Norway and Finland have been left untouched. Certain groups, as in Spain, after having experienced a strong expansion, paid dearly for the absence or weakness of Trotskyist traditions in their countries.

This experience is now extensive enough for certain lessons to be drawn from it: in regard to the relations between youth organizations and building a party; in regard to discussions on orientation that will from now on be posed for the sections.

Concerning the first point, it appears that the JCR's experience cannot be generalized as there might have been a tendency to do. It coincided with a very specific period in the shift between the student and workers mobilizations. It served as a bridge between the youth radicalization and the Trotskyist tradition at a time when the workers upsurge did not yet make the vanguard's intervention absolutely necessary. The youth organization in England and the RKJ [Revolutionaer Kommunistische Jugend—Revolutionary Communist Youth] did not play, in relation to the IMG [International Marxist Group] and the GIM [Gruppe Internationaler Marxisten—International Marxists Group], role comparable to that of the JCR in relationship to the PCI, even if they helped to bring to-

gether the old sections and the young vanguard. Spain, which did not have an old section, did not need to go through the stage of youth organization. On the other hand, the problem of consolidating a Trotskyist core within the LCR was posed even more sharply.

It is clear then that the JCR was not an ordinary youth group of a party, but a stage along the road of building the party. This is why an attempt to mechanically reproduce the experiment where it is not absolutely necessary risks producing rather unpleasant results. This was the case in Mexico where the section and the youth organization were barely distinguishable from one another. Hence the danger of tensions and contradictions occurring between the two, unless one of them quickly disappears. This is also the import of the discussion in France on the ORJ [Organisation Révolutionnaire de la Jeunesse—Revolutionary Youth Organization, a name used in the internal discussion in the Communist League to designate a hypothetical youth organization created by the League], which, if it were formed before the party was consolidated would risk playing the role of a centrist organization among the youth, unless it was just an unoriginal copy of the adult organization without its own purpose. This problem was dealt with more in detail in a document by Vergeat and Delphin written as a contribution to a meeting of the European BPs.¹

Now as the sections continue to grow, discussions on strategic orientation will be posed. The United Secretariat majority document on Europe as well as the summary document of the LCR "En Marche" and the theses of the congress of the French League fit into the heart of these discussions. In reality what is involved is shedding light on and grasping hold of the political consequences of the empirical break with entryism: a concrete analysis of the crisis of Stalinism and the Social Democracy; the relations between parties in the process of being built and the organized workers movement; the problem of the united front, of a governmental formula and of workers control; the question of workers self-defense and revolutionary violence. Such are the central questions that have to be clarified by the sections in the process of growth. As a matter of fact, the entryist strategy for building a party implied a system of political answers that have been brought into question by the break with entryism. And, in face of the Lambertists in particular, the English and French comrades have felt the lack of consistency in answers as yet unsystematized at a time when, concerning electoral problems or a governmental formula, it is obvious that we cannot respond in the same terms as the entryist organizations did. Our systematic differences with the Pabloists in regard to the Union of the Left adequately illustrate this.

III. LATIN AMERICA AND THE MEANING OF ARMED STRUGGLE

1. The Ninth Congress was held in 1969. It recorded the impact of ten years of the Cuban revolution on setting the Latin American vanguard into motion. The political expression of this impact reached a peak with the OLAS conference where the international scope of the Latin American revolution and its dynamic of permanent revolution were confirmed.

The adoption of a resolution on Latin America involving an orientation of armed struggle marked a decided turning point in the International toward the struggling vanguards that empirically arose in the wake of Castroism. Such an orientation is justified from an objective viewpoint by an analysis of the form of domination that imperialism holds over the continent. But it is also justified by the subjective need to re-root the Trotskyist movement in the real vanguards of the struggle, following the heavy liability bequeathed by Posadas and Latin American Trotskyism.

2. Even though this turn still seems justified today, the balance sheet of the struggles in Bolivia and Argentina calls for a critical evaluation of the way this turn was carried out. Indeed, to define armed struggle as a dividing line and an orientation on a continental scale is too vague. It is a question of the same dividing line, in part symbolic, that OLAS drew between revolutionists of the word and those of action.

Now, in 1969 this dividing line becomes inadequate for separating a reformist strategy (which could accommodate itself to tough or armed actions on occasion) from a revolutionary strategy. The setback or stamping out of the guerrillas in Bolivia, Peru, Guatemala, Venezuela, shows the need for a more exact definition of the relationship between armed struggle and building a party, between armed struggle and mass work in legal or semi-legal workers organizations.

On these decisive points the resolution and the documents in the discussion remain general. They firmly fight Debray's foquista theories, but rural guerrilla warfare occupies an importance in them that is perhaps not unrelated to the plans the Argentine PRT had at the time of the congress (that is, before the Cordobazo). An orientation for armed struggle that is not based on a sufficiently precise definition of a strategy for building a party clearly shows its dangers in the case of Argentina. In fact, whereas at the time of the World Congress the comrades had a plan for launching rural guerrilla warfare, right after the Congress, in May 1969, an insurrectional strike in Córdoba took place which prompted changing the center of gravity of armed struggle to urban guerrilla warfare.

Here it was a question of an empirical correction that didn't raise strategical ambiguities. This is concretized in the conception of the ERP [Ejército Revolucionario del Pueblo—Revolutionary Army of the People]. The ERP is presented as a mass-oriented organization. Their actions, such as distributing food and clothing in the poor neighborhoods, therefore aim in this direction. The other possibilities for mass work, particularly in the trade union movement, are subordinated to this. Now, if the ERP's mass orientation is considered in the context of a strategy whose main axis is rural guerrilla warfare, the shift toward urban guerrilla warfare should also have transformed the organizational system. As a matter of fact, the growth of a mass people's army assumes almost a geographic advancement of dual power, that is, support from liberated zones providing economic, logistic, and administrative support to the people's army. In a situation where urban armed struggle becomes the main axis, the possibility that a mass people's army will develop is at least questionable. There is no question of contemplating

liberated zones. On this basis, a military organization remains more than a mass organization, the armed wing of the party, and linking up the military actions with the working class struggle plays the decisive role.

These questions were neither posed, foreseen, nor considered at the time of the Ninth Congress. It could be said that they had no place in the resolution, but they should at least have come up in the discussion. This was not the case.

3. These imprecisions are fraught with consequences. True, the PRT's ideological eclecticism can be criticized. But, it is not an ideological confusion that is totally independent of the PRT's practice. On the contrary, the PRT's borrowing, from the Chinese experience, of the schema of prolonged war giving rise to a mass people's army fosters looking ideologically to centrism and Maoism. And remaining loyal to the chosen strategic schema in return risks encouraging questionable practical choices such as a reorienting toward rural guerrilla warfare.

IV. THE INTERNATIONAL DISCUSSION AND THE APPEARANCE OF INTERNATIONAL TENDENCIES

1. *Some Axes of the Discussion*

a. The minority position in the International has developed a propagandistic conception of the Transitional Program. It is seen more as an overall programmatic outlook, relatively independent of the period and the forces available to the party, than as a lever for transforming the mass mobilization itself. So the transitional program for the Black movement, for women, and for students are more in the nature of propagandistic messages than demands and perspectives that address themselves to the transitional demands of the working class and are matched with organizational proposals defined in terms of a strategy for building the party.

This conception of the Transitional Program ends up as a form of subtle spontanéism. The party contents itself with propaganda, while it is the mass movement that in practice will spontaneously raise the transitional demands. The party's practical role diminishes, the model activities that it could undertake are virtually excluded. Thus a spontanéist view of the problem of arming the proletariat is outlined, according to which the masses will solve the problem when the time comes without the party having cleared the path for fear of substituting itself for the masses in this area. This conception defines a strategy for building the party that actually consists of applying timeless organizational principles defined as Leninist. These principles are applied without concern for the period, independent of the fact of knowing whether the revolutionary crisis could come in six months or twelve years, as a comrade from the SWP said at the IEC. Now, when we strongly defended Leninist principles against the spontanéist wave in France, we always said that these principles take form within a period through a specific system of organization that flows from our strategy for building the party. This strategy is neither independent of the characterization of the period, nor of the forces we begin with. The Spanish comrades in the "Encrucijada"

tendency have defended the opposite view by explaining, for example, that the strategic axis of the united front, as a strategic axis, does not depend on the party's forces and that we should have applied it in Spain from the time the Comunismo Group, which the LCR came from, was created. This is a nice example of a conception of building a party that is unrelated to the specific period.

Taken as a whole, these conceptions risk encouraging a mechanistic deformation of Marxism. Particularly a mechanistic use of the concept of radicalization as a linear, spontaneous, objective movement. Certain writings of the SWP comrades, for example in the debate on Lukacs, are stamped with this deformation.

The consequence of this course is notably to struggle against all the party's exemplary activities, however necessary for making an initial opening. In Spain, this is expressed in the debate on initiatives in action, which the "Encrucijada" tendency brands as substitutionism. A similar position is incubating in opinions held by the SWP comrades on armed actions in Latin America or on some of our minority actions. This fear of substitutionism goes so far as to define, in extreme cases, propaganda on workers control as substitutionist. This was summarized by the Spanish comrades in the "Encrucijada" tendency in their concise formula: "Against the ERPs of armed struggle or of workers control!" . . . They themselves showed where this position ends up by refusing to grasp the occasion of the anniversary of Patino's death (a construction worker killed two years ago during a strike in Madrid) to agitate on self-defense, instead of focusing the propaganda only on demands around the standard of living.

b. For these comrades the problem of building a party has been once and for all settled. Or better yet, it hardly exists at all since it boils down to the accumulation of cadres on the basis of a program. This is why any attempt to provide a specific organizational solution for setting new vanguards in motion looks to them like a dangerous compromise with centrism or ultraleftism. This explains a certain form of sectarianism in relation to certain forms of centrism that the Bolsheviks could have battled with the same energy during the 1920s. But at that time centrism was being fought in the light of the October Revolution and the founding of an International with the backing of the masses. Today it is a more complex product, linked to the crisis of Stalinism and Social Democracy as much as to the organizational weakness of the Trotskyist pole. Hence the sectarianism of the comrades in regard to organizations such as the MIR [Movimiento de la Izquierda Revolucionario—Movement of the Revolutionary Left] for example, or the LCR's original sectarianism against the ETA [Euzkadi ta Azkatasuna—Basque Homeland and Liberty] and the centrist currents. And even on an international scale, the lack of understanding of the separate place the Chinese leadership occupied (until the Cultural Revolution) or the Vietnamese leadership occupies, as distinct from strictly Stalinist leaderships.

c. The comrades in the minority tendency explain that against the orientation for armed struggle, their alternative at the Ninth World Congress lay in the resolution on youth. Very well. But the problem concerns the view of this resolution. We are printing the introduction to the document "*Le 2eme Souffle*," [The Second Wind] as a supplement, which deals with precisely this discussion.²

This is why we are only summarizing here. It takes up the question of winning cadres from among the youth on the basis of the Transitional Program and not of separating and educating a layer of the broader vanguard that could spread within the student movement. This same phenomenon was seen in regard to the antiwar movement. We do not reproach the comrades for having organized a mass movement around purely democratic and anti-imperialist slogans. This was their first task in the imperialist citadel. But the scope of the antiwar movement presupposed all the more that the party, either as the party or through specific organizational forms, develop direct activity of internationalist solidarity with the Indochinese revolution. This they scarcely did at all for two reasons: mistrust of the Vietnamese leadership and the dynamic of the Indochinese revolution; lack of concern for winning over not merely individual cadres from the antiwar movement, but militant layers whose radicalization would inevitably go beyond the scope of mobilizing against the war on the basis of democratic slogans.

2. *The Basis of the Discussion*

It is clear that there are objective reasons why the American comrades from the SWP and the LSA-LSO comrades form important components of the minority. The political and historical isolation that the revolutionary workers movement in the USA has been through (and which played an important role in the 1953 split during the period of McCarthyism), and the relative delay in the workers radicalization in the USA in comparison to Europe for example, unquestionably affects the outlook and the theories on party building that the SWP can develop. But the type of positions drawn up within these objective conditions are not mechanically linked to them. They furthermore correspond to the uneven development of the radicalization and the sections. Thus the growth of the International confronts it with a relatively new series of problems that cannot be solved by merely repeating by rote what it has learned. It will be necessary to confront this at the price of heated discussions and sometimes empirical research. In relation to these difficulties, the temptation to stay within the given situation instead of venturing out on new terrain will continue to be great during the transitional period when the reascendance of the revolution has not developed sufficiently and is not homogeneous enough to lead to a common frame of reference.

In this context a conservative, dogmatic, sectarian current in the Trotskyist movement has a real basis for forming. It is true, and we must be conscious of the fact, that an attempt to link up with new vanguards and solve the questions that come up carries real risks of opportunist, centrist, and ultraleftist deformations. But these risks have to be run if we want to build sections with live forces that are seen as a vanguard in the struggle and not merely as propaganda agents for the program.

This explains how the positions developed by the SWP comrades could be carried over to Europe and Latin America. As long as a Trotskyist pole rooted in the new vanguards is not consolidated, the international crisis of Stalinism will leave the way open for the growth of a dogmatic Trotskyist current. Once again, to understand the basis for this in the United States itself, a longer expo-

sition (a separate document will be necessary) of the situation the SWP is working in would be necessary: an extensive social mobility which makes laying down roots difficult, the strength, or even overdevelopment, of the apparatus; but also the proof shown time and again of this organization's revolutionary zeal in a difficult, hostile context in which pressures towards reformist adaptation are multiplied. The concrete evidence of their capacity to foresee, if not understand, the rise of forms of the radicalization, some with questionable results, must also be stressed: this applies to their defense of the Cuban revolution in the sixties, and since then, the women's movement and the student movement for example.

V. THE OUTLOOK FOR THE TENTH CONGRESS

1. The multiplication of situations where there are two organizations claiming affinity with the International (Argentina, Peru, Mexico, Australia, Canada, Spain) should make us clearly conscious of the danger of a split hidden in this dynamic. We should understand it to be better able to fight it, since we are all conscious of the seriousness of such a split in the midst of a period of international expansion of our movement. This expansion itself risks increasing the difficulties by making the recognition of each new section, and many have applied, the stake in a political battle. This is why the development of the international discussion, its organization through the form of tendencies, the maturing of the respective positions,

should enable the discussion to be balanced and its dynamic controlled. In accordance with this, the most important aspect will be how the period evolves in years to come: in particular, the growth of the workers radicalization in the United States and the continuation of the world revolutionary upswing would transform the objective situation and would create, we hope, a common framework of understanding that is more favorable to the discussion.

2. In regard to the way the debate should be conducted, the creation of a common basis for discussion is decisive. Now, the minority tendency is posing the problems in a dogmatic way by ignoring the central problem of party building. The general propagandistic polemic with then, as it has generally evolved since the Ninth World Congress, has not helped things move forward very much. In opposition to this, it is crucial to focus the discussion as a whole in terms of building the party and in this way forge a different framework for discussion. Documents such as the United Secretariat's on Europe and the "En Marcha" tendency's balance sheet on the Spanish discussion constitute examples on this score that we should learn from.

(Begun in November 72, finished in January 73 for reasons beyond my control . . . And factors change quickly!)

Jebrac

1. The document is scheduled for a coming Internal Bulletin. [IIDB, Vol IX, No. 5, Nov. 1972.]

2. cf. a coming Internal Bulletin. [IIB Reprints, *Discussion on*

the International Youth Radicalization, "A Contribution to the Worldwide Radicalization of the Youth" (Resolution passed by the Political Bureau of the French Communist League) pp. 21-23.]

On The Disputed Questions in The Fourth International: A Brief Summary

By C. Howard

[The following report was made by Clarissa Howard at the Jan. 25-26, 1973, meeting of the International Marxist Group, the British section of the Fourth International.]

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The last IEC (International Executive Committee) of the Fourth International saw the formation of a minority and majority tendency within the Fourth International. While we should not overexaggerate the consequences of this development—since in one sense it merely formalises a situation which has existed (as far as the minority is concerned) for the last 2-3 years—it nevertheless indicates a growing differentiation within our movement. What adds to the tenseness of the situation is the fact that in a number of countries there have been open splits between the supporters of the majority and minority tendencies.

In Québec it was the supporters of the majority who split from the existing section, constituted themselves into the Revolutionary Marxist Group, and established a monthly newspaper (*Red Mole*). In Mexico it was the supporters of the minority who left the section; in Australia a fusion between two groups, one supporting the majority and the other the minority was deemed by the majority supporters to have failed and they "ended it" by withdrawing from the Socialist Workers League and forming the Communist League with a regular eight-page fortnightly called *The Militant*.

In Spain, where the organisation is illegal, both tendencies agreed on the impossibility of working together and parted company. The comrades supporting the minority characterised the majority supporters as "ultra-left sectarian . . ." while the latter comrades labeled the former as "right-wing opportunists, basically on Lambertiste positions. . . ."

Without going into the detailed reasons for all these splits (in the resolution at the end I propose a procedure for making this information available to the comrades) what cannot be denied is that in most of these cases comrades from both the majority and minority found it impossible to work together in one common national organisation. It is *this* development, rather than the formation of two tendencies, which has created a serious situation within the International. In fact the formation of the two tendencies could possibly safeguard against hasty and unthought out actions by supporters of both sides since tendency discipline would act as a moderating factor. What is vital in this situation is that the debate preceding the Tenth World Congress (scheduled for September 1973) is conducted in the most disciplined and

democratic fashion possible in *every* section and inside organisations prevented by reactionary legislation from becoming official sections.

Up till now every *international* tendency fight in the Fourth International since its foundation in 1938 has led to a split. It is in the interests of the entire world movement to prevent a repetition of this particular 'tradition' of the FI. Of course, if the divisions reach a point where they involve (in the case of either tendency) a fundamental breach with revolutionary Marxism, events will take their course, but this situation has by no means been reached. What all this implies is that we need a discussion which aims to clarify political issues rather than to score easy debating points.

What are the differences which have developed inside the Fourth International since the Ninth World Congress. The minority comrades argue in *Argentina and Bolivia—The Balance Sheet* (International Internal Discussion Bulletin, Vol. X, No. 1) that the difference is between those who advocate guerrilla war (the majority) and those who support the policy of "trying to link up with the masses through consistent application of the method advanced in the Transitional Programme" (the minority). The real debate, however, is centred around the problems confronted by a Fourth International which has grown enormously since 1968 and which is today larger and more influential than it has ever been since its inception.

The essence of the dispute is involved in the following questions: What is the nature of the epoch we are living in and what does this mean for revolutionists? What is a Leninist party? How is this party built in different situations in both advanced capitalist and in colonial and semicolonial countries? What are the tasks which confront such a party? Related to the answers given by both sides to this question is an assessment of the Transitional Programme, its nature and its function. The minority comrades have transformed this programme from one "which combines demands which take the immediate preoccupation of the masses *only as a point of departure*, and lead them, through their own experiences in struggle, to understand the *necessity of the socialist revolution and to act accordingly*, above all by creating organs of dual power" (Majority tendency statement, December IEC, 1972, signed by 18 IEC members [IIDB, Volume X, No. 4]) into a programme which consists essentially of "democratic" demands, which are the ones we apply as they relate to the existing level of consciousness. This has led the minority comrades to positions which run counter to Trotsky's theses on the permanent revolution, specifically in the cases of Québec and the Middle East.

Comrade Germain has dealt with this question at length in his text (*In Defence of Leninism, In Defence of the Fourth International*) [IIDB, Vol. X, No. 4]. It is not necessary therefore to do much more than give a brief summary of the differences which flow from the dispute on what constitutes a Leninist party and what are its tasks. For the Socialist Workers Party comrades a lack of understanding of the latter (exemplified most sharply in Pete Camejo's definition in his article in the Nov. 1972 *International Socialist Review*) is related to their inability to comprehend the nature of the present epoch except in a broad, general, and propagandistic sense.

ON THE DIFFERENCES

Latin America

At the last world congress the discussion on the strategy and tactics for Latin American revolutionaries was the most controversial issue of debate. It is clear from the text of the minority that this issue is once again likely to play a dominant role in the discussions leading to the Tenth World Congress. Before we discuss the situation in detail, particularly with regard to Argentina, it is worth noting that the political positions of the SWP comrades have undergone a certain change and transformation over the years. There is nothing wrong with this, but what is a trifle peculiar is that this has been done without the SWP making a single self-criticism of its past "ultraleft" positions. A study of the writings of SWP leaders from 1963-68 shows a completely different attitude to the problems of the Latin American revolution than their antiguerrillarist crusade today would indicate. To give comrades some idea of what we mean by this let us simply examine the following three quotations:

"(13) Along the road of a revolution beginning with simple democratic demands and ending in the rupture of capitalist property relations, guerrilla warfare conducted by landless peasant and semiproletarian forces, under a leadership that becomes committed to carrying the revolution through to a conclusion, can play a decisive role in undermining and precipitating the downfall of a colonial or semicolonial power. This is one of the main lessons to be drawn from experience since the second world war. It must be consciously incorporated into the strategy of building revolutionary Marxist parties in colonial countries." (*Fourth International*, 17, Oct/Dec 1963) [*Intercontinental Press*, May 11, 1970, p. 444.]

Now this is no ordinary, random, quotation. It is one of the theses on the basis of which the Political Bureau of the SWP agreed to the reunification of the Fourth International. Should we then argue that the source of the "ultraleftism" of both the PRT [Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores (Combatiente)—Revolutionary Workers Party] and the IMG [International Marxist Group] is not the Latin American resolution of the 9th World Congress, but the SWP's theses entitled "For Early Reunification of the World Trotskyist Movement." This vital thesis is not even mentioned in the course of Peter Camejo's recent attack on Guevara (and the FI majority by implication) in the *ISR*. Surely we have a right to ask the SWP comrades whether they were wrong and ultraleft in 1963? If not could they please explain to us

how Comrade Moreno or their other supporters are applying the implication contained in this thesis *in practice*. However let us move on and examine another quotation:

"This dialectical unity of the objective and subjective factors in the making of a revolution has been both *exemplified and theorised* (my emphasis—C.H.) by Fidel Castro and his close associates. If ever an historic event could be considered the work of one man, that was—and is—the Cuban Revolution. Castro is truly its 'lider maximo' [main leader]. Castro has explained, notably in his December 21, 1961, speech on Marxism-Leninism, how the founders of the July 26th Movement did not wait for *all* the objective conditions required for revolutionary success to emerge spontaneously. They deliberately set about to create the still missing revolutionary conditions by fighting. Their guerrilla warfare did bring about the moral, psychological, political changes needed to overthrow Batista's tyranny. The general lesson of their experience for the further struggles against Latin American dictatorships has been formulated as follows by Che Guevara in his handbook on guerrilla warfare: 'It is not always necessary to wait until all the conditions are ripe for the revolution; the insurrectional centre can create them.'" (George Novack, *ISR*, Winter 1965).

Now while I certainly would not agree with all the formulations employed by Comrade Novack, certainly the framework in which he approaches the problem is more correct than the inanities mouthed by Comrade Camejo. However, as late as 1967 Comrade Ed Shaw, a member of the SWP leadership involved in Latin American work and who sang a different tune not long ago when he travelled to Latin America with Linda Jenness (the presidential candidate of the SWP), was saying:

"You have heard some description of what it's like in Bolivia today. The Barrientos regime is one of the most cruel and inhuman that has existed. And it is a total puppet of the United States government, that is, our ruling class. . . ."

I submit that to criticize a person, a revolutionary, who takes the road of armed struggle in conditions that exist in almost all of Latin America today, is to take the position that there should be no struggle at all, because there is no other way to struggle under those conditions. It's either, or. . . ." (Ed Shaw, speech on Che's death, reported in *Young Socialist*, Dec. 1967, p. 6).

These and numerous other examples (some of them cited by Comrade Germain) which clearly show that it is the comrades of the SWP who have changed or moved away from their old positions. Unfortunately they have moved to the right, the most blatant expression of the rightward drift being Comrade Camejo's *ISR* article. The implication beneath all this (never stated clearly, but always beneath the surface) is that we are seeing a new reformist phase in Latin America. The practical consequences being that revolutionary organisations can be built in exactly the same way as they are in North America. Even when the minority comrades are compelled to admit that a prerevolutionary situation exists, as in the case of Argentina, their practice belies their own rhetoric. A prerevolutionary situation in Argentina means new Cordobazos (i.e., mass uprisings of an insurrectional character) and the *key* tasks in this situation confronting any group which considers itself revolutionary, has a

membership of several hundred and a large periphery, is to prepare a section of its organisation for clandestine activities and for *armed actions*. It would be irresponsible to do otherwise.

The comrades of the Moreno group who have taken over a section of Argentinian social-democracy (in a remarkable act of political necrophilia) and now call themselves the PSA (Argentine Socialist Party) have done this simply in order to participate in the elections being prepared by the Lanusse dictatorship. The elections are part of an elaborate manoeuvre by the dictatorship to isolate and smash the resistance of the armed groups. That is why the CP and all the extreme left groups have been barred from participating in the elections. In this situation the participation of the PSA Moreno in the electoral farce only makes sense if the tactic is utilised to launch public attacks on the dictatorship and defend the armed groups, explaining the necessity of the armed struggle. The orientation of the PSA is, however, largely electoralist in character and amounts in the "prerevolutionary situation" recognised even by the minority comrades to left-reformism.

The text of the minority comrades contains the, by now familiar, catalogue of atrocity stories, particularly in relation to Argentina.

Apart from a political discussion on Argentina, the last world congress had to decide on the problem of which grouping to recognise as the Argentinian section of the FI. The minority grouping (led by Comrade Moreno) [at that time the PRT-La Verdad] has supported the position of Comrade Hansen. The majority had voted for the general line of the Latin American resolution. The unanimous position of the congress was to recognise the majority as the section (i.e. the PRT-Combatiente) on the grounds that it *was* the majority. In my view this is an unsatisfactory procedure based on organisational rather than political considerations and has to be eschewed in the future as the main criteria for admitting sections. Of course what it highlights is the absence of a programme for the FI on the basis of which groupings can be admitted as sections and which provides a political basis for centralising the International as such and its activities. However another abnormal decision was taken, namely to recognise the minority grouping of Comrade Moreno as a sympathising section of the FI. This was done with the agreement of the majority Argentinian delegates and it was made clear and written into the statutes that this could only be done with the agreement of an existing section.

Since then the difference between the two groups has increased still further and the Argentinian section has now formally informed the leading bodies of the International that it no longer gives its approval to the Moreno group continuing as a sympathising section as the latter have officially dissolved themselves and fused with the PSA (or to be more specific the tendency of the PSA led by Coral). Neither this fusion nor the basis on which it took place nor the common protocols agreed to by the La Verdad group and the PSA were discussed, leave alone approved, by any leading body of the FI. What is more, the PSA (even the new-style PSA) is not formally a sympathising group of the Fourth International. However, the final decision on these questions will be taken

by the Tenth World Congress and comrades will find a more detailed and thorough discussion of the differences in the document of Comrade Germain.

It is, however, essential to make a few remarks about the development of the Argentinian section, the PRT [Combatiente], and its activities. Up till now it has not been easy to draw an organisational and political balance sheet of the PRT. Because of the fact that the latter is totally clandestine and that its entire leadership is being hunted by the forces of the dictatorship, the communication with the FI Centre has, until recently, been extremely fragmentary and dependent on rare, and, usually unsatisfactory, trips by majority comrades. We should also bear in mind the fact that the PRT and its armed organisation the ERP [Ejercito Revolucionario del Pueblo—Revolutionary Army of the People] are the main target of a military dictatorship, which despite its "democratic" pretensions (i.e., allowing elections) has only recently carried out the massacre of 16 disarmed revolutionaries at Trelew and has generalised tortures and kidnappings of its political opponents, in particular members of the armed organisations of the extreme left and the left Peronistas.

Quite clearly the blows received by the PRT comrades since the Sallustro and Sanchez executions and the Trelew massacre have been the hardest ever to be received by a revolutionary group in Argentina over the last decade. This has resulted in *the death of the most developed political and military cadres of the PRT*. So, in addition to a considerably weakened leadership, we have an organisation whose rank and file has been in the party for less than a year. This shows itself in the weak ideological level of the comrades, something which, alas, cannot be compensated for by their unquestioned heroism in the armed struggle and their undoubted devotion to the socialist revolution.

Despite these weaknesses, the political prestige of the PRT amongst the Argentinian masses remains extremely high. This is important not only for Argentina but for the whole of Latin America, and of course, for the International and its development in the colonial and semi-colonial world. The political balance sheet of the PRT which is drawn by the majority of the FI and the beginnings of which can be studied in the Germain text (op cit) will be extremely important for the development of our movement. Thus the *Unico Camino* (or *Only Road* [IIDB, No. 4 for 1972] text of the PRT, which many comrades have read by now (if they have not they should do so!!!!) is the principle "weapon" utilised by the SWP in its campaign of exposing the atrocities of the majority. For the SWP comrades the whole document is no doubt "alien" to the "traditions of the Trotskyist movement," etc. Now certainly the document has many particularly incorrect formulations, particularly on Maoism and to a lesser extent on Castroism and the theory of "people's war" (certainly there is no formulation on Castroism which is any more "revisionist" than the formulation of Comrade Novack cited above.

But that is not the essence of the *Only Road*. In my view the document poses some fundamentally correct questions and pinpoints the weakness of the FI in a very crucial area of struggle, namely Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Furthermore it discusses the problems of the

colonial revolution from the point of view of revolutionaries who are obsessed with the question of seizing power. Comrades will agree that this is by no means an unhealthy obsession. The fact that the PRT comrades do not always come up with the correct answers does not detract from the importance of their text. Quite clearly the international majority will have to provide the correct answers, but it is within this framework that the problems of the Argentinian and Latin American revolution will have to be discussed.

When discussing with the Argentinian comrades, therefore, one has to understand that the FI has *not* been able to provide a meaningful answer to the problems posed by revolutions in colonial and semicolonial countries. The betrayal of the LSSP, the blind sectarianism of some Chinese Trotskyists (i.e. the inability to recognise a revolution after it has taken place) can in one sense be explained by this weakness. The difference between the majority and the minority is expressed in the fact that while the majority comrades are beginning to grapple with these problems and are attempting to further *develop* Leninist and Trotskyist concepts the minority comrades in the name of the "orthodoxy" of the TP [Transitional Programme] refuse to even take these questions seriously, leave alone thinking in terms of providing answers. Every new or awkward problem can be summed up by the blanket formula of "ultra-leftism."

The prestige of the PRT/ERP is based on a very simple fact: it is the expression of the recognition by the vanguard layers of the Argentinian masses that gradualist, pacifist or parliamentarist roads can not end their misery and exploitation. They have to learn this through their own bitter everyday experience and they have come to understand that repression by the bourgeois state always greets them after the struggle has developed beyond a certain stage. This understanding of the necessity to prepare layers of the masses for the armed struggle while at the same time also training the revolutionary organisation is what distinguishes the PRT from the PSA.

However it is important to recognise the fact that the development of the PRT over the last years has meant that it has not been able to capitalise (i.e. organise and win thousands of cadres) on its prestige. While clandestinity makes this difficult (we must not forget that the PRT comrades do not and cannot have a 182 Pentonville Rd. [the IMG national headquarters]) the main problem has been their ideological weaknesses.

Some of these weaknesses are dealt with in a letter sent to the PRT leadership by several comrades of the USFI [United Secretariat of the Fourth International] and which should soon appear in the IIDB, while others will be discussed in other documents. The important point to grasp is that while the majority comrades have certainly been late they nevertheless made it clear at the IEC in the presence of one of the principle leaders of the PRT that they were not in agreement with the Argentinian comrades on a whole variety of issues. The PRT comrade said that they too had disagreements with the majority, but he hoped that many of these could be settled by organising a discussion. In other words, the International, while it has been somewhat opportunist in the past by utilising the prestige of the PRT/ERP and not making a thorough organisational and political balance sheet

of Argentina, has today been compelled to do this. What is important to understand is that this had to be done within the general framework of the positions of the majority and the correct analysis of Latin America projected at the 9th World Congress and further developed by Comrade Mandel in an extremely important and necessary text (*Imperialism and National Bourgeoisie in Latin America, International*, Vol. 1 No. 5). The document by Comrade E. Germain, as was noted above, makes a valuable contribution.

Europe

Since the 9th World Congress the differences have been extended far beyond Latin America, and as the tendency declaration of the majority states, now encompass programmatic issues. Nowhere has this been brought about more clearly than in the differences which have emerged between the supporters of the SWP and the supporters of the majority in Europe. These differences first came to the fore in the IMG immediately after the last world congress. They crystallised on the question of Labourism, the youth vanguard, attitude to bourgeois elections, etc.

It is not intended to go into the details of the administrative methods used by the SWP to try and keep the IMG within its "sphere of influence." We shall document these for the information of comrades in a special document sketching the history of SWP/IMG relations. (This has become even more necessary since the SWP internal discussions on the "Questions before the 10th World Congress" including a discussion on the IMG! sandwiched though it may be between coffee and doughnuts and an intriguing "happy hour".)

The Big T and little t tendencies within the IMG, which have now existed for almost three years, reflect the general orientation of the minority tendency in Europe. However, for a whole period the SWP engaged in an Albanian polemic, concentrating its fire on the IMG (the best example of this is Comrade Hansen's text "In Defense of the Leninist Strategy of Party Building") rather than attack the French section or Comrade Mandel directly. The bulk of the comrades in the rest of Europe on their part imagined that the SWP/IMG polemics did not concern them. The opposition by the SWP to the European Perspectives Document [EPD] has shattered that particular myth, and brought the entire discussion and debate right out into the open.

The objections made by the SWP comrades to the EPD essentially concern its "ultraleft character." However, since the minority comrades have not produced an alternative document for building the sections in Europe, it is somewhat difficult to make any sense of their vague, confused verbal criticisms of the EPD. What seemed embarrassingly obvious at the IEC was that the SWP comrades had simply not understood the European document: what followed after the opening reports can best be characterised as a dialogue between the deaf.

The only reason given by the minority comrades for not producing an alternative was voiced by Comrade Hansen at the IEC when he stated that it was not the task of American comrades to prepare a draft perspectives document for Europe. Ignoring the fact that this

attitude reveals a somewhat strange understanding of internationalism, nevertheless the comrades of the SWP have supporters in both the T and t tendencies in Britain and also in Spain. So even if one accepts their odd refusal to document their differences, surely we can expect a document to counter the EPD from their European supporters. A refusal to do so after voting against the document and misinterpreting it would be extremely irresponsible.

It would be much more useful for a political clarification if the SWP comrades wrote a serious document on Europe instead of employing (me thinks one detects the hand of Comrade Hansen here) debating tricks such as the following: A document written by four comrades in the preconference discussion of the Communist League (including Comrade Jebracq) and which raises some interesting questions, is pounced upon by the comrades of the minority. Here we have it in a nutshell, say the SWP comrades. The evil, ultraleft, Jebracq has said that guerrilla warfare is possible in France, that the League should prepare for clandestinity, etc. The quotations are first taken out of a long document signed by four individuals and then gradually it is implied that the Ligue Communiste in reality holds and responds to these views.

It is not mentioned that the Political Bureau of the League strongly criticised some of Comrade Jebracq's formulations and that Comrade Jebracq made a self-criticism in the Internal Bulletin! But to mention this would not have served the childish factional purpose for which the SWP intended the document. Moreover it would cause some surprise in the SWP's ranks that leaders and members of political committees of revolutionary organisations (in this case the largest section of the FI) actually indulge in dubious vices as making self-criticisms and admitting their mistakes before the membership.

This irks us especially because Comrade Hansen used similar tricks before, both publicly and internally, with Comrade Wilcox's article, "Let it bleed," a text which contained some faulty formulations on the Labour Party. [See "In Defense of the Leninist Strategy of Party Building," IIDB collection of *Discussion on Latin America*, 1968-1972, p. 129.] This was broadly interpreted as being the "real" position of the IMG and the *Red Mole* and at a time when Comrade Wilcox was not even a member of the IMG. Things have at least progressed and improved in one field: Comrade Jebracq is at least a member of the Political Bureau of the Ligue Communiste.

What this highlights is the total failure of the minority comrades to provide *political* answers to the questions which have been posed in Europe since 1968. Instead they engage in erecting straw men and then knocking them down. The majority supports, or is moving toward, guerrilla warfare in Europe . . . we must give battle to this guerrilla orientation . . . etc. A tendency formed on the basis of a totally distorted picture of its opponents can easily become disoriented when this picture is shown to be distorted. This disorientation can easily lead to even further distortions. Presumably the SWP comrades are aware of the logic of this as much as we are.

Nationalism

The positions of the SWP on the Arab revolution, of the LSA [L/SO—League for Socialist Action/Ligue Socialiste Ouvrière] on Québec reflect a common misapplication of the theory of permanent revolution. In the case of the Arab revolution the SWP comrades projected at one stage in their press the idea of a "democratic and secular" Palestine. Presumably this state was a classless entity since the comrades did not specify its class nature. However the formula they use is firmly within the framework of the bourgeois state. It is identical to the conceptions of El Fateh and equally wrong. Since the defeat of September 1970, this formula has not been repeated in the same form, but no real balance sheet or assessment either of the demand for a "democratic and secular Palestine" or of the fate of its originators, El Fateh, has appeared in any SWP publication as far as I know. A document on the Arab revolution will be available in the IIDB within the next few months.

The position of the LSA Central Committee on the struggle in Québec is nothing short of a scandal and represents the logical culmination of the right-wing opportunism of the politics of the minority comrades on this question. The LSA/LSO Central Committee has as its central demands: i) the establishment of a "democratic republic." ii) "All power to the National Assembly" with policy elaborated by the entire nation: i.e. a bourgeois assembly. iii) an "independent monetary system" i.e., a monetary system for Québécois capitalists independent of Canadian capitalists or could it simply be an "independent monetary system" i.e. a monetary system on its own, independent of every other country. iv) "For an independent customs policy to permit the Québécois to establish import tariffs according to the needs of the Québécois" again within the framework of capitalism, but the comrades seem to want a national capitalism. v) "Repeal the Federal abortion laws . . . give Québec women control over their bodies and their lives" etc, etc. This is the program elaborated by the Canadian (and this includes Québec) section of the FI for the struggle in Québec.

I repeat: this is an absolute disgrace for a section of the Fourth International. What is ironic is that it is these very comrades who raise criticisms of the 7-point program of the PRG!—a document which may have its faults, but which is well to the left of the formulations contained above and could certainly not be characterized as a program for advancing the interests of a "national bourgeoisie." The positions of the LSA leadership on Canadian nationalism and their reformist orientation to the NDP have been dealt with in some detail in the Germain text (op cit).

On solidarity with the Vietnamese revolution

Another difference which has existed, but has not been specified, is how to build the solidarity movement in the imperialist countries in relation to the war in Indochina. This was related to the slogans on which we mobilise the vanguard, the sort of actions which are possible, etc. In the early days of the VSC [Vietnam Solidarity Cam-

paign] in this country, the SWP raised little criticism of either our principle slogan (Victory to the NLF) or some actions we were compelled to take such as defending ourselves against the police brutality (in the course of which some damage was inflicted on the American embassy). These actions were reported in the IP fairly regularly. Our polemics against the CP on this question were also reprinted approvingly in the same journal. No criticism was made of us internally inside the FI.

However a number of factors changed in the years following the last world congress (there was a general decline in the solidarity movement because of the weakness of the vanguard in relation to the rise of the working class upsurge after 1968, the Paris peace talks, etc.).

The fact that the IMG was in general agreement with the majority on China and Latin America also played its part in the changing attitude of the SWP comrades towards us. A tailendist criticism was directed at us: the reason you can't mobilise any longer on Vietnam is because your slogans are ultraleft. Forgotten was the fact that in the heady days of 1967-68, the Young Socialist Alliance had itself carried placards reading "Create Two, Three, Many Vietnams — Che" and decorated its conference hall with the banner: "The duty of every revolutionary is to make the revolution." From now on the SWP began to curb its youth wing and all propaganda in the antiwar movement was based on essentially slogans such as "Bring the Boys Back Home." When Nixon actually began to do so, this was amended to the present variation of "Out Now."

Let me make it clear that there is no objection to these slogans as such. The point, however, is that they are *not* sufficient on their own. While it is certainly correct to use them as the basis of an antiwar united front, the constant aim of the revolutionary organisation must be to project its own politics, its own slogans, and its own propaganda on the question *within* the framework of this united front. This has not been adequately done by the comrades of the SWP.

Their main political battles were fought, not against the rightists and liberals within the antiwar movement, but against the "ultra left" (i. e., those who wanted to raise slogans demanding victory of the Vietnamese against U.S. imperialism) wing. This has without doubt led to a distortion of the role which the SWP should have played in the antiwar movement.

In our opinion its primary thrust should have been to attempt to win over the *leftists* to revolutionary Marxist positions. (It would be totally incorrect to imagine that the Weathermen development was inevitable. In our view it was an impatient response to the political weakness of the antiwar movement.) This would have *strengthened* the antiwar movement. Why? Because without doubt the SWP was the largest organised force on the extreme left to participate in the mass mobilisations. A correct political orientation on its part would have drawn to its ranks the best politically conscious militants within the antiwar movement and would have projected the movement on a broader anti-imperialist trajectory. This would have made it difficult for Nixon to pull the rug out from under their feet simply by changing his tactics and actually bringing the boys, or a large number of them, home, thus *partially* accepting the principal slogan of

the antiwar movement. Moreover the leftist current would then not have disintegrated and could have been together with the SWP the backbone of a rising and developing movement.

If large sections of the antiwar movement did not ascend from a simple antiwar consciousness to a broader anti-imperialist consciousness, part of the blame has to be laid fairly and squarely with the comrades of the SWP. Thus their inability to politically educate the antiwar movement (except in a wrong and totally negative way against the "ultralefts") meant that after the heaviest bombing of the war in December 1972, NPAC was incapable of an *immediate* and emergency mobilisation. Why? Because in the YSA convention held only a few weeks before the terror bombing, NPAC had been "laid on ice" as it was not possible for the SWP/YSA on their own confession to take the political issue (such as the role of Moscow and Peking) concerning the war into the antiwar movement.

An argument used to justify the SWP's slogans on the Vietnam war and their refusal to call for a victory to the NLF/PRG and confine themselves to "self-determination" is the alleged "Stalinist" character of the Vietnamese leadership. This is related to another discussion, which it is not intended to go into here as it would involve a debate on Stalinism, what its principle characteristics are, what role it plays in the international workers movement, and also on how parties (whether they be social-democrats, Stalinist, Trotskyist, Centrist) evolve in conditions of mass struggle and upsurge, etc.

However this is in any case a false argument as the SWP comrades have quite explicitly tended to support both El Fateh and the Official IRA, neither of which despite their *formal* references to socialism are any more than petty bourgeois nationalist organisations and both of which have demonstrated in practice their inability to lead either the Palestinian or the Irish struggles to a successful conclusion.

Why then this discrimination against the NLF/PRG even if one accepts for the sake of argument that it is Stalinist. What logic justifies giving support (general) to petty bourgeois nationalism and denying it to Stalinists who happen to be in the forefront of the international class struggle, fighting the most heroic struggle ever waged in the entire history of the workers movement. This important difference between the majority and minority comrades is related to the whole question of the relationship between movements in solidarity with the colonial revolution and the anticapitalist struggle in the heartlands of imperialism. Certainly there is a relative autonomy between the two due largely to the labour and Stalinist bureaucracies of the working class, but the task of revolutionists here is to break down this autonomy and not to enhance it.

Conclusion

The emergence of two tendencies in the International, while containing some dangers for the FI, could be turned into an extremely rich and beneficial *political* experience for the entire Trotskyist movement. The debates are related to the growth of the FI and the emergence of new problems which we have not had to confront in the past.

How the discussion ends, therefore, is dependent partially on the ability of the FI to ensure democratic discussion throughout the sections and also on the attitude of whoever is in a minority at the next world congress to loyally carry out the decisions of the majority and to defend them publicly in its press. The future of the FI is therefore dependent, at this state, on both tendencies.

Resolution to be voted on by the National Committee

- 1) That we accept the general line of this report.
- 2) That the IMG National Committee comrades support the formation of a majority tendency inside the FI and all leadership comrades in agreement with the appeal issued by the majority should therefore sign it.
- 3) That as an immediate task the NC authorises the Secretariat to publish in a special International Information Bulletin material related to the splits mentioned in the Howard document. This would include statements by both sides (where available) on the reasons for the split.
- 4) That the NC formally opens the International discussion in the branches and asks the PC to organise discussions on the EPD [European Perspective Document], the Latin American dispute, China, etc., in all branches.
- 5) That all NC comrades signing the majority tendency declaration organise regular meetings to discuss questions related to the building of our tendency internationally.

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[The following excerpts from the IMG National Committee minutes of Jan. 25/26, 1973, relate to the disposition of the resolution at the end of Comrade Howard's report.]

Amendments to C. Howard Motion

- 1) Delete point one of the resolution.
- 2) That the IMG NC support moves toward defining a majority position on the International and establishing a clear political basis, for the formation of a tendency and we support the statement issued and signed by majority IEC members and circulated to NC members.

- 3) Accept point three as it exists.
- 4) Accept point four as it exists.
- 5) Delete point five.

CARRIED 14-4-3

WATTS Motion: That we ask the USFI to clarify the question of formation of tendencies and that this meeting only discuss the document presented by Comrade Howard.

DEFEATED

Petersen Resolution

- 1) No votes should be taken except of questions of opening the discussion.
- 2) That we reject the Comrade Howard paper.
- 3) That there be no split in the leadership on these questions before adequate discussion.

DEFEATED

Motion by S. Williams

- 1) This NC refuses to take a decision on the assessment of Comrade Howard or any other comrade of the general line of a document which, on information given by Comrade Howard, is being written by Comrade Mandel on behalf of the majority leadership of the FI. When the document is written and circulated we will read it, have a democratic discussion and then make a decision regarding it. The NC notes that a document has been submitted for the world congress on Latin America by a minority of the international leadership. The (words missing) will take a decision on this document also, after there has been a democratic discussion. The comrades of the NC will then decide whether to support any international tendency which is formed.
- 2) That time be allocated at the next NC for a political discussion on Latin America. That a national school should be organised to which comrades from Latin America supporting the majority and minority positions in the International leadership be invited to attend and speak.
- 3) That a preliminary discussion on Latin America should take place at the national conference being held Easter 1973.
- 4) That the IMG takes no votes on the documents being presented at the world congress until the special national conference being convened prior to the world congress.

DEFEATED (8-9-4)