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by Art Young for the Political Committee

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REPORT ON THE INTERNATIONAL

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The general line of the following report was adopted unanimously by the Central Committee at its January 4 - 7 Plenum.

At our last plenum in September 1972, we adopted a World Movement Report which dealt with the discussion in the Fourth International as it had unfolded to that point. This report reaffirmed our opposition to the guerrilla orientation adopted at the last World Congress for Latin America. It also took a stand against the extension of this error to other areas, and it outlined our views on the key issues before the December meeting of the International Executive Committee.

This report consists of a report on what occurred at the meeting of the International Executive Committee, the world leadership body of the Fourth International between World Congresses, and an assessment of its significance.

The central issues at the IEC were Bolivia and Argentina: How had the majority line stood the test of events in those two countries since the last World Congress? Three of the five days of meetings were spent discussing this question, and because of its importance, special efforts were made to bring leaders of our Latin American movement to the IEC. Comrades attended from Peru, Chile and Mexico. Leadership delegations were invited from both Argentine Trotskyist groups. Four comrades represented the PRT-Verdad, the Argentinean sympathizing organization, while the official section, the PRT-Combatiente was represented by one comrade. Unfortunately neither Hugo Blanco nor any Bolivian comrades were able to attend.

Opportunities for the leadership of the International to meet and discuss together over a number of days are all too rare; but this was one such occasion. There was a substantial and representative attendance at this IEC meeting, as leaderships of a large number of sections and sympathizing groups were invited to send observers, in recognition of the fact that a considerable number of new Trotskyist groups have been established around the world since the present IEC was elected at the last World Congress.

In addition to myself, the Canadian delegation was composed of Alain Beiner and Joan Newbigging, replacing comrades Ross Dowson and Ernie Tate. Comrade Naomi Joliffe also attended as part of the staff helping to organize the plenum.

Every one of the five days saw heated polemics, reflecting the serious issues dividing the participants. New differences appeared in a number of areas, including party building in Western Europe and our evaluation of the Vietnam accords. But the central dispute remained that over Latin America, with comrades representing the majority and minority of the United Secretariat presenting documentation and extensive reports. Everyone recognized the central importance of the Latin American dispute.

Bolivia

Our aim, as set out at our last plenum, was to push the world movement to recognize what had really occurred in Bolivia and Argentina, and through this, to demonstrate the disastrous character of the guerrilla orientation. The IEC plenum heard detailed presentations by two leading Latin American comrades of the meaning of the experiences in Argentina and Bolivia. Still, the majority leadership showed no sign of pulling back. It refused to admit what had really happened when its line was implemented in the two countries; it held that in fact events had confirmed its line; that if errors had been made, these were not attributable to the World Congress line but rather errors in its application by the sections concerned; and that we should press forward with the guerrilla orientation.

Comrades Lorenzo, Moreno, Hansen and Camejo submitted a new document to the IEC, entitled Argentina and Bolivia: the Balance Sheet. At the time of the meeting, Hugo Blanco had stated his agreement with an earlier draft of this document, but had been unable to examine the draft submitted to the IEC. He has since added his name to it. (International Internal Discussion Bulletin, Vol. X, No. 1, Jan. 1973.) The authors of this document outline in considerable detail what a magnificent revolutionary opportunity was lost in Bolivia; how our section, searching for openings for guerrilla warfare, was blinded to the revolutionary significance of the mass struggles unfolding before its very eyes; did not recognize the nature of the prerevolutionary situation it faced; did not recognize the significance of the Popular Assembly as a possible embryo of dual power; did not advance slogans connected to the real living process of struggle; and how, after the defeat, the section has now entered the Anti-imperialist Revolutionary Front, a formation with a program calling for a "national" government, and with a formal discipline binding on the activities of its members.

All these errors, terribly decisive ones for our party and the Bolivian revolution, flow from the mistaken guerrilla orientation that the section was applying in total contradiction to the real process of the class struggle.

In his report for a minority of the United Secretariat, Comrade Lorenzo, a long-time member of the PRT-Verdad, made several important points. A key issue in the dispute at the last World Congress over Latin America was whether "the most probable variant" for the revolution in that continent was that of a process of extended guerrilla war, as the majority held. Or would it not in all likelihood follow the "classical variant" of proletarian revolution along the lines of the October Revolution, embodying the rise of mass struggles mainly in the populated centers and led by the proletariat, supported by other layers, leading to insurrectionary situations with the creation of forms of dual power? In this latter variant, a revolutionary party, steered through years of experience in mass struggles, and armed with a correct program and cadres rooted among the masses, is required to lead the working class to power. In our view, that was "the most likely variant" and the one we should prepare for, said the minority at the time of the World Congress.

Comrade Lorenzo asked: were there not insurrectionary situations in Bolivia right after the World Congress? Did not a pre-revolutionary situation open up in Argentina, which continues to this very day? What about the huge general strikes in Uruguay? And the massive popular mobilizations in Chile? Where has guerrilla war played a key role since 1969, let alone offered a path to power? Which variant did these events confirm?

It was false, Lorenzo stated, to blame the section for the fiasco in Bolivia. The overriding error was made by the majority at the World Congress and by the leaders of the International who persisted in that line in the face of events which refuted it. It is significant that the majority leaders offered the Bolivian comrades no major criticisms or alternative line during the decisive period.

Lorenzo stated his emphatic agreement with the reporter for the United Secretariat majority, comrade Maitan, who stressed the grave responsibility for the defeat borne by the treacherous reformist misleaders of the class. But we insist, Lorenzo said, that these misleaders cannot be fought by isolating ourselves from the workers in actions of a small vanguard, whether armed or not. We have to seek the road to win decisive influence among the masses, competing with the reformists, often inside the organizations they lead, around a transitional program of struggle for power. This is what a "strategy" of guerrilla war prevents.

The majority report however affirmed agreement with the course of the Bolivian section. Despite the solid arguments of comrade Lorenzo and other speakers for the

minority, the majority reaffirmed its determination to persist on the course which has proven so costly in Bolivia.

Argentina

The central debate of the entire IEC occurred over Argentina. While in many ways this debate was similar to that over Bolivia, here we were able to hear the opposing views of the two groups engaged in the struggle inside the country under discussion: the official Argentine section (PRT-Combatiente), and the sympathizing organization (PRT-Verdad).

The majority position, presented once again by Comrade Maitan, consisted essentially of another reaffirmation of the correctness of the guerrilla orientation, this time in Argentina.

The majority document makes a positive assessment of the armed struggle course of the PRT-C after its Fifth Congress, endorsing its use of the following: armed actions to accumulate money, arms and medical supplies, seizing food and clothing to distribute to the poor, "actions linked to the mass mobilizations", and actions of punishment against hated figures of the regime. Within this overall positive framework of the work of the section, the document criticizes the section for (i) the weakness of its links to the masses, flowing from a lack of clarity in its strategic orientation, (ii) the lack of clarity in its concept and method of intervention in the mass movement, and (iii) the possible ambiguity as to its opposition to any theory of stages.

(In a later statement, leaders of the majority also criticized themselves for not having opened up sooner a debate against the erroneous international positions of the PRT-C. They now promised to begin the debate.)

The above are indeed very telling criticisms of the PRT-C's orientation: its links to the masses are weak, it is unclear how to intervene in the mass movement, its strategy is unclear, and particularly the question of the theory of stages. When combined with the list of actions hailed above, which are so void of political content that special mention must be made of those actions which do have any connection with the masses, these criticisms clearly call into question the entire majority line, which the Argentine comrades are merely attempting to interpret and apply.

But that is not at all the reaction of the majority leaders. To them their "strategy of armed struggle", that is, guerrilla war, is the key thing. Everything else is secondary. The majority even went so far as to hail, in its document on Argentina presented to the IEC, certain actions of the ERP (led by the PRT-C), as representing "the highest stage of armed struggle attained since the Cuban revolution, to the extent that they represented an attempt to integrate the armed struggle into the concrete dynamic of the struggle of the masses." (page 9). They thus place these activities of the ERP on a plane higher than the insurrection in Santo Domingo of 1965, or the struggle led by Hugo Blanco in La Convención.

Majority leaders went even further. Up to the IEC meeting, they had all remained silent over whether or not they felt the ERP's kidnapping of Sallustro to be correct or not. At the IEC meeting, comrade Maitan broke the silence to affirm his agreement with the action.

Comrade Moreno, a leader of the PRT-V, reported for the United Secretariat minority. He described how the two lines, party building or guerrilla war, were applied by the two groups operating in the same country over the same time period. The guerrilla-ist line applied by the official section led to the isolation of heroic militants from the masses, their brutal repression at the hands of the regime, and their further departure from the Trotskyist program. The Verdad group, on the other hand, by applying a line based on the Transitional Program, was able to grow very rapidly, to develop Trotskyist cadres, and to root themselves in key struggles of the Argentine masses.

The contrast between the two groups on international questions is equally striking. The PRT-Verdad, now called the Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores (PST-Socialist Workers Party), is a firm supporter of the Fourth International and its program. Combatiente, on the other hand, the official section of the International in Argentina, is carrying on a public campaign against the Fourth International designed to break it apart and to replace it with a new international based on the Communist Parties of China, Albania, North Korea, North Vietnam, Cuba, as well as certain other organizations which are not Trotskyist. (These positions are cited in the Balance Sheet document.)

Before even attempting to win our world movement to these views, the PRT-C has put them forward aggressively, in public, throughout Latin America. (To make matters worse, the International has not yet said one word of public defense of its historic heritage and program against these attacks.)

In a separate report, Comrade Nicolas representing the PRT-C presented their view, which I will not attempt to summarize here. I would refer comrades to the World Congress resolution on Latin America, to the document on-titled The Only Road..., (International Information Bulletin, No. 4 in 1972), and to the documents of the Fifth Congress of the PRT-C which should be published shortly. Comrade Nicolas confirmed that while some of those views were not under discussion within the PRT-C and might be altered, they were in fact the positions of his organization.

In this crucial debate, a number of supporters of the United Secretariat majority unfortunately refused to address themselves to the political issues, preferring to raise such matters as the supposed inherent faults, or "traditional weaknesses" of Comrade Moreno and his group dating back to 1951, his supposedly "well-known opportunism", etc. This rummaging in the closets of the movement for skeletons of the past could of course be practised in several directions by the different parties in the current debate. But such a procedure would in no way serve to clarify what line our movement should have today. The attacks on Moreno could only have been designed to divert the discussion away from the hard facts before us: the debacle of the majority line as applied by the PRT-C, and great success of the Verdad comrades.

Another question is posed by such factional conduct. The leadership of the PRT-C demands the expulsion of the Verdad comrades from the Fourth International at the coming World Congress. (For Good Preparation of the Next Congress of the Fourth International, International Information Bulletin, No. 2 in 1972, June 1972.) Faced with this call, the leadership of the world movement was required to take a stand for the unity of the movement, and against splits and expulsions. The absence of such a stand from the majority leaders in the case of the La Verdad comrades, and their torrent of factional attacks on them, can only increase fears that an attempt is under way to lay the basis for the expulsion from the Fourth International of the Verdad comrades at the coming World Congress.

As far as the leadership of the Canadian section is concerned, the correctness of the party-building strategy in Latin America has received rapid and striking confirmation in Argentina. We are very gratified with the great progress being made by the PST (formerly the PRT-V) comrades. The January 1973 convention of the PST had 195 delegates in attendance, representing approximately 1,000 members. Its program, as comrades can judge from the material that has been translated in our press, is Trotskyist. At that convention, the PST voted to affiliate

to the Fourth International, thus settling the last outstanding question in the eight-month manoeuvre of the PRT-V to gain legal status and expand the size and influence of the Argentine Trotskyist movement qualitatively. The manoeuvre has succeeded brilliantly.

The Trotskyist PST is still expanding very rapidly. It is now the second-largest group on the left in Argentina, following the Communist Party. It has just held a youth conference, with 800 in attendance. The Workers Front which it leads recently held a conference of over 1,200 persons, including some of the best-known union militants in the country. This progress is being made in a pre-electoral period around the principled line of denunciation of the military dictatorship, opposition to Peronism and class collaboration, and in favor of independent working-class political action. The question of breaking the workers from their support of Peronism is a historic problem in Argentina, and the comrades are making a very important contribution towards overcoming it.

The PST's election campaign calls for immediate amnesty to all political prisoners, and is linked to support for the workers struggles now in process across Argentina. They are calling for the generalization, extension of these struggles as the road forward for the Argentinian working class.

This development is of great importance for the entire Fourth International, not only for its significance in Argentine politics, but also because the comrades are demonstrating through their work the superiority of Trotskyism in the class struggle, and exposing our opponents, reformists and ultraleftists alike. The Fourth International has never before had a Latin American party of this size and weight. It is furthermore clear that the strength of the organization in Argentina, together with the power of its example, will play a very important role in building Trotskyist parties throughout the continent.

The entire Fourth International should react to the breakthrough that is occurring in Argentina in the same way that it reacted to the breakthrough of our French section during the May-June uprising of 1968. It should hail it, use all its resources to publicise what is occurring, and show the role of our party vis-a-vis all the other currents. The leading parties should consider sending cadres into Argentina to maximize coverage in our press and to increase liason with the comrades: this was done during the French events. All these developments could be used to explain to the revolutionary left on a world scale what Trotskyism is, and thus to build the different sections.

It is a sad commentary on the state of the Fourth International today that the reaction of the majority leadership has been quite the opposite. The comrades doing this important work are being factually attacked and their positions slanderously distorted inside their world movement. Leaders of the International have tried to ignore the gains being made. The facts have not been made available to the world Trotskyist movement, either internally or in the press. In fact, the majority leadership has even refused to publish any information on this crucial development of the Argentine class struggle -- not one word has appeared in the press under their direction!

A leadership which suppressed information of such vital importance condemns itself in the severest possible fashion.

The Balance Sheet of the Guerrilla Orientation

In our opinion, an important error was made at the last World Congress on Latin America. This was inevitably quite costly for our movement, but the costs could have been limited if the leadership had been able to reassess its course within a short time after the World Congress in the light of the new developments which had occurred. Instead, the erroneous course has been persisted in to the point where two key sections of the Fourth International have been decimated. Yet the majority leaders absolutely refuse to reconsider their course even now. The authors of the "Balance Sheet" document correctly characterize this situation as a crisis within the International. This is all the more apt as the errors involved have far-reaching implications which go well beyond Latin America.

Our last plenum called on the IEC to "reassess the line" the last world congress in the light of events in Bolivia and Argentina; to call a halt to the process of extension of this error to other areas which could prove even more costly to the Fourth International and the world revolution; and to reverse the line." (ISA/ISO Discussion Bulletin, No. 11, p. 19). The IEC instead deepened the error. But we see no reason, for our part, for the Canadian section to alter its course. The discussion must now be carried to the ranks of the world movement in the most systematic way possible.

Extensions of the Guerrilla Line

Since our last plenum there have been further examples of the extension of the guerrilla war "strategy" to other areas of the world. One as occurred inside the Ligue Communiste where a central leader of the section has projected the application of the guerrilla orientation to France. Comrade Jebracq, a member of the Ligue Communiste Political Bureau and of the IEC, submitted his proposal along with three other members to the Ligue Communiste internal bulletin. Searching for some "breakthrough" in France, for a way to get around the mass Communist Party, and minimizing the possibility of a repetition of May-June 1968, the four comrades project a strategy for France which places actions of "minority violence" to the fore. They also stress the dangers of the legal status of the section, and project the necessity for changes in its method of organization in line with the orientation toward promoting acts of exemplary "minority violence".

(An English translation of the Jebracq document will appear shortly. It is also discussed in section four of the "Balance Sheet.")

This document was not voted upon at the recent congress of the Ligue Communiste -- thus our French section neither adopted it nor rejected it. It remains the position of a significant current inside the LC, including at least one of its central leaders. The appearance of these views in explicit form is the most striking ** of a proletarian revolution along "classical lines," or even

confirmation to date of our contention that the guerrilla orientation could not be confined to a single continent but would come home to roost in Europe. Given the absence of response from the majority leadership of the International, it represents a truly menacing development.

The positions of the United Secretariat majority on Bolivia and Argentina were adopted, while the two sections in the "Balance Sheet" dealing with events in the two countries were rejected. The Canadian comrades voted for these sections, and against the majority positions, in accordance with the established positions of the LSA/LSO.

Western Europe

The document "The Building of Revolutionary Parties in Capitalist Europe" (International Information Bulletin, No. 5 in 1972, Nov. 1972) produced a new dispute. The Canadian comrades voted against this document and for the critique of it presented by comrade Mary Alice Waters.

We could not support the document because it does not provide a correct basis for the work of our European comrades. To briefly summarize a number of our criticisms:

1. We do not think that it is possible to write a document setting out in detail how to build Trotskyist parties across an entire continent encompassing political situations as different as those in Spain and England, Greece and Sweden. It is no more possible for Western Europe than it is for Latin America.
2. A major problem of this document is that it substitutes vagueness and generality for an analysis of the concrete problems before us, and the real and immediate opportunities for party-building in the various countries of Western Europe. It takes no stand on the vital questions around which differences and debates have developed in the key Western European sections, such as the debate initiated in the Ligue Communiste by the contribution of comrade Jebracq, or the debate in every section over the character of social democratic parties. This is a disservice to the European sections, impeding political clarity.
3. It projects a narrow view of the radicalization, discussing it almost exclusively in the framework of job actions by the industrial working class and ignoring the vital importance of such manifestations of the class struggle as struggles for national liberation within Europe; for womens' liberation and for student demands. It thus substitutes the discussion of a limited schema for an assessment of the range of real, concrete challenges before us.
4. It rejects the line of the document adopted unanimously by the United Secretariat in 1969, "The Worldwide Youth Radicalization and the Tasks of the Fourth International." (International Information Bulletin, No. 4 March 1969; Reprinted in the compendium "Discussion on the International Youth Radicalization".)

This earlier document outlines the central importance of youth and particularly student work to the building of Trotskyist parties, as well as the need for autonomous Trotskyist youth groups. The Western European document presents a wrong line on this question. It endorses the liquidation of our youth groups throughout Europe.

5. It contains, in section 19, a very dangerous projection for the struggle against repression, which points, not to the central role of mass action; and of self-defense actions which grow out of the mass movement, but to the "exemplary role" of minority violence and even armed minority action. This is not only entirely wrong, it is clearly a bridge to the Jobracq guerrilla-ist projection for Europe.

6. It also contains what could be called "vanguardist deformations". While section 5 on "the appearance of a new vanguard" describes a real phenomenon facing our movement, the document contains errors and confusion on how our movement should deal with this new challenge. In section 17, for example, it takes as one of the starting points for determining what campaigns we should wage "carefully chosen issues that correspond to concerns of the vanguard (and that) do not run against the current of mass struggles." That is wrong. We begin with the objective needs of the working masses, and search for ways to lead struggles around these demands. Tailoring our orientation to the "vanguard" can lead us away from a mass orientation; this has already occurred in a number of instances in Europe.

On the decisive question, that of the prospects of the national organizations of the Fourth International developing into mass parties capable of leading the struggle to power, the resolution contains a strange ambiguity. After projecting a 4-5 year deadline before the decisive battles are fought, the resolution goes on to rule out the "tactic" of massive recruitment to our national sections ("massive organic growth"), and projects instead "our main goal (as that) of winning political hegemony within the mass vanguard" (p. 14). A few sentences later, it holds out the task of transforming the vanguard, "making it an adequate instrument for regenerating the organized workers' movement." What does this really mean? Does it mean that we cannot anticipate "massive organic growth" in the 4-5 years before the "decisive battles" are fought? Does it mean that in this light, we must envisage forging an "adequate instrument" that is something less than a Leninist revolutionary party? This ambiguity needs rapid clarification.

7. Despite its ouvrierism, the document fails to give concrete direction for our work in the unions, limiting itself to proposals for propaganda around a few general themes. It does not address itself to some of the vital transitional demands we should be raising. Similarly, the document, despite its wealth of descriptive material, does not outline a strategy which can effectively break the workers, currently under the influence of the

Stalinist or Social Democratic parties, from their misleaders. The document states that the period of entrism is over; and that mass extra-parliamentary action is essential. But this is far too limited to constitute an effective strategy for winning the leadership of millions of workers.

8. The resolution affirms the correctness of the tactic of entrism sui generis, and projects it as a valid model for possible use in the future. This tactic, entailing the dismantling of an effective public face and open activity by Trotskyist forces, combined with their entry into mass Stalinist or social democratic formations for a prolonged period, proved disastrous in its application in Europe and elsewhere in the period 1951-69. The resolution is wrong to ask in this way for a vote on the history of the movement. In and of itself, the projection of entrism sui generis as a valid model requires a vote against the resolution.

A forthcoming International bulletin will contain a more developed critique of the Western European resolution. Finally, it should be noted that comrades Adair and Williams, members of the (minority) Tendency in the British section voted against the document, and that the "Crossroads" tendency of the Spanish sympathizing organization, representing a majority of the organization, also disagrees with it.

Vietnam

Other new and important differences surfaced during the discussion of the projected 9-point Vietnam accord. We are all aware of the significance of Vietnam, for so many years the center of the confrontation between world imperialism and the revolution, and the center of revolutionary politics.

A minority of the United Secretariat presented a short statement outlining its view of the October accord. This statement follows the lines of the analysis which we have expressed in our own press. The United Secretariat majority statement, though three times longer, was unclear on a number of key points.

The majority fails to reiterate our principled refusal to grant imperialism any right to impose any concessions whatsoever on the Vietnamese people. It is one thing if the Vietnamese feel they must, under incredible pressure, negotiate a compromise. But we are under no such pressure, and it is our responsibility to oppose imperialism's demands for concessions.

The majority resolution did not pose the necessity of continuing to advance the central slogan of total and unconditional withdrawal of all U.S. forces from Southeast Asia. Rather importantly for us in Canada, the draft said nothing about opposition to any form of peacekeeping or truce supervision by outside powers. (The latter two criticisms were accepted by the majority reporter, comrade Mandel, who said the final draft would make the necessary additions.)

The most important failure of the majority statement is that it does not take a stand on the most burning question facing each and every

section of the world movement -- do we call for support to the accords or not? It can only offer the general theme of "for total victory" for our work. But no one knows what such a theme means in real life. The text refuses to come out either for "Sign Now" or for "Out Now". It suggests that this question should be discussed further. It is a sad day when the leadership of the World Party of the Socialist Revolution finds itself unable to take a position at this, the turning point of the very struggle that has been for so long at the center of the world revolution.

The majority statement omits the clear opposition to any governmental coalitions which include bourgeois forces that is expressed in the statement of the minority. It fails to characterize the Vietnamese Communist Party as Stalinist. And most important of all, it expresses confidence in the ability of this leadership to carry through the revolutionary process in South Vietnam to victory -- a confidence which is unwarranted either by the past record of this leadership, or by its present program.

The Vietnam discussion revealed other important differences which we could not pursue adequately for lack of time. Comrade Mandel in his report stated his opinion that the South Vietnamese CP will not lay down its arms. A major reason for his thinking so? They laid down their arms in 1954, and paid a terrible price for it; they surely will not do the same thing again today. Comrade Ali said that since Stalinism is by nature counter-revolutionary, and since the Vietnamese CP is actually leading a revolution, it cannot be Stalinist. (This comment recalls discussions in the International many years earlier on the Chinese revolution and the nature of the Chinese CP.)

Comrade Mandel said that the settlement was not a setback; neither was it a victory. Yet comrade Sterne on the other hand expressed his confidence that a settlement along the lines of the 9 points "should mean a favorable outcome for the revolutionary forces in Vietnam," and this was the message he conveyed to the convention of the YS/LJS on behalf of the Ligue Communiste.

It is worth noting that comrade Mandel in his report for the majority of the United Secretariat said that comrades Ali and Sterne would supplement his report. One wonders therefore what is the position of the majority on these questions, or whether in fact they have a position.

In short, the draft majority statement on Vietnam (which has appeared in edited form in the January 15, 1973 Intercontinental Press -- ed.) is seriously wrong on several key issues. It fails to give concrete direction to our antiwar work. And it deliberately avoids taking a clear stand on some basic questions. The reason for the ambiguity is that the comrades of the majority could not agree among themselves. For example, the Ligue Communiste is campaigning vigorously around the slogan

"Nixon must sign" the accords, which it qualifies as "an important victory," while the IMG polemicizes vigorously against the "sign now" position and calls for immediate and total withdrawal (while also calling "for total victory" for the PRG-NLF.)

The Canadian delegates voted against the majority position, and for the minority report and statement.

For A Democratic World Congress

We also voiced our concern and dissatisfaction with the slow pace of translation and distribution of the international bulletin. This was far from the first time we had raised this matter, yet despite the many assurances we have received, there remains a truly massive backlog of material yet to appear in French. We must anticipate that following the IEC, and as the World Congress approaches, the volume of documents submitted will grow appreciably. It is hard to see how this backlog can be reduced unless fundamental changes are made. For there to be a democratic World Congress, the ranks of the world movement must have access to all the main contributions and responses, in at least the main languages, in adequate time for them to be fully considered and discussed. This is all the more important at the present stage in the International when the overwhelming majority of members have joined since 1969, and when major political differences exist between substantial sectors of the movement.

This was one of the reasons which caused comrade Hansen to argue that the World Congress should be postponed several months, at least to the end of the year, to allow more time for document translation, distribution and discussion.

The other reason cited by comrade Hansen has the new situation created by the existence of two tendencies in the International (which I will explain in a moment). While this can be a normal development in the internal life of our movement, when deepening differences appear, it does involve dangers. There have already been splits in a number of Trotskyist groups. A discussion which is rushed due to the imminence of the World Congress can only heighten the danger; more time would allow each tendency to establish better control over the situation and prevent rash actions by their supporters. Delay would also allow the movement to better adjust to the functioning of tendencies.

Comrade Mandel answered by acknowledging the delay in publication of the international bulletin, assuring us that his international tendency accepted the responsibility for insuring that at least in French, the backlog would be eliminated "in the coming weeks." It was his view that postponement of the World Congress would only prolong the discussion, increasing the number of bulletins to be published and therefore the backlog;

that there is already a great volume of material before the membership at the present time, and that the members "could be snowed under if too much more were published; and that the discussion" has already lasted quite a long time. We need soon to take a decision and move into action in applying the majority line, he stated.

We were not convinced by this answer, and voted for postponement. We do not think that the ranks are snowed under with material. Our own experience shows that the comrades are quite capable -- in fact, most anxious -- to assimilate any and all available information on the disputed issues. The problem in Europe has been that much of this material has not been available, and even where it has been, the leaderships of the sections have been slow to organize the discussion; the process is only now beginning in Europe. As for the backlog, the Lorenzo contribution; "The Only Road" as well as the resolutions of the Fifth Congress of the PRT-C; and the "Balance Sheet" have yet to be translated, among others. This represents a very large number of pages, and in addition, each of them will surely provoke responses. There is also the material discussed at the IEC meeting which will go into the bulletin, and responses to it. It is clear that the problem of documentation will be a very big one indeed. To discuss all this material will also require a certain period of time.

The refusal by the majority to postpone the Congress poses some very serious dangers: for example, will there be a cut-off date for submissions that is so early that it stifles vital contributions? In the light of the backlog and delay in translation, distribution and discussion of documents, will the rank and file of the world movement have the material and time necessary to make a considered judgement of the issues in dispute? A World Congress held without a truly democratic or adequate discussion among the ranks would lack any political authority in the eyes of the world movement.

Under the pressure of an imminent World Congress and a tendency struggle to win a majority at it, a succession of organizational disputes could arise which would generate great heat. We hope that as the problems begin to make themselves appear, the majority leaders will reconsider their position.

Tendency Formations

The authors of the "Balance Sheet" declare that the refusal of the majority leadership to pull back on the guerrilla orientation in Latin America, in the light of all the evidence, and their extension of the error to other areas, has provoked a crisis within the Fourth International. It is now necessary to form an ideological tendency to struggle to resolve the crisis, they conclude.

The leaders of the majority at the IEC responded to this call for a tendency by calling for a counter-tendency at the IEC. They called for their tendency on the basis of three points: support for the Western European resolution, reaffirmation of the guerrilla orientation in Latin America, and support for a greater centralization of the International.

The founders of this tendency declare that the division over the Western European resolution shows that more than just a dispute over Latin America is involved. I would certainly agree that the issues are wide. It has been leaders of the majority who, up to now, had sought to portray the guerrilla orientation as a special strategy for Latin America alone. They denied the contention we and others advanced that the Latin American difference raised the questions of our method of party-building, of how to use the Transitional Program, how to fight repression, and how to win the masses. We had warned that the errors were of a general character: either they would be corrected or else they would be extended.

The widening of the areas of difference so graphically recorded at this IEC meeting in no way diminishes the importance of the testing of the line in Latin America. On the contrary, that continent provides two glaring demonstrations of the gravity of the error. The consequences could be no less serious if the error were extended to other areas.

The tendency dispute has already been injected into the Canadian movement. The IEC majority comrades decided not to submit their tendency statement to the membership of the world movement through the internal discussion bulletin for a while. However, they apparently have made it quickly available to a selected group of comrades around the world. In his summary to the convention of the YS/LJS the reporter for the Revolutionary Communist Tendency's international positions read out the text of the IEC majority tendency call. It was to say the least, highly irregular to see the call read to members of our youth movement and to sympathizers (i.e. to non-members of the Canadian section) before the Central Committee of the section had been permitted to read it, let alone discuss it.

Comrade Sterne, a member of the Maitan-Mandel-Frank tendency, has met with the RCT to discuss developments in the international, as well as the possibility of the RCT's joining the tendency. It seems clear that the international majority leadership is moving very rapidly to attempt to crystallize forces behind its tendency across the world, -- but without yet submitting its tendency call to the ranks of the entire world movement.

Yesterday the Central Office received the following statement signed by the Coordinating Committee of the RCT: "The Revolutionary Communist Tendency of the Canadian section of the Fourth International has discussed the call for an international

majority tendency. We unanimously accept the terms of the call. Furthermore, we call upon the leadership of the international majority to centralize the discussions of future documents."

The leadership of the Canadian section, for its part, has had a clear line on the disputed question inside the Fourth International for many years now. These positions mean that we should now very seriously weigh how we want to respond to the call by comrades Blanco, Hansen, Moreno, Lorenzo and Camejo for the formation of a tendency. In the light of the latest developments I have reported to you, it would be logical that leaders of our section would want to participate in this tendency.

However, the Political Committee is not proposing that this body take action on the call for formation of a tendency at this time. You have just received the "Balance Sheet" at this plenum, and will want time to read the entire document, consider the implications of tendency formations, and discuss it. At a later stage, certainly by our convention, appropriate action will be in order. In the interim, the Political Committee will be guided in its actions by the line of this and previous reports adopted by it. This gives it the latitude to take any action which could become necessary in the interim.

Prospects are excellent in this struggle to win world Trotskyism to our position on the disputed questions. The motions advanced by the leaders of the Maitan-Mandel-Frank tendency were adopted by votes of 15-18 to 11 at the IEC. While the "International Majority Tendency" can thus claim to represent a majority of the IEC, there is no reason to believe that they will have the support of a majority of the Fourth International at the time of the World Congress. The International has experienced a qualitative expansion since 1969, and there have been significant political shifts. To cite two examples: the Spanish sympathizing organization is the second-largest group in Europe. A majority of the group agrees with us on Latin America and is opposed to the Western European resolution. A majority of Trotskyists in Latin America agree with us in opposing the line of the document for that continent adopted by the last World Congress. This Latin American majority includes a significant number of comrades outside Argentina.

We cannot know what the reaction of leaders or members of many groups will be when they are finally able to read the documentation and hear speakers present both views; but we have every reason for optimism. With a democratic pre-convention discussion, and democratic representation of the real forces of world Trotskyism at the Congress, there is every chance that we will win a majority there.

Conclusion

The meeting of the International Executive Committee recorded the reaffirmation by the majority of its guerrilla strategy, as well as its rejection of our contention that concrete experience with this line has yielded a very heavy negative result. It recorded in addition the broadening of the differences to encompass new questions, notably on party-building in Western Europe and on Vietnam, as well as the widening of the scope of the divergences to the point where we will soon face two ideological tendencies organized on a world scale. A dangerous decision not to postpone the World Congress was also made. In summary, then, the Fourth International faces an internal crisis which can only be resolved through a deep-going political struggle.

Because the "Balance Sheet" and Western European documents have been before you only a short time, the comments I have made on them are not included in the general line of this report; nor are my comments on material presented to the IEC which you have not yet seen. The general line of this report does specifically include the positions presented on: the meaning of the Bolivian and Argentine events, and of the majority's course; our position on Vietnam; the democratic organization of the World Congress; and the course of our section.

With those clarifications, on behalf of the Political Committee, I move the adoption of the general line of this report.

March 28, 1973.