

New York, N.Y.
March 27, 1974

TO LENINIST-TROTSKYIST FACTION COORDINATORS

Dear Comrades,

Enclosed is a copy of the statement submitted by the IEC Majority tendency outlining their views concerning the "Agreement on Measures to Help Maintain Unity of the Fourth International" adopted by the world congress. They have requested that this statement be included in the minutes of the congress.

We preferred no statements of this sort; let the 9 points stand and try to make them work. But we indicated that if they felt strongly about it, we had no objection to including the statement in the IIDB with the congress minutes. In that case, the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction would also be obligated to append a statement outlining how we view the decisions reached by the world congress. That was agreed, and we are now drafting our statement, which will be mailed to you shortly.

The IEC Majority statement is interesting in that it reflects the frustration and resentment of the split wing of the majority over the decisions that prevented a split at the congress.

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On March 16 the United Secretariat held its first meeting since the world congress. Members of the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction present were Marcel and Johnson, both elected members, plus Pepe and Atwood as observers. A number of important questions came up.

1. Concerning publication of documents. It was agreed that the special world congress issues of Intercontinental Press, Quatrième International, and Cuarta Internacional would publish the majority resolutions on the world political situation, Bolivia, Argentina, armed struggle, and Europe, plus the unanimously adopted statutes. The majority rejected publication of the "Agreement on Measures to Help Maintain Unity of the Fourth International," arguing that it would not be comprehensible unless it were explained in an accompanying article on which it might be difficult to reach common agreement. They agreed to publish the world political resolution of the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction. However, they decided to withhold decision on the LTF resolutions on Bolivia and Argentina, and Joe Hansen's counterreport on armed struggle, until they received edited versions of those items. So the question of which minority documents will be approved by them for publication is still unresolved. We have now mailed to the center edited versions of all our resolutions and reports, and we'll have to wait and see what decision they make.

2. On the LTF members of the United Secretariat. Comrades will recall that the IEC meeting following the world congress rejected the LTF nominations for the United Secretariat as not being of high enough calibre to serve alongside the comrades designated by the IEC majority. In other words, in a departure from the norms of Bolshevik procedure, they denied us the right

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to select our own representatives. Instead they adopted a motion that the United Secretariat be composed of 14 comrades of the IEC Majority, plus Comrade Karl of the Compass Tendency, plus Comrades Marcel, Johnson, and Blanco (whom we had designated as our first three nominations) plus two "very top" leaders of the SWP, as observers, who need not be resident in Brussels. The motion also stipulated that if in addition the SWP decided to release two "very top" leaders to be resident in Brussels, they could be added to the United Secretariat as observers, but in that eventuality the majority would also add one more member to the United Secretariat.

The LTF members of the IEC voted against the motion on the composition of the United Secretariat; but once adopted, we indicated that we would need some time to consult and see if we could meet the very stringent limitations placed on our participation.

At the March meeting of the United Secretariat we reported that we had been unable to make any progress in solving the dilemma they had confronted us with, but we would continue to work on it.

3. On the selection of a bureau of the United Secretariat. The United Secretariat designated a bureau composed of 10 members of the majority. As for minority representation, they nominated Comrades Johnson and Blanco plus one "top" leader of the SWP as an observer. However we were informed that Comrades Johnson and Blanco would not be allowed to participate in the Bureau unless the "top" leader of the SWP was also resident in Brussels. In other words, they took another step in the process of refusing us the right to name our own representatives. The statement by the IEC Majority on the outcome of the world congress will give us an opportunity to explain this question to the entire world movement.

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Finally, you will also find enclosed a copy of the edited version of Joe Hansen's counterreport on the armed struggle resolution. This has been sent to the United Secretariat.

Comradely,

Ed Shaw

Declaration of the Majority Tendency at the Conclusion
of the Tenth World Congress of the Fourth International

The majority tendency accepted numerous organizational compromises in the preparation for, and the course of the World Congress:

- A super-abundance of internal discussion bulletins;
- Counting the votes of sympathizing groups as well as those of sections (which tended to erase an important distinction inscribed in our statutes, and which partially falsifies the real relationship of forces between tendencies);
- Registering the total number of mandates claimed by each group, when some of them seemed (and still seem) to us to be greatly exaggerated (the clearest case being that of the Argentine PST whose 72 mandates we definitively challenge). This in turn falsified the tendency relationships, except in the composition of the IEC.
- Taking no action against the nonpayment of proper dues on the part of some formations (the PST's dues, in particular, are ridiculous in relation to the number of members it claims);
- Recognizing as sympathizing groups formations whose political weight and representativeness are highly dubious (the Brazilian Ponto de Partida and the Iranian group);
- Recognizing as a sympathizing group a formation not only of doubtful membership, but whose orientation has also been a particular disgrace to the Fourth International (in Uruguay, the case of the PRT-U which can not fail to pose serious problems in our relations with the Latin-American vanguard);
- Not recognizing as sections formations which by their activities and their real political weight fully deserved such recognition--and these groups are in countries that are very important for the future of our movement (ICR-ETA (VI) in Spain and GCI in Mexico. . .);
- Recognizing the Mezhrayonka de facto as an international tendency, when the statements published during the congress (declaration of tendency, and the "semi-dissolution" statement) demonstrate its lack of a clear basis. The Mezhrayonka was set up and maintained for one week in order to "obtain a guarantee of equal rights" with the supporters of the majority and minority and "to defend the unity of our movement" (how?). It got 2.5 percent of the mandates. This sort of thing tends to deprive the very concept of international tendencies of its meaning (since the concept of forming international tendencies requires presenting political perspectives on the questions in dispute that constitute an alternative orientation to that of the other tendencies and an alternative for our movement as a whole).

In sum, these organizational compromises are considerable. They can make the development of our movement more difficult in

certain cases. They put some of our organizational principles partially in abeyance. We accepted them for the following four reasons:

--To focus the international debate on the political differences and keep it from getting diverted and bogged down in procedural or narrowly "organizational" questions (a foretaste of this danger was provided by the SWP leadership artificially creating a sensation over the Barzman letter "affair"). In this way, we could establish a majority on a clearly political basis.

--To eliminate any excuse to challenge the decisions of the World Congress by demonstrating that, even in the most favorable conditions for the minority, an unchallengeable majority had emerged. The strength of this majority is substantially reflected by the composition of the IEC (with a majority of 60 percent, and a minority of 40 percent), while still--let us emphasize once again--providing for representation of sympathizing organizations, particularly the Argentine PST.

--To create a political framework conducive to the application by the entire International of the majority line, one that would facilitate recognition of the authority of the World Congress, its political decisions, and the leaderships elected there, and avoid opening a procedural battle or an unlimited political debate that would endanger our work.

--To maintain a framework in this way that would preserve the unity of our movement, a unity that would have been gravely threatened if there were no authoritative World Congress and if our movement's work were paralyzed by the continuing internal debate.

That being said, the organizational compromises adopted at this World Congress should in no way be taken as precedents for the future functioning of our movement. The transformation of these exceptional measures into operating rules would endanger certain principles which guarantee and cement the unity of the Fourth International. The exceptional character of these measures is demonstrated, moreover, by the unanimous adoption of our new statutes.

We regret that, despite the agreement commonly adopted by the Tenth World Congress, the minority faction has refused--up to now--to accept joint responsibility for the day-to-day leadership of the International. We proposed a United Secretariat capable of acting (with 20 or 21 members) in which the majority would have 66 percent of the positions (a minimum percentage if it is to be allowed to lead), the minority would have had five or six positions, and Herb would be elected for the German Compass (and not for the dissolved and inconsistent Mezhrayonka). The minority then refused to designate as its representatives in the United Secretariat comrades whose authority and position would make it possible to involve the most important minority section in the day-to-day leadership of the International. This leads us to a very dangerous situation where the representatives of the minority are not even in a position to vote on proposals for action without first consulting with their tendency leadership. This tends to transform the official leading organs of the international into consultative organs or "sounding boards."

Behind this lies a federalist conception of the International which contradicts the statutes and the line adopted by the World Congress. Whatever the circumstances, we will act in accordance with the statutes and the decisions of the congress which give the leadership of the International full authority to apply the decisions of the World Congress and to take all the necessary day-to-day decisions.

In view of this exceptional situation that arose in the aftermath of the Tenth World Congress, the continuation of the debate on several limited subjects (Vietnam, China, the mass movements. . .) and the continuing activity of the minority faction, the majority tendency has decided not to dissolve and to continue to function as a centralized international tendency.

Submitted March 16, 1974

Armed Struggle in Latin America
Report by the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction

To properly judge the resolution that has been placed before the congress, and in particular the arguments made by Comrade Roman, the reporter for the International Executive Committee Majority Tendency, who said that the resolution represented a "programmatic clarification" not only for Latin America but for the entire world, it is necessary to consider the document in relation to the position on this question held by the Fourth International since it was founded in 1938.

The fundamental position of the Fourth International on armed struggle proceeds from the view that the socialist revolution, unlike all previous revolutions, is a conscious action carried out by the masses--by the masses in their millions and tens of millions--under the leadership of the proletariat. This sounds simple; and it is simple--but it is also very profound. It constitutes the basic frame of revolutionary-Marxist politics, distinguishing us from all other tendencies in the radical movement. We proceed from this view in trying to solve the key problem that faces us as revolutionary Marxists today: how to bring the program of socialism to the masses so that they adopt it as their own program and set out themselves to realize it in life.

This is very clearly shown by the way Trotsky, in his final programmatic statement on the question of armed struggle, handles the subject in the Transitional Program.

He begins with mass actions; in this instance with a wave of sit-down strikes and occupations of factories. That is the proper way to begin from the Marxist point of view. Then he proceeds to the probable response by the bourgeoisie--the use of violence. This in turn impels the workers to act in self-defense.

Measures of self-defense, worked out by the masses and put into effect by the masses, sharpen the class struggle, as Trotsky outlines the likely course of events. The bourgeoisie, as has been seen in many a bitter strike struggle, resorts to the use of armed thugs, to private armies, in addition to the ordinary use of the police and army. As the struggle sharpens, the bourgeoisie inclines more and more toward a fascist takeover. Or, if you wish to look at it in the context of many areas today, including Latin America, the bourgeoisie inclines toward a military coup and the establishment of a repressive military regime.

And so to defend themselves in the most powerful way open to them, the masses mobilize in their millions. Their self-defensive measures--as Trotsky continues the logical sequence--become broader, sharper, and increasingly effective through the organization of armed workers detachments. This involves, as Trotsky stresses, tens of millions of toilers. In dealing with armed struggle, Trotsky always speaks in terms of the masses--of the vast majority of the population. The battle begins in the plants, Trotsky says; in the plants where the workers are. It ends with the masses flooding the streets as the contending class forces confront each other in mounting clashes.

The nuclei in this area of the class struggle consist of strike pickets. That's the point of departure. For the workers,

self-defense begins with pickets. These develop at a later stage, as Trotsky visualized the sequence, into a workers militia.

Trotsky emphasizes, moreover, that as the struggle proceeds, the advances always occur on the basis of the experience of the masses themselves. He is simply stating the most elementary proposition of Marxist politics. Our politics is the politics of the mass movement, of mass struggles.

Here is Trotsky's summary on the question of armed struggle:

"Engels defined the state as bodies of 'armed men.' The arming of the proletariat is an imperative concomitant element to its struggle for liberation. When the proletariat wills it, it will find the road and the means to arming. In this field, also, the leadership falls naturally to the sections of the Fourth International."

What is the essence of this position, of this revolutionary-Marxist political position? It is the mobilization and organization of tens of millions of people. The concept is one of immense boldness--a perspective of organizing the masses by the millions. Considering the small forces that we start with, what perspective could be bolder than that?

By what strategy is this aim to be achieved? It is through the construction of a mass revolutionary party, an instrument interlocked with the masses and thereby in position to provide them with leadership at each stage of the struggle.

Consider more closely Trotsky's sentence on how the proletariat is to be armed. This is Trotsky speaking: "When the proletariat wills it, it will find the road and the means to arm itself."

Does this mean that Trotsky was a spontaneist? Few today would call Trotsky a spontaneist. In 1938 that position was called having confidence in the initiative of the masses. Initiatives in action, if you please.

Trotsky was not an advocate of violence. He said more than once that it would be preferable to avoid violence. He pointed out, however, that the decision on this question rested with the bourgeoisie, and that history teaches us that the bourgeoisie will resort to minority violence if they believe their rule to be seriously endangered. The majority then has no choice but to defend itself against the violence of the small minority hanging on to power against the will of the people.

Trotsky insisted on the importance of the distinction between majority and minority. In the case of the civil war in the United States and again in Spain, it was the reactionary minority that resorted to violence in hope of frustrating the will of the majority. The majority had no choice but to respond in kind.

Trotsky's rejection of a course that would have involved our movement in the use of "minority violence" cannot be ascribed to pacifism, tail-endism or right opportunism on his part. In the last years of his life, as is well-known, he was greatly concerned about the mounting threat from native fascism in the United States itself. Against that threat, Trotsky counseled his followers in

the United States to use their influence to help the trade unions and other mass organizations initiate the organization of workers defense guards.

What Trotsky said on this question in the last years of his life is especially important. He was voicing his considered judgment based on the entire experience of the revolutionary movement, including what he had learned in the Russian revolution and in the struggle against the rise of fascism in Europe. In the Transitional Program he condensed the valid positions of the first four congresses of the Communist International. Besides that, Trotsky left us rich observations on this question in his History of the Russian Revolution.

What is the conclusion of the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction on this point? Briefly, that there is no need for a new resolution on armed struggle. We already have a rounded programmatic position on armed struggle. What we leave open is its tactical application. That has to be determined by the concrete circumstances at a given moment in the class struggle. If any resolution is required it ought to be one reaffirming the Trotskyist position against the challenge offered by the new rise of individual terrorism in many countries.

The resolution of the IEC Majority Tendency does the opposite. It revises the Trotskyist position. It reaffirms the guerrilla orientation adopted at the 1969 congress. At the same time it seeks to make that orientation more palatable. It could be said to mark the completion of the turn adopted by the majority at the last world congress. The resolution reduces guerrilla warfare to but one form of "armed struggle." Or, looked at from another angle, it generalizes guerrilla war. Instead of a particular form we have been presented with the general form.

What is referred to in the resolution, it must be emphasized, is not armed struggle as initiated and carried out by the majority of the population but violent actions initiated and carried out by small groups. Such actions are supposed to serve as examples to the masses. And this is obviously how the term "armed struggle" will be understood by every guerrilla fighter, every practitioner of "minority violence" in the world.

Some of the flaws in the resolution, as it stands, should be noted. In the very first sentence a contradiction appears: "For a series of reasons that were spelled out in the resolution on Latin America at the Ninth World Congress and that are particular to that continent at this stage, any turbulent rise of the mass movement must soon confront a resolute attempt by the army to crush it and to establish a military dictatorship."

According to that, "armed struggle" is confined to the continent of Latin America. Yet the stated conditions hold generally for all continents. They hold even for industrially advanced countries. It can be safely predicted that any turbulent rise of the mass movement anywhere in the world today faces the danger of "a resolute attempt by the army to crush it and to establish a military dictatorship."

That was the experience in Indonesia, which is hardly a part of Latin America. Wasn't a turbulent rise of the mass movement

there met with the establishment of a ferocious military dictatorship?

If it is true that the bourgeoisie will grant concessions in face of small mobilizations, as the resolution states elsewhere, but will seek to smash big mobilizations, doesn't that hold for Western Europe and for the United States? Consequently, even though we consider his conclusions to be wrong, it was correct of Comrade Roman to consider the question on a world scale and not merely in reference to Latin America.

In fact it would appear that the references in the resolution to Latin America represent nothing but bits of the shell in which the new orientation on "armed struggle," or guerrilla war, was presented at the last world congress.

There are other flaws. The resolution singles out "armed struggle," as an entity existing in its own right, a phenomenon to be considered by itself. Abstracting the question in this way shows that the authors of the resolution have isolated it from the struggle of the masses.

Further proof, if proof is needed, is the emphasis on the action of miniscule groups. In reality that is all the resolution deals with--the action of miniscule groups isolated from the masses.

Along with this goes unrealistic schematization, an abstract set of rules as to when and where "armed struggle" is to be used, in what forms the miniscule groups should apply it; that is, whether as guerrilla war, as armed detachments of the party, as initial pilot projects, etc.

The fatal flaw in this approach is that the concrete reality is always richer than the best laid schema. Concrete reality always proves to be richer than it can be imagined in advance. Thus the tactical prescriptions advanced in this resolution can prove to be deadly traps.

Our movement has had some bad experiences in this respect. Wasn't that one of the reasons why the sections of the Fourth International in both Bolivia and Argentina followed courses out of consonance with the reality, thereby suffering serious setbacks?

This is not all. The resolution offers a caricature of the position outlined in the Transitional Program. Then it combines this caricature with the Transitional Program.

What this means in practice is shown by what the Bolivian comrades told us happened in Bolivia. They succeeded in getting important union bodies there to vote for the Transitional Program. Then they discovered that this was not enough because later on they still had to confront the problem of "armed struggle." So they "attached" armed struggle to the Transitional Program.

The most important aspect of the Transitional Program, however, is the method it offers--a method to be used by the revolutionary party in advancing the class struggle. This method applies to all aspects of the class struggle, including the periods in which the masses resort to arms in self-defense against the attacks of

the bourgeoisie. The point is that revolutionists should master this method so that they can utilize it in concrete situations no matter how unexpected these situations may be in their actual form. To have unions vote for the Transitional Program can be meaningless, if not worse.

The Bolivian comrades believed, of course, that they had carried out their duty and had scored a success in getting powerful unions to vote for it. After this success they turned to other tasks. And what happened? They were left defenseless before the pressure of Castroism.

The resolution submitted by the International Executive Committee Majority Tendency follows essentially the same course. The majority comrades emphasize that they are all for the Transitional Program; but they propose to combine something with it that goes directly against Trotsky's basic concept of armed struggle as arising from within the mass movement itself.

On the theoretical level such an attempt represents an absolute collapse of serious thought.

The orientation on rural guerrilla war adopted at the last world congress reflected the pressure of Castroism on our movement. In some circles of what the majority calls the "new mass vanguard," it is thought that the Chinese, Vietnamese, and Cuban revolutions were touched off by small groups through pedagogical armed actions.

If you believe that this model is valid for the coming revolutions, then the majority resolution follows logically. But it is the logic of Castroism--a quite obsolete logic, it ought to be added. The fact is that this model is far removed from the real course of those revolutions.

On top of that, the revolutionary upsurge developing internationally today is more and more approximating the model of the Russian revolution.

Castroism has been ebbing for some time. How then are we to explain the pressure within the Fourth International for continuing the guerrilla orientation, the pressure for deepening it, for generalizing it, for experimenting with new variants of it? The explanation remains the same as the one offered by the minority at the 1969 congress. The fact is that the memory of the impact of the Russian revolution, of its pattern, of the methods used by its leaders and what a mighty role can be played by a Bolshevik-type party has grown dim. It remains a living concept only among the older generations, along with young comrades who are really willing to study it in depth and to transport themselves in mind to that titanic event.

Many youths have come into the Fourth International under the influence of the Cuban, Chinese, and the Vietnamese revolutions. They have not yet outgrown that influence. At best the Russian revolution is to them one among other revolutions, one model among others; and they have not yet grasped its central political lesson.

And sadly enough, some of the leaders of the Fourth International, rather than seeking to overcome the ultraleft bias of these new recruits, bent to the pressure. As in the way they handled the non-Trotskyist PRT in Argentina, these leaders drifted. Still worse, they pampered the ultraleft prejudices of these recruits. These are the main sources of the pressures within the Fourth International that have led to the continuation, deepening, and generalization of the "armed struggle," or guerrilla, line as codified in this resolution which is now before us.

We come to another very important point. The resolution on "armed struggle" opens the way to all kinds of deviations of the most dangerous kind. An example is the headline that appeared in the Red Weekly of January 11, 1974: "Spanish Trotskyist give total support to Carrero Blanco assassination." What conclusion are we to draw from this? That the resolution of the majority on armed struggle is already being applied in an anticipatory way by members of the International Executive Committee Majority Tendency in both Spain and Britain.

I said that this resolution marks the completion of the turn adopted at the Ninth World Congress, the turn toward guerrilla war. This is not quite accurate. It can also be said to have opened a new stage. If adopted, it would place the Fourth International in a rather ignominious position--standing on the sidelines hailing the "minority violence" committed by others. Could this position be maintained for long? I don't think so. The pressure would mount to go beyond mere chatter and to vie with the out-and-out terrorist groupings. That is the fateful perspective facing the Fourth International if the resolution on armed struggle is not defeated.