

# International Internal Discussion Bulletin

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## The Meaning of the IMT Steering Committee's Self-Criticism on Latin America

By Jack Barnes

[The general line of the following report was adopted by the National Committee of the Socialist Workers Party (U.S.A.) on January 7, 1977.]

The 1969 World Congress of the Fourth International resulted in a grave setback for the world Trotskyist movement—the adoption of an incorrect line on Latin America.

Two counterposed lines were discussed at the congress. The minority line was presented by Joe Hansen and supported by a number of comrades, including the leaders of what is now the PST of Argentina. This report included the following basic points:

First, it criticized Guevarism and drew an initial balance sheet on the limitations of the Cuban leadership and the contradictory results of the OLAS [Organization of Latin American Solidarity] conference that took place in 1967. Joe maintained that the Cuban-influenced currents were only *relatively* independent from the Stalinist movement.

Second, the minority report predicted that a new pattern of revolution was going to dominate Latin America, the pattern seen first in the Dominican Republic in 1965. That is, a pattern in which the urban population, the proletariat, and in many countries the organized proletariat, would move to the forefront of political struggle.

Third, the report contained a defense of the Trotskyist method presented in the Transitional Program; that is, the use of immediate, democratic, and transitional demands to link together the toiling masses of the city and the countryside in pursuit of their interests along the road to constructing a mass revolutionary party that can take power.

Fourth, the report emphasized the Leninist strategy of party building. Tactical questions—even extremely important ones—had to be subordinated to this strategic goal.

Fifth, special attention was called to the small size of our own forces. Recognition of this objective limitation had to be our starting point. The report noted that *especially* if there were openings for us in the Castroist movements and other newly radicalized milieus, our small forces had to be politically armed with our program to avoid the twin dangers of adaptationism or, because of fear of adaptationism, sectarianism.

[All documents concerning the Fourth International debate on revolutionary strategy in Latin America for the 1968-72 period are available in a single International Internal Discussion Bulletin. Documents written and published in the IIDB during the 1973-77 period are referred to by volume and number.]

The majority line was presented by Comrade Hugo González Moscoso of Bolivia and Comrade Livio Maitan of Italy. I say the line was presented by both because Comrade González gave the report but then Comrade Maitan took over and gave the summary. Their line was the following:

First, the critique of Guevarism and its limitations presented by Joe was rejected as false. They counterposed, as an absolute rule, the position that we must everywhere integrate ourselves into OLAS.

Second, the axis of the coming struggle would not lie with the urban masses, and would not be dominated by radicalization and uprisings of the proletariat in the cities; instead the coming struggle on a continental scale would be in the countryside for an extended period, under civil war conditions that were already raging.

Third, it was projected that the Fourth International would be built around the struggle in Bolivia. The congress participants were assured that there were no guerrillaist deviations among the Argentine comrades, either in the documents or in the practice of the PRT (Combatiente)—which was later to become the PRT-ERP [Revolutionary Workers Party-Revolutionary People's Army].

Fourth, guerrilla warfare, also called "armed struggle," was explicitly presented as a strategy. Instead of the Leninist strategy of party building, to which the tactics of armed struggle had to be subordinated, the majority put forward the strategy of armed struggle, specified as rural guerrilla warfare, to which party-building tactics had to be subordinated. A tactic, the tactic of armed struggle, became the strategy. Organizational technique—in this case the gun—supplanted political line as the most fundamental element in our approach.

Fifth, the method outlined in the Transitional Program was dumped in the majority report. Both strategy and tactics were deduced for an entire continent from an analysis of the objective situation. Although the guerrillas were to be based in the countryside, it was noted that they were not to be primarily peasants. They were to be mainly urban petty-bourgeois elements who would go to the countryside. In the entire resolution there was not a single demand relating to the social needs of the peasantry, not even the demand for land reform.

Sixth, the small size of our cadres was mentioned, but it was considered to be a secondary question. As presented in the majority report and resolution on Latin America, the main problem was to go beyond "propagandism," which had marked the "entryist" period of the Fourth International, to "action." The problem we faced, contrary to what Joe had warned, was not adaptation to Guevarism and other petty-bourgeois currents, but the danger of conservatism in not moving forward on the guerrilla line.

These were the two lines presented.

### Two Counterposed Directions

But there was a deeper problem than simply having two counterposed lines on a single question. The depth of the turn that was presented at the 1969 World Congress indicated that, at least implicitly, two counterposed directions were proposed for the Fourth International.

One was toward adaptation to Guevarism and concessions to ultraleftism—opening the door to adventurism, sectarianism, workerism, which would, over time, make us vulnerable to New Lefters, centrists, and ultimately to the Stalinists. As Trotsky explained, centrists in the last analysis are either a left wing of the Social Democracy or of the Stalinists. There is no other place for them.

“Marxist-revolutionary” and “armed struggle” phraseology coupled with opportunist practice were the stock-in-trade of the guerrilla-oriented groups, and if we took this approach, our cadres would also become susceptible to this.

Democratic demands, according to this approach, were either ignored, as in the case of the peasantry, or downplayed. This would disarm us in the face of the growing struggles of oppressed nationalities, the development and continuity of the youth movement, the deepening of an international antiwar movement, and what was soon to take place: the rise of the women’s movement.

There was a strong tendency to underestimate the mass reformist organizations. The Communist and Socialist parties were supposedly being bypassed by a new vanguard. I remember Peter Camejo getting up at the congress and predicting that the net result of a guerrillaist strategy would be the *strengthening* of the Communist and Socialist parties, and that this represented the greatest danger to the revolution in Latin America. Peter’s point was brushed aside by the majority reporters.

The guerrilla turn meant that our whole method was put into question. A scholastic method was advanced of deducing tactics and strategy from an objective global evaluation, and then empirically finding a “tactic” that would supposedly build our movement.

Most dangerous of all was that even our class criteria in politics were becoming subordinated to the organizational techniques related to armed struggle. It was not class lines that were presented as number one and as dominant in leading us to decide tactics; it was technique and organization and securing guns that would determine political directions. This could mean that sooner or later—as had already happened to existing guerrilla organizations—we would find ourselves in bed with strange company: Stalinists, Social Democrats, or bourgeois nationalists.

If carried out to the end, this approach could lead to only one conclusion, a conclusion that would apply not only to Latin America: that the proletariat, at least for a period, is not the decisive force destined to lead the masses in the class struggle, including armed combat in defense of their own interests. Instead, leadership would consist of some kind of bloc between the peasants and a radicalized and courageous urban petty bourgeoisie and intelligentsia, whose actions would ultimately spark the lethargic proletariat into action. This theory, applied to an advanced capitalist country like France, was to be advanced three years later in the famous Bulletin No. 30 by Comrade Jebrac et al. of the French section. Fortunately, it was never adopted. [See SWP IIB, No. 6 in 1973, pp. 3-11, “Is the Question of Power Posed? Let’s Pose It!”] But the logic leading toward such a position was present in the turn of the 1969 World Congress.

This turn was especially dangerous for another reason. It occurred just at the moment when thousands of new members were coming toward the Fourth International.

The greatest opportunities in our history were opening up. The turn of the 1969 World Congress meant that these new people would not be integrated into the international as rounded Trotskyists; rather, the turn would reinforce all the weaknesses they brought from their petty-bourgeois backgrounds and their lack of experience; and on the other hand, the turn would itself be reinforced by the one-sided and false ideas these new forces brought with them. This wrong turn they would think of as Trotskyism.

The guerrilla turn for Latin America, the “strategy of armed struggle,” dominated every aspect of the 1969 congress. It is instructive to step back and look at the congress as a whole from this point of view.

## Youth Resolution

A few months before the world congress, the American comrades had been asked to draft a resolution on the youth radicalization, which was then a totally noncontroversial matter within the movement. The whole international had been involved in this work. We all saw the openings. We all realized that we had to apply the method of the Transitional Program, and systematically lay out a transitional approach in this area. We drafted the document and sent it to the United Secretariat. The comrades in Europe went over it, made some changes, and it was unanimously adopted by the United Secretariat and submitted to the world congress. That took place a couple of weeks before the congress.

But at the world congress itself, under the gathering momentum of the guerrilla turn, the French comrades raised doubts about the youth resolution.

Then they urged no vote on it. Then they asked for equal time to report, not against it, but about it. Then in their report they indicated disagreement with the method of the resolution. They were worried about what they called “propagandism,” and implied that the method of the Transitional Program was to some degree outdated. It was as though they thought the Transitional Program was a pamphlet to be sold, rather than a program and a method to be applied in action, whether in an upturn like that of May 1968 in France or a downturn such as we experienced during the McCarthyite witch-hunt.

The previous orientation of the international toward building the anti-Vietnam War movement was beginning to be questioned. And what the French comrades in a critical spirit later called their “triumphalism” (or to be more precise, their ultraleftism) began to flower.

It was for the first time clearly stated in this counterreport on the youth resolution by Comrade Jebrac that the “concerns of the vanguard” were to be dominant in our youth work. And this meant that we were not to build Trotskyist youth organizations, but broader youth groups that could encompass Guevaraist influences, Maoist ideas, etc.

## Europe and China

The second indicative thing that happened was the decision to take the European resolution off the agenda. Once again there was a basically unanimous document prepared before the congress. This time Pierre Frank had been asked to draft it. The United Secretariat had discussed it. While we did not agree with every paragraph of it (especially its evaluation of the entryist period), we

considered it to contain a generally correct line for what to do next. It closed the book on the period of entryism and projected an orientation to the radicalizing youth. Unlike the Latin America document, it was based on an application of the method of the Transitional Program. It did not reflect a political adaptation to the centrist and ultraleftist forces that came to be known as "the new mass vanguard," but stressed programmatic clarity vis-à-vis them. Under the impact of the turn at the congress, this resolution was put aside for "later consideration." Nine months later the vanguardist "initiatives in action" line for Europe emerged full-blown in a revised European resolution. [See "On Tactics in Europe," *Intercontinental Press*, Vol. 8, No. 11, p. 259. For original world congress resolution and report, see International Information Bulletin collection *Discussion on Europe (1968-1971)*.]

On China a similar interesting thing happened. The SWP leadership had been asked to draft a resolution on the Chinese "Cultural Revolution" on the assumption that there was basic agreement. We drafted the resolution, but we found it reflected a minority viewpoint at the congress. As the strategy of armed struggle emerged and the adaptation to the non-Marxist, nonproletarian currents which composed the "new mass vanguard" accelerated, we discovered that the Stalinist "strategy of people's war" was being favorably reexamined inside the Fourth International. Aspects of our draft critical of the Stalinist character of the Mao regime, its program, and its influence on the newly radicalized youth were especially unacceptable.

So right at the congress itself we had not only a fundamental division on the Latin American question, with all its importance, but every other question on the agenda was affected by this turn, including our coming tasks, our youth work, our work in Europe, as well as our evaluation of Maoist Stalinism, and how to approach those influenced by it.

In a sense, the *way* all this happened is more important than *what* happened, because without an understanding of this, the wrong course that followed the 1969 congress might seem to be just a series of unconnected errors. We came into this congress with a set of common documents on almost all the major questions before us, documents that had been discussed and worked on up to seven days before the opening of the congress, and then a new line began to unfold at the congress itself, extending the method and underlying assumptions of the turn on armed struggle.

The momentum for guerrillaism, for "initiatives in action," for building the Fourth International around "armed struggle" in Bolivia, swept the congress. And comrades sincerely believed in it. Assigning the American comrades and Comrade Pierre to write documents was not a trick or a fraud. When these assignments were made, it was done in good faith and on the assumption of agreement.

I will also testify that Comrade Livio ought not to be made a scapegoat for the Latin America line. Comrades will notice from the International Internal Discussion Bulletin that Livio dissociated himself from the IMT's Self-Criticism document. [See IIDB, Vol. XIII, No. 8 in 1976.] He has not yet explained what he disagrees with. But for the record I'll testify that the guerrilla turn cannot be put solely at Comrade Livio's doorstep.

Actually, the dominant forces in turning the entire world

congress toward this line were all the most experienced majority leaders plus the new French leadership.

The role played by the French leadership is important to note. The founding convention of the Ligue Communiste, the post-May 1968 fusion of forces formerly belonging to the old French section (the PCI) and the Trotskyist-led youth organization (the JCR), took place one week before the world congress. A strong minority at the French congress (forces that were later to split and form a quasi-Maoist-spontanéist group called Révolution!, which is today one of the components of the OCT [Communist Workers Organization]) had been opposed to affiliation to the Fourth International. They considered it to be an ossified, sectarian relic, the carrier of dogmatic archeo-Trotskyism which could only repel the new generation of revolutionists and hinder the growth of the Ligue Communiste.

Those in favor of affiliation won a majority, but at the world congress one of the comrades of the French delegation took the floor to explain that those who fought for affiliation did so on the basis that they were not joining the Fourth International unconditionally. They were affiliating on the condition that the international change. For them a decisive test was the adoption and implementation of the new guerrilla orientation in Latin America. It might be a little strong to refer to their method as blackmail—but it bore some resemblance.

As the campaign mounted, right at the congress itself, the majority of comrades were won over to the guerrilla orientation. Toward the end of the gathering, fearing the implications of the new political line for the whole program of our movement, we urged the leading majority comrades to at least make amendments to their own document; for example, to amend the paragraph that says the main axis of the class struggle in Latin America is going to be rural guerrilla warfare for an extended period on an entire continent. They rejected making any such amendments.

### Beginnings of Factionalism

Under the momentum of putting across the turn, which developed over about a ten-day period, we witnessed something else that was new: the beginnings of an outbreak of factionalism in the international. Those who opposed the guerrilla line were listened to less and less as the congress went on. When one of us took the floor, the reaction would be as if Kautsky was about to speak. The more that comrades began to feel that everything hinged on "armed struggle," and the more convinced they became that the next world congress might well be held in La Paz, the more it appeared to them that some old critic like Hansen was a deadweight. And I don't make this point in a personal sense; I'm describing an objective event.

We began to be seen as obstacles to the Glorious Child that was being born at that meeting. For the first time since reunification, we saw the beginning of a tendency to hide information about developments affecting the international. Some discussions began to be saved for a restricted group. Thus we had great difficulty getting a copy of the pamphlet entitled *The Only Road to Workers Power and Socialism*, which stated the positions of the Argentine section, the PRT (Combatiente). And we were assured that anyway the anti-Trotskyist, guerrillaist line outlined in that booklet was not the real line of the

Argentine organization. [The document is reprinted in the IIDB collection *Discussion on Latin America (1968-1972)*.]

There had been practically no discussion in the sections or sympathizing groups on any of these questions prior to the 1969 World Congress. We were not as well organized as we are today. Documents were prepared on the eve of the congress. In most countries, including the United States, the comrades did not have pre-world-congress conventions to discuss the documents and elect delegates or observers.

So when a turn of this magnitude was adopted with virtually no preparation, we assumed that the discussion would remain open, at least in written form or among the leadership. But this too was rejected, for "security reasons."

Another phenomenon we saw for the first time was the beginning of anti-SWPism. I guess the assumption was that if the SWP comrades were so dogmatic and "archeo"-Trotskyist on guerrilla warfare, they must be wrong on other things as well—an attitude that was to cost the international heavily in the next few years in relation to the national question, women's liberation, democratic rights, trade-union tactics, and other questions.

Joe and I could relate a personal experience that shows the momentum and the speed of the turn that swept the congress. On the last day, Joe and I and Comrade Ernest Mandel were assigned to edit the resolution on the world situation. When we sat down to do this, Joe and I didn't attempt to reargue the Latin American question, since we had had our say on the floor, but we indicated that we did not believe the turn could be limited to Bolivia. Ernest argued that the guerrilla line was necessary and correct for Bolivia, but he assured us that it would be applied in no other country. He especially wanted to assure us that the resolution was in no way intended to be applied in Argentina.

One week later, several of the American comrades attended a Central Committee meeting of the French organization in Paris. Also attending as guests were Comrade Hugo González Moscoso from Bolivia and Comrade Daniel Peyrera from Argentina. First Comrade González spoke, soliciting support for their intended armed actions. Then Comrade Peyrera got up to speak and I figured he was also going to urge aid for the Bolivian comrades. Instead, he asked for support for his own party, for the Argentine PRT; he described their intention to open three guerrilla fronts, and noted how they were confident of support from the international in the light of the turn.

About a month later, Comrade Ernest Mandel wrote an article for *Quatrième Internationale* entitled "The Place of the Ninth World Congress in the History of the Fourth International." In it he explained that one of the decisions of the congress was to "direct several sectors of the colonial revolution onto the road of armed struggle." [See *Quatrième Internationale*, July 1969. Emphasis added.]

These incidents should give you an indication of the fast pace and the depth of the turn. It had to be fast because guerrilla war—even preparations for it—is serious business. Once you begin to go in this direction, you cannot go halfway, or you face certain disaster.

In our discussions later about what had happened at the congress and why, one thought that served as a preliminary explanation was that maybe the turn represented a reaction to the problems of entryism as it was practiced by the European sections during the 1950s. There was a deep feeling on the part of the young comrades at the 1969

World Congress that the international had to sweep away any remnants of entryism *sui generis* (entryism of a special type), the term used for the policy of long-term entry by our comrades into the Stalinist and Social Democratic parties with little or no open work by our own organizations. This policy *did* often amount to a form of propagandism; that had been the opinion of comrades in the SWP since 1954. So we thought that the French comrades' preoccupation with "propagandism" might simply stem from the intensity of their concern to burst out of entryism, which had been so belatedly abandoned in Europe, and that in the process the comrades were making mistakes by going too far.

### Political Disaster for Trotskyism

And so we began the test of practice, the basis on which Marxists stand in verifying theory. The majority had decided on a line, and its results would quickly be seen. But here came the tragedy. If the turn at the 1969 World Congress constituted a grave setback for the Fourth International, as it did, the refusal, or political incapacity, of the majority to draw a balance sheet and reverse the wrong course constituted one of the worst political disasters in the history of the Fourth International.

At the meeting of the International Executive Committee three and a half years after the 1969 World Congress, after the debacle in Bolivia, after the tragic decimation of cadres in Argentina, after the entire set of experiences we had gone through, the Fourth International majority leadership rejected writing down even a tiny fraction of the critical evaluation that appears in the new "Self-Criticism on Latin America." Instead, at the December 1972 IEC meeting, the majority of the comrades reaffirmed the essential correctness of the 1969 turn, laying the basis for the generalization of the theory of armed struggle for the entire continent that was to be adopted at the 1974 World Congress.

It was after the results of the December 1972 IEC meeting that comrades who opposed this course met and formed the Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency.

In retrospect, perhaps we had been naïve, but it's probably better to be naïve in the sense of giving all comrades the benefit of the doubt. As we headed into this December 1972 IEC, we thought that there was a chance the majority of the comrades would say, "Whoa, let's reverse this turn." But that did not happen.

What did this mean?

First, it meant a breakdown of the political integrity of the Fourth International. I stress this, and I choose the words carefully.

All Leninist politics is built on the assumption that practice, the test of experience, is the final arbiter, and that after the test, corresponding changes and adjustments will be made. If no attention is paid to the test of events, we become a sect, in which minorities cannot under any circumstances hope to convince a majority to change its course.

The refusal to reverse the 1969 turn meant that further extensions of this error were now inevitable. The error would be multiplied. Deriving "tactics" from schematic projections of the "objective situation" would lead to both adventurist and opportunist mistakes. What happened in Bolivia was repeated in Argentina and then many of the same errors were repeated in Portugal. We can disagree on

what was the correct political line in Portugal, but the political disorientation of our comrades there at decisive moments was obvious to all. The result was another setback for the Fourth International. Few today would say support to the FUR [Front for Revolutionary Unity] was correct, but a majority of the leadership of the international did at the time.

In France, within six months of the 1972 IEC, we saw the clearest extensions of both the opportunist and the ultraleftist errors stemming from the refusal to draw a critical balance sheet of the fruits of the 1969 turn. For the first time the French section decided to cast votes for an electoral bloc that included a bourgeois party. They called for a vote for the Union of the Left on the second round in the spring 1973 legislative elections in France.

On June 21 they engaged in an isolated, adventurist confrontation with the cops that gave the French government a handle to declare the organization illegal and that disoriented the section for months.

The refusal to reverse the turn meant we were going to become increasingly vulnerable to centrism as well as the ultraleftism and adventurism that surrounded the guerrillaist movement and that inspired the "triumphalist" initiatives in action. We would face the danger that the mask would become the face—the orientation of trying to look attractive to centrist forces would lead us to adapt to them more and more in politics. That was the meaning of the decision not to draw the critical balance sheet back in 1972, when all the facts were in.

### **Underpinning of Democratic Centralism**

The decision had a second series of implications. It destroyed the underpinning of democratic centralism in the international. This was the single most important organizational consequence.

The assumption behind democratic centralism, the assumption behind the willingness of minorities to submit to the majority decision and carry out what is decided, is that practice will test the alternative lines, adjustments will be made on that basis, the organization will move forward together. Alignments will be temporary, not permanent. Comrades will disagree with each other in a committee or a convention on different questions, decisions will be carried out, these decisions will be rediscussed after a test of practice; and, from a common basic programmatic homogeneity, new alignments will emerge, adjustments will be made, errors will be noted, and steps forward will be taken.

This was the norm followed by the Bolsheviks even in the heat of the revolution and the civil war. They had many disagreements, including between Lenin and Trotsky. They would have a discussion, sometimes with an eight-minute speaking limit, to decide very big questions such as whether to open a new front. They would argue among themselves, say very sharp things, but these were never permanent alignments. They would carry out the decision—on Brest-Litovsk, on economic policy—and they would be on to new questions, new differences, coming to grips with them collectively and moving forward.

We are a political, not a religious, organization. Once the test of practice no longer leads to adjustments and corrections, the political homogeneity on which democratic centralism is based has been destroyed. The foundations on which a disciplined organization is built are eroded.

And, as you all know from branch experience or trade-union experience, once a position has been shown in practice to be wrong and those upholding it decide not to admit it but to continue carrying out the same basic line, this means they start operating in a certain way. They have to start hiding unpleasant facts that verify the correctness of the criticisms, blocking discussion, not telling everything they know. Relations become awkward and critics become a bother.

This law of politics became observable in the international, and signs of organizational degeneration began accelerating. This degeneration was inevitable in view of the failure to draw a balance sheet.

Secret bodies had to be set up, because you couldn't discuss the real views of the Argentine guerrillas in front of people like the Americans, for God's sake. The concept of a "real international" developed among some comrades, the concept that there is a select group of comrades who have to make the real decisions. Growing numbers of comrades built up a subjective stake in the wrong position, an irrational, self-destructive compulsion to hold on to that position with a sort of prayer that something would happen to retrieve the situation.

### **Dynamic of Frozen Factions**

Combinationism started growing up. Comrades in the majority began feeling there was something wrong, knowing there was something wrong, but held together for one reason and one reason only: to maintain a majority per se.

Factionalism grew, and comrades began drawing further conclusions. "If we're so right and the others seem to think we're so wrong, they must be against the program of the international. A split is going to occur along majority-minority lines. In fact, it is probably inevitable, and if that's the case, we might as well help it along." Splits began taking place in a whole series of countries.

The factions tended to become frozen. This reached the point of absurdity when comrades, under immense pressure, actually voted for documents they did not believe in at the 1974 World Congress. We now know that the armed struggle resolution and the resolutions on Bolivia and Argentina really lost at the last world congress. We have been told by three comrades that they voted in support of documents whose general line they no longer agreed with at the time. I'm not saying that they agreed with the LTF balance sheet or that the LTF position should have been registered as adopted; no, it was probably a minority view. But under this pressure comrades actually voted for a political line they didn't believe in. That is the final, ultimate logic of frozen factions.

Formal bodies became majority faction bodies, and the more they became faction bodies the more difficult it became for minorities to participate in them. The more the minorities were excluded from the "real" leadership, the more the elected bodies lost authority. The more they lost authority, the more factional they became, which meant a new loss of authority. It was a self-destructive, vicious circle.

Sectarianism mounted against forces coming toward the international that disagreed with the majority.

Finally, as new political problems and theoretical questions arose, a real discussion became increasingly

difficult. The normal working out of the big problems facing our movement—with comrades feeling free to allow for give and take in coming to a collective decision—gave way to discussion within narrow groups, within factions.

This meant in turn that the international became more heterogeneous, and we had, for example, the spectacle presented by the international when Mao Tsetung died. If you read the press of the international during the month following Mao's death, the political divergences were unbelievable! You got a sampling of them in the translations published in *Intercontinental Press*. Leaving aside who was right or wrong, the range of positions was truly amazing for an organization that thinks of itself as based on a homogeneous political understanding.

Comrades in the SWP leadership were convinced that what was involved was a race between the political degeneration of the majority of the Fourth International and the correction of the error committed by the Ninth World Congress. Once again, I'm not trying to be melodramatic; we thought that degeneration would prove inevitable if the error was not corrected. The danger increased as more and more new members came into the international and were trained to see this type of politics and this dead-end factional mode of functioning as the norm.

### Important Document

That is why the document before you, the "Self-Criticism on Latin America" by the International Majority Tendency, is a progressive and even historical document, whose publication serves the interests of the entire Fourth International.

We had become convinced that a reversal of the turn of the 1969 World Congress depended on a new generation coming into the leadership of the international, comrades who may have been members at the time of the congress but who did not bear responsibility for the turn. As these comrades moved forward to leadership in their sections and the international and came to grips with all the tactical and strategic party-building questions, they had to decide either to correct what had happened at the Ninth World Congress or themselves be pulled under. Fortunately they decided to reevaluate the 1969 turn.

This critical balance sheet on Latin America opens the door to resolving the crisis of the international collectively. We assume that what the comrades say in their document is in complete good faith: that they consider this document to be merely the first step in weighing the 1969 turn. This makes it possible to end the factional approach to politics in the international.

I am going to take some time to read what the document says. I am going to read you the parts I agree with, not the parts I do not agree with, because I think that is where we have to start. Here is what the IMT leadership says about the Ninth World Congress turn and its results:

- First, the method of the resolution on Latin America was wrong, it was not the Trotskyist method. The general economic and social features of an entire continent were used to deduce immediate political tactics for each of the countries on the continent.

- Second, a great number of the errors stemmed from an incorrect appreciation of the factors that led to the victory of the Cuban revolution and the character of the Cuban leadership.

- a. The 1969 resolution assumed incorrectly that guerrilla warfare was decisive to the victory of the Cuban revolution. This was false. It created part of the necessary preconditions, but only the enormous mass mobilizations beginning in January of 1959 and going through 1960 and 1961 were responsible for overturning Cuban capitalism and defending the workers state.

- b. The 1969 resolution on Latin America did not correct but reinforced the wrong lessons that the Guevaraist current drew from their misreading of the Cuban revolution: the view that a few hundred courageous revolutionaries can, by sheer discipline and force of will, set in motion historic processes leading to a socialist revolution.

- c. Apart from the fact that this was not what happened in Cuba, it was wrong not to "clearly affirm that such an idea is false in itself."

- d. The line of the Ninth World Congress led us to "underestimate the weight and role that the Latin American CPs would continue to have," and "because of this we underestimated the importance of the political and ideological battle against them."

- e. The Ninth World Congress document "ill understood the real relationship of forces in Latin America between reformists and revolutionaries" in mass organizations such as the trade unions.

- f. The majority leaders wrongly assumed a guarantee of continued, systematic aid to revolutionary movements throughout Latin America from Cuba.

- g. The majority leaders did not understand that the 1967 OLAS conference "marked the end of an era for the Cuban revolution," not the beginning of a new era, and the wrong conclusions were drawn. All the "strategic choices presented in the resolution" were "explicitly linked" to the assumption that the Cubans would maintain their orientation.

Finally, the course of "integration into the historic revolutionary current represented by OLAS," as projected by the congress, is recognized as "very much mistaken."

- The third major set of errors cited by the Self-Criticism concerns the failure to begin from "the real state of our forces in Latin America"—size, political level, etc. Any idea of involving ourselves with OLAS or any other force like it presupposed a political battle; we were unprepared for such a battle, the line of the Ninth World Congress did not equip our cadres for such a battle, and thus we left our comrades disarmed and vulnerable to the political pressure of these very forces.

- The fourth set of errors pointed to in the IMT Self-Criticism relates to the erroneous conclusion that Latin America had entered a period "of prolonged civil war on a continental scale."

- a. This was dead wrong; "... civil war is not proclaimed by the vanguard."

- b. This error led "to attributing to [the masses] a level of consciousness that they do not in fact possess," and also led to the belief that the level of consciousness of the working class itself, of the toiling masses, can be basically modified by "a series of exemplary actions carried out by the 'vanguard organization.'"

- c. The whole concept of a "revolutionary army of the people" is not only foreign to the strategic needs of the struggle of the workers, but is completely "foreign to their immediate needs and their very condition as workers."

- d. The totality of these errors in the 1969 document, far from leaving us with the ability to engage in a political



battle with the PRT and ERP of Argentina, opened the door to their further evolution toward a non-Marxist line.

• The fifth set of errors concerned the formula “strategy of armed struggle.” It “falsely identifies what must be an element of revolutionary strategy with the whole of the strategy.” The axis of rural guerrilla warfare was dead wrong. Furthermore, it was wrong to project what the new criticism calls “‘uprooted’ guerrilla warfare,” which assumed that the urban petty bourgeoisie, not the peasantry, would be the dominant force in the guerrilla groups. The entire strategy implied, among other things, an “underestimation of urban mobilizations, that is, underestimation of the role of the proletariat and its organizations.” Thus, “the Ninth World Congress resolution served as the framework for the theorizations made by the Argentine PRT.”

• The sixth set of lessons concerns the political concessions that were made to the PRT-ERP. Adaptations were made to their populist conceptions and to their assumption that *coups de main*, audacious acts by small groups, were sufficient to effect political change. The new Self-Criticism dissociates from the earlier false idea that the ERP was “a mass organization in formation.” It points to the error of not polemicizing against the PRT-ERP comrades’ view that “their model was that of the Vietnamese NLF, or more precisely the image of the NLF they derived from the documents of the Vietnamese leaders themselves.” The new document recognizes that “the dominant ideology in the PRT was a complex mixture of borrowings from Trotsky, Mao, Lenin, and Che.”

And while the Ninth World Congress document did not advocate the course that the ERP took, or its concept of the seizure of power, “it was written in such a way that the comrades who upheld such a conception could vote for the resolution and legitimately claim allegiance to it.” The PRT-ERP comrades followed the line of this resolution. We must admit, states the new document, that “in reality the resolution was a political compromise aimed at keeping the PRT(C) in the ranks of the International.” But the net result of these political concessions was to give up the only chance of keeping these comrades in the international, which could be done only by confronting the political questions.

The Argentine comrades of the ERP correctly derived their line of “spectacular actions” from the Latin American resolution, and the comrades who wrote the Self-Criticism state that the ERP’s spectacular actions blinded the comrades in Europe from seeing the degree of “opportunist passivity” in the PRT line. To a large degree, says the new criticism, the documents of the Ninth World Congress simply “crystallized the best theorizations made at the time by the revolutionary currents issued of the Cuban revolution,” as opposed, I might add, to the Trotskyist appraisal of questions of armed struggle as made by Hugo Blanco and others.

• Then, the Self-Criticism document moves on to its political conclusions:

1. The Latin American resolution “did not arm us to grasp the forms that would be taken by the rise of the mass movement in several countries of the continent at the beginning of the 1970s.”

2. We weren’t ready for the democratic interlude in Bolivia, and therefore lost a decisive opportunity to change the size and character of our party.

3. We didn’t recognize the character and meaning of the

Popular Assembly in Bolivia, a real incipient soviet.

4. The resolution did not arm us to understand or relate to the general strike that was carried out by the Uruguayan workers in 1973.

5. “It did not arm us to understand the dynamic and implications of the return of Perón to Argentina and the character of the ‘second period’ of Peronism that was opened.”

6. It did not arm us in any way to understand the role of the *cordones industriales* or the JAPs [Juntas de Abastecimiento y Control de Precios—Committees to Control Food Supplies and Prices], the organizations that arose as incipient soviets in Chile.

7. In fact, the new document states, to enable us to understand these organs for what they were—proletarian organs that emerged out of a rising struggle—we would have required a “center of gravity of political attention, intervention, and preparation of cadres different from that of the Ninth World Congress document. . . .”

I might add that when you consider these last seven points, the strengths of the Argentine PST on these questions and what it had to contribute are striking.

• Lastly, here are the organizational conclusions: The 1969 Latin American resolution opened the way to an orientation that isolated us from the organized workers movement, isolated us from recruiting proletarian cadres, and placed upon us the “moral and political responsibility for what happened to a certain number of militants and organizations in Latin America.”

The Latin American resolution “fostered the tendency of our comrades at that time to divert their political and organizational attention from what was essential: the organized workers movement.” It meant that the comrades from petty-bourgeois backgrounds who were coming into the international at that time, “a generation without great political maturity,” brought wrong ideas into our movement that were not corrected but rather were reinforced. In this sense, “the resolution was an extension of the political origin of this generation at the moment when it was at the beginning of its change.”

Finally, in the closing sentence of the document, the comrades emphasize that they consider this only “a necessary first step” in the international’s job of deepening and clarifying our balance sheet of the lessons to be drawn from the past decade of struggle in Latin America.

I repeat: I consider this a historic document. It opens the door—regardless of other differences and regardless of the time it will take—to reorienting the Fourth International, by a collective and objective effort, not by factional point-scoring polemics.

## Remaining Contradictions

Before raising some proposals on how we can move forward in this way, we need to outline some of the remaining contradictions as well. This is necessary to give us a perspective on what we are trying to do. It cannot be done overnight, and it cannot be done by trying to overlook the differences we still have. None of us are for that.

It is understandable that contradictions remain and that a further sorting-out process is necessary—on both sides. The international has had the wrong line for ten years. During seven of those ten years, practice had already convinced what was probably the majority of the interna-

tional that that line was wrong. Then at the end of a decade, this critical balance sheet is made.

I date this wrong line back to 1967, when we first heard the rumors that the Bolivian comrades were discussing armed actions.

In 1968 Comrade Livio wrote his contribution, "An Insufficient Document," criticizing the draft political resolution of the Ninth World Congress for not recognizing that our task was to subordinate everything to the search for a "breakthrough" in some country and, specifically, that "at the present stage the International will be built around Bolivia." [See IIDB collection *Discussion on Latin America (1968-1972)*.]

What are the remaining contradictions?

One concerns the use of language and of characterizations, particularly in regard to the role of the minority in the international that opposed the Ninth World Congress line. The Self-Criticism document, for example, refers to the views of the majority as "vilely attacked" by us.

No matter what else you might want to say about the documents submitted by the minority in this entire debate, the one word you could not justly use is "vile." These contributions were comradely, pedagogical, and patient; in fact, we had to develop the patience of Job or we wouldn't have been able to keep functioning as a minority after a certain period of time.

I know that a whole number of comrades in the International Majority Tendency would take issue with calling our criticisms "vile." I raise this because I think such language is one of the hangovers from the past as we start this process of collective clarification. We should drop the use of such terminology. The problem was not that we carried on "vile" polemics, but that we had differences over big political questions that we were trying to sort out and clarify.

The documents of the Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency and Faction attempted to be very careful and precise in the way they characterized the line of the majority. We noted the concessions to ultraleftism, we pointed to the pressures from petty-bourgeois milieus, we pointed to the dangers of adventurism and that this would open the door to opportunist mistakes.

These are all problems that are acknowledged in the Self-Criticism. None of these warnings were "vile."

Maybe we can even put aside the characterization of the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction as "conservative dogmatists." Perhaps "conservative dogmatism" is what Leninism looked like through the glasses of the strategy and method adopted at the Ninth World Congress. But whether history will judge us to be "conservative dogmatists" or not, we should avoid such terminology about each other over the coming year as we collectively work our way through the process of clarification.

### Accuracy in Polemics

A second problem concerns the use of quotations and the need for *accurate* polemics. Partly this point comes as a reaction to a footnote in the Self-Criticism that says, "Jack Barnes predicted 'new democratic concessions from the ruling classes in Chile and Argentina as a by-product of the struggle of the masses'" only five months before the rightist coup in Chile. What I actually said was that as a by-product of this revolutionary struggle, "they [the Chilean and Argentine workers and their allies] can win

significant concessions from their ruling class, including greater democratic rights on the political arena. . . ." [See "Unfolding New World Situation," in *Dynamics of World Revolution Today* (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1974), p. 98.]

The original says that given the political situation in Argentina and Chile, the workers *can* win concessions; it does not "predict" that they *will*. And in fact they could have—if we had made headway in building a party that could take on the Stalinist and Social Democratic misleaders.

There is a second problem of this type in the Self-Criticism. It says that Joe Hansen "evaded any response to the four questions posed by the Germain-Knoeller document." Well, Joe wrote a long document called "In Defense of the Leninist Strategy of Party Building," the second half of which was entitled "In Reply to Comrades Germain and Knoeller." Section 15 of this is called "Four Answers to Four Questions." [See Appendix I. I hope reading Joe's four answers that were supposedly "never" given will encourage comrades to read in their entirety both the Germain-Knoeller document and Joe's response. These can both be found in the IIDB collection *Discussion on Latin America (1968-1972)*.] Now, some comrades may feel the answers are wrong or insufficient. But it is false to say that Joe did not answer the questions. He then posed a question of his own, to which an answer hasn't been given; but that's another chapter. (Unfortunately, in their Self-Criticism the comrades didn't document these references and quotations, so comrades not already thoroughly familiar with the discussion would be unable to verify the accuracy of various assertions themselves. It's a sloppy method of polemics and one that we should take pains to correct.)

There are also unresolved political questions and contradictions. While the document clearly rejects the strategy of armed struggle and its implications, on the other hand it seems to argue the need for a separate "strategy" for meeting repression in countries like those in Latin America. The Germain-Knoeller document is cited prominently in the Self-Criticism, but the purpose of this is unclear: Is it to defend the line of the Germain-Knoeller document, or is it simply cited in connection with the questions that Joe supposedly didn't answer? The Germain-Knoeller document does defend the concept of a strategy of armed struggle. So this seems to be a contradiction.

Another area that needs more discussion is the role of the "new mass vanguard" and our orientation to it—as projected in the 1969 World Congress documents and as carried over to the European resolution and the experience of the FUR in Portugal. Here we still have disagreements, but we ought to try to sort out at least those errors that both sides could agree were attributable to the mistaken line of the Ninth World Congress.

A third contradiction is the assessment of the LTF, which includes the leadership of the Socialist Workers Party, of course, and its supposedly false views on party building, its supposed "legalism," lack of knowledge of the crisis of Stalinism, errors on democracy, etc. The Self-Criticism document complains that the comrades of the minority "ceaselessly reaffirmed the necessity of party building without explaining how to do it." Well, we in the SWP have been trying to show how to build a party, and we've written long resolutions about it. If this is now to be

presented as an issue in debate, then at least those resolutions should be translated, printed, and discussed openly. We were assured over a year ago that the political resolution adopted at our last two conventions, "Prospects for Socialism in America," was all translated into French and ready to be run in *Quatrième Internationale* for the information of the French-speaking members of the international. *Quatrième* has not appeared to this day and neither has our resolution been printed anywhere in any form in French.

Finally, I will note one other contradiction that relates to the document by Comrade Ernest Mandel that I mentioned earlier, the one he wrote about a month after the 1969 World Congress. This article, entitled "The Place of the Ninth World Congress in the History of the Fourth International," ends with the sentence, "Thus, the Ninth World Congress will go down in history as the one that began the transformation of the Trotskyist movement from a propaganda group into a combat organization, already capable of effectively leading revolutionary vanguard actions."

This conclusion, of course, is precisely what has been very effectively refuted by the Self-Criticism document.

Far from transforming the sections of the Fourth International, the Ninth World Congress led to severe setbacks, proved our incapacity to correctly assess the political situation and effectively lead revolutionary vanguard actions, and resulted in an unnecessary ten-year detour for which a heavy price was paid.

The contradiction is not that such an article was written in 1969, but that it was selected by Ernest to be reprinted just a few months ago in the book *La Longue Marche de la Révolution* [The Long March of the Revolution], a book that contains eight essays written by him over the last thirty years. This is a book that will be used to educate the comrades in the international. Decisions to publish such material without comment seem to be out of harmony with the views expressed in the Self-Criticism.

## The Way Forward

So, what is the way forward? In view of our opinion of the new document, we are obligated to make proposals on what to do next.

First, we must work together to unravel the fabric that was knit out of the turn of the 1969 World Congress. I am not saying that to begin this process the comrades of the majority have to accept that they were wrong on everything, or that they are wrong on the issues we disagree on today, including the ones we think are rooted in the turn of the Ninth World Congress. These issues remain to be worked out in discussion and practice. But, while we must accept that, the comrades of the majority are obligated to accept the objective possibility that a turn this deep, this wrong, and this long-held could not have been engaged in without affecting our strategy and method up and down the line.

The question must be answered: Is it possible that a course consciously built on generalizing the turn of the Ninth World Congress—even if aspects of it were correct—could escape substantial errors that require reviewing? The comrades of the majority themselves have acknowledged that a series of blunders occurred in various countries in the last few years—ultraleft mistakes, the false notion that the program of the SWP is revisionist,

errors in relation to women's liberation that blocked fruitful work there, disavowal of the important place of democratic demands, misestimation of the role of the national question. Do these exhaust the errors? Have thorough enough corrections been made? Or do we still face problems because aspects of the turn remain uncorrected? Are any of the results in Portugal attributable to the turn of the Ninth World Congress, the concept of the "new mass vanguard" and "initiatives in action," and the strategy of armed struggle?

We have a great responsibility to the comrades in Spain to make this kind of thorough review. And in this connection I want to say that I was very happy to notice one thing about the report on Europe yesterday by Comrade Alan Jones. Unlike many other IMT reporters I have heard in recent years, he did not insist that a "breakthrough" somewhere is decisive for the coming period. After Bolivia, after Argentina, after Portugal, maybe we are reaching the point where we can approach Spain much more correctly. We are not going to pin all our perspectives around a quick breakthrough in Spain.

It seems clear to me that we need a little time in Spain. I hope that a crisis is not precipitated right away, as the Francoist regime comes apart, that would deny the Fourth International time to sort out these political questions. To arm the Spanish comrades, the correct political lessons must be drawn. Otherwise we can miss gigantic opportunities. If we can make the necessary corrections, the Spanish situation can result in a solid advance for our movement instead of turning out to be another promised "breakthrough" that ends in a setback.

As the stakes in Spain illustrate, we cannot view the correction of the turn of the Ninth World Congress as simply required for the record. The history of a revolutionary organization must be an active history. Lessons from the past must be absorbed for use in the future; otherwise each generation has to drink from a poisoned well.

## Concept of 'Self-Criticism' Is Open to Misunderstanding

A second step in moving forward should be to drop the concept that the International Majority Tendency is duty bound to make a "self-criticism." While it is correct to study the reasons for errors, the better to avoid them in the future, the practice of "self-criticism" has been so contaminated by Stalin, Mao, and their disciples and heirs, that the very term leaves a bad taste in one's mouth. As the Stalinists use "self-criticism," it is a fake and a fraud. They create scapegoats in order to avoid the real discussion. The workers are supposed to criticize themselves when the bureaucrats change the line. It's utilized as a tool of bureaucratic repression, to force people to "admit" their errors and be "reeducated"—whether they politically agree or not.

Furthermore, it is not the responsibility of the IMT per se to engage in self-criticism. It would have been superior if the document had simply been signed by a few comrades on both sides involved in the Latin American work.

However, comrades have taken the essential first step; that is, to initiate a process of drawing a critical balance sheet that is long overdue and required to help move the Fourth International forward. We should not pursue this balance sheet further in terms of an IMT responsibility or

in terms of an admission of guilt. Now it is the responsibility of the entire leadership of the international to grapple with these questions. As I said earlier, we accept the sincerity of the comrades in stating that the document is merely the first step in the job that has to be done.

Thirdly, the membership of the international must restudy the Latin America debate. We are going to set an example in this in the Socialist Workers Party in the coming period. We are going to make sure that all the key documents of the past debate are available in convenient form in English for all the comrades; we hope the same will be done in French. I believe that this is one of the richest political debates in the history of the Fourth International; certainly it is the richest since the 1939-40 fight with the petty-bourgeois opposition led by Shachtman and Burnham. And, if I can pay one tribute, I think you'll find in Joe Hansen's major articles some of the finest political writing we've produced on the burning questions of the world movement. The entire international should read or reread these documents, study them, so that the rectifications we make are based on fact, on knowledge of the real positions and counterpositions, and on the availability of these positions to all the ranks of the international.

### **Rescind the Latin American Resolutions**

Fourth, it is our collective responsibility at the next world congress to formally rescind the 1969 World Congress resolution on Latin America, and the 1974 World Congress resolutions on armed struggle, and Bolivia and Argentina. This does not mean accepting the counterresolutions that were put forward. That is a different question. I doubt if the majority now agrees with our line in its totality. But rescinding these documents based on the 1969 World Congress turn is a necessary part of moving forward and collectively drafting an appropriate fundamental Latin America document.

This also means that we have to place Latin America on the world congress agenda. We have a political obligation and a great moral obligation to do so. We have already received letters from comrades in Latin America demanding this. One was from a veteran leader of the Chilean section in exile in another country where there is a dictatorship. Another was from a young leader in Argentina who used to be a supporter of the IMT. They can't believe that the Latin America question is not on the agenda. Comrades like these paid with blood and with a generation of cadres for this wrong line, yet they still look to the international for leadership, to work with them in developing a correct line. The question must be put on the agenda. And our goal should be a single common document on Latin America.

Fifth, we must not rush to the next world congress. We must take the time necessary to see how far we can go in collectively working through these questions. It is the only responsible thing to do. This means organizing a real discussion. At the same time we can't hold back concurrent discussions on Europe, Portugal, and other pressing questions on which there are disagreements and which involve ongoing practice.

In addition we must be careful not to put off new questions because of factional alignments—for example, with regard to the women's liberation resolution, a potential Mideast resolution, or even a new document on

the imperialist countries. There is no reason at all not to begin from the assumption that a significant majority cutting across previous faction alignments can agree on a single line in these areas.

Sixth, we must now have a discussion on the theoretical questions: character of Stalinism, Maoism, how and when China became a workers state, etc. In the past period, political discussion has become more and more confined to the internal life of factions. This has hindered us from having cross-fertilization of ideas, even on the big theoretical questions, let alone political questions.

During the discussion on Indochina at this plenum I was thinking about how long this debate has been frozen. Rather than a collective give and take, we have simply had a confrontation of resolutions or editorials. That has to end.

Finally, I think it is now obligatory to dissolve the structures of the two main factions in the Fourth International. This would greatly facilitate forging a new majority of perhaps eighty or ninety percent of the international on a whole number of key questions as we proceed to settle the old questions.

We have a powerful new reason for ending factional operations. The factions originated precisely in the struggle that broke out at the Ninth World Congress over two counterposed lines on a key question for the international. Something new has developed: a recognition by comrades who carried the line that whole elements of it were wrong and must be discarded. It was the refusal to recognize this that in our opinion led—regardless of the intentions of the comrades involved—to the organizational practices that necessitated forming a faction. Now the situation has changed.

We can go back to the norm in a Bolshevik organization of temporary alignments, give and take in leadership relations, the possibility of different lineups on different questions. We can agree today, disagree tomorrow, agree the next day after events show who was right and who was wrong. We can seek a homogeneous leadership.

There is not only cause for optimism but reason for determination in pressing forward. The next world congress, which will probably be held sometime in 1979, will take place soon after the fortieth anniversary of the founding of the Fourth International, where the Transitional Program was adopted and the validity of the Leninist strategy of party building was reaffirmed, laying the foundations for the Fourth International today. If we can collectively take advantage of the new situation in the international and move forward together, there will be an extremely large majority of comrades who will again reaffirm this course at the next world congress. That should be our goal.

### **Summary**

The first thing I want to do is to respond to a couple of points Comrade John Barzman raised.

We don't have a mystical idea that all the differences in the international, including those on China, arose for the first time at the Ninth World Congress. I was trying to point out that we went into the 1969 World Congress with broad agreement on a number of big questions, but this agreement evaporated at the congress itself as the Latin

America turn became generalized. I repeat, it was only a short time before the world congress itself that the United Secretariat as a whole, the entire international leadership, voted unanimously on a number of the documents to be submitted to the world congress. This wide area of agreement was ripped apart by the turn that occurred at the congress, and this was an example of the destructive results of this turn that were to come.

John is correct when he refers to the attempt to reknit some sort of collaboration in 1971, when Mary-Alice Waters and I went to Europe. We tried, and other comrades tried. But there was, of course, an unstated assumption all along that something would have to give politically, otherwise it wouldn't work. Either a balance sheet would be drawn on the Latin American orientation or the attempt at greater collaboration would fail.

Here is how it blew up: One morning in April 1972, a French comrade came in with a long face and told us something had just happened in Argentina and we had better find out about it. We found out that Oberdán Sallustro, manager of Fiat Concord in Argentina, had just had his head blown off by members of the ERP in an "initiative in action."

Our assumption was that this episode would finally drive home to comrades how far wrong the guerrilla line was. But contrary to our anticipations, this led right to the December 1972 meeting of the International Executive Committee, where comrades rejected making a correction on any aspect of the turn. As the majority hardened its line against any retreat from the Ninth World Congress errors, over the span of a few months the collaboration broke down. Mail stopped being shared with us. Secret meetings began to be held. For the first time ever, attempts were made to blackmail the SWP and discredit us in the international because we are barred by reactionary legislation from giving money. There was no collective leadership, so we packed up and came home.

We faced an eminently political problem. Even after the Sallustro assassination, which showed to the world where we were heading with this guerrilla idiocy, the IEC reaffirmed the line of the Ninth World Congress and prepared to codify its extension at the Tenth World Congress. They had to hide the truth in order to defend their line. So collaboration became impossible. The political logic was very straightforward.

### Democratic Interludes

I want to make a point about one of the continuing disagreements on Latin America. The question in dispute was never the *length*, or stability, of periods of bourgeois democracy or of "democratic interludes." We all agreed they would be *relatively* short and unstable. The issue was the *decisive importance* of such interludes in enabling us to prepare for the coming showdowns. If you miss the boat during the democratic interlude, when the showdown comes, you're finished. That's where the disagreement arose: How to use these periods to build the party and prepare for the next developments.

### Military Preparations

One of Comrade Jones's important points concerned the military preparation of the working class. Comrade Jones said that if we concur with the resolutions of the first four

congresses of the Comintern on this question, and with the Transitional Program, then we would have agreement. I assume he would add to his list the lessons on this subject from the *History of the Russian Revolution*, as well as the chapters from Trotsky's biography of Stalin where Trotsky draws conclusions about the military aspects of events leading up to the Russian revolution.

This would be fine with me. We have said all along that we stand on these documents. But that means subordinating military questions to our overall political strategy, and thus we must rescind the Tenth World Congress resolution on the strategy of armed struggle for Latin America. It also means we cannot accept the basic line of the Germain-Knoeller document, which prepared the way for that resolution. They are in contradiction with the documents Comrade Jones mentioned.

### Cuban Revolution

John [Barzman] says he thinks he would draw more conclusions from the Cuban revolution than I would. I don't think so. I learned a great deal from the Cuban revolution. It was the Cuban revolution that won me to Trotskyism.

I was in Cuba at the time when, according to the resolutions of the Socialist Workers Party and the Fourth International, Cuba became a workers state. So I got to observe and participate in a great moment in history, the actual establishment of a dictatorship of the proletariat. It's an experience that you don't forget.

There are many lessons to be drawn from what happened in the summer and early fall of 1960, but I will tell you what was for me the biggest one of all. Cuba showed me, through my own personal experience, that our class is capable of taking hold of society, changing it, and building a new society infinitely better than anything that has ever been seen. Cuba showed that there can be no substitute for the working class itself doing this, and that it can do it.

It is the same lesson I think Farrell [Dobbs] learned during the Minneapolis Teamsters struggle, as expressed in the dedication in the front of the first volume of his series on the Teamsters union, where he says: "To the men and women who gave me unshakable confidence in the working class, the rank and file of General Drivers Local 574."

But from this kind of experience you learn the reverse lesson as well—to avoid like the plague any substitutes or shortcuts that get in the way of the job of mobilizing and leading the masses themselves. I think the basic lesson of the Cuban revolution is the same as that of the Bolshevik revolution.

It's ironic. I think those in the leadership of the international who were most directly influenced by the Cuban revolution were the ones who were most critical and clear-eyed about what we were getting into in 1969.

### The PRT and Marxism

A question was raised concerning the Argentine PRT's understanding of Marxism. The PRT was a petty-bourgeois nationalist organization with a mélange of populist, Stalinist, semi-Marxist ideas. Their program and strategy had nothing to do with the perspective of the working class taking over and running Argentina.

Nothing in their documents or their approach suggests any such perspective.

This is not to say they were insincere. It's wrong to think that petty-bourgeois radicals can't be totally committed revolutionists, ready to put their lives on the line in fighting for a socialist society. I think many of the PRT members were, and many of them did. But that did not make them Trotskyists. At most it made them dedicated people whom we should have sought to win over to our movement by speaking the truth about politics in general and their politics in particular.

### Analysis of Stalinism

The breadth of the gap between two largely divergent views of the nature of Stalinism was one of the most striking things to me about yesterday's discussion on Indochina. Perhaps we are going to have to go back and review the whole development of our basic analysis again.

Trotsky called Stalinism, among other things, the second wave of Menshevism. His analysis indicated that nothing short of a revolution would change the dual problem we face. That is, we have two big mortal enemies within the working-class movement; we confront two petty-bourgeois currents, the Stalinists and Social Democrats, both of which are vying for leadership of the working class, the better to serve as agencies of the bourgeoisie.

The situation would have been different if the Soviet Union had gone back to capitalism, or similarly if it had gone forward to a political revolution, in which case we would have wiped Stalinism off the map. On the other hand, if the Social Democratic parties had become bourgeois parties pure and simple, this would have facilitated the Social Democratization of the Stalinist parties.

But neither of these things happened. Both currents still exist and both have a class-collaborationist program.

But there are further complications on the question of Stalinism. What happened before and after World War II—the victory of the USSR and the overturns of capitalist property relations in several countries under Stalinist aegis—caused a crisis in the international. After the intensive discussion that took place in the international on these questions, we thought that these events and what they showed about the nature of Stalinism had been understood and absorbed. Now, however, I think this whole question requires rediscussion.

The problem stemming from World War II was the dual character of the victory of the Soviet Union. On the one hand there was the revolutionary defeat of German imperialism and a successful defense of the new property forms in the Soviet Union. But on the other hand, these achievements gave a tremendous boost to the reputation of the Stalinists.

In addition, in many of the colonial countries, the Stalinists came to the forefront in massive struggles, as in Vietnam and China. To most people, the petty-bourgeois character of these parties was not evident; they saw only the titanic struggles and heroism of the masses. Once again, this resounded greatly to the favor of the Stalinists.

The role of Stalin himself should be borne in mind. Despite the blows he dealt the Russian revolution, Stalin himself ordered the overturn of property relations in

Eastern Europe. Stalin himself "took up the gun" in a massive way, marching troops across a whole section of Europe. He then used the troops to oversee the transformation of the property relations of those countries. Yet Stalin remained a Stalinist, the supreme arbiter of a crystallized social formation, a caste.

To overturn property relations, however, he had to use more than the Soviet army. He mobilized masses in his own bureaucratic way; he mobilized the workers under the leadership of native political figures in all of these countries, from Hungary to Czechoslovakia and Poland. He had to do this, since there is no totally "cold" way to overturn capitalism. Even under such conditions as a Soviet army occupation, the workers had to be mobilized, even if bureaucratically organized and controlled, to overturn property relations.

This mass upsurge was so real that very soon thereafter Stalin had to organize purge trials in every single East European country to murder or jail the native leaders who had been used to mobilize the workers in carrying out the overturn.

But the meaning of these events was difficult to grasp because we knew Stalin was an arch-counterrevolutionary. Once we understood why Stalin himself could take up arms, could order the overturn of property relations in eight or nine European countries, and at the same time remain a Stalinist, then the rest was easy; we could see how Mao, Tito, or Ho Chi Minh could do likewise under exceptional circumstances and remain Stalinists. Our attitude had to be to support any progressive acts of the Stalinists, while discounting their promises, criticizing their program, and warning the workers against placing political confidence in them.

But something happened as this process developed following the war. These seeming successes of Stalinism chipped away at the political consciousness of the vanguard. Illusions grew in Stalinism, all kinds of confusion, misplaced hopes, the false idea that somehow these big Communist parties could be used as revolutionary vehicles, making it possible to shirk the difficult job of building Marxist parties.

This type of problem never arose in the case of the Social Democrats. That is, since 1917, only extremely small sections of the conscious political vanguard ever succumbed to illusions in the Social Democrats' ability to make a revolution. But thousands and thousands, including within the Fourth International, developed the illusion that perhaps the Stalinists could somehow do so. This is what led to the game of redefining Stalinism.

But still another complication arose. The establishment of new workers states meant the establishment of separate new national bases for the bureaucratic castes. It was no longer possible to define as Stalinist only those Communist parties that slavishly followed the foreign policy of the Soviet Union. As soon as other deformed workers states appeared, the bureaucratic castes that came to power in those countries began drawing their privileges, their living standards, from what they could rake off the workers in their own countries, not in the Soviet Union. "Socialism in one country"—this is what they will fight tooth and nail to defend.

Let me give you an example on which I don't think we would disagree. Is the Albanian Communist Party Stalinist? I've never heard anyone in the international maintain that the Albanian Communist Party is no longer

a Stalinist party. Does the Albanian party follow Moscow? No. It thumbs its nose at Moscow. It signs military pacts with other countries against Moscow. Does it cease being Stalinist because of this? No.

Thus, breaks with Moscow are not necessarily breaks with Stalinism, whatever verbiage may accompany the break. Mao Tsetung, for example, broke with Moscow quoting Lenin's *State and Revolution*, but this didn't mean he broke with Stalinism. There has been confusion about this in the Fourth International, especially concerning the case of the Maoists.

But if we are not clear on this, we are bound to develop illusions in, and adapt to, the Stalinist movement and get suckered into Stalinist projects, as some comrades did partially in Portugal.

### Theory of the Cuban Revolution

This is why the question of our theory on the Cuban revolution is important. Until yesterday I thought there was agreement in the Fourth International on at least two questions, Cuba and Algeria. We had arrived at common positions that verified the correctness of the analysis we had come to regarding the overturns of capitalism after World War II. We saw once again how a petty-bourgeois party—this time it was not of Stalinist origin—can establish a workers and farmers government and use it to overturn capitalist property relations. And in the case of Algeria we noted the limits of this process and its contrary results.

We had agreed that in January 1959 a capitalist coalition government was formed in Cuba, even though the Batista army had already been chased out of Havana. We had agreed that a workers and farmers government came into being in the summer of that year, when Castro named a replacement for Urrutia as president and when Che Guevara became head of the national bank. We had agreed it became a workers state in the summer and fall of 1960, when the broad expropriations were carried out through massive mobilizations of the workers. [For Cuba, see the Education for Socialists publication *The Nature of the Cuban Revolution* by Joseph Hansen, and for Algeria, the Education for Socialists publication *The Workers and Farmers Government*.]

To my knowledge, at the time of the 1963 reunification of the Fourth International, there was total agreement on this analysis of Cuba. The resolutions of the International Secretariat and of the Socialist Workers Party took virtually identical positions on these stages and on the class character of the Castro leadership that initiated the process. So, to revise our analysis of that sequence, which, if I understand correctly, Comrade Jones proposes, is to revise a common position, codified in the reunification documents, and never challenged in written form inside the international. [For the position of the International Secretariat on Cuba prior to reunification, see *Fourth International*, Number 10, Summer 1960, pp. 4-6; and Number 12, Winter 1960-61, pp. 48-50.]

After reunification, in February 1964, the United Secretariat released a unanimous statement noting the turning points in the process that led to a workers and peasants government in Algeria, its logic, and contradictions. [See *World Outlook*, Vol. 2, No. 8, February 21, 1964, pp. 1-3. I am appending this statement plus the two mentioned above from the *Fourth International* because

the original publications are not readily available and they have not been reprinted in a form that is obtainable by comrades at this time. See Appendices II, III, and IV.]

But we can't proceed like this. If we are going to reconsider the analysis of Cuba and Algeria, if we want to change it—and we're open to proposals to reconsider anything—it has to be done openly. We have to point out what we said before, where we went wrong, and why we should therefore change our analysis.

We insist on treating this theory seriously not only because we think what we said then was correct and crucial in reunifying the Fourth International and in understanding a living revolution. It is also important because our analysis of Cuba enabled us to look back and confirm our position on the events of the post-World War II period—to confirm our criteria in judging how and when workers states can come into being, and to confirm Trotsky's prediction of what a petty-bourgeois leadership is capable of doing under exceptional circumstances as well as the limitations of such leaderships.

The alternative is to go back to the position that was argued at the 1961 Socialist Workers Party convention by Bert Deck: that is, that a workers state came into being when Castro's army marched into Havana. We can't allow such a discussion to just skip back. We can reconsider a position, but it must be done openly. We must say, "These are the positions we held; here is the new position proposed for adoption; and this is a revision of a programmatic conquest we had worked out jointly."

If we don't do this, we break with our continuity, we break unconsciously with the traditions and program of our movement, we drift back to earlier, more primitive ideas such as the theory that the character of the state is determined simply by the class character of the bodies of armed men who hold control.

No matter how decisively the bourgeois armed forces are defeated, if the property relations are not overturned, a bourgeois armed force can be reconstituted. The capitalists were preparing to reconstitute one in China in the early 1950s. That's the reason the Maoists finally had to nationalize the economy. As long as capitalist property relations are maintained, the tendency will be for a class based on them to arise and to constitute its own bodies of armed men.

This theory is the most important conquest we have made in the whole period since Trotsky died. He prepared us for it in *In Defense of Marxism*, and our theory is rooted in his contributions published in that book. What is now being proposed is a revision of all this. If we are going to do this, then at least let's do it clearly, take our time, and consider it carefully.

### Recasting the History of the Cuban Revolution

Let me add one final example to show how we start making mistakes when revisions are undertaken without discussion. This concerns what I consider to be one of the biggest errors contained in the IMT Self-Criticism document: that is, recasting the history of the Cuban revolution.

Once you begin revising a correct theory, then you have to revise an accurate account of events, because correspondence with reality is demanded of theory. What happened in Cuba was that a petty-bourgeois movement based on the peasantry came into Havana fighting for immediate

and democratic demands, began mobilizing the urban masses, and in the class struggle over these goals established a workers and farmers government. This movement came into contradiction with bourgeois property rights, underwent a sharp internal crisis in which the main wing changed its mind about what it was going to do, and mobilized the working masses to overturn capitalism.

Now, in addition to revising our theoretical findings on the Cuban revolution, it is proposed that we change the record as to the facts. The Cuban ruling class, we are told, organized a "self-destruction" over a sixty-year period. The IMT Self-Criticism asserts that rural Cuba was marked by the number of agricultural proletarians, not peasants. The revolutionary conquest is attributed to the proletarian consciousness and traditions of the agricultural proletariat.

The agricultural proletariat, of course, played a major role—our reporting and analysis in the *Militant* and *International Socialist Review* made this clear. It's important to remember that in their great majority they were underemployed peasants, who worked seasonally in the sugar fields and mills. And their social and family connections remained on the whole with the peasantry.

Politically, the power and the driving force behind the Cuban revolution—apart from the universal call of "Down With the Batista Tyranny"—was the commitment to carry out a radical land reform, the only one that was actually lived up to in the history of Latin America. This was promised in the basic program of the July 26 Movement; it was carried out partially in the mountains during the fight; it was used to fuel, to drive forward, the revolution; and it was over this that the conflict came with the bourgeoisie and with American imperialism. The workers were mobilized as a powerful ally (including the agricultural workers early in the game). As the conflict deepened, they then took the further step of expropriating the bourgeoisie. Before this, of course, the workers had come to the fore.

To get rid of the real stages is to get rid of the real theoretical problems.

In 1960 at their world congress, the International Secretariat comrades presented it more correctly. [See p. 48, *Fourth International*, Number 12, Winter 1960-61.]

### Dissolving the Factions

Finally, I want to reemphasize the advisability of dissolving the factions.

If I had been able to take part in the IMT's discussions on Cuba, I would have raised these points about the theory of the Cuban revolution several years ago. Perhaps I would have been convinced by the arguments on the need to reconsider the analysis. The SWP could have discussed these questions. Other comrades would have discussed them. But instead we find ourselves confronted not just with political differences, not just with organizational decisions, but with developed theoretical revisions on the biggest questions, reached without a discussion involving the world Trotskyist movement as a whole. Bang! Just like that.

I sat here yesterday and heard for the first time that at least part of the leadership of the Fourth International has apparently revised, in their own minds, the common programmatic understanding of the Cuban revolution that constituted part of the principled basis on which the Fourth International was reunited in 1963.

This procedure is a consequence of the existence of factions based on issues that are being superseded. These factions have little relation to some of the most important problems we are grappling with today, such as the political differences on the women's liberation question, on the national question, and on other questions where our agreements and disagreements cut across the old factional lines.

The fact that we still have differences is no justification for factions, or the continuation of factional structures. We believe the international would be best served by dissolving them.



## Appendix I (Reprinted from IIDB collection **Discussion on Latin America [1968-1972]**)

Excerpt from "In Defense of the Leninist Strategy of Party Building," by Joseph Hansen)

### Four Answers to Four Questions

"So that the discussion can make real progress and not harden into a dialogue of the deaf," say Comrades Germain and Knoeller, "we would like to pose four questions to Comrade Hansen." (Ibid., p. 31.)

It is to be hoped that the discussion does not harden into a dialogue of the deaf. Any joint effort that might help prevent this can certainly count on my cooperation. Consequently I gladly pose four answers.

Question: "1. Does he believe that, as a general rule (with only a few minor exceptions) in the stage immediately ahead of us in Latin America it is improbable if not impossible that we will see a peaceful advance of the mass movement, broadening out in successive waves within an essentially bourgeois-democratic framework?"

Answer: I think that the general stand taken by our movement long before 1969 on the erosion and disappearance of bourgeois democracy -- and not only in Latin America! -- still remains valid. Out of the many items that could be cited, the following sentences from the Transitional Program, written in 1938, will indicate what I mean: "The bourgeoisie is nowhere satisfied with the official police and army. In the United States, even during 'peaceful' times, the bourgeoisie maintains militarized battalions of scabs and privately armed thugs in factories. To this must now be added the various groups of American Nazis. The French bourgeoisie at the first approach of danger mobilized semi-legal and illegal fascist detachments, including such as are in the army. No sooner does the pressure of the English workers once again become stronger than immediately the fascist bands are doubled, trebled, increased tenfold to come out in bloody march against the workers. The bourgeoisie keeps itself most accurately informed about the fact that in the present epoch the class struggle irresistibly tends to transform itself into civil war." (Pp. 27-28, first English edition.)

Question: "2. Does he believe that, as a general rule, it is improbable that the breakup of the reactionary bourgeois armies in Latin America will proceed at the same rate as the rise of the mass movement, and that therefore these armies will lose their capacity for carrying out a bloody repression of the movement?"

Answer: Unfortunately, I am not

good at reading tea leaves. A powerful upsurge of the mass movement -- in Latin America as elsewhere -- will find a dialectical reflection within the armed forces. The bourgeois armies will tend to become weakened, corroded, or paralyzed, even torn with internal contradictions. Some anticipations of this were recently visible in Bolivia, for instance.

The rate at which this will occur will be determined by a whole series of factors, not least of which is the existence of a competent revolutionary leadership rooted in the masses. Only the course of the struggle itself can provide us with a meaningful answer as to the rate.

Again, the Transitional Program outlines a method for anticipating successive situations in this field and for working out effective responses in good time as the complex, dynamic process actually develops in life.

Question: "3. Does he think, on the basis of the two preceding considerations, that it is the duty of the Latin-American revolutionists to carry out a propaganda campaign to prepare the masses, and above all the vanguard, for the military confrontations inevitable in the near and relatively near future in most the Latin-American countries? Does he think that the revolutionary strategy on whose basis the sections of the Fourth International are built must include a clear, unmistakable answer to this question, which in any case is being discussed by the entire vanguard?"

Answer: That was hardly fair. You smuggled in an extra question. However, let it pass.

As I hope I have made clear previously, I think the discussion involves much more than Latin America; and I must say that it is particularly obscure why you confine this question only to that continent.

I will repeat that the answer is really quite old. Long before 1969, it was included in the basic documents of our movement. The following sentences in the Transitional Program will serve, I hope, to refresh everyone's mind:

"The strategic task of the next period -- a prerevolutionary period of agitation, propaganda and organization -- consists in overcoming the contradiction between the maturity of the objective revolutionary conditions

and the immaturity of the proletariat and its vanguard (the confusion and disappointment of the older generation; the inexperience of the younger generation). It is necessary to help the masses in the process of the daily struggle to find the bridge between present demands and the socialist program of the revolution. This bridge should include a system of transitional demands, stemming from today's consciousness of wide layers of the working class and unalterably leading to one final conclusion: the conquest of power by the proletariat." (Ibid., p. 18.)

Please note: "the strategic task." Also note that Trotsky mentioned the immaturity of the vanguard, owing in part to "the inexperience of the younger generation."

Question: "4. Does he think that once our own organizations have accumulated a minimum of forces they must, in their turn, prepare for these confrontations or risk very heavy losses, both in physical terms (inflicted by the class enemy) and political terms (inflicted by the other tendencies in the revolutionary movement)?"

Answer: I suspect that this is a loaded question in which the authors have in mind a "minimum of forces"

for involvement in the "strategy" of armed struggle or guerrilla warfare.

Taking the question at face value, however, I will say the following: In general, the primary problem right now is to increase our own forces so that we can wield greater weight in the political arena, whatever the type of confrontation we are faced with and whatever its source, whether this be the class enemy or opponents challenging us for leadership of the vanguard. Party building is the shortest route to solving these problems at the least overhead cost both physically and politically.

\* \* \*

Now that I have answered these questions and thus helped save the discussion from becoming a dialogue of the deaf, I should like to ask Comrades Germain and Knoeller just one question:

1. What did the four questions above have to do with the real reasons for the decision of the majority at the last world congress to make a "turn" and head toward the "strategy" of guerrilla warfare as opposed to the strategy outlined in the Transitional Program?

## Appendix II (Reprinted from Fourth International, Number 10, Summer 1960.)

# TURNING-POINT IN THE CUBAN REVOLUTION

The Cuban revolution has reached a crucial point in its development. As a result of the advances already achieved, it has gone considerably beyond bourgeois-democratic limits by adopting measures that affect the capitalist regime itself.

By basing itself on a peasant mobilization begun before the fall of Batista, it is not only carrying out an agrarian reform, but also organizing production on the basis of peasant coöperatives. In this direction it has gone farther

than the Guatemalan and Bolivian revolutions, which limited themselves to the distribution of the land, thus halting the reform midway.

Furthermore, by employing as cadres the officers and soldiers of the revolutionary army, the Cuban revolution is developing a policy of struggle against illiteracy, of construction of dwelling-houses, and of raising the living level of the people.

Against the pressure of capitalist encirclement and interior counter-revolution, Castro has taken

measures such as the expropriation (with large long-term indemnizations) of big U S farm properties, the expropriation of American-owned hotels, the confiscation of newspapers financed by the Batista government, a beginning of monopoly of foreign trade (by an orientation of imports toward the articles most necessary for the development of the country at this stage), etc.

The trade unions, on their side, have stepped up their political role — as appears from the resolutions of the CTC (national trade-union federation) — organized their militia of peasants, workers, and students (despite Castro's initial hostility toward such an extension of arming the people), and have asserted the principles of workers' control, as has been the case with the newspaper printers' and reporters' unions.

Granted, all this development that goes past bourgeois limits has been carried out by a petty-bourgeois leadership — with a structure and ideology that are bourgeois rather than socialist — such as the leadership of Fidel Castro himself.

At this moment the revolution has reached a stage where, the agrarian reform having been largely carried out, the peasants cease to play a vanguard role, and this role is transferred to the cities, to the proletariat. The peasant, now master of his own land, is going to begin to consider the revolution from the point of view of the market, from the point of view of what the city can give him in exchange for his products. On this factor the extent of his support will more and more depend.

Hence the problem of the country's industrialization is taking first place. In this industrialization, and in the measures and methods adopted to give it impetus in a backward country, the tasks of the proletariat are in their turn moving into the foreground.

The Cuban revolution must tackle a programme of nationalization of the main industries, nationalization of the banks, under workers' control and even workers' administration, of planning of industrial development on the basis of state monopoly of foreign trade, and of a balanced correlation between the prices for industrial products and the prices for farm products.

The achievement of such a programme is impossible without an extraordinary expansion of the participation of the masses in the administration of society, of the economy, of the enterprises, and of plans for development.

In this field the Fidel Castro leadership is advancing in an empirical way. It is taking steps forward under the pressure of the masses, but it remains prisoner to its own conception of "humanist capitalism." There is a permanent

contradiction between its underlying paternalism concerning the participation of the masses, and the impact made on it from below by those same masses who would like to control and even run the economy. At this level, when the centre of the tasks of the revolution is shifting from the countryside to the cities, it is evident that the revolutionary army cannot be the only source of cadres for the revolution, the only "party" that organizes the masses.

Hence an acute need is arising for a workers' leadership, for proletarian cadres endowed with a proletarian and revolutionary ideology, for organs of a soviet type, in order to set and accomplish the tasks of the revolution. In the 26 July Movement there is an entire tendency which is heading in this direction, which is demanding a conscious combination of socialist measures with the bourgeois-democratic measures in order to make the revolution go forward.

This combination has been begun, but in an elementary, empirical, non-conscious form, determined by the permanent character of the Cuban revolution, which began as a campaign for administrative moralization carried out by an idealist petty-bourgeois grouping but which spread out into a revolutionary transformation of the country's entire life.

Imperialism has understood the permanent development of the revolution; it is this that basically explains the extreme violence of its attacks. While there are still imperialist commentators who compare Castro with Nasser and call for an attitude aimed at neutralizing him, the conscious leadership of imperialism has understood that the development of the Cuban revolution is escaping from any possible control by its present leadership, that its repercussions throughout Latin America are immense and revolutionary, that the examples of the farm coöperatives, armed militia, etc, are spreading, and are undermining the whole foundations of imperialism in Latin America. Imperialism understands empirically that in Cuba it is a question of permanent revolution that cannot stop at a given stage, and in consequence imperialism's policy is to crush it rather than to negotiate with its present leadership.

It is precisely on the international plane that the advances of the Cuban revolution have been so far the most spectacular, and the blows to imperialist prestige and domination the heaviest.

Cuba has proved that it is possible to resist imperialism "right in the monster's jaws," as a French journalist phrased it. It has countered the imperialist attacks blow for blow. It sprang to break economic encirclement and strangling

of foreign trade (in addition to the withdrawal of the aid extended to Batista), by setting up diplomatic and trade relations with the workers' states and the semi-colonial countries of Asia.

To the U S boycott of Cuban sugar (on whose sale the island's economy now depends), it answered by accepting a credit of \$100 million from the Soviet Union and by signing with it an agreement for the annual sale of a million tons of sugar for the next five years (20% paid in dollars and 80% in goods, including Soviet oil). It signed an agreement with Japan, selling 450,000 tons of sugar as against the purchase of Japanese goods for \$18 million. It is now making deals with the United Arab Republic, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, India, Poland, and Indonesia. It is sending delegates to the workers' states; People's China is opening a press agency in Cuba. And all this right under the nose of Yankee imperialism! This is an example that is making an immense impression on all the peoples of Latin America. It is certain that, if imperialism has not engaged in military intervention in Cuba, it is because it knows that this would cause a revolutionary storm of incalculable consequences in all Latin America.

Cuba is receiving this popular support in spite of the open hostility of all the Latin American bourgeois governments, even if one of them, such as Venezuela, is obliged to moderate its criticisms so as not to collide with its own masses. During the latest trip of a Cuban delegation in Latin America, Cuban President Dorticós was able to verify the warm popular reception in all countries, and the cold and hostile official reception by the governments of Argentina, Uruguay, and Brazil.

All the Latin American bourgeoisies join with imperialism in a common fear about the revolutionary repercussions of the Cuban revolution in their own countries. A very sharp line of division, which is more and more coinciding with the anti-imperialist and class line, divides all Latin America on the question of support to Cuba. The cry of the Latin American masses — "In the Cuban way!" — is terrifying the bourgeoisies there and their allies.

International developments are emphasizing the urgency of the workers' tasks in the Cuban revolution. The coming diplomatic recognition of China, the invitation to Khrushchev and to Chou En-Lai to visit Cuba, mark — on the plane of international policy — the objective shift of the revolution toward proletarian tasks. For it is undeniable that all these attitudes have a much deeper meaning right in Latin America — not many miles away from the United States, and with a consciousness of very grave repercussions on the very foundations of Yankee imperialism — than in Asia or the Middle East.

In the 26 July Movement, in the trade unions, there is a left tendency that is heading towards an understanding of the turning-point that the revolution is reaching. This tendency is posing itself the task of building, on revolutionary Marxist bases, a leadership that will apply in a conscious way a workers' programme for the purpose of overcoming the revolution's national and international contradictions, and ensuring a Latin American extension of the Cuban revolution: an organizational and militant alliance with the whole workers' and anti-imperialist movement of Latin America and the prospect of the Socialist United States of Latin America.

The action of the Partido Obrero Revolucionario, Cuban Section of the Fourth International, has as its aim to aid the development of this tendency, to speed up the building of a workers' leadership for the revolution, and to orient, by means of a workers' programme, the course of the revolution and the formation of the leading cadres of the next stage. At the same time it supports all progressive measures taken by the Cuban government and backs up anti-imperialist resistance and measures.

International support for the Cuban revolution at this moment must be an active support for its anti-imperialist struggle and for its anti-capitalist measures, for the strengthening of its ties with the workers' states and with the international workers' movement, on which the fate of the revolution is going more and more to depend.

**Appendix III** (Reprinted from **Fourth International**, Number 12, Winter 1960-61.)

## ON THE NATURE OF THE CUBAN REVOLUTION

1. Pre-revolutionary Cuba was marked to the highest degree by the contradictions typical of a semi-colonial country in the grip of imperialism; industrial development was very limited and conditioned by the economic needs of the imperialists; agricultural production was largely one-crop in nature, directly dominated by foreign trusts; unemployment was very high, with a considerable percent-

age of the labor force not utilized; the masses in general existed at very low living levels; the "national" bourgeoisie was limited, incapable of the slightest autonomous development, and essentially parasitical and graft-ridden; the political power was dictatorial, based on ferocious repression and lacking any bourgeois-democratic guarantees or rights.

In the given context of the international and Latin American situations, these underlying objective conditions were eminently favorable to the revolutionary initiative shown by the Fidel Castro vanguard. Despite the very serious difficulties it had to face at the outset, its links with sectors of the poor peasantry of the Sierra Maestra produced deep changes in the initial prospects of the movement. In these circumstances Fidel Castro began to sketch a draft programme of agrarian reform. Under these conditions the Fidelist vanguard was capable of allying itself quite rapidly with sectors of the peasant masses, of gradually broadening its influence by winning the support of other strata of the laboring population, of establishing itself in one region of the country, and thus of preparing within a relatively short time the victorious insurrection. It is basically the birth, growth, and maturity of a very powerful mass movement, unprecedented in this part of the world, that caused the defeat of the Batista dictatorship, made possible the broader and broader offensive, first against imperialism, and then against the native capitalist forces, and represented the n° 1 obstacle to the aggression by which the imperialists would like to try to overturn a situation disastrous for their interests.

2. The Cuban revolution has so far had three phases: the first, in which, after having limited its goals and its methods to a programme of "moralization of the regime" and of armed action exercised by a limited group which tried to win over a sector of the army, the Fidelist movement developed a programme of struggle against the regime, mainly aimed at bourgeois-democratic demands and at more and more advanced peasant demands; the second, marked by the first revolutionary conquests and especially the agrarian reform; and the third, whose culminating points were the mortal blows against imperialist property in the Summer of 1960 and the decisive wave of nationalizations, including those of native capitalist properties, in October of the same year.

On the specifically political level, in the first phase the people's revolutionary forces signed (July 1958) a pact with the representatives of the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois democracy; the second phase was marked by the formation (January 1959) of a government participated in by liberal-conservative elements, with Urrutia as President. Finally the inevitable break with these last-named occurred — a break caused above all by the promulgation of the agrarian reform.

In its first two phases, therefore, the Cuban revolution developed as a radical anti-imperialist democratic revolution, whereas in the third it carried out its transformation into a socialist revolution that eliminated not only the imperialist economic bases, but also native capitalist properties. On the level of political leadership, the evolution had far more form than substance, for the real power was in the hands of the Ejercito Rebelde and the Fidelist staff, even during the period of dual power sui generis that ran from the taking of power to the fall of Urrutia.

The Cuban revolution represents a new and brilliant confirmation of the permanent nature that the revolution cannot fail to have in a colonial or semi-colonial country if it is really determined to triumph over its enemies, carry out its fundamental purposes, and give an answer to the masses' elementary economic, political, and social requirements.

3. In the eminently transitional period through which the revolution is now going, Cuba has ceased to be a capitalist state, and is becoming a workers' state through the application of the nationalization measures of October 1960. This sociological characterization is based essentially on the three following factors:

a) After the measures nationalizing foreign enterprises and properties, the Cuban bourgeoisie, while having lost its political power, still maintained its economic position and even the new post-revolutionary structure permitted it to continue to accumulate its surplus value. But after the government's decisions of 14 October, the economic power of the native bourgeoisie is also eliminated, and capitalist property — including the sugar-plantations — practically disappears from the island. It is true that sectors of medium-sized and small property continue in principle to exist, and even to enjoy a certain aid, but

they represent, especially in a country like Cuba, an entirely secondary economic and social element which under the given conditions would not be able to be decisive from the viewpoint of social characterization.

b) The agrarian reform has not involved and probably will not within a short time involve, a genuine socialization of relations in the rural regions — which, for that matter, has not been carried out in the USSR and the other workers' states, either. But what is in question is a very advanced reform that has eliminated imperialist property and the capitalist latifundia and created a very broad coöperative structure on its way to rapid development. With the INRA as intermediary, the state has, moreover, every possibility of intervening and exercising control, by preventing potentially capitalist petty-bourgeois elements from exploiting to their own advantage the contradictions that are inevitable at this stage in the new agricultural structure (economic differentiation among the coöperatives, conflicts of interests between the peasants who are members of the coöperatives and those who are not, the hiatus between the sector where the agricultural structure is coöperative and that where individual peasant property continues to exist, etc.).

c) The state has set up what is essentially a monopoly of foreign trade, and can by this means exercise a decisive influence on economic life (this measure is all the more important in that Cuba is a country where foreign trade has played and still plays a role of capital importance).

In Cuba, consequently, a workers' state of peculiar origin and of a new type has been created.

4. The apparatus of the old bourgeois state has been essentially destroyed by the revolution: this destruction is expressed particularly in the form of the destruction of the apparatus of military and police repression.

Nevertheless, the old apparatus has not been replaced by a new one corresponding to the new ownership relations, by a democratic apparatus based on workers', peasants', and soldiers' councils, and this grave deficiency is at the present stage the main weakness of the revolution. But in substance the Ejercito Rebelde — whose role is far from being purely military — and the militia have ensured a specific though quite inadequate form of renovation of the apparatus, on the basis of the peasant, worker, and radical petty-bourgeois classes.

On the other hand, in spite of important bureaucratic limitations, the masses have taken a more and more active part in political life through the unions, coöperatives (whose leadership is elected, not appointed), the 26th July political movement, and other political groups. Mass participation in gigantic meetings and the attention paid to televised speeches, etc. — these are another form of mass mobilization, a form of "plebiscitary democracy," which, though essentially paternalistic and laden with dangers, has nevertheless had so far a concrete meaning for the masses, compared to pre-revolutionary political conditions.

5. The advanced nature of the Cuban revolution is confirmed by a whole series of reforms which either preceded or followed the underlying structural reforms: reforms — such as those in education, in rents and housing, in conditions of certain disinherited or declassed categories, etc. — which have a really revolutionary scope and represent a complete break with a barbarous past.

6. The Cuban revolution has both features in common with other revolutions of our period and features specific to the country itself (or to a category of such countries).

The features in common are: a) the preponderant weight of the peasantry, especially up to the taking of power; b) the fact that the proletariat of the cities, despite quite serious political and trade-union traditions, played a less decisive role than that of the revolutionary army, socially composed predominantly of peasants; c) the part played by the cadres emerging from the intelligentsia and petty-bourgeois strata.

To explain the victory of the revolution, however, account must be taken of certain specific factors:

a) the peasants were able to play an eminently revolutionary role not so much because of their numerical preponderance (which is much less in Cuba than in similar countries), as because of their particular social composi-

tion (decisive weight of the agricultural workers and extreme poverty of the small land-owning peasants); it must be added that in the Cuban rural regions, certain historically retarding ideological factors (e.g., the influence of the Church) operated to only a very limited extent;

b) the presence of an important number of workers in the sugar industries who worked in the rural regions and had many connections with the peasants, aided a de facto alliance between the peasants and the far more concentrated proletarian nucleus;

c) the hard grip of Yankee imperialism gave anti-imperialist motives a great and explosive radius among the widest popular sectors, while the existence of the ferocious Batista dictatorship aided the mobilization of the petty bourgeoisie and even of certain liberal bourgeois sectors.

And lastly it must be specified that, though the role of the proletariat was not decisive for the overthrow of Batista, it was essential in preventing a petty-bourgeois or liberal bourgeois grip on the new regime, and, a fortiori, is permitting the consistent anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist development of the revolution.

All these factors, taken together, made possible the victory of the revolution — given the fact also of the extreme weakness of the native bourgeoisie and its complete dependence on imperialism and of a world context where imperialism was not in a position to intervene directly in order to support the old ruling classes, unable by themselves to face the powerful movement of the peasant and proletarian masses.

7. The Fidelist leadership emerged as a Jacobin staff, of non-proletarian and petty-bourgeois social composition and ideology, but it linked itself right from the beginning with the peasant masses, and later, especially after taking power, with the proletarian masses. In a situation such as that in Cuba, and in the given international context, it was to undergo more and more the influence of these masses, free itself of the petty-bourgeois and even conservative bourgeois elements with which it had reached temporary agreements, and adapt itself empirically but audaciously to the logic of the permanent revolution by going far beyond the goals that it had itself conceived.

Even in estimating the nature and role of the Fidelist leadership, the radical character of the peasantry with which it was linked up must not be forgotten. Furthermore, on the ideological level, despite their theorizations infused with fundamentally petty-bourgeois eclecticism ("humanism"), Fidel Castro and his companions have never expressed a flatly capitalist ideology, and above all they quite soon demonstrated a clear political consciousness of the driving forces of the revolution. This much reduced the negative range of their empirical procedures.

Neither must we underestimate the undeniable fact that, in the Fidelist leadership, an important part was played by men who had learned and understood the fundamental lessons of Marxism.

8. The importance of the Cuban revolution cannot be limited to its internal extent, even though that is immense.

The 1959-60 revolution has struck a tremendous blow at the prestige of U.S. imperialism, for which it has represented a major political defeat. It has contributed to a further deterioration of the correlation of forces on a world scale to the disadvantage of capitalism.

It is destined to have a very great influence on the evolution of the mass movements in colonial or semi-colonial countries, especially in Latin America, where it is already exerting a powerful force of attraction.

It has, what is more, permitted a further concretization of the de facto alliance between the workers' states and the colonial revolution.

9. From the Cuban experience the revolutionary Marxist movement can and must draw a whole series of political and theoretical lessons of primary importance.

The Fourth International must concentrate its full attention on these problems by seizing so priceless an occasion to enrich its theoretical heritage and it must work up the proper strategy to be able to be prepared to intervene in similar phenomena which could occur in countries of analogous structure and in analogous situations.

The lessons to be drawn concern particularly: the role

of advanced peasant strata in certain specific situations, the scope of a guerrilla with a predominantly peasant base as a form of anti-capitalist revolution, the role of the cadres emerging from the radical petty-bourgeoisie, the rapid generalization of a cooperative experiment in the rural regions, the organization of militia, and the role that the revolutionary army can play at certain exceptional periods, even for economic organization. Above all, however, the problem is raised of the genesis, training, formation, and coming to maturity of a new revolutionary leadership under conditions that are specific though probably not unique; for the most original element, in a revolution that is nevertheless so original in many aspects, is that for the first time a capitalist regime has been overthrown by a movement whose leadership was not linked up with the traditional workers' parties or influenced by the Soviet bureaucracy.

10. If the successes of the Cuban revolution can without any exaggeration be described as historic, the tasks that remain to be accomplished are gigantic.

In the immediate future Cuba must confront the threat, even the military threat, of imperialism. But apart from possible military defense, the fate of the revolution depends on its capacity to ensure to the country a harmonious economic development based above all on a real industrialization. On the political level, a new proletarian-democratic structure has to be built from scratch.

The revolution is now enjoying total popular support: that is due both to the revolutionary political results achieved and to the economic advances already accomplished, as also to the improvement in the masses' standard of living. But it is necessary to strengthen this position, steadily to advance, gradually to eliminate the contradictions that remain.

The task of our Cuban comrades is especially to work up a detailed transitional programme to be proposed to the Cuban workers, peasants, and intellectuals.

Here we shall limit ourselves to stressing in general the following points:

a) The revolution must make sure of the active solidarity of the masses in the other colonial and semi-colonial countries, especially in Latin America, and of the proletariat in the advanced capitalist countries. It is a basic duty of the sections of the International to stimulate and organize in all countries every form of solidarity with the Cuban revolutionaries, among others that of encouraging the sending of technicians, the formation of Committees for the Defense of the Cuban Revolution, and brigades of volunteers.

b) In a situation which will in any case be difficult in various ways for a rather long period, the new regime can strengthen itself and become unshakable only by organizing a genuine workers' and peasants' democracy that ensures to the workers and peasants the real and direct exercise of political power and the leading role in economic management. Such a proletarian-democratic structure would obviously be nothing like the traditional bourgeois democracy mourned by the capitalists.

c) Economic planning with a view to industrialization becomes a more and more pressing objective necessity. It cannot be carried out without setting up a whole series of democratic organs of planning, composed of technicians, workers, and peasants.

d) The popular masses will support the revolution without weakening if it is able to avoid any bureaucratic deformation in a spirit of socialist equality. A return of economic privileges to administrators, technicians, and political, economic, and military leaders in general must be avoided.

e) It is the duty of the workers to make the sacrifices imposed by the economic development of the revolution, but they must have the guarantee that their specific interests will be adequately defended. That means that they must keep their full right to trade-union organization, and that the unions must remain independent of the state, while ensuring to it their collaboration in building socialism and in defending the revolutionary state.

f) All proletarian and peasant political parties, groups, and tendencies that accept the new revolutionary legality must keep the right to organize and to express themselves freely.

In the later phases of the revolution, in the process of industrialization and economic planning, the working

class is destined to play a decisive role. At the same time, the need for a much more organic and less monolithic economic and administrative state apparatus is objectively becoming more and more necessary. On this level also, the role of the working class will be irreplaceable.

Thus simultaneously the need becomes greater and the conditions more favorable for a consistent revolutionary Marxist leadership, capable of overcoming the empiricism, the limitations, and the contradictions of the present leadership.

The role of the revolutionary party will be, basically, to ensure that the revolution in its later stages has this leadership, conscious of the revolution's final goals, and capable both of wisely selecting transitional objectives and of choosing adequate means thereto.

This leadership must at the same time carry out the destruction of the last vestiges of imperialism and native capitalism and be on the watch against the danger of a bureaucratization which, though limited today by the dynamism of the masses, fundamentally exists wherever there are to be found the objective conditions now present in Cuba (backward economic situation, low cultural and technical level, pressure on the revolution from outside).

The revolutionary party must furthermore insist on the prospect of a Socialist Federation of Latin America as the real solution to the economic and social problems of this region of the globe, beginning by putting forward the strategic task of the Socialist Federation for the whole of Central America, as a powerful element for the mobilization of the masses.

**Appendix IV** (Reprinted from **World Outlook**, Vol. 2, No. 8, February 21, 1964.)

*a labor press service*

# WORLD OUTLOOK

PERSPECTIVE MONDIALE

*Un service de presse ouvrier*

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## ON THE CHARACTER OF THE ALGERIAN GOVERNMENT

PARIS, Feb. 17 -- The United Secretariat of the Fourth International today issued the following statement, summarizing the views of the world Trotskyist movement on the character of the Algerian government:

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For some time the course of the new regime in Algeria has shown that it is a "Workers and Peasants Government" of the kind considered by the Communist International in its early days as likely to appear, and referred to in the Transitional program of the Fourth International, as a possible forerunner of a workers state.

Such a government is characterized by the displacement of the bourgeoisie in political power, the transfer of armed power from the bourgeoisie to the popular masses, and the initiation of far-reaching measures in property relations. The logical outcome of such a course is the establishment of a workers state; but, without a revolutionary Marxist party, this is not guaranteed. In the early days of the Communist International it was held to be excluded in the absence of a revolutionary Marxist party. Experience has shown, however, that this conclusion must be modified in the colonial world due to the extreme decay of capitalism and the effect of the existence of the Soviet Union and a series of workers states in the world today.

An essentially bourgeois state apparatus was bequeathed to Algeria. A crisis in the leadership of the FLN [Front de Libération

Nationale] came to a head July 1, 1962, ending after a few days in the establishment of a de facto coalition government in which Ferhat Abbas and Ben Bella represented the two opposing wings of neocolonialism and popular revolution. The struggle between these two tendencies within the coalition ended in the reinforcement of the Ben Bella wing, the promulgation of the decrees of March 1963 and the ouster successively of Khider, Ferhat Abbas and other bourgeois leaders although some rightist elements still remain in the government. These changes marked the end of the coalition and the establishment of a Workers and Peasants government.

As is characteristic of a Workers and Peasants Government of this kind, the Algerian government has not followed a consistent course. Its general direction, however, has been in opposition to imperialism, to the old colonial structure, to neocolonialism and to bureaucratism. It has reacted with firmness to the initiatives of would-be new bourgeois layers, including armed counterrevolution. Its subjective aims have repeatedly been declared to be the construction of socialism. At the same time its consciousness is limited by its lack of Marxist training and background.

The question that remains to be answered is whether this government can establish a workers state. The movement in this direction is evident and bears many resemblances to the Cuban pattern. A profound agrarian reform has already been carried out, marked by virtual nationalization of the most important areas of arable land. Deep inroads have been made into the old ownership relations in the industrial sector with the establishment of a public and state-controlled sector. Yet to be undertaken are the expropriation of the key oil and mineral sector, the banks and insurance companies, establishment of a monopoly of foreign trade and the inauguration of effective counter measures to the monetary, financial and commercial activities of foreign imperialism.

Among the most heartening signs in Algeria are (1) in foreign policy the establishment of friendly relations with Cuba, Yugoslavia, China, the Soviet Union and other workers states with the possibility this opens up for substantial aid from these sources; (2) the active attitude of the government toward developing the colonial revolution in such areas as Angola and South Africa; (3) within Algeria the establishment of the institution of "self-management." "Self-management" with its already demonstrated importance for the development of workers and peasants democracy offers the brightest opening for the establishment of the institutions of a workers state.

As a whole, Algeria, as we have noted many times, has entered a process of permanent revolution of highly transitional character in which all the basic economic, social and political structures are being shaken up and given new forms. This process is certain to continue. It will be greatly facilitated and strengthened if one of the main problems now on the agenda -- the organization of a mass party on a revolutionary Marxist program -- is successfully solved.

The appearance of a Workers and Peasants Government in Algeria is concrete evidence of the depth of the revolutionary process occurring there. It is of historic importance not only for Algeria and North Africa but for the whole African continent and the rest of the world.