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Two Ways of Constructing the Revolutionary Marxist Party and Engaging It in Action

By Pierre Frank

Comrade Mary-Alice's article is presented as a critique of the document adopted by the IEC Majority on the construction of revolutionary parties in capitalist Europe. We will first summarize the basic theses of this document before examining the critique. According to these theses, several years ago capitalist Europe entered a period characterized by a revolutionary rise of the masses which will in the course of the years to come bring with it decisive tests on the plane of the class struggle; the question of power will be objectively placed on the order of the day; the revolutionary vanguard is already numerically strong, with dozens and even hundreds of thousands of people escaping from the grip of the reformist Socialist or Stalinist leaderships and seeking revolutionary solutions to overturn the capitalist regime; but that vanguard is politically heterogeneous and situated on the periphery of the bulk of the working class which is still largely controlled by the traditional formations; the building of revolutionary Marxist parties, favored by the objective situation, should be centered on the conquest of political hegemony over that vanguard in such a way that it could, through its actions, allow the working class to verify our program in actions, in struggles.

Comrade Mary-Alice's article does not at any time take up these theses as a whole in order to answer them and to oppose another analysis and perspective of the situation to them, even though on page 5 (of the English text) she says she rejects this document "because of the errors it makes in analysis and perspectives." She even begins by denying the need and the possibility for such a document, since no strategy for the building of revolutionary parties could exist that would be valid for the capitalist European countries. Her alleged demonstration of the falseness of the document is made up of a series of criticisms that are unrelated to each other: one cannot write a general orientation document for a whole continent; it is an innovation to make the tasks and tactics flow from perspectives and not from the immediate situation and the present forces of our sections; the document is oriented toward the concerns of a so-called vanguard and not toward the demands of the masses; women, youth, etc., are forgotten in it; the document opens the door to adventurism . . . We are going to take these criticisms up again in order to show that behind their disparity one nevertheless finds a concept of how to build the party which is opposed to the majority's. In this way one will be able to see the basic differences confronting each other in the International, and in this way the differences on other specific problems will be seen under brighter illumination.

A Nonexistent Problem . . . Or What is Becoming of the International?

Comrade Mary-Alice's article denies numerous times the possibility of writing a document valid for Europe:

"The document tries to develop a single continental orientation to cover more than 15 countries as different from one another as Finland, Sweden, or Norway from Portugal, Spain, or Greece. This method of deriving a tactical orientation is wrong and unrealistic." (P. 5)

"The alternative to 'The Building of Revolutionary Parties in Capitalist Europe' is not an omnibus counterdocument for all of Europe. We reject this approach, just as we rejected the idea of a continental counterdocument on Latin America." (P. 27)

What an astonishing argument. Thus one could not write a document for a continent whose evolution presents a certain degree of homogeneity, one could only write a document for a given country. This argumentation, if it were upheld however slightly, would put into question the existence of the International. If one cannot write a document for a group of relatively homogeneous countries, how could one write a document making an analysis of the world situation? What sense would there then be in documents like "The Dynamics of World Revolution Today" and even the "Transitional Program" that analyze the three sectors of the world—the advanced capitalist countries (and not solely those of Europe), the colonial and semicolonial countries (and not solely those of Latin America), and the Soviet Union and the other workers states?

Comrade Mary-Alice also puts into question—without having wanted to—a basic slogan of the Trotskyist movement, which the Stalinists have attacked since the beginning of their struggle against us, the slogan of the Socialist United States of Europe. If there had not been a *real unity* of development of Europe (which doesn't exclude differences from country to country), if Europe didn't present a certain unity with respect to other parts of the world, we would not have any justification for this slogan. We present Trotsky's words on this subject. Here is how, in *The Third International After Lenin*, he polemicalizes against the Stalinists:

"Defending the slogan of the Soviet United States of Europe, we pointed out in 1915, that the law of uneven development is in itself no argument against this slogan, because the *unevenness* of historical development of different countries and continents *is in itself uneven*. European countries develop unevenly in relation to one another.

Nevertheless it can be maintained with absolute historical certainty that not a single one of these countries is fated, at least in the historical epoch under review, to run so far ahead in relation to other countries as America has run ahead of Europe. For America there is *one* scale of unevenness, for Europe there is *another*. Geographically and historically, conditions have predetermined such a close organic bond between the countries of Europe that there is no way for them to tear themselves out of it. . . .

"The revolution in Europe, as has already been said, *will in the final analysis* be of decisive importance for America as well. But *directly*, in the immediate course of history, a revolution in Germany will have an immeasurably greater significance for France than for the United States of America. It is precisely from this historically developed relationship that there flows the political vitality of the slogan of the European Soviet Federation." (*Third International After Lenin*, pp. 14-15.)

It is because common tendencies really do exist in the development of the class struggle in Europe that the European document could be written.

The Perspective in Europe

"Are we in a period marked by a new rise of workers struggles? Of course. Is it correct to say that such a period will not last indefinitely, that if wave after wave of struggle is defeated the bourgeoisie will succeed in forcefully imposing its solutions? Of course. Is it correct to project the possibility of explosive new prerevolutionary crises and revolutionary upsurges in one or more countries in the next four to five years? Of course. Will such explosions have repercussions throughout Europe? Certainly. Are there exceptional opportunities before us in the coming period for party building? Absolutely."

This citation is not drawn from the European document or from an article by a majority comrade, as one might think when first looking at it; it is found on page 12 of Comrade Mary-Alice's article. But she hastens to immediately add the following lines:

"But this is *not* what the document says. Instead, it postulates one extreme variant—that the next four to five years *will* see revolutionary crises in several European countries and that these will spread throughout Europe."

Compared with the earlier ones, these later lines show that for Comrade Mary-Alice, the "of course's," "certainly's," and "absolutely's" have only a very relative meaning. For her, the perspective of the European document is possible, but *only possible*. It is the "extreme variant." It is true that in certain circumstances it is not easy to formulate a perspective and that one can only envision various possible variants. We do not think this to be the case at present for Europe. But, if such is Mary-Alice's opinion, we are within our rights to ask her: are there other possible variants and what are they, and what consequences does she draw from them for our policy? We will find nothing on this subject in her article, and further on we will see that she does not feel the need to have perspectives in her conception of building the party.

But first off we will say a few words with respect to the stir she makes about the "dogmatic timetable" of the coming four to five years for Europe. The document is not, on this point, as rigid as Comrade Mary-Alice wants it to seem. Successes or defeats can cause a variation in the

duration of the revolutionary rise in Europe. But we energetically defend the idea that one cannot establish a perspective and a policy without taking into account the time factor. "Such a factor as time cannot be left out of consideration in political calculations." (Trotsky, to the Fourth Congress of the Communist International, repeated by him in *The Third International After Lenin*, p. 41.) We are going to see where a certain indifference toward time on Comrade Mary-Alice's part comes from.

An Innovation?

"The document mechanically tries to derive our central political tasks and tactics from this projected time schedule. It does not define our tasks in accordance with the immediate situation or our actual forces." (P.5)

"The schematic approach of choosing a 'tactic' for building the party at each 'stage' is an innovation for the Marxist movement." (P.14)

"Winning the leadership of the most advanced and conscious radicalizing elements is a *goal we always* strive to attain." (P. 14)

"[Our central task] is *recruiting and educating* the basic nucleus of cadres who will be able to win a base in the working class and build a mass Trotskyist party capable of handling every situation that arises. . . ." (P. 15)

All these citations show that, in Comrade Mary-Alice's thinking, the building of the revolutionary party—while awaiting the day when there will be a sufficiently large accumulation of cadres to be able to respond to each political situation that presents itself—is summed up in the recruitment and education of a nucleus of cadres, and this independently of the period, of its perspectives, of the objectives that a revolutionary party would have to propose to the masses. Stated another way, in the present conditions of our movement, we should not decide upon a course in relation to the situation, to its perspectives, but in relation to our present forces. The party as the party can only recruit and educate. We will see later on that she also envisions "mass work," what kind and how, but it is necessary for us to stress this building independent of the political developments. In the course of the IEC where she set forth the positions contained in her article, the comrade went so far as to say that if, a year before May '68, we had known that May '68 was going to happen, that would not have changed our activity in any way; and that were we to have revolutionary crises in 12 months or 12 years, in the present conditions that would change nothing in our present activity. If, a year before May '68, we had had the perspective of these events happening, our preparation on both the political and organizational plane would have been better; we would have made a greater effort to root ourselves in the factories and a major preparation for the period of illegality we had to undergo. If the building of the party was not tied to the development of the situation, one would wonder why we would spend so much time making analyses, developing perspectives from them . . . and dividing ourselves on these questions. Could it simply be to write articles and to "recruit and educate" cadres? When then is this Marxist "education" independent of action? In any case an action that would be solely "in accordance with the immediate situation of our actual forces," would be pragmatism, a quite dangerous pragmatism.

What is an innovation for the Marxist movement is Comrade Mary-Alice's concept and not the determination of a tactic in relation to the characteristics of a period. We would be able to fill a big brochure with nothing but quotations from Trotsky. We will only give a few of them from *The Third International After Lenin*, which in our opinion constitutes a manual of strategy and tactics that every revolutionary leader must read attentively.

"The second half of 1923 was a period of tense expectation of the proletarian revolution in Germany. The situation was evaluated at too late a date and in a hesitant way. . . . Despite all warnings, a change in tempo was undertaken only at the last moment; everything ended in a frightful capitulation by the leadership of the German Communist Party, which surrendered the decisive positions to the enemy. . . . the opposition, during the second half of 1923, sounded the alarm on the political *denouement* which was approaching, demanding a course truly directed towards armed insurrection, and insistently warned that in such historic moments, a few weeks, and sometimes a few days, decide the fate of the revolution for many years to come." (Pp. 249-50)

"Time is a decisive factor in politics, especially in periods of sharp historic turns, when a life-and-death struggle between two systems is unfolding. We must dispose of time with the greatest economy. . . ." (P.255)

"There are periods of high-tide and periods of ebb-tide. But the former and the latter pass in turn through various phases of development. It is necessary from the point of view of tactic, to adapt the policy of each of these stages being experienced, while maintaining at the same time the general line of conduct in its orientation towards the conquest of power and being always prepared, so as not to be taken unawares by a sharp change in the situation." (P. 259)

"To lead means to foresee." (P. 264)

"In an objectively ripe revolutionary situation, ripe not only with regard to its social bases but not infrequently also with regard to the mood for struggle of the masses, the subjective factor, that is, a revolutionary mass party, was lacking or else this party lacked a farsighted and intrepid leadership. . . . Without an extensive and generalized dialectical comprehension of the present epoch as an epoch of abrupt turns, a real education of the young parties, a correct strategical leadership of the class struggle, a correct combination of tactics, and, above all, a sharp and bold and decisive re-arming at each successive breaking point of the situation is impossible." (P.86)

Thus, not a line by Trotsky that doesn't pose with extreme emphasis the tie between the strategy and the tactics of the party with the perspective and with the turns in the situation. Comrade Mary-Alice's innovation results on the one hand from her not saying anything on the character of the present period in Europe, and on the other hand from her not grasping what the European document states, that is, that in terms of building the party in this part of the world we find ourselves in an intermediary situation—our sections are beginning to leave the stage of propagandistic groups in order to become organizations capable of being a factor on the political scene of their respective countries.

Ignoring that a revolutionary rise exists, she only envisions, for our sections, the routine of basically propa-

gandist groups, "to recruit and educate." We will see that she misunderstands another very important factor in the situation.

Vanguard and Masses

The European document devotes a very large place to the existence at present of a *large vanguard* in nearly all the countries of Europe, within which we must try to achieve political hegemony. Comrade Mary-Alice declares that she starts from a different point of view. What interests her, she says, is not—as it is for us—the "concerns" of this vanguard but the needs of the masses.

"The difference between these two starting points—the concerns of the vanguard or the objective needs of the working masses—is neither minor nor hair-splitting.

"To win recruits to our sections from vanguard elements we must convince them of the correctness of our program for the working masses." (P. 8)

From a very careful reading of Comrade Mary-Alice's article one can only draw one conclusion: she misunderstands what we term the vanguard in the European document. She often places the word vanguard in quotes. In several instances (see especially p. 9 and p. 22) she states that what is for us a vanguard is for her groups affected by "political backwardness." She justifies such a qualification by the fact that this vanguard, which had been constituted before May '68 on the basis of support for the Vietnamese revolution, oriented itself after May '68 primarily around the specific problems of the class struggle in the countries of Europe where they took place. For us the large vanguard is made up of these dozens and hundreds of thousands of people, above all youth, who want to overturn the capitalist regime and who have already freed themselves from the grip of the Social Democracy and Stalinism. In this vanguard, political groups of the far left (our sections, Maoist, spontanéist, centrist currents and tendencies) were formed and intervene. The minority comrades don't at all understand the importance that this vanguard can have as a political factor in the revolutionary rise in Europe.

That the Maoist, spontanéist, centrist groups are *politically confused* is self evident for us. But to simply use the characterization *politically backward* is to not understand the present phenomenon which we are taking part in, and it is to deny oneself the means of intervening in order to reduce the audience of these groups and to win the vanguard to us. We have never confused these formations and their audience in broad youth layers, a reaction to the reformism of the traditional leaderships, with the traditional incurable ultraleft or centrist groups. We have never considered today's youth who are politically off base as lost people or enemies, despite their errors and even the services they have involuntarily rendered the bourgeoisie and the Stalinists through their political mistakes. In fact, Comrade Mary-Alice's article moves in the direction of identifying the political vanguard with our sections, because she thinks that there is no vanguard outside ourselves since we alone have the revolutionary Marxist program. And, in consequence, she only envisions winning individuals to our program. For her, the only orientation is to strengthen our organizations through recruitment and education. That is one of our

tasks (see the European document, point 15, and the practice of our European sections), but that isn't our entire task.

Let's move to the reproach that is made of our orienting ourselves to the "concerns" of the vanguard in opposition to the needs of the masses. We have never created such a counterposition for the simple reason that the "concerns" of the vanguard are the needs of the masses. For a very simple reason. The "radicalization" in Europe, in contrast to that in the United States, is a powerful revolutionary rise of the working class. That is true not just in France and Italy, but also in Spain, in Great Britain and also in Germany, even if it is still on a lower level there today. The working class in its great mass votes, to be sure, for the traditional parties, but already it often resorts to new, harder, forms of struggle. It often raises demands that are no longer wage demands, but demands which put into question the authority of the boss in the factory. In large circles of the working class, very elevated political problems are debated, and not solely from a theoretical point of view.

Comrade Mary-Alice, who is opposed to a common document for Europe, doesn't appreciate that at the same time she is using the word "radicalization" in the most general way to cover phenomena much more differentiated than the political situations in various countries of Europe. She doesn't hesitate, by virtue of that "radicalization" to write documents on a world scale on the "radicalization" of youth, of women, etc., although the condition of women, despite some common traits, is extremely different depending on whether one is dealing with the United States or the colonial countries. The "radicalization" in Europe is *qualitatively and quantitatively* different from the "radicalization" in the United States. It is expressed through general strikes, wild-cat strikes, forms of militant struggle (sequestering of managers, massive pickets . . .), of slogans of a high level. The minority comrades forget the differences in the conditions that the vanguard in Europe and the radicalized currents in the United States find themselves in. The vanguard currents in Europe, in distinction to the radicalized sectors in the United States, as a whole find themselves in the midst of a combative working class, which has been politicized for dozens of years, sometimes for more than a century. They turn quite naturally toward that working class to try to detach it from the reformist Stalinist or socialist leaderships.

In the creation of revolutionary parties, the big difference between what happened in the revolutionary rise that followed the first world war and today is this: at that time, the Social-Democracy's betrayal and the appeal of the Third International separated the revolutionists from the reformists *in the very heart of the working class*; at present the revolutionary rise has made the peripheral layers move ahead far more than the bulk of the working class. From this flows the strategy developed in the European document. We obviously seek to win the maximum number of individuals to our organization, to its program, through propaganda, but what is involved is coming up with a strategy to use this vanguard *in actions*, around certain points of our program that would make the masses see, through the experiences they are going through or that are made tangible for them, the superiority of our program over the program of the reformists. The "concerns" of the vanguard in Europe, with all due respect to Com-

rade Mary-Alice, are identified with the demands of the masses. The error among numerous layers of the vanguard is to only deal with the immediate demands and to ignore how to link them to higher political questions, an error that often gives rise to currents of a populist type. Our strategy is to seek out through our actions the slogans, the demands of the masses, that also have the greatest support in the vanguard, that are capable of leading to mass actions of the broad vanguard. In this way large masses could be influenced who will not be won to us through propaganda because they only move forward politically through the experiences that they go through, that they live through.

Our 'Omissions' and 'Mass Work' According to the Minority

The readers of Comrade Mary-Alice's article receive long lessons on the need to work in diverse milieus, lessons which our sections give to all candidate members before accepting them into full membership. One should think that the old leaders of the International, who participated in writing the European document, have not yet forgotten these lessons. The differences must be, and are, elsewhere. Comrade Mary-Alice states that in the absence of Trotskyist youth organizations we will be unable to profit from the radicalization of the youth. Unhappily for her, scarcely had she finished writing her article than the LRT in Belgium and the Ligue Communiste in France led very powerful movements of high-school and college students. In France this movement, through its power, even went so far as to force the leadership of the CGT to make a temporary tactical turn in which it openly addressed itself to the High School-College Coordinating Committee, well known to be led by members of the Ligue Communiste. At no time did Comrade Mary-Alice seek to understand the reasons that led the Ligue Communiste, after several months of discussion, to drop the idea of building a youth organization at the present time. If anyone has a dogmatic position on this question, undoubtedly she does, and with her the minority.

Let's leave aside the lessons on work in the youth, in the army, etc., and see what Comrade Mary-Alice puts forward as a conception of "mass work":

"As in every other aspect of the struggles of the masses, we play a *vanguard* role. We take the initiative *within* the masses. . . . We take these initiatives as members of the *mass* organizations, and in the name of the *mass* organizations. . . ." (Her emphasis, p. 26)

Stated another way, the mass work must be done by Trotskyists, acting as individuals in the name of the mass organization, i.e., on the level of these organizations. The revolutionary party coordinates the actions of its members in these mass organizations, but it isn't a question of an intervention, an initiative on its own, an action by the Trotskyist organization itself around the specific slogans of the Trotskyist organization—which as an organization, as we have shown above, only "recruits and educates." We again find the conception of the party that was expressed by Comrade Camejo in his article against "Guevarism." We refer the comrades to the critique of it in the principal document of the Majority Tendency—"In Defence of Leninism: In Defence of the Fourth International." If the party is at present only an instrument

of recruitment and education, if mass work is only the work of its members in the mass organizations, on the level of these organizations, then it is obviously impossible to change, to raise the consciousness of the masses solely through propaganda while only doing mass work on the level of the masses, a level that is to a certain degree arbitrarily chosen since the masses have different levels, and in doing this one forgets that there are also militants of the vanguard who have political and theoretical needs that the masses don't have.

We will not repeat the entire critique made on this subject in regard to Camejo's article; let's look at what Comrade Mary-Alice wrote on the question of workers struggles:

"One of the gravest errors made in the European document is the mechanical way in which it tries to derive the central party-building tasks before each of the European sections of the Fourth International today from an analysis of previous revolutionary upsurges and from the need to prepare for the emergence of organs of dual power in coming prerevolutionary crises. . . . But one entire category of problems is missing: those related to building revolutionary parties prior to a revolutionary upsurge, i.e., those relating to the concrete day-to-day, month-to-month tasks of every section in Europe *today*." (P. 15)

"The document advances workers' control as the central axis of our propaganda. It tries to justify the centrality of this demand *now* by pointing to the future need for organs of dual power—not by analyzing the workers struggles the comrades are actually engaged in, and not by reference to the level of consciousness of the workers they are trying to reach and lead." (P. 16)

"Any tendency to dissolve the richness of the Transitional Program into propaganda for workers control alone would be seriously disorienting." (P. 17)

Comrade Mary-Alice is persistent in her thinking. The necessity that organs of dual power emerge in revolutionary situations is a lesson that our movement has drawn from the past. But today, with the possibility of revolutionary situations in Europe being only the "extreme variant," and our activity not being dependent on the nature of the period, it would be necessary for us to stick to the immediate demands of the workers. Regarding the question of workers control, it is relegated to *propaganda* and, regarding propaganda, it would actually impoverish the Transitional Program to reduce it to the question of workers control. In this conception of "mass work" and of the propagandistic role of the party, workers control is only a propaganda formula and not a concept that our sections should try to find practical applications for in the large struggles that are taking place in Europe, by means of creating organs that are not called organs of dual power but that will tend to become such with the development of struggles toward higher and higher levels.

The concept defended by the minority renounces in fact the turn of the Ninth World Congress, meaning the orientation for our sections to pass from the stage of propagandistic groups to organizations capable, in certain spheres, of leading struggles around some of our slogans. We are pulled back to a previous stage and even further back. Because, ever since the formation of the Trotskyist movement, we have *always* participated in the struggles of the masses. We have attempted to give ascendancy to our ideas that corresponded to a given situation. But, with some exceptions, we were unable as an organization

to intervene except in a propagandistic manner, advancing a policy, criticizing the policies of others, but being unable to exert our policy to the least degree in a leading way.

The whole lack of understanding of what the nature of the present period in Europe involves leads Comrade Mary-Alice to accuse those who attach such importance to present workers struggles of "economist," "apolitical," "parochial" deviations. (P. 19) To these extravagant accusations, she cannot fail to add, by virtue of the concept that opportunism and ultraleftism are symmetrical, that we are guilty of manifestations of "adventurism," as we shall see.

Whoever Steals an Egg Will Steal an Ox . . .

Let's again take up an already cited passage from Comrade Mary-Alice's article while mentioning the aspect of struggles in which she applied it:

"As in every other aspect of the struggles of the masses, we play a *vanguard* role. We take the initiative *within the masses* on such questions as the formation of strike pickets and workers militias, or in certain situations, guerilla units to defend the mass struggles of the peasants. We take these initiatives as members of the *mass* organizations, and in the name of the mass organizations. . . ." (P. 26)

Let's not repeat what we have already written on this concept of "mass work." Comrade Mary-Alice is certainly in favor of strike pickets, workers militias, guerrillas on occasion; but it is solely from a propagandistic point of view, all of these being found, like workers control, the general strike, the armed insurrection, etc., in the program. For her it is quite another thing in real life.

In the first place she indulges in an extrapolation that is at least strange:

"While such acts of violence by a handful may be ostensibly 'linked to political objectives,' they have their own logic and develop along their own path—from window-breaking sprees to Molotov cocktails, to plastic explosives, to kidnappings, to assassinations, etc." (P. 25)

We don't doubt that there are some people who act according to the "logic" exposed by Comrade Mary-Alice. It is not solely the "logic" of certain ultralefts. It is also the "logic" of the common petty-bourgeois sentiment that is expressed in France through the aphorism "whoever steals an egg will steal an ox." But that has nothing to do with our logic, with Marxism, which seeks at each point to find concrete solutions to the concrete problems posed by the class struggle. Since one of these is the question of force and the relationship of forces, one must in each case know if there are grounds for a recourse to force, through what means, for what ends, within what limits. They would be poor revolutionary Marxist leaders who let themselves be automatically dragged along by the "logic" dreaded by Comrade Mary-Alice!

The use of force is not in itself terrorism and it is necessary to take care not to use the critiques made in our classics, for example against the Narodniks, incorrectly. Let's listen to what Trotsky himself said:

"It must be said that the Narodnik terrorists took their own words very seriously: bomb in hand they sacrificed their lives. We argued with them: 'under certain circumstances a bomb is an excellent thing but we should first clarify our minds.'" (P. 79, *In Defense of Marxism*.)

Under certain circumstances a bomb is an excellent thing! Under certain circumstances, Trotsky, according to Comrade Mary-Alice, fell prey to adventurism and terrorism.

The article in question denounces two "adventurist" actions, the one against the Argentine Embassy and the one against Honeywell-Bull. They were "in no way related to the needs of the masses or of any section of the masses." (P. 25)

In our opinion, the crime of Trelew required an immediate response and, as everyone knows, one cannot always summon up mass demonstrations. Thus the question of a vigorous action was posed, and we were of the opinion that the Trelew crime required more than a telegram or a customary gesture. But in the question of Honeywell-Bull, one finds a problem posed that Comrade Mary-Alice didn't seem to suspect. Why did revolutionary militants attack this American firm if not because it made material used against the Vietnamese revolution? We are for the defense and victory of that revolution, of the workers state of Vietnam. On this question we are not just for mass actions but also for the sabotage of the capitalist troops and of their armament: "The Fourth International has established firmly that in all imperialist countries, independent of the fact as to whether they are in alliance with the USSR or in a camp hostile to it, the proletarian parties during the war must develop the class struggle with the purpose of seizing power. At the same time the proletariat of the imperialist countries must not lose sight of the interests of the USSR's defense (or of that of colonial revolutions) and in case of real necessity must resort to the most decisive action, for instance, strikes, acts of sabotage, etc." (P. 30, *In Defense of Marxism*.)

The action against Honeywell-Bull, symbolic as it had been, fell into this category. It was "related to the needs" of the Vietnamese masses, and one can simply regret that there weren't more of them and more vigorous ones.

In peremptorily asserting that minority violence and mass violence cannot be complementary, that they are politically contradictory, Comrade Mary-Alice rejects *en toto* all the actions taken on by the Ligue Communiste that had a minority character. But the Ligue *concretely showed* the contrary within the framework of solidarity actions toward the Indochinese revolution. On the day after the presidential "elections" in Saigon, the Ligue clandestinely organized a demonstration of 400 militants in front of the American consulate in Paris. This demonstration, like the others (against the South Vietnamese consulate in Paris, Honeywell-Bull. . .) *politically prepared* the January 20, 1973, demonstration, in the course of which 15,000 demonstrators violently confronted the police in order to make their way to the American Embassy. That demonstration even had an echo in the ranks of the French CP. It represented a step forward in the anti-imperialist mobilization. It would have been much more difficult to carry out if it hadn't been prepared by the Ligue.

Out of fear of the "logic" that could lead her to terrorism, Comrade Mary-Alice falls into a very disturbing spontanéism:

"As for the workers, they decide to use means of struggle involving violence only when the need for such measures arises in the course of their own mass struggles." (P. 25) "As those struggles unfold, the masses themselves come to understand the need to defend their interests against the

violence of the rulers. As that point approaches, we help the masses to organize *their* defense of *their* struggles." (P. 26)

Alas, the working class cannot by itself, without a vanguard, learn revolutionary politics, especially as pertains to the use of organized, structured violence. The revolutionary party cannot teach it this simply through propaganda. It is a task in which the revolutionary party must also serve as an example, sometimes paying dearly. Not wanting to lengthen this article beyond measure, we will only say that this question of the role of the party in the creation of combat organs by itself has been discussed more than once in history, in particular in the Communist International, and that we are not engaging in an innovation in this field.

Again a point concerning violence. The European document, in point 19, says that "our sections will have to educate the entire mass vanguard . . . to show the bourgeoisie in practice that the price it will have to pay for any attempt to establish an open dictatorship will be a civil war in which both camps will use arms." (P. 26)

Comrade Mary-Alice interprets these lines as meaning that we should "begin now . . . to teach the bourgeoisie in practice that we will use arms." (P. 27) Is she so naive? Does she believe that the European bourgeoisie, upon reading the European document, will discover that we are for the use of arms to overthrow its regime? Does she believe that we want "to teach" something to the bourgeoisie (which is not a part of the cadres we are educating)? What does it really mean? In periods of grave crisis, as the problem of a change in regimes is posed for the bourgeoisie, political currents form within it in accordance in particular with the reactions to be expected on the part of the working class. Thus, in 1958, the bourgeoisie liquidated the parliamentary regime and carried de Gaulle to power because it didn't fear an armed workers response. It did the same thing in Greece. In Italy, on the other hand, although some had envisioned a military coup d'etat, the fear of an armed response by the masses made them step back. We don't think that large social crises constitute only a possible variant in Europe. They are inevitable. It is to avoid their ending in catastrophes for the workers movement, as happened in the past, that we see it necessary to prepare the masses, and also our movement, so that there is an element in the calculations of the bourgeoisie that will give them pause to reflect. For that it is necessary to make propaganda, but not just propaganda. The intervention of large masses at such times can depend on the will and the means at the disposal of a vanguard like the one beginning to take shape in several countries of Europe.

Some Clear Differences

At the end of this article, we see where the differences really are, not just on the subject of the European document, but—Comrade Mary-Alice says it herself—more generally in the International. In the first place she shies away from an analysis and perspectives of the period in Europe, just as her tendency had done on Latin America at the previous congress. For this tendency, the organization's activity is not related to this analysis and perspective. Moreover it is from this that one can understand the differences on the recourse to armed struggle in Latin America,

and not on the use of this or that form of struggle in this or that country. In shying away from the present period in Europe, the minority renounces in fact what it subscribed to at the Ninth World Congress. It ignores or underestimates the existence of a large vanguard in Europe. It considers the building of the revolutionary party as a thing in itself and limits the intervention of the party as a party to propagandistic work, while the "mass work" is done on the level of the masses, by members of the movement as individuals, and through the go-between of the mass organizations. It is a conception whose validity the minority extends to all domains, including the use of force. We again find in Comrade Mary-Alice's article the same conceptions on these questions as those expressed in Comrade Camejo's article, "Why Guevara's Guerrilla Strategy Has No Future" (see the critique of it in the *Bulletin de Documentation Internationale*, No. 6-7, March 1973, p. 42 and passim). It is the concept of a party that combines day-to-day activity of party members on the level of the masses with Marxist propaganda of a quite general type. We are not faced with an article from a comrade who expressed himself badly. It is a question of a point of view defended by the representatives of the minority in the discussion. Listen to what Trotsky wrote on a conception that was put forward in the draft program presented by Bukharin to the Sixth Congress of the Communist International:

"So far as the strategical problems are concerned, in the proper sense of the word, the draft program limits itself to such ABC wisdom as:

"The extension of its influence over the majority of its own class. . . .

"The extension of its influence over the broad section of the toiling masses in general. . . .

"The day-to-day work of conquering the trade unions is of an especially high importance. . . .

"The winning of the broadest section of the poorest peasantry is also[?] of enormous importance. . . .

"All these commonplaces, indisputable in themselves, are merely set down in rotation here, that is to say, they are brought in without any connection with the character of the historical epoch, and, therefore, in their *present* abstract, scholastic form, could be introduced without difficulty into a resolution of the Second International." (*The Third International After Lenin*, p. 77).

The orientation of the minority transforms the Transitional Program, which it claims such title to, into a document of "scholastic and abstract" propaganda, to use Trotsky's terms. Of course, the Transitional Program serves to educate the members of the Fourth International, but it was not written for that alone. It aims to give our sections and the International the means to publicly intervene as sections and as an International, under the forms of initiatives in the class struggle, around the appropriate slogans contained in the Transitional Program. Each of our sections should in effect find in this program, in connection with the course of the class struggle in its country, the link which enables it to seize the chain in order to pull it and tie the whole thing together, i.e., in order to carry the class struggle toward higher and higher levels. The Transitional Program is not, for us, essentially a propaganda document, but rather an arsenal from which we have to draw the arms that are appropriate to different

moments in the class struggle, which will permit our sections through their interventions to become more and more leading factors in the class struggle. The minority comrades accuse us of seeking "shortcuts" for strengthening our sections. It is true that more than once our movement had to combat opportunist tendencies that thought that our sections would be able to rapidly grow if one found "shortcuts" in the building of the party. But the "shortcuts" these currents proposed did not entail interventions in the class struggle; we fought them because they proposed throwing a more or less large part of our program overboard, because they wanted to build revolutionary parties very cheaply. Far from rejecting any part of our program whatsoever, we seek to make it come alive in the class struggle, we seek to apply it as a start to certain sectors of the masses.

We will end with a few words on Comrade Novack's article "Two Lines, Two Methods," which upholds the minority viewpoint. We find there a series of general assertions: truth is concrete, the present situation is characterized by sudden turns, etc., which no one would dream of contesting. But it also contains some assertions that are at least doubtful from the point of view of the *method* on which it claims to carry the debate. For example, he writes:

"When and if civil war does erupt in that country [Argentina], it will be the tendency that has implanted itself in the mass movements through prior participation in all the ongoing struggles that will be best situated to defend the workers against extreme reaction and to go over to the counteroffensive." (P. 35)

Would Comrade Novack mean that an organization that would be implanted in the mass movements without having foreseen a perspective of civil war, without having prepared the organization and the masses for that perspective, an organization that would be implanted in the masses while only addressing itself to the level of their immediate demands and not devoting itself to anything but general propaganda for a socialist pole, would he mean that such an organization would be thus in a position to lead a civil war? How many centrist parties would in this way have been "best situated" to "defend the workers against extreme reaction and to go over to the counteroffensive," if that is, for our friend Novack, a circumlocution to indicate the civil war! His "method" inspires some doubts in us in this area.

He also writes:

"The future of the Fourth International as the leadership of the world socialist revolution does not hinge upon what does or does not eventuate in a single country — or even a single continent — at any one time. . . . Its progress today as in the past depends upon the skillful, persistent and effective application of its Marxist ideas and methods wherever its cadres function in order to build the vanguard party as the indispensable instrument of proletarian struggle." (P. 35)

These words are so general that one can say that the truth they contain ceases to be concrete. The future of the Fourth International does not depend in the long run on the blows it might receive in this or that country in the future — it didn't die from all the blows that Stalin and his sort dealt it in its long history; but its future as a leading force of the world socialist revolution in so far as the delays in this are concerned — and this is not at all a matter

of indifference—depends on our initiatives, on our interventions at the present stage. Can one build, according to Comrade Novack's "method," a revolutionary party independently of all analysis of the objective situation, of its possibilities, of all analysis of the different currents, large and small, which act in the working class? Can one build a revolutionary party whose members would intervene in the mass movements and in the name of these movements on their level, while the party as a party would only concern itself with the recruitment and education of individuals of the vanguard? Can one prepare the masses for the use of force in the class struggle with a revolutionary party which, while of course taking into account the circumstances and its forces, would not provide an example and would wait to intervene in this sphere until the masses were at the point of understanding? Is the building of the revolutionary party a linear function of individual recruitment until an undetermined date in the future or is it right now a dialectical process especially comprising direct interventions by our sections as such in different moments of the class struggle?

Finally, the next world congress will not simply judge, it will also give political leadership. Comrade Novack supports a tendency that rejects the orientation proposed by the European sections, which at present comprise the majority of the present members of the Fourth International, a tendency that refuses to put forward another orientation. If the tendency Comrade Novack supports were to obtain the majority at the congress, around what orientation would our European sections act? To propose nothing, to claim that the problem of an orientation in Europe is not posed, is a "line" and a "method" which we don't know how Comrade Novack could justify.

June 20, 1973

* * *

Postscript (July 13)—This article was barely finished when the events tied to the dissolution of the Ligue Communiste took place. One can have no doubt that, according to the concept developed by Comrade Mary-Alice, the June 21 action would constitute a violent action of a minority detached from the class, not organized by a mass organization, therefore an ultraleft, adventurist action, etc., which, therefore, would be politically condemnable because, far from being useful for building the revolutionary party, it would have to lead to or aggravate the isolation of the organization which carried it out with respect to the masses. We have moreover learned that

certain supporters of the minority have already condemned the Ligue Communiste's action as ultraleft. Here we are not considering the tactical or technical aspects of the Ligue Communiste's action, aspects that might be questionable and that one can return to at a more propitious time. Here we are considering the essential point for the debate in the International in which two ways of building the revolutionary party are counterposed.

In this regard, the Ligue Communiste's action, far from having isolated it, has, following the governmental repression, resulted in its defense by the *entire* workers movement (from the right wing to the far left wing of this movement) and by relatively large bourgeois and petty-bourgeois democratic layers. We would like to see a minority comrade explain to us, in line with the method of building the party developed in Comrade Mary-Alice's article—i.e., especially while making an abstraction of the political estimate of the present period—why this alleged leftist action not only has not caused the isolation of the French section of the Fourth International, but has provoked the largest movement of solidarity and defense which has been seen in France in a long time if not the largest ever. How does one explain that a violent minority action won the support of relatively large working-class layers? How does one explain that the PCF, a Stalinist party even among the Stalinists, which didn't defend Pierre Overney when he was killed by the boss's agents about 15 months ago, today conducts a campaign for the Trotskyist organization? The Ligue's action was carried out in the name of the Ligue, no mass organization took the initiative in it. How does one explain, within the logic of Comrade Mary-Alice's article, that this action has greatly strengthened the prestige, the authority of the revolutionary Marxist current? Of course we don't deny that the repression is going to cause temporary organizational difficulties for the revolutionary Marxists, but it will not lead to regression. On the contrary, in our opinion it sets the stage for a new leap forward. Moreover, can one think that the building of the revolutionary party will be accomplished—if the revolutionary Marxist vanguard acts in fact as such—without going through difficult tests, that it will be accomplished through an accumulation of forces within the cocoon of bourgeois democracy?

We would also like someone to explain to us, while making an abstraction of the estimation of the present political situation in France, how an allegedly ultraleft action and the governmental measure that followed it have led not only to the general solidarity mentioned above, but also to dissension in the state apparatus, within the government itself, in the police and the judiciary.

On the 1973 Legislative Elections in France: May 28, 1973, Letter to the Political Bureau of the Ligue Communiste from the Political Committee of the Socialist Workers Party

New York, N.Y.
May 28, 1973

Political Bureau
Ligue Communiste

Dear Comrades,

We are very sorry that Comrade D. was unable to attend the recent plenary meeting of our National Committee. We had hoped he would be present to participate in the discussion. We were also hoping to have the opportunity to raise with him some questions relating to the recent legislative elections in France.

In the course of our plenum several comrades expressed opinions critical of the line adopted by the Ligue Communiste in the elections. It would have been useful if a leading French comrade had been there to present your views on this as well as other questions.

Since this did not prove possible, the Political Committee has asked me to communicate our views to you and solicit your comments. We realize that our information may be sketchy on some points and would welcome your corrections of any factual errors on our part as well as an explanation of how you arrived at your line.

As you may have noted, *The Militant's* coverage of the French elections focused on two things: the scope, importance and character of the Ligue's campaign, and your denunciations of the program of the Union de la Gauche [Union of the Left].

We also reported on the debate between the parties and organizations of the French "far left" concerning the character of the Union de la Gauche and what attitude revolutionary Marxists should adopt towards it. We deliberately refrained from making any editorial comment about this debate. However, on the basis of the information available to us, we found we could not agree with the totality of the positions advanced in this debate by any group, including the Ligue Communiste. We refrained from commenting on this in the pages of *The Militant* as we preferred to raise our criticisms in the context of the internal discussion preparatory to the coming world congress.

We would like to get your thinking before taking the discussion further.

* * *

In our opinion, the decision of the Ligue to enter a large slate of candidates in the elections, and use the opportunity afforded by the campaign to present the program of the Ligue Communiste to broad layers of the working class was an extremely positive step. Under the current conditions in France any other decision would have been either ultraleft abstentionism (as demonstrated by Révolution!) or factional opportunism (as demonstrated by the Lambertists who ran only a token campaign while calling for a vote for the candidates of the CP and SP on the first round as opposed to the Trotskyist candidates of the Ligue Communiste).

Your ability to carry out a campaign of such large scope is a gauge of the advances the Fourth International has made towards the construction of a mass revolutionary Marxist party in France.

Our differences with the policy you adopted center on three questions: (1) the decision to call for a vote on the first round for all candidates of the "far left," i.e., those whom you defined as "candidates who reject the electoral and peaceful roads to socialism" (Political Resolution, *Rouge*, December 16, 1972); (2) the decision to call for a vote on the second round for the candidates of the Union de la Gauche, as opposed to the candidates of the Communist Party and Socialist Party only; and (3) the ambiguity of your attitude towards the Socialist Party as expressed by the decision taken at your last convention against characterizing the Socialist Party as a working-class party with a bourgeois-reformist program.

* * *

1. As outlined in the political resolution adopted at the Ligue's December 1972 convention, your aim on the first round of the elections was to promote programmatic clarification. One aspect of this was the sharp criticism you directed at the program of the Union de la Gauche. You also criticized the line of the other groups on the French "left."

However, in our opinion, to call for a vote for all candidates who reject an electoral or peaceful road to socialism, cuts across the goal of achieving programmatic clarification. It establishes a new criterion for determining to whom we give critical support in elections.

The Marxist movement has always had definite criteria

for determining whether it is correct in principle to support the candidates of any party or group other than our own. One criterion is program. If a candidate or party is putting forward a program that helps advance political consciousness and explain the need for independent action by the working class, a program that calls for an unequivocal break with all forms of class collaboration, then it is within our principles to call for a vote for that candidate.

Our second criterion is class composition. While the Stalinist and Social-Democratic parties do not break programmatically with class collaboration—indeed their programs are based on class collaboration—they are historical currents long recognized as established tendencies in the international working-class movement. Their base is in the mass organizations of the working class. It is within our principles to call for a vote for such parties and their candidates, despite their programs, if doing so helps advance the concept of the need for counterposing class against class, if such action helps draw the line in the electoral arena between the working class and the bourgeoisie.

The criterion which the Ligue Communiste used in the first round in this election campaign—rejection of the electoral road—is new to Leninism.

It leads to the conclusion that there is some acceptable minimal "far-left" program with one and only one point: rejection of the electoral road to socialism. In our opinion, such a one-point minimal electoral platform does not constitute an adequate basis to justify voting for certain candidates nor does it contribute to programmatic clarity.

One can reject the "electoral or peaceful road to socialism" and still engage in class collaborationist maneuvers—as the Vietnamese Stalinist leadership does, for example, or as the anarchists did in the Spanish civil war.

The explicit rejection of popular frontism, and all other forms of class collaborationism, should be the basis of any limited electoral platform in France today. But even on that basis, a one-point program would hardly be adequate to achieve programmatic clarity. And at this stage in our development the sections of the Fourth International have no other reason for participating in elections than to utilize the electoral arena for propaganda purposes. Our primary purpose is to take *our program* to the broadest possible layers of the working class.

Under certain circumstances it is in order to try to reach an electoral agreement with organizations like Lutte Ouvrière and the Organisation Communiste Internationaliste (OCI)—the Lambertists. Since the programs of the Ligue Communiste, Lutte Ouvrière and the OCI reject all forms of coalitionism, it would be entirely principled to support each others candidates on the basis of a common, limited platform for the elections, if one could be agreed upon. But in the absence of a more rounded common platform than the one-point criterion of rejecting the electoral road to socialism, a call for a vote for all the "far left" on that basis can only lead to confusion rather than programmatic clarification.

Your attempt to reach an agreement with Lutte Ouvrière and the OCI to run no candidates against each other is an entirely different matter from establishing an electoral bloc on a limited program. A "non-aggression" pact was, we believe, a correct initiative to take. It is a recognition on our part that the biggest obstacle today in the path of the French working class is the Stalinist Communist

Party. Such an agreement in no way indicates programmatic preference for the OCI or Lutte Ouvrière. It is simply in our interests at the present time to focus our fire on the bourgeoisie and the Stalinist misleaders of the working class, and avoid what would seem to the masses of French workers like a sectarian squabble between Trotskyist factions.

* * *

Under the circumstances, it seems to us that it would have been wiser to call for a first-round vote for the candidates of the Ligue Communiste alone.

In our opinion, the tactical error on the first round of trying to put together a "far-left" electoral bloc on the basis of rejecting the peaceful road to socialism is not unrelated to the concept of trying to regroup the so-called "new mass vanguard" and transform it into a revolutionary party, as projected in the United Secretariat majority document on "Building Revolutionary Parties in Capitalist Europe."

* * *

2. On the second round, we believe it was an error to call for a vote for the Union de la Gauche per se, rather than for the candidates of the working-class parties, the CP and the SP. This error was more serious, in our opinion, than the tactical mistake on the first round.

The Union de la Gauche began as an electoral bloc between the Communist Party and the Socialist Party, on a common program based on the reformist programs of those two organizations. However, from the beginning it had a different character, a different *class* character, than either of the two parties making it up. The Union de la Gauche was not an action coalition but a programmatic, electoral bloc, that *solicited* the participation of parties and groups not part of the working-class movement.

From the beginning, its perspective was to draw in bourgeois and petty-bourgeois political forces as soon as possible. That is, its orientation was to transform itself into a vehicle of class collaboration involving real, as opposed to potential, bourgeois forces, as rapidly as objective circumstances would permit.

The crisis of French capitalism is not yet so acute as to impel any major bourgeois forces to turn to the CP as a savior of the nation. Thus, only a few, relatively peripheral bourgeois figures accepted the bid of the Union de la Gauche. Therefore, it would, in our opinion, probably be correct to designate the Union de la Gauche an embryonic or incipient popular front.

There are obviously important differences between the 1936 popular front and the Union de la Gauche, or between the Union de la Gauche and the Liberation government in which the Stalinists took key posts. The Ligue Communiste has pointed out many of the differences. But all three were similar in *essence*, that is, in their character as class-collaborationist electoral coalitions and/or governmental blocs. The relative weight of the various forces within such blocs is secondary. The fact that the CP or the SP may be the dominant force within such a bloc for a period of time in no way negates its fundamental character as a class-collaborationist electoral bloc.

We are not interested in the semantics of the question. Whether we should put the label "incipient popular front" on the Union de la Gauche, or some other designation can be put aside as long as we agree on the essence: that the Union de la Gauche was, from its very inception, an electoral class-collaborationist project of the Stalinists.

It seems to us that many times during the campaign the Ligue Communiste correctly emphasized the similarities between the program of the 1936 Popular Front, the program of the Liberation government, and the Common Program of the Union de la Gauche. The account of the meeting at the Palais des Sports, written by Comrade Pierre Frank for *Intercontinental Press*, for example, (February 26, 1973, pp. 198-99) pointed out that this was one of the themes of Comrade Krivine's speech on that occasion.

The problem with the Union de la Gauche was not simply the presence of the Left Radicals, as the Lambertists claimed. The fatal flaw of the Union de la Gauche lay much deeper. Even if the Left Radicals had not joined the Union de la Gauche, we believe it would have been an error to call for a vote for it per se.

The key question was not *when* some section of the bourgeoisie, or as in Spain some "shadow" of the bourgeoisie, might decide to participate in the Union de la Gauche. From its very inception it represented a projected electoral bloc with bourgeois forces, the ultimate goal being a coalition government. Its *essence*, its *purpose* was to prepare for this.

Under those circumstances a vote for the Union de la Gauche per se did not represent a vote for independent working-class political action. It was a vote for a petty-bourgeois electoral bloc with a popular front perspective. A call to vote for the Union de la Gauche was qualitatively different from a call to vote for the CP and SP as a way of voting against the bourgeois candidates by voting for candidates of parties of the working class.

We vote for Stalinist and Social-Democratic parties in some circumstances not because of their programs, but despite their programs and in opposition to their programs. We do this in order to draw a line in the electoral arena between our class and the enemy class. With this in mind, it is not incorrect to vote for candidates of the Stalinist and Social-Democratic parties. Whatever their relative weight in any particular country, whatever their conjunctural ups and downs in size and influence, they represent historical currents within the international working-class movement. They are working-class parties with bourgeois-reformist programs.

Calling for a vote for the Union de la Gauche was not the same as calling for a vote for the CP and SP as parties of the working class, despite their programs. It meant calling for a vote for a petty-bourgeois electoral bloc extending beyond the CP and SP. It meant voting for the structure (admittedly a rickety one) set up by the CP and SP in the electoral field.

The fact that the Left Radicals did come into the Union de la Gauche well before the elections was simply an early confirmation of the perspective of the Union de la Gauche.

We agree with the position taken by the comrades of the Ligue Communiste that the Left Radicals did not represent a major bourgeois force, and in that sense the Union de la Gauche was different from the 1936 Popular

Front and from the Liberation government. But a coalition with the bourgeoisie does not necessarily begin with major bourgeois forces.

Or, to put it another way, the embryo of a class-collaborationist coalition looks quite different during the first month and the ninth month.

* * *

3. The error of calling for a vote for the Union de la Gauche appears even more serious if the position of the Ligue Communiste on the character of the Socialist Party is taken into account. At the time of the December 1972 convention of the Ligue, the delegates refused to take a position characterizing the SP as a working-class party with a bourgeois-reformist program.

According to the Political Resolution published in the December 16, 1972, issue of *Rouge*, in face of the weakness of its working-class base, the "SP can be defined today as neither a bourgeois party nor a bourgeois workers party." In short, the Ligue Communiste has no position on the class character of the SP.

Although this was one of the main issues in dispute during the preconvention discussion, and more than 25 percent of the delegates stated unequivocally that they believed the SP to be a bourgeois party, the majority of the convention took the position that it was irrelevant whether the SP was a bourgeois party or not, because the class character of the Union de la Gauche was determined by the dominant weight of the CP within it.

In other words, the position adopted by the Ligue was that it is permissible from the point of view of class principles for revolutionary Marxists to call for a vote for candidates of the SP even if it might not be a working-class party. Also, the Ligue obviously believes it is correct to support an electoral bloc between the CP and SP even if the SP is not a workers party.

If this is indeed your view, we believe it would amount to a revision of the fundamental Marxist position on this question, negating all the lessons that have been learned by the revolutionary workers movement since the time of Millerand.

In our opinion, it is a violation of principles to vote for or support the Union de la Gauche. This is doubly true if you believe that the SP is no longer a component of the workers movement.

It seems to us that the correct position in the March elections would have been to call for a vote for the CP and SP candidates on the second round, as opposed to calling for a vote for the candidates of the Union de la Gauche. By counterposing the two alternatives we could have more clearly explained the nature of the Union de la Gauche.

* * *

The questions raised by the French elections are important to revolutionists throughout the world. The issues and problems involved are relevant to the work of the Fourth International in numerous countries. They will become even more so in the coming period as the rising pressure of the class struggle forces the ruling class in more and more countries to try to gain time and room to maneuver by utilizing popular front type blocs with

the Stalinists and Social Democrats.

Many of the same questions have come to the fore in Chile, for example, where the "Chilean Union de la Gauche," the Unidad Popular, illustrates one variant of popular frontism.

In the recent elections in Chile, held on March 4, our comrades of the Partido Socialista Revolucionaria called for a vote for the candidates of the Socialist Party, but did not call for a vote for the Communist Party or the Unidad Popular. This seems to us to have been a correct decision under the particular circumstances and given the issues over which the SP and CP were divided.

In Vietnam the call of the Provisional Revolutionary Government for the formation of a government of national accord and reconciliation raises similar questions.

In Uruguay, in 1971, the formation of the Frente Amplio posed problems not unlike some of those raised in the recent French elections. As you know from the article written by Joseph Hansen at the time ("The 'Broad Front' Suffers Defeat," *Intercontinental Press*, December 13, 1971, pp. 1086-88), and from the letter he sent to the Uruguayan comrades, which the United Secretariat received a copy of, we believe the comrades of the PRT-U made an error that resembles the error made by the Ligue Communiste in the recent elections in France.

It is precisely because class-collaborationist electoral and governmental blocs can appear in so many different forms and variants that they often pose difficult problems for us. It is sometimes difficult to combine tactical flexibility in responding to the challenge they represent while maintaining absolute inflexibility in our principles. But

that is all the more reason to discuss out the problems and issues and try to clarify the differences.

* * *

Despite the error made by the comrades of the PRT-U we did not believe them to be popular frontists, class collaborationists, or anything of the kind.

Nor do we today characterize the comrades of the Ligue Communiste as class collaborationists. Your criticisms of the program of the Union de la Gauche clearly demonstrated your rejection of a popular front program.

However, we do think a serious mistake was made in calling for a vote for the Union de la Gauche. If left uncorrected, the error could miseducate the ranks of the Ligue Communiste and other sections of the International on our fundamental class criteria in electoral tactics.

* * *

We have tried to state our views briefly, without unduly elaborating or developing them. But we are anxious to know your thinking concerning the points we have raised.

Comradely,
s/Mary-Alice Waters
for the Political Committee

P.S. For your convenience we are enclosing two items referred to in this letter: (1) a copy of the letter from Joseph Hansen to the comrades of the PRT-U; and (2) a copy of the article from *Intercontinental Press*.

APPENDIX I: January 28, 1972, Letter to the Political Committee of the Uruguayan Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores, by Joseph Hansen

New York, N.Y.
January 28, 1972

Political Committee
Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores
Montevideo, Uruguay

Dear Comrades,

In the December 13, 1971, issue of *Intercontinental Press* I offered some comments on your election campaign, praising it as a whole but criticizing what appeared to me to be some negative aspects. These comments, of course, reflected the views of the Political Committee of the Socialist Workers Party. I have been asked to further explain the reasons for these views in hope of removing any possible misunderstandings and of facilitating a fruitful exchange of opinion.

From the discussions that various members of the SWP have held with members of the PRT, it appears to us that the key difference lies in our judgments as to the nature of the Broad Front. You saw it as an anti-imperialist

movement in the main, whereas to us it appeared to be a popular front.

Before considering the question in detail I should like to reiterate that on all fundamental questions we consider your approach to have been correct. You rejected the illusion that there can be a peaceful electoral road to socialism. You rejected supporting bourgeois governments, including varieties like those headed by Allende in Chile and Torres in Bolivia. You recognized the need for independence from all bourgeois and petty-bourgeois currents. You stressed the imperative necessity of building a Leninist-type party rooted in the mass movement.

The PRT deserves special recognition for its clear rejection of the ultraleftism that has plagued the new generation of revolutionists in Latin America. This firm stand has enabled you to withstand the pressure from such formations as the Tupamaros. Your rejection of ultraleftism also enabled you to avoid the error to be seen on all sides in Latin America in which former ultralefts capitulated overnight, shifting from guerrilla war to support of the bourgeois government of General Velasco

Alvarado in Peru and of the current leading advocate of a peaceful road to socialism, Salvador Allende.

Our common struggle against ultraleftism, which has been the predominant problem faced by the Latin American vanguard for the past decade, must now include its opposite, class collaborationism. This political and ideological struggle requires the clearest possible analysis of such formations as the Broad Front.

Let me take up first the nature of the struggle against imperialism in the colonial and semicolonial countries.

In that area today, the national bourgeoisies will not conduct a consistent struggle against imperialism. Trotsky long ago explained the reasons. First of all, if the working class and peasantry are mobilized, they tend, in following their own class interests, to break through the framework of capitalism. This tendency has become an increasingly paramount feature of the political scene. Secondly, the main class interests of the national bourgeoisie are the same as those of the imperialists, and they serve as their agents.

Leadership in this struggle thus passes to the working class. In any vigorous and massive struggle it can win the majority of the peasantry and either bring in the lower middle classes or neutralize them. In such a combat, the national bourgeoisie will inevitably side with imperialism.

Trotsky taught us nonetheless that the national bourgeoisie is capable of taking actions that are objectively anti-imperialist. A recent example was the nationalization of the International Petroleum Company by the Peruvian government in 1969. While such actions must be supported by the working class, they do not change the fundamental nature of the regimes that undertake them. The working class must not grant them an iota of political confidence. The anti-imperialist actions, whatever their progressiveness in and of themselves, remain within the orbit of continued imperialist relations in which the national bourgeoisie seeks only a more substantial position. This was proved to the hilt in the case of the Mexican bourgeoisie, which undertook some rather spectacular anti-imperialist actions in 1938.

At present, in bending to the pressures of the general upsurge that has marked the colonial world since the end of World War II, the national bourgeoisie has generally felt compelled to give itself an anti-imperialist and even "socialist" coloration that is particularly evident in its propaganda. The objective, of course, is to confuse the masses and to contain the struggle they seek to develop independently against imperialism.

This is often seen to a high degree during electoral campaigns. However, when a national bourgeois party includes democratic and anti-imperialist planks in its platform, this does not change the fact that such a party remains an agency of imperialism. Of course, it is possible that the need to appear anti-imperialist in face of a mass upsurge can bring a national bourgeois formation to endorse, or seem to endorse, mass actions against imperialism. This has occurred in the past but has become rare in recent times in correspondence with the bourgeoisie's increasing fear of the masses. In these cases, *actions* must carefully be distinguished from *electoral promises*.

It is perfectly permissible—in fact, necessary—for a Leninist-type party to endorse, participate in, or initiate an action front against imperialism that includes petty-

bourgeois or national bourgeois formations so long as it does not give up its political and organizational independence, including the right to offer criticisms and to warn the workers on the basically proimperialist nature of the national bourgeoisie and the need for a socialist revolution to win the struggle against imperialism.

Thus the existence of an "anti-imperialist front" hinges on *actions* that are undertaken and not on mere declarations, that is, propagandistic *assertions*. Both the July 26 Movement in Cuba and the National Liberation Front in Vietnam projected programs that were confused and even dead wrong on many fundamental issues, including the role of the national bourgeoisie, but they constituted fronts that engaged in *actions* in the struggle against imperialism.

A popular front is different. This involves an effort by the bourgeoisie, or part of it, to establish a coalition government committed to maintaining capitalism with the support of the workers and plebeian masses. In the colonial world this necessarily includes continuation of imperialist domination. The essence of such a coalition is class collaborationism.

The problem of such class-collaborationist coalitions has faced the socialist movement since the time of Eduard Bernstein and before. Its practitioners have always sought to give it attractive guises. In the thirties, the Stalinists and Social Democrats presented it as an "antifascist front." In China in 1936 it was offered as an "anti-Japanese national united front." In Ceylon in 1964 it was ballyhooed as a "socialist front," as it is today in Chile.

In China in 1936 both a class-collaborationist front and a real anti-imperialist front existed at the same time. Insofar as a concrete struggle was being conducted against Japanese imperialism, it was perfectly correct and necessary—as the Trotskyists insisted—for the Communist Party to reach understandings with the regime of Chiang Kai-shek concerning actions against the imperialist invader on the battlefield and elsewhere. However, the Stalinists engaged in something else that hampered the struggle against imperialism. They pressed for a "new democratic republic," a "joint dictatorship of several anti-imperialist classes, that is, a coalition government in which the workers and peasants" would be tied to the national bourgeoisie.

The name "popular front" or "people's front" can be a source of confusion. It was the "high-flown name," as Trotsky called it, used by Thorez in 1934 when the French Stalinists set out to form a bloc that would include the Radical Party. They succeeded in doing this in May 1935. Several months later at the Seventh World Congress of the Comintern, the Stalinists pointed to this class-collaborationist formation as a model. Trotsky said of the congress:

"It is important if only for the fact that by legalizing the opportunistic turn in France, it immediately transplants it to the rest of the world. We have a curious specimen of bureaucratic thinking in that while granting, on paper at any rate, a liberal autonomy to all sections, and while even issuing instructions to them to do independent thinking and adapt themselves to their own national conditions, the Congress, immediately thereupon, proclaimed that all countries in the world, Fascist Germany as well as democratic Norway, Great Britain as well as India, Greece as well as China, are equally in need

of the 'people's front,' and, wherever possible, of a government of the people's front." ("The Stalinist Turn" in *Writings of Leon Trotsky* (1935-36), p. 13.)

When Trotsky was still alive, our entire movement used the term "popular front" or "people's front" in referring to the class-collaborationist blocs between workers' parties and bourgeois parties seeking governmental power at the time, such as those in Chile, Brazil, China, India, etc. Actually there was little choice in the matter. The term selected by Moscow was universally used in the world press in those years. Trotsky himself, accordingly, used the term in a sweeping way that included the popular front formations in the colonial world.

In arguing on this question, some of the comrades have contended that at least one quotation shows Trotsky to have been of the opinion that a popular front signifies solely a coalition between the *imperialist* bourgeoisie and the workers of an *advanced* country. From this, the argument goes that Trotsky did not believe a popular front could exist in the colonial world. As a consequence, it was deduced by these comrades that the Broad Front in Uruguay could not be properly classified as a popular front and to call it that only confused matters.

Whatever the exact interpretation may be of the quotation found in Trotsky's writings (it is in "For Committees of Action, Not the People's Front" in *Writings of Leon Trotsky* (1935-36), p. 56), the truth is that he would not want us to place so much weight on the interpretation of a single sentence in an article dealing with the popular front in France. He would have asked us why we did not take other things he wrote into consideration, why we did not proceed to a concrete analysis of the Broad Front in Uruguay, and why we did not seek to compare the Broad Front with previous formations of a similar nature.

As an example of Trotsky's way of thinking on such questions, his answer to a request to distinguish between the united front and the popular front is of interest:

"Yes, we make concrete the difference between the two notions. During 1917, all the politics of the Bolsheviks consisted in fighting against the popular front—not so called—in favor of the united front. The Russian bourgeois party, the Kadets—it is from the words Constitutional Democrats which became abbreviated to Kadets—remained as the only bourgeois party. All the bourgeois parties merged with the Kadets in 1917. The Kadets were in an alliance with the Social Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks. It was named at that time the coalition, not popular front as now, but coalition. We addressed the workers, and said to them: 'You must ask of your leaders, the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries, that they abandon their alliance with the bourgeoisie and that they enter into an alliance with us, and the Bolshevik workers are ready to fight with them together in a united front.' It was our policy. Every worker by and by understood our policy. They abandoned the Mensheviks and the Social Revolutionaries, and we became a genuine party of the masses at the turning point." (*The Case of Leon Trotsky*, p. 386.)

From this it is clear that Trotsky drew a straight line from the class-collaborationist bloc called "the coalition" that sought to derail the revolution in backward Russia and the "people's fronts" initiated by Moscow throughout

the world in the mid-thirties.

It is true that Trotsky did not write a great deal about the specific problems of Latin America or about the differences that might be found between popular front formations in the imperialist countries and popular front formations in the colonial countries. What mainly concerned him was their similarities because it is precisely in these that the essence of the matter lies.

A few examples can be cited. In speaking of the decline of popular front governments in the imperialist countries just before the outbreak of World War II, Trotsky wrote:

"But in the colonial and semicolonial countries—not only in China and India, but in Latin America—the fraud of the 'people's fronts' still continues to paralyze the working masses, converting them into cannon-fodder for the 'progressive' bourgeoisie and in this way creating an indigenous political basis for imperialism." ("Manifesto of the Fourth International on the Imperialist War and the Proletarian World Revolution" in *Writings of Leon Trotsky* (1939-40), p. 39.)

It should be carefully noted that Trotsky viewed the popular front in the colonial and semicolonial countries as a vehicle for creating a political basis for imperialism. This is a specific aspect that ought to be explored. An illuminating paper might be written on it based on the experience in various countries in Latin America. Trotsky made his comment following the election of a popular front government in Chile in December 1938 in which Allende served as a minister. Some instructive lessons could be drawn from a comparison of the program, composition, and course of the popular front that was formed in Chile in 1936 and the program, composition, and course of the Broad Front formed in Uruguay in 1971.

Again in the alleged "special national situation" in Spain which the POUM used to justify entering the people's front there, Trotsky wrote:

"The Spanish bloc of the tops of the working class with the left bourgeoisie does not include anything 'national' for it does not differ in the least from the 'People's Front' in France, Czechoslovakia, Brazil or China." (*New Militant*, February 15, 1936, p. 3.)

Trotsky's concept is quite clear. He speaks rather sharply, saying that "it does not differ in the least." He was pointing to what was similar in the blocs—their class-collaborationist essence and their aim of duping the workers and diverting them from independent struggle.

Trotsky's inclusion of the popular front in Brazil is of particular relevance from the viewpoint of our own discussion. The "National Liberation Alliance," formed in 1935, was proclaimed by the Stalinists to be an anti-imperialist front. Their claims sounded plausible since the front was organized under illegal conditions. Yet Trotsky disregarded even that in light of the concealed purpose of the bloc—to create an indigenous political base for imperialism.

I hope that this is sufficient to show that Trotsky made no fundamental distinction between popular fronts in the imperialist countries and in the colonial world. To him, as to all of us at the time, they were class-collaborationist blocs, the essence of which was far from new.

Now what about the Broad Front in Uruguay? To analyze its nature, we must consider its program, its actions, its composition, and its leadership.

The program of the Broad Front was adopted at a meeting held February 5, 1971. The Broad Front took as its goal the formation of a multiclass coalition, including the "progressive sectors" of the bourgeoisie, on a common program. The objective of the coalition was stated to be the establishment of a new government via the electoral road. The projected government, according to the authors of the program, would carry out a series of reforms of a democratic and anti-imperialist nature. Later the Broad Front adopted an electoral platform promising a long list of reforms. The essence of the program and electoral platform was pure class collaborationism.

As to class composition, the Broad Front brought together "workers; students; professors; priests; Protestant ministers; small and middle producers; industrialists and businessmen; civilians and members of the armed forces; intellectuals and artists. . . ."

In political composition, the Broad Front included Stalinists, Social Democrats, various bourgeois and petty-bourgeois formations, including the Christian Democratic Party, and split-offs from the Colorado and Blanco parties.

The leadership was placed in the hands of bourgeois elements, loyally and energetically supported by the Stalinists, trained since 1935 in the school of popular frontism.

As for its actions, the Broad Front was designed as an electoral bloc. Although its program talked about "permanent political activity" going beyond the 1971 election, the nature of this "activity" was not specified. A primary objective of the Broad Front was to instill or reinforce electoral illusions among the masses. This required painting the participation of the Broad Front in the bourgeois electoral process as an action of great moment, the manifestation of a movement of the people against "the imperialist power" and against the domination "of the oligarchy of middle men, bankers, and big landowners."

The campaign unquestionably aroused considerable enthusiasm. Unfortunately a good part of this was based on illusions, on confidence that something might be accomplished at the ballot box, on false hopes of winning the election. The truth is that the Broad Front was set up by a collection of petty-bourgeois leftists, trade-union bureaucrats, Stalinist and Social-Democratic reformists, and bourgeois politicians on the make, who were dazzled by Allende's success in Chile and thought it might be repeated in Uruguay.

They played for the stake of emerging as saviours of Uruguayan capitalism in its hour of need. They deliberately established the Broad Front not to struggle but to contain the struggle of the masses by diverting them into the electoral arena. *They did not form an action front projecting specific actions requiring specific agreements on the part of the participating organizations.*

Of course it can be argued that the Broad Front was formed in response to an upsurge, in response to the fact that the workers, students, slum dwellers, and plebeian masses generally were intensifying their struggles. Precisely. This has always been the basis for popular fronts of any scope. They are formed to co-opt the mobilization of the masses, to advance the careers of reformists and bureaucrats, and to maintain the status quo.

In Uruguay the break with the two-party system is an indicator of the deep economic and social crisis racking the country and of the growing radicalization of the

masses. The rejection of the two old parties is a sign of rising political consciousness among the masses. These are welcome developments. But it was the tendency to break from the two-party system that provided an opening for deployment of the Broad Front as an instrument of the national bourgeoisie and of imperialism. Real progress will begin when the masses break from the *capitalist* two-party system. That would mean rejection of a capitalist *three-party* or multiple-party system. This is what will give reality to the slogan of the revolutionary socialists calling for independent political action.

This brings me to the inconsistencies or ambiguities in the position taken by the PRT toward the Broad Front. You called on the Broad Front to undertake actions going beyond the electoral arena. This was correct from several points of view. Here I will note only that it followed logically from your judgment that it was an anti-imperialist front. The urgings of the PRT met with no response, since the leaders of the Broad Front held a quite different view of its nature and its purpose.

The PRT at the same time proceeded as if the Broad Front were not an anti-imperialist front but could possibly be converted into one—moreover one that would follow a line of independent political action. To achieve this would require wresting the leadership of the Broad Front from the hands of its bourgeois backers and their agents and placing it in the hands of leaders of the workers committed to independent political action. An appropriate slogan for this would have been "Throw out the bourgeois elements!"

The feasibility of such an attempt can be questioned, inasmuch as the founders of the Broad Front made sure—as is always the case in such formations—to keep a tight grip on the organizational machinery, and they were acutely alert to possible challenges from the left. To advance the slogan of throwing out the bourgeois elements would, however, have proved advantageous as part of the propagandistic efforts to expose the real nature of the Broad Front.

Nevertheless the PRT did not raise a slogan of this nature. No doubt that was because of the assumption that the Broad Front *was* an anti-imperialist front.

A further inconsistency was that in a certain way the PRT acted as if the Broad Front were a *popular front*. We noted with satisfaction that you leveled sharp attacks against the bourgeois leadership. You exposed the diversionary aims that motivated the formation of the Broad Front. In opposition to the program of the Broad Front calling for a coalition government you called for a government of the workers and plebeian masses, that is, a government of the working class, the slum dwellers, and poor sectors of the petty bourgeoisie.

Yet, in contradiction to this, the PRT held that the national bourgeois candidates of the popular front were anti-imperialist and that "the electoral victory of the Broad Front would unquestionably create a more favorable situation in the interest of the working class."

The truth is that such a situation would prove highly ephemeral without the development of the working class's own independent mass struggle. And if the electoral victory were gained at the cost of that independent struggle, this would signify a disaster! Against any and all electoral blocs with the national bourgeoisie, the workers must develop their own independent struggle. This brings dem-

ocratic gains for the masses and setbacks for imperialism as by-products.

The fact is that the anti-imperialist propaganda of the bourgeois candidates of the Broad Front amounted to a cruel hoax. Had these candidates won the election and been permitted to take office they would have conceded reforms only under heavy mass pressure, while they carried out their real task of derailing the mass movement.

Although the quotation is rather long, Trotsky's projection of what could happen in the case of India is worth considering in connection with this.

"The Stalinists cover up their policy of servitude to British, French and U.S.A. imperialism with the formula of 'People's Front'. What a mockery of the people! 'People's Front' is only a new name for that old policy, the gist of which lies in class collaboration, in a coalition between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. In every such coalition, the leadership invariably turns out to be in the hands of the right-wing, that is, in the hands of the propertied class. The Indian bourgeoisie, as has already been stated, wants a peaceful horse trade and not a struggle. Coalition with the bourgeoisie leads to the proletariat's abrogating the revolutionary struggle against imperialism. The policy of coalition implies marking time on one spot, temporizing, cherishing false hopes, engaging in hollow maneuvers and intrigues. As a result of this policy disillusionment inevitably sets in among the working masses, while the peasants turn their backs on the proletariat, and fall into apathy. The German revolution, the Austrian revolution, the Chinese revolution and the Spanish revolution have all perished as a result of the policy of coalition. . . . The self-same danger also menaces the Indian revolution where the Stalinists, under the guise of 'People's Front', are putting across a policy of subordinating the proletariat to the bourgeoisie. This signifies, in action, a rejection of the revolutionary agrarian program, a rejection of arming the workers, a rejection of the struggle for power, a rejection of revolution.

"In the event that the Indian bourgeoisie finds itself compelled to take even the tiniest step on the road of struggle against the arbitrary rule of Great Britain, the proletariat will naturally support such a step. But they will support it with *their own* methods: mass meetings, bold slogans, strikes, demonstrations and more decisive combat actions, depending on the relationship of forces and the circumstances. Precisely to do this must the proletariat have its hands free. Complete independence from the bourgeoisie is indispensable to the proletariat, above all in order to exert influence on the peasantry, the predominant mass of India's population. Only the proletariat is capable of advancing a bold, revolutionary agrarian program, of rousing and rallying tens of millions of peasants and leading them in struggle against the native oppressors and British imperialism. The alliance of workers and poor peasants is the only honest, reliable alliance that can assure the final victory of the Indian revolution." ("An Open Letter to the Workers of India" in *Writings of Leon Trotsky* (1938-39), p. 38.)

In still another way, the PRT proceeded as if the Broad Front were a popular front. Against the slate of Broad Front candidates committed to class collaborationism and the objective of putting a coalition government in office, the PRT proposed a slate of worker candidates under the control of workers' organizations. The logic of this,

naturally, was to run an alternative slate in opposition to the slate nominated by the class-collaborationist leaders of the Broad Front.

The PRT did considerable along this course, actually putting up a slate of worker candidates. Precisely here, however, the ambiguities of the PRT's electoral campaign became most clearly expressed. The slate of worker candidates for which the PRT campaigned was headed by the three top bourgeois candidates of the Broad Front.

I appreciate that the comrades of the PRT found it very distasteful to include these bourgeois candidates on their slate and that they did so only because it was the price demanded of them by the organizers of the Broad Front if they wanted their permission to continue to work within the front. In short, the PRT considered it to be a tactical matter and felt that the price was not too high.

The determination of the PRT to take advantage of every possible opening and to avoid a sectarian or dogmatic attitude that could result in isolation from the masses is completely within the spirit of Trotskyism. However, on the particular decision to accept the terms laid down by the organizers of the Broad Front, I would like to advance three considerations:

1. It has been argued by way of analogy that Trotsky favored the tactic of the Chinese Communists entering the Kuomintang and that in the first stage of this experience he was opposed to them leaving. If the tactic was proper in relation to the Kuomintang why not in relation to the Broad Front?

Trotsky's real views on this question are, unfortunately, not well known. The following quotation from a letter that Trotsky wrote to Max Shachtman on December 10, 1930, makes clear what his stand was:

"You are quite right when you point out that the Russian Opposition, as late as the first half of 1927, did not demand openly the withdrawal from the Kuo Min Tang. I believe, however, that I have already commented on this fact publicly somewhere. I personally was from the very beginning, that is, from 1923, resolutely opposed to the Communist party joining the Kuo Min Tang, as well as against the acceptance of the Kuo Min Tang into the 'Kuomintern'. Radek was always with Zinoviev against me. The younger members of the Opposition of 1923 were with me almost to a man. Rakovsky was in Paris and not sufficiently informed. Up to 1926, I always voted independently in the Political Bureau on this question, against all the others. In 1925, simultaneously with the theses on the Eastern Chinese Railway which I have quoted in the Opposition press, I once more presented the formal proposal that the Communist party leave the Kuo Min Tang instantly. This was unanimously rejected and contributed a great deal to the baiting later on. In 1925 and 1927, I had uninterrupted conflicts with the Zinovievists on this question. Two or three times, the matter stood at the breaking point. Our center consisted of approximately equal numbers from both of the allied tendencies, for it was after all only a bloc. At the voting, the position of the 1923 Opposition was betrayed by Radek, out of principle, and by Piatakov, out of unprincipledness. Our faction (1923) [the faction formed in 1923 that made a bloc with the Zinovievists in 1926—JH] was furious about it, demanded that Radek and Piatakov be recalled from the center. But since it was a question of splitting with the Zinovievists, it was the general decision that

I must submit publicly in this question and acquaint the Opposition in writing with my standpoint. And that is how it happened that the demand was put up by us so late, in spite of the fact that the Political Bureau and the Plenum of the Central Committee always contrasted my view with the official view of the Opposition. Now I can say with certainty that I made a mistake by submitting formally in this question. In any case, this mistake became quite clear only by the further evolution of the Zinovievists. At that time, the split with them appeared to the overwhelming majority of our faction as absolutely fatal. Thus, the manifesto [of the International Left Opposition on the Chinese question, issued late in 1930] in no way contradicts the facts when it contends that the Russian Opposition, the real one, was against the Communist party joining the Kuo Min Tang. Out of the thousands of imprisoned, exiled, etc., hardly a single one was with Radek in this question. This fact too I have referred to in many letters, namely, that the great majority of the capitulators were not sure and firm in the Chinese and the Anglo-Russian questions. That is very characteristic! . . ." (*Problems of the Chinese Revolution*, 1932 edition, p. 19.)

2. When the organizers of the Broad Front laid down their antidemocratic proscription against any of the participants in the formation running an independent slate offering workers' candidates as an alternative to the top three bourgeois candidates, I anticipated that the PRT would surely denounce this stricture—which was intended to muzzle and block any independent currents in the Broad Front—and find a way to challenge the decree in a dramatic way, publicly refusing to obey it. Naturally, I could not visualize from a distance what tactical steps might be required to dramatize rejection of the decree. It was a considerable disappointment to learn that the PRT took the opposite course of merely protesting it and then abiding by it.

Was this a case of tactical considerations determining politics and even theoretical appreciation of the true nature of the Broad Front? In any case I think an error was committed that can prove costly, particularly if it goes unrecognized. Placing the names of Seregni, Crottogini, and Villar on the ballot of the PRT outweighed the verbal criticisms leveled against the three, for including them on

the ballot was a way of telling the workers that it was correct to vote for these bourgeois candidates. In short, it was an action that signified political confidence in them and their campaign propaganda.

3. Rejection of a class-collaborationist electoral bloc with the bourgeoisie does not necessarily mean isolation from the masses. So long as the cadres of the PRT participate in the unions and other organizations of the working class, remain with the workers in the plants, and participate in their day-to-day struggles, they cannot be isolated.

If the cadres of the PRT gain a solid reputation as militants, their political opinions will be listened to with respect, even if what they say clashes with enthusiasms of the moment that are based on illusions fostered by the betrayers of the working class.

The main current task facing the PRT is to recruit potential cadres. In this the utmost clarity is required on all programmatic questions, above all on the class collaborationism that served as cement for the Broad Front.

To summarize: When the Broad Front was formed, it was completely correct for Trotskyists to say, "Yes, we will participate in all *actions* of a democratic or anti-imperialist nature." In saying this, however, it was just as imperative to say, "No, we will not participate in any *electoral bloc* designed to advance the interests of bourgeois candidates."

Our criticism is based on the failure to make this differentiation clear.

Let me repeat that we are fully in agreement with your determination to explore and take advantage of all possible openings. This includes your persistence in seeking discussions before the ranks of the Broad Front and in making specific proposals to the Broad Front.

We also consider the intensity of your effort during the campaign to be a model. Particularly notable was the way you got out literature and improved your newspaper both in frequency, size, and appearance.

Comradely yours,
s/Joseph Hansen

cc: United Secretariat

APPENDIX II: Uruguay: The 'Broad Front' Suffers Defeat, by Joseph Hansen

From *Intercontinental Press*, December 13, 1971.

As of November 30, The outcome of the November 28 elections in Uruguay was still in doubt. The Colorado party held the lead with 575,690 votes as against 565,556 for the National party (Blancos) and 252,534 for the Broad Front (Frente Amplio).

Of the seven presidential candidates of the Colorados, Juan Mará Bordaberry, the successor handpicked by President Jorge Tacheco Areco, was in the lead. Wilson Ferreira Aldunate held the front position among the three candidates running on Blanco slates. With 10 percent of the vote still to be counted, it may take several weeks to determine which of the twins in Uruguay's two-party system won the presidency and control of the 129-seat parliament.

Although he quickly conceded defeat after seeing the early returns, General Liber Seregni Mosquera was perhaps the one most surprised by the defeat of the Broad Front. On November 26, the presidential candidate of the popular-front formation went on television and radio to give a victory speech, so certain was he that he would be swept into office.

Seregni's confidence evidently stemmed from his estimate of the meaning of the giant demonstration in Montevideo November 24 behind the banners of the Broad Front.

By all accounts it was the biggest turnout yet seen in Uruguay. The Montevideo press reported that half a million persons had joined in the march.¹ The Paris daily

Le Monde reported 200,000 while the *New York Times* cut the figure to 100,000.

It was also an extremely spirited demonstration, reminding observers of the fervor at rallies in Havana in the early days of the Cuban revolution.

Slogans chanted by the more radical participants were readily picked up by tens of thousands of voices, swelling into a roar as they passed for miles along the line of march. Here are some of them:

"El pueblo armado jamás engañado!" (People in arms are never cheated.) "Por la tierra con Sendic!" (For land with Sendic [the leader of the Tupamaros].) "Al gobierno fascista el pueblo te responde con la revolución!" (The people reply to the fascist government with revolution.) "Ni yanquis ni fascista, América socialista!" (Neither Yankees nor fascist, for a socialist America.) "Lucha! Lucha! Lucha! No dejes de luchar por un gobierno obrero y popular!" (Fight! Fight! Fight! Don't stop fighting for a workers' government, workers' and people's.)

The size of the demonstration and its militant tone appeared to be in direct answer to the flood of lies and red-baiting that partisans of the Pacheco regime had engaged in to intimidate supporters of the Broad Front and to influence the vote.

However, the enthusiasm of the Montevideo demonstrators, who were quite youthful in the majority, was not registered at the polls. This was to be expected. The electorate, even when it includes the bulk of the working class, generally lags behind events, tending to register past moods and past relationships in the class struggle rather than the current reality. The voters in Montevideo who waited for hours in long lines to cast their ballots on Sunday were noticeably older than the contingents that marched in the streets on Wednesday.

Another reason for the high hopes of the organizers of the Broad Front was the victory last year of a similar formation in Chile, the Unidad Popular (People's Unity) headed by Salvador Allende Gossens. In October 1970, a month after Allende's triumph, the first trial balloons were floated in Montevideo on making a similar try; and the response, particularly among intellectuals and circles influenced by the Communist party, showed that the effort would gain considerable support.

The main components of the Broad Front consisted of the Communist party, two factions that broke away from the Colorado and Blanco parties, the Christian Democrats, the Socialist party, a number of prominent intellectuals, and a gamut of groupings, ranging from unions to cultural associations.

Among the participating vanguard organizations were the Movimiento de Independientes "26 de Marzo" ("March 26" Movement of Independents, a formation representing the viewpoint of the Tupamaros),² the Partido Obrero Revolucionario (Revolutionary Workers party headed by Juan Posadas, which is sometimes mistaken as Trotskyist because of its claims), and the Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores (Revolutionary Workers party, a Trotskyist grouping that has proclaimed its adherence to the Fourth International but that has not yet been accepted as a section).

The main architect of the Broad Front was the Communist party. Its objective was to divert the current upsurge into safe electoral channels. As proof positive that it hoped to play the role of saviour of the capitalist sys-

tem rather than its destroyer, the Arismendi leadership of the CP made sure that the three leading candidates of the Broad Front would be acceptable to ruling circles in Uruguay. The ex-General Liber Seregni and Dr. Juan José Crottogini were nominated for the presidency and vice-presidency, and Dr. Hugo Villar for mayor of Montevideo.

As the Buenos Aires Trotskyist weekly *La Verdad* correctly noted in its issue of September 29, these nominations, to which "bourgeois circles reacted favorably," represented "another step" in structuring the Broad Front "as a variant of reformism, acceptable to the bourgeois system."³

In its political purpose and main structure (its subordination to a bourgeois leadership), the Broad Front constituted a Latin American variant of the popular front long utilized by the Stalinists and Social Democrats in wheeling and dealing with bourgeois parties in the electoral arena.

It is true that the Broad Front was not a mere replica of the popular fronts seen in Europe in the thirties. Like every political formation in Latin America that seeks popular support today, it stressed anti-imperialism.

Its thirty-point platform included the following planks: An "agrarian reform," the "nationalization of private banks," the "nationalization of the main firms engaged in foreign trade," and "energetic industrial action by the state, including nationalization of the meat-packing industry."

But fitting its platform to the radical mood of the Uruguayan masses did not change the essence of the Broad Front. Like the popular fronts seen elsewhere in the world, it was designed to divert the masses from the road of revolutionary struggle.

The role played by the Tupamaros was of special interest. During the latter part of the electoral campaign, they desisted from guerrilla warfare so as not to embarrass the Broad Front.

La Verdad said of this: "The immediate strategy of the Tupamaros would itself seem to help open up and smooth the road to an electoral triumph for the popular front."

Quite a few of the groupings participating in the Broad Front ran their own slates of candidates (save for the presidency and vice-presidency), which was possible under Uruguay's democratic electoral system. But the Tupamaros, although under heavy pressure to follow the others in this, refused to run a slate of their own.

Through the Movimiento de Independientes "26 de Marzo" they stated publicly on several occasions that they were leaving it up to their followers to vote for whatever slates they wanted to.

For instance, in the November 26 issue of the Montevideo weekly *Marcha*, they explained why they were not running their own candidates. "We are independents. And we are organizing in that way. We do not aspire to electoral burdens. We merely support the common candidates of the Front."

They called attention to a previous declaration in which they had explained that they consider it "more important to organize and train the ranks of the people for the coming decisive struggles than to divert forces in selecting figures to be proposed for consideration in the electoral contest."

The Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores (PRT)

followed a different course. The PRT began only two years ago as a very small grouping of Trotskyists. The intensity of their activities would do credit to a group many times their size, and they have made encouraging progress, including establishing a press of their own. During the latter part of the election campaign, besides huge quantities of leaflets, they published their paper *Tendencia Revolucionaria* (Revolutionary Tendency) as a six-to-eight page weekly.

When the Broad Front was first projected in October 1970, the PRT decided to take an active attitude toward it. In the first phase, in the numerous meetings that were held all over to discuss the issues on which the proposed front should take a stand, the PRT militants did two things: (1) They argued that the platform should be decided through a democratic discussion among the ranks. (2) They presented the program of Trotskyism, stressing democratic and transitional demands in particular.

They gained a favorable hearing, but were not strong enough to block the Communist party from imposing on the Broad Front the kind of platform it wanted.

Similarly on the question of the candidates of the Broad Front, the PRT advocated nominating workers. They stressed the need for labor to run its own candidates and strongly criticized the Communist party for not appealing to the Convención Nacional de Trabajadores (National Workers Convention, the big trade union) to join the Broad Front and run a slate of its candidates on an independent basis.

Again, the PRT was not strong enough to carry its position, although it received a favorable hearing at the meetings where its speakers took the floor.

When the architects of the Broad Front had settled on Seregni and Crottogini, the PRT decided to run a slate of its own. Under the Uruguayan electoral system this was possible only as a sub-slate (sub-*lema*) of the Broad Front.

Here the PRT ran into a snag. The top committee of the Broad Front ruled that while any grouping could run what candidates it wished for local offices or as senators or deputies, all groupings were barred from running any candidates for president and vice-president of the country and mayor of Montevideo except Seregni, Crottogini, and Villar.

This meant that in contrast to the Colorado party with its seven presidential candidates and the National party with its three, the Broad Front would appear on the ballot with only one presidential candidate—Seregni.

The ruling was highly undemocratic. Its purpose was purely factional, since all votes cast for rival candidates of the Broad Front would have counted against the Colorado and National parties. The ruling was intended to block vanguard groupings like the PRT from exercising their right to gain a line on the ballot that would indicate their proletarian opposition to Seregni, thereby complicating things for the publicity experts engaged in converting the nondescript figure of Seregni into the "choice of the people."

The PRT decided to bow to this decision since to defy it would have meant exclusion from the ballot. On the ballots listing their slate of workers' candidates, they included the names of Seregni, Crottogini, and Villar under the slogan, "La liberación de los trabajadores es obra de los trabajadores mismos" (The freeing of the workers is the task of the workers themselves).

In my opinion, this was an error. More than a tactical question was involved, since objectively to issue a ballot with Seregni's name on it was to ask voters to vote for him, that is, vote for the bourgeois leadership of the Broad Front. It would have been better to try to make a scandal over the undemocratic ruling and to avoid issuing a ballot that included the name of a figure whose program was in complete opposition to that of the PRT.

It is true that from abroad it is difficult to determine what weight Seregni's name actually represented in Uruguay. Among the groupings that ran slates of their own candidates in addition to Seregni, Crottogini, and Villar, one notices the stress they place in their political advertisements on the candidates identifying their grouping as such and the completely subordinate position they give to Seregni. In many instances his name is not even included.

It seems, too, that the ballot designations are discounted to a certain extent by the voters. The Broad Front itself appeared on the ballot only by courtesy of the Christian Democratic party, which made its standing place on the ballot available to the Broad Front. Thus every ballot of all the Broad Front slates starts out with the line: "Partido Demócrata Cristiano."

But the Christian Democrats were so far from thinking that this meant an automatic vote for their party, that they ran their own slate, designating it in big type as Partido Demócrata Cristiano, Lista 808; and they campaigned for votes on that basis.

In addition, it must be noted that in its election literature, the PRT did not campaign at all for Seregni. A good example of what they said can be found in the article from *Tendencia Revolucionaria* published on the eve of the election, which is included elsewhere in this issue.

Nevertheless, the objective meaning of including the names of Seregni, Crottogini, and Villar on the slate of Candidatos Obreros (Lista 1968) remains.

In Wall Street, the defeat of the Broad Front was received with a sigh of relief. The *New York Times* in an editorial December 3 saw the outcome as giving "one of the traditional parties a new five-year opportunity to transform the country." As an afterthought the editors added: "It may be the last chance for the Uruguayan democracy."

It is doubtful that Uruguayan capitalism will win a five-year breathing space. The deep economic crisis that has racked the country for the past fifteen years continues unabated.

The Uruguayan workers will hardly wait for a half a decade to go through another experience with a broad front. It is much more likely that they will pour into the streets by the hundreds of thousands as they did on November 24—but this time to change the entire system. And they will do it in perhaps less than the ten days that it took the Russian workers in 1917.

1. The impressiveness of this figure can be judged from the fact that Montevideo's estimated population in 1968 was 1,348,000. The estimated population of the entire country in 1970 was only 2,900,000.

2. This was listed erroneously in an article that appeared in translation in our October 25 issue (p. 916) as "July 26 Movement."

3. See the October 25, 1971, issue of *Intercontinental Press*.

Bolivia—Once Again on the Facts

By Peter Camejo

Some comrades have correctly noted that it is difficult to engage in a fruitful political discussion when basic facts seem to be in dispute. They note factual contradictions between the document "Argentina and Bolivia—The Balance Sheet" of the Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency and Germain's "In Defence of Leninism: In Defence of the Fourth International."

This contribution aims to clarify some of these "factual" discrepancies and straighten out some distortions of the LTT position on Bolivia. I will take up the following points: 1. Did the POR (González) advocate guerrilla warfare under the Ovando and Torres regimes? 2. Was the Political Command a typical coalition between working class and bourgeois parties? 3. Did the LTT accuse the POR (González) of "preferring" Banzer over Torres as Comrade Germain states? 4. Is the charge false that the POR (González) was late in recognizing the importance of the Popular Assembly? 5. How could the masses have been armed in Bolivia if not through the course followed by the POR? 6. Should we agree with the facts as presented by Germain (with Maitan's supporting vote) or as presented by Maitan (with Germain's supporting vote) when they are in direct contradiction? 7. Was Che Guevara's strategy *foquista*? 8. Do Comrades Germain and Maitan support the political line of Guevara? 9. What was the POR-ELN agreement made in 1968-69? 10. Is the FRA a programmatic front? 11. Should we enter programmatic fronts?

Germain's Charges

Germain makes various kinds of charges against the positions of the Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency. For example, he accuses the LTT of "a complete travesty of the truth" at one point and later of using "slander of Stalinist origin."

The present discussion may very well be one of the most important in the history of the Fourth International. If any comrades are deliberately distorting the documented factual record, or engaging in Stalinist-type slanders, we face a serious problem because it would be difficult under those conditions to have a truly fruitful political debate. Because of the stakes involved, the depth of the differences, and the need for the utmost political clarity, some points in dispute must be considered in detail. Several documents that will serve to remove any lingering doubts about them should also be consulted. I have added these as an appendix.

Ovando-Torres

The discussion over Bolivia revolves around four regimes, Barrientos, Ovando, Torres and Banzer. The sharp-

est differences over factual accounting concern the Ovando-Torres period.

Comrade Germain claims that Comrade Aníbal Lorenzo "presents the policy of the POR (González) as if it continued to prepare guerrilla warfare in isolation and thereby 'lost two valuable years.'" Comrade Germain charges that "This is a complete travesty of the truth."¹

What did the Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency actually say?

Our position is that the POR (González) under Ovando was engrossed in preparations for guerrilla warfare and did not take full advantage of either the legal openings nor did it participate in the upsurge of the mass struggles. After Torres took power, the POR (González) changed its position. It continued to *advocate and prepare for guerrilla warfare* but combined this with use of legality and mass work. It looked upon the Torres regime as a temporary opportunity to strengthen its forces for initiating guerrilla warfare later, when Torres would fall, and repression begin. *That was its central orientation.*

Guerrilla warfare remained the fundamental strategy of the POR (González) not only under Barrientos but also under Ovando and Torres. Comrade Germain challenges this assertion.

At one point in his discussion of the POR (González) line under Torres, Comrade Germain writes: "The *POR (Combate)* didn't say a word about 'rural guerrilla warfare,' but likewise called upon the masses to arm themselves against the incoming semi-fascist onslaught."² It is true that the POR (González) concept of guerrilla warfare was not solely rural but included the mining districts and urban centers. Nevertheless, this is not what Comrade Germain is referring to. He attempts to give the impression that the POR (González) rejected the guerrilla war orientation as its central objective during the Torres regime, if not also during the period under Ovando. This is clearly implied, for instance, when, speaking of the Barrientos regime, Comrade Germain uses such a phrase as, "Even when the POR had as its main orientation the preparation of guerrilla warfare. . . ."³

Thus the main factual difference between the two versions is whether or not the POR (González) central strategy and orientation continued to be preparation for guerrilla warfare during both the Ovando and Torres regimes.

Let us review some of the facts that are either challenged by no one or that are completely documented, although they may be challenged by Germain.

Fact one: On May 17, 1971, *Rouge* printed an interview with Comrade Hugo González Moscoso on the orientation and activity of the party under Ovando and Torres.

"Under the Ovando government," he said, "the party operated in completely clandestine conditions and was totally absorbed in armed work. Since last November,

after Torres came to power, we have been able to redevelop our legal work aimed at the unions but also the peasants and the universities, where we had done very little before."

Fact two: In the original analysis of the "Ovando Government and the Bolivian Situation" made by the POR (González) printed in the April 13, 1970 issue of *Intercontinental Press*, the line for guerrilla warfare is stated explicitly. "In the present situation in Bolivia of a militarization of politics and total control of the country by an army-party, a situation which is part of the process going on throughout Latin America, the way to construct this instrument and take power is armed struggle—concretely, guerrilla warfare."⁴

"Guerrilla warfare is still a valid method,"⁵ is the central conclusion drawn by the POR (González) in its analysis.

Fact three: An example of propaganda issued along this line by the POR (González) is their 1970 May Day manifesto. This appeal was directed to 15,000 workers who were able to assemble on May Day with the demagogic support of the Ovando regime, which had conceded at least partial legality to the COB (Central Obrera Boliviana—Bolivian Trade Union Federation). On the fight for socialism the manifesto states: "The struggle for socialism is posed on a continental and world scale. The Bolivians are not alone. Yon Sosa's guerrillas and the FAR in Guatemala, the Sandinist Front in Nicaragua, the Douglas Bravo and MIR guerrillas in Venezuela, Favio Vásques' ELN and Marulanda's groups in Colombia, the Mariguela and Lamarca movements in Brazil, the brave and audacious Tupamarus in Uruguay, the Chilean MIR, and the different Trotskyist and revolutionary Peronist guerrilla groups in Argentina are the advanced revolutionaries who are clearing the road to Worker and Popular Power through the defeat of imperialism and the national bourgeoisies."

Referring to the above list of assorted guerrilla groups in Latin America, the manifesto states, "In this concrete form the struggle for socialism is under way." More quotes are available but this should settle any dispute about the POR (González) line during the Ovando period.

What was the central orientation during the ensuing Torres regime when the POR (González) did turn toward mass work? Germain assures us that during this period the POR (González) said not one word about (rural) guerrilla warfare.

Fact four: The first issue of *Combate*—the official paper of the POR (González)—to appear under the Torres regime is dated November 1970. (See appendix.) What is its line? *The continued validity of guerrilla warfare.* The headline reads, "Despite the Setbacks, Guerrilla Warfare Continues to be the Way to National and Social Liberation." The central editorial is on the same theme.

Fact five: In the next issue of *Combate*, dated January 1971, (on the cover, *Combate* is described as a fortnightly, but during the Torres regime, which lasted ten months, only four issues appeared) special attention is given to a speech by Comrade González. It is titled "Defense and Reevaluation of the Guerrilla Struggle in Bolivia." Once again the line of guerrilla warfare is stressed as the only road to national liberation.

Fact six: After the fall of Torres, two members of the United Secretariat, Sabado and Enero, representing the two different views on Latin America, were sent to Latin America to meet with the Bolivian comrades and ascertain the facts on their situation. They issued a joint report in which they said the following on the line of the POR (González) during the Torres regime. "Under the Torres government the POR maintained its line of guerrilla warfare."⁶

Comrades can choose. They can accept Comrade Germain's assertion—or they can rely on the documented record.

'Stalinist'-Type Slander

Comrade Germain charges "slander of Stalinist origin" because the Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency noted the POR (González) view that armed struggle would develop after the fall of Torres. Germain, after admitting that González predicted Torres would be overthrown by a repressive rightist coup, writes, "But it is completely misleading to present things as if the *POR (Combate)* refused to conceive the possibility of a struggle for power under the more favourable conditions of the Torres regime, i.e., 'preferred' in a certain sense the dictatorship which would open up the road for 'extended guerrilla warfare.' This type of slander of Stalinist origin should not be developed in the Fourth International discussion documents, whatever may be the heat of the debate."⁷

Germain places the word "preferred" in quotation marks implying that it was used by the Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency. But neither the word, nor the accusation, nor the implication can be found in what we wrote. Our criticism was that the POR (González) political orientation was to prepare for an armed struggle to begin *after the defeat of the mass movement*.

Here is the exact quotation from "Argentina and Bolivia—The Balance Sheet." "As they [POR-González] visualized the coming sequence, Torres would fall and then would come the real struggle for power, that is, rural guerrilla warfare on a new and higher plane, since the successor to Torres would be the most brutal dictator yet seen in the country. This was their real perspective. That was why they were so preoccupied with building some kind of military apparatus separate and apart from the mass organizations. That was also why they persisted so arduously in trying to create a united front with the other groups committed to the schema of guerrilla war—the ELN, the Maoists, and the Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria."⁸

Where is the accusation that they "preferred" a Banzer? There is no "Stalinist" slander involved. In an interview with two members of the International Marxist Group (British section of the Fourth International) published in the IMG's magazine *International*, Comrade González makes it clear that, under Torres, they were preparing for an armed struggle to come after the defeat and that it would be on a higher level than the earlier guerrilla warfare experiences.

Here is what Comrade González said: ". . . if there was a coup now, it would be a military victory for the right and the army. But this would not allow it to do

more than control certain cities. It would re-establish the armed struggle at a much higher level than in the period of the guerrillas of the Nancahuazu and Teoponte."

Comrade González continues, "If the arming of the workers is not organized, if the popular army does not develop, we think that the coup will easily be able to re-establish the army's control. But this control will not last. That situation will be the opening of the war. We don't think in terms of any fixed model. It will be a civil war on a national scale with different fronts. It will be the beginning of a long war for which *we are now preparing*." (Emphasis added.)⁹

The Political Command

Comrade Germain tries to justify the POR (González) policy of not participating in the Political Command with the following comment, "Unfortunately for the authors of the minority document, the 'political command' was not a working class united front, but a typical coalition between working class and bourgeois parties. One of its main participants was the largest bourgeois party in Bolivia, the MNR, whose top leaders have been responsible for the terrible massacres of the miners in 1964. One of its first acts was to demand ministerial posts in the Torres cabinet. Should the POR have joined these gentlemen in a common 'political command'? We don't think so."¹⁰

What was the "political command"? It was a front created by the trade unions of Bolivia. The full name of the Political Command when it was created was "The Political Command of the C.O.B." (Bolivian Workers Confederation.) This is the way it is referred to in Comrade González's article titled "La Universidad y el Comando Político de la C.O.B." (The University and the Political Command of the C.O.B.) printed in *Revista de America*, July-October, 1971, p. 45.

Mass demonstrations, the building of barricades, and strikes resulted in the defeat of a rightist coup and the creation of the Political Command of the C.O.B. Since the Political Command had the same political composition as the trade unions of Bolivia, not only reformist workers currents like the CP and POR (Lora) but the bourgeois political party the MNR were present.

If tomorrow similar events should arise in Chile, for example, and the CUT (Central Unica de Trabajadores — Central Workers Union) set up a general strike council, would not the "largest bourgeois party," the Christian Democrats, *likewise* be present? Didn't the central leaders of the Christian Democrats have the responsibility of massacres of workers and peasants on their hands? Should the Fourth Internationalists therefore not participate in such a front? Should we not counterpose our class struggle program to the program of the reformist class collaborationists inside any front directly created by the class struggle actions of the masses? In fact, shouldn't one of our demands inside the Political Command have been to expel the MNR as a bourgeois party, and to invite peasant and soldier representatives to join, as we sought to move the Political Command in the direction of becoming a worker, peasant and soldier

soviet?

Later the Political Command gave rise to the Popular Assembly and expelled the MNR. But even if that had not been the immediate development, Germain's reasoning leads to a sectarian posture before the organs created by mass struggle. Germain's error is a methodological one. He separates out the class composition of the Political Command from the historical process which gave rise to it, determined its composition, its function, and its potential revolutionary evolution.

In a polemical exchange, comrades must try to avoid the temptation of scoring debater's points. This is what Germain has done regarding the Political Command. Thus what he says is inaccurate. In order to avoid making the same kind of error in an opposite sense, it is necessary to acknowledge that the evolution of the Political Command was far from settled at the moment it was created. It was in essence a strike committee, an action front, which began negotiating with the bourgeois government for concessions. But it had no program; and its political orientation was class-collaborationist.

Yet in its efforts to reach an accord with the bourgeois government it came under terrific pressure from the masses. Its evolution toward a soviet-type formation cannot be explained otherwise. This course certainly did not reflect any conscious design of its leaders. But for a revolutionary party in Bolivia in October of 1970, being inside the Political Command offered an extraordinary possibility for furthering mass actions and at the same time counterposing its own program.

Delayed Action on the Popular Assembly

Comrade Germain argues that "There is consequently no sign of any 'hesitation' on behalf of the POR (Combate), as it attempted to gain representation in the Assembly from the first day of its convening. . . ." ¹¹ This is his answer to the charge by the Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency that the POR (González) was late in understanding the importance of the Popular Assembly.

Comrade Germain does not stick to the facts in making such a claim. He says, "from the first day of its convening," which he earlier established as "May 1, 1971." But the Popular Assembly was created in January and the discussions and preparations for election of delegates went on during January, February, March, and April. These were the crucial months for intervention at the rank-and-file level among workers, soldiers, students, and peasants. That it had no positive line toward the Popular Assembly until May of 1971 shows that the POR (González) did not understand what was happening. It was lagging behind events. That was precisely what the Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency charged.

Also in direct contradiction to Germain's presentation of the "facts" are the comments by the two IMG members who interviewed González during the stormy events of 1971 under Torres. They wrote, "In addition, the revolutionary political parties, in particular the POR-González, have decided that the Assembly is worth taking seriously. At first they tended to have an attitude of watching the Assembly to see how it turned out, rather than actually participating in it." ¹²

All Power to the Popular Assembly

Germain argues that it would have been wrong to call for all power to the Popular Assembly and states his general agreement with what the POR (González) did. He thus leaves the impression that the POR (González) did not call for a government of the Popular Assembly. This is false. The POR (González) was the only political party in Bolivia that called upon the Popular Assembly to become the government.¹³ In our opinion, this was a correct slogan. To be sure, this was done confusedly and late, and apparently Comrade González himself now believes the demand to have been incorrect.¹⁴

How to Arm the Masses

The discussion on the Political Command and the Popular Assembly leads directly to the heart of Comrade Germain's defense of the POR (González) and his attack on the Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency.

Germain writes, "The decisive question was to prepare the workers and peasants against the coup by arming them."¹⁵ That is exactly our position. But the real question is *how*?

Germain's case can be reduced to the fact that the POR (González) called for the arming of the workers, and armed some workers and some of its members. To this he adds that the POR (González) called for rank-and-file elections to the Popular Assembly and for extension of the revolution to the countryside.

Comrade Germain tries to give the impression that the POR (González) was exceptional in foreseeing the coming coup and almost alone in calling for the arming of the workers. His final conclusion is that "The POR (Combate) did everything it could to prepare the workers for the fight against the impending coup."¹⁶ Comrade Germain's picture of what happened is one-sided.

The fact is that almost every group of the left made calls to arms and predicted a coup. It is true that the POR (González) armed a few workers and a few of its members. Let us estimate 50 in all. Maybe Germain will insist on 100. It does not matter. An important fact totally missing from Germain's account is that the workers led by the POR (González) represented a tiny fraction of the workers who were armed. For example, in early January of 1971, 3,500 armed workers appeared in La Paz to defend Torres from a threatened coup. Although they were armed with primitive weapons and were poorly organized, these armed workers constituted the elementary nucleus of a mass workers militia.

It is to the credit of the POR (González) that it took an initiative in arming workers where it had influence in the mass movement. There is also no question their actions reflected the total dedication and spirit of self sacrifice of the POR (González) comrades in support of the workers movement.

But the problem they confronted was only secondarily a technical one; it was above all political. A political program with a system of demands leading to the arming of the workers was needed. Comrade Germain makes no effort to develop such a program or to suggest that the POR (González) had one. On the contrary, he tends to

criticize, if not ridicule, the political approach suggested by the Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency in "Argentina and Bolivia—The Balance Sheet" without offering any alternative.

The Struggle for Power

The objective problem was how to rapidly organize and arm tens of thousands of workers in militias, not only with primitive weapons but with the most modern possible. This required a correct revolutionary political line in the mass organizations, toward the government, and *toward the army*.

Why Comrade Lorenzo Emphasized Work in the Army

Comrade Germain belittles Aníbal Lorenzo for going into detail about the necessity of an orientation toward the army and for "underestimating" the "immediate" arming of the masses.

First of all, the charge that Comrade Lorenzo does not call for workers militias is false. From the day Torres came to power, Comrade Lorenzo and the other comrades of the PST in Argentina saw the implications of the events of October and raised the following slogans: "Long live the general strike! Long live the workers and students militias! Long live the armed insurrection of the workers, students and peasants! For a government of the C.O.B., peasants, students and revolutionary commissioned and non-commissioned officers! All power to the C.O.B.!" (*Revista de America*, Sept.-Oct., 1970, p. 29.)

Comrade Lorenzo, in his contribution "The Lessons of Bolivia," mentions the necessity of armed workers as the prerequisite for a victory, just before his excellent section on the necessity of work in the army. In the LTT "Balance Sheet," he makes a further clarification in the following terms, "The army in Bolivia could not be won over simply by propaganda, essential as that was. It was crucially important to openly organize workers' militias to show the rank-and-file soldiers that the workers were in dead earnest about defending their rights and blocking the plots of the ultrarightist generals."¹⁷

The reason that such emphasis is placed on work in the army is that it was completely missing in Bolivia. Everyone made calls for workers militias, including the national gathering of all the trade unions of Bolivia under the leadership of the opportunist Lechin. The calls to arms made by Lechin and the C.O.B., although demagogic, carried more weight than the POR (González) genuine call to arms. The problem was how to take advantage of the C.O.B. call to arms. The solution could be found only through a political approach. Although some workers were armed, there was no work and no orientation toward the ranks of the army, yet this was essential for a proletarian victory.

All the reformists adopted a common attitude in this respect. Bending to mass pressure they made futile calls "to arms" and for "socialism" but they kept clear of the institution upholding Torres, the army. The political rea-

son for this was simple—their class-collaborationist line of support to Torres.

The advanced workers in Bolivia failed to understand the bourgeois nature of the Torres regime and its implications. Led in the overwhelming majority by Lechín, the CP, the POR (Lora), etc., they had confidence in Torres, believing he would either control the army or give them arms. To arm the masses it was necessary to break those illusions. That is why it was crucial to raise a governmental slogan that could move the masses away from Torres. A governmental slogan that counterposed the Popular Assembly to Torres and that called on all workers, peasants and soldiers to be ready to come to the defense of the Popular Assembly was required to begin to move the masses away from Torres and to build an alliance between the workers and army ranks.

Comrade Germain disagrees on this. He assures us that in other situations, in other countries, coups were blocked without a governmental slogan. Once again this is an abstract ahistorical argument. Comrade Germain's central example, Russia, is irrelevant precisely because it is taken out of its historical context. It is true that at the moment of Kornilov's attempted coup the Bolsheviks suspended their governmental slogan. But their campaign for "All Power to the Soviets" had *already*, at the time of the Kornilov coup, convinced the majority of the workers in the central cities to have no confidence in the Kerensky government and had helped build the Bolshevik Party to a membership of 176,000 with majority influence in the key workers districts. Does Comrade Germain believe that this achievement by the Bolsheviks was independent of their correct governmental slogan? Does he not see the connection between the easy defeat of the Kornilov coup and the whole system of slogans and demands previously raised by the Bolsheviks, including their governmental slogans?

Comrade Germain writes at length on how the workers must be armed before they can win over the army and how Comrade Lorenzo supposedly reverses this. He is wrong on both counts. The tasks are interrelated and do not fall into a first-one-then-the-other order. Lorenzo does not argue anywhere for a specific sequence.

In Santo Domingo, for instance, a whole section of the army went over to the people with the result that the army disintegrated in 48 hours without a single workers militia existing beforehand. According to Comrade Germain's schema this was impossible. As he puts it, "The arming of the workers and poor peasants, far from being 'prepared' by 'propaganda inside the army,' creates the necessary precondition for such successful propaganda, at least on a mass scale."¹⁸

Comrade Germain quotes Trotsky on how propaganda alone cannot win the army and how the army can only be won when it sees the workers are ready to fight for power. This is perfectly true, but Germain forgot to mention what Trotsky said in the very same article before and after the paragraph he selected.

Trotsky, referring to the workers militias, writes: "Of course, the arming will be primitive at the beginning. The first workers' detachments will have neither howitzers nor tanks nor airplanes." Later he explains, "The strength of the proletariat lies in its numbers. Even the most primi-

tive weapon in the hands of the masses can perform miracles. Under favorable conditions, it may open a road to more-perfected weapons."¹⁹

Clarifying the importance of work in the army, Trotsky explains, "*The struggle for the army* is incontestably the greatest part of the struggle for power."²⁰

The masses appealed to Torres for arms over and over again. They should have appealed not to Torres but to the lower officers, the rank and file of the army. They should have appealed through a hundred different channels; through the families of the soldiers, through leaflets, through political calls, through manifestoes of the Popular Assembly, through declarations and demonstrations of the workers, including their militias. The battle from October 1970 through August 1971 was a battle for control of the army. Comrade Lorenzo understood this. Comrade Germain does not understand it to this day.

Comrade Germain says nothing about how to win the army. He just repeats over and over again that it was necessary "to arm the masses" and that the POR (González) understood this. He shows his lack of understanding of the meaning of the Torres regime and the opportunity it offered for winning sectors of the army when he states, "The fact that the army was united not by General Torres but by General Banzer is of absolutely secondary importance. What we understood was that there was only a short time left to prepare for armed confrontation, and that the workers should have prepared for this."²¹

Precisely the difference between a Torres and a Banzer is the chance the latter offered the masses to arm. Torres could not "reunite" the army, he had to be removed by force. The army ranks could be won by taking advantage of this very real split in the officer corps. The Banzer-Torres split temporarily paralyzed the bourgeois state so that it could not repress the workers movement for a time, and the army ranks became vulnerable to the influence of the workers movement.

It was possible to win the ranks of the army only if the masses could be made to understand the role Torres was playing and appeal directly to the army ranks. The willingness of the workers to struggle would have increased tenfold from the confidence that would have resulted from contact with the soldiers. As it was, at the last moment, some sectors of the army did help the workers. However, most soldiers hesitated and then capitulated to Banzer when they saw how weak the workers were.

The truth is that when the decisive moment came only a small percentage of the armed workers were involved. The miners, who made up the backbone of the armed workers, did not even go on strike!

Comrade Germain thinks that the lack of an approach to the army and the failure to raise a governmental slogan are not directly relevant to this outcome. Comrade Germain recalls over and over the POR (González) calls to arms. We say that was not enough. A clear political program and orientation was needed.

Germain Versus Maitan

In their balance sheets on the events in Bolivia, the evaluations offered by Comrades Germain and Maitan are markedly different although each voted for the other's

evaluation. Comrade Maitan's version was accepted by the majority of the IEC, while Comrade Germain's version, written one month later, was adopted by their tendency.

Comrade Germain insists "The POR (Combate) did everything it could to prepare the workers for the fight against the impending coup." Comrade Maitan makes a different evaluation. According to him, "The party also let itself be sidetracked by conflicts within the Assembly and did not take advantage of all the possibilities it had to give an impulse to the peasant movement (occupation of land, etc.) and to develop its military preparations under the form of self-defense as well as under more specialized forms. It marked time too long before taking audacious initiatives that were both possible and necessary. The material difficulties were not serious enough to justify this failure—all the more so since during the decisive months the POR did not even call upon the International for help in overcoming its difficulties.

"The functioning of the organization and especially of its leadership merit severe criticism. On the one hand, the centralization was excessive with the result that the formation of new cadres was seriously impeded; on the other hand, the criteria for membership and the organizational norms were often too vague without a clear distinction being made between members and sympathizers, and without the leadership working as a collective body. One particularly serious error was to postpone the party's convention for a long period and especially not to have held it in June-July 1971 in accordance with the decision made at the time. Finally the party systematically failed to bring out its publications, which for years have appeared with extreme irregularity."²²

This severe criticism made by Comrade Maitan (voted for by Comrade Germain) includes "military preparations." Of course it is difficult to figure out what Maitan is referring to since he uses Aesopian language. He talks about "specialized forms" and "marking time" before taking "audacious initiatives" that were "possible" and "necessary," without indicating what is meant by "specialized forms" and "audacious initiatives." Skilled interpreters of "Ninth World Congress" language and those who have applauded the kidnappings, expropriations and assassinations carried out by the PRT-ERP might offer a plausible interpretation.

The inconsistency in the two estimates can be easily explained. While Comrade Maitan attempts to present and justify the political line projected at the Ninth World Congress and defended for four years by the majority of the United Secretariat, which includes some criticisms of the functioning of the Bolivian section, Comrade Germain seeks to parry the criticisms of the Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency by covering up for the more obvious errors and failings of the POR (González).

The Swedish supporters of the Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency in the international discussion in the Revolutionära Marxisters Forbund perceptively evaluated Comrade Germain's arguments on Bolivia and Argentina in the following terms: ". . . in our opinion attention can be drawn to the fact that Comrade Germain's manner of discussing the concrete questions surrounding the experience of Bolivia are disconnected and unprincipled. In order to avoid

taking up a discussion of two political lines and their concrete consequences, he draws the criticisms of the Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency down to a number of unsystematic and wrongly formulated points chosen by himself, on which he then proceeds by different ways to accumulate debating points. That cannot lead to a clarification of positions before the membership of the International."

The resolution reported on by Comrade Maitan at the IEC meeting presents a more clear alternative political approach to the balance sheet of the Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency, while Comrade Germain attempts to obscure the issue.

Was Che Guevara a Foquista?

Was Che Guevara a *foquista*? The question appears absurd since it was Guevara who outlined the basic concepts of the *foquista* strategy and it was his experiment in Bolivia and its failure that dealt the decisive blow to the *foquista* conception in Latin America. Unfortunately the question has arisen in our own discussion because the IEC Majority Tendency maintains the opposite.

Guevara's ELN guerrilla action in Bolivia, projected from outside the country, without any contact whatsoever with the mass movement, is an exemplary case of the application of the *foquista* theory.

Yet the IEC Majority not only reject the characterization of Guevara's guerrilla action as *foquista*, they deny it was incorrect politically. Moreover, as late as December 1972, the IEC voted a resolution once again declaring their historical evaluation of political support to Che's guerrilla strategy.

The POR and ELN Accords

At the time of the last world congress we were informed that an agreement had been made by the ELN with the POR (González) to initiate a guerrilla front together. We were assured that this was made possible because the ELN was no longer "*foquista*." The exact terms of the agreement were never clarified and at least some comrades felt that the ELN was repeating Guevara's errors and that our comrades were adapting to Castroism.

In the new majority IEC resolution we are again assured that "Guevara and his collaborators took the initiative in opening guerrilla war in a political context that fully justified the launching of armed struggle."²³ This reconfirmed what Comrade Maitan had written earlier, "We quite quickly pointed out what, according to our analysis, were the reasons for the defeat of Che's guerrillas in Bolivia, being careful to avoid getting mixed up with the opportunists of all stripes who had opened a counterattack. Nonetheless, we considered it incorrect to characterize Che's undertaking as an artificial operation, or an application of the *foco* theory because subjective and objective conditions for armed struggle existed in Bolivia at the time."²⁴

In case comrades had forgotten what those criticisms of Guevara were, the December 1972 IEC resolution spells them out.

"First of all, the choice of terrain was questionable." And, "The second error resided in an objectively sectarian

conception of the political relationships among the forces favoring armed struggle. It was completely correct to strongly advocate a united military policy. It was also correct for the group that took the initiative to uphold Che in the leadership role he normally played. But from this it did not follow that all those who wanted to join in the guerrilla action had to automatically accept the political hegemony of the ELN and even less to dissolve organizationally."²⁵ That is all.

According to Comrade Maitan, Guevara's errors consisted of picking the wrong location and not allowing groups to join without dissolving into the ELN. If Guevara had only picked the correct terrain and allowed groups as such to participate, the IEC Majority would have no criticism to offer.

The inference in the above quotation as to how leaders should be chosen is startling, but I will leave it aside.

This "criticism," although possibly valid in itself, does not go beyond the organizational and technical levels. It reflects failure to understand the incorrectness of Guevara's politics with its rejection of the Leninist concept of building a party through mass struggle.

But from this criticism we now have an indication as to the possible nature of the POR-ELN agreement. The ELN agreed to the POR's concept of terrain (three fronts, rural, urban and mining) and agreed to allow the POR to participate as an organization and not to dissolve. Could it be that on this basis, a purely organizational and technical one, the POR began a joint guerrilla effort? Naturally Peredo would be the accepted leader since "he normally played" that role.

The ELN and Foquismo

The agreement with the ELN was reached in late 1968 or early 1969, although it was not put into effect until later. It is rather revealing when Comrade Germain, attacking an article by Comrade Moreno, suddenly says, "It is not necessary to continue these quotes. They prove beyond any doubt that under the Barrientos dictatorship in 1968, Comrade Moreno gave our Bolivian section the advice to put itself completely under the command of the ELN and its 'undisputed leader,' who were conducting a typical *foquista* form of rural guerrilla warfare."²⁶

In this way we are informed in the winter of 1973 by Comrade Germain that the ELN's concept was a "typical *foquista* form of rural guerrilla warfare." Did Comrade Germain in his haste to score a point forget that we were told the *opposite* at the last world congress? Does Comrade Germain now believe he was misled into believing the ELN was not *foquista*? Or does Comrade Germain believe that the ELN under Guevara was not *foquista* in 1967, became *foquista* in 1968, stopped being *foquista* at the time of the world congress in April of 1969, and returned to being *foquista* in June of 1969 when Inti Peredo publicly declared, "The ELN maintains the principles established by Che. We hold valid the thesis of the need for a guerrilla *foco* in the current situation in Latin America. Because of this we announced that we would return to the mountains. We will build an armed force. We are not trying to form a political party."²⁷

The Line of the Last World Congress

Unlike Comrade Germain, who tries to cover up the nature of the decision at the last world congress by claiming that it was not an orientation toward guerrilla warfare on a continental scale, etc., Comrade Maitan in the IEC resolution on Bolivia presents things more accurately. "After the death of Guevara," writes Maitan, "the POR, in contact with the International, decided on an orientation of relaunching armed struggle, while recognizing the lessons of the defeat. This orientation was completed at the time of the Ninth World Congress.

"In short, the POR considered that a prerevolutionary situation existed in Bolivia as well as on a continental scale. . . .

"That was why it was necessary to place the problem of armed struggle on the agenda. . . . It was necessary to prepare for a long and hard struggle acquiring—and this is the most likely variant—a continental dimension. The specific form of this armed struggle for an entire period could only be guerrilla war."²⁸

The Bolivian Disaster

During 1968-69, when the mass movement was beginning to revive in Bolivia and openings for involvement in it began to appear, the Fourth Internationalists concentrated on preparing a guerrilla front in conjunction with the ELN.

The preparations never culminated in an actual front because government agents infiltrated the movement, and both organizations suffered repression. Some comrades were caught and imprisoned; others went into hiding. The POR (González) stopped functioning for a period as a structured organization.

The repression hit at the beginning of the summer of 1969. It was not until around fall that the POR (González) managed to overcome the paralysis. It set out to reestablish contact with the ELN and again begin preparations for a guerrilla front.

This second attempt began under the Ovando regime. It was at this time that the Communist League in France and other sections of the Fourth International engaged in an intensive public campaign for funds for the projected POR-ELN guerrilla front. The Ovando regime was viewed by the majority of the United Secretariat as essentially the same as the Barrientos regime. It was assumed that the nationalization of some American holdings was simply a maneuver, approved by the U. S. State Department, intended to give the Ovando regime a liberal image. On this point, comrades should read the POR (González) analysis of the Ovando regime and the analysis in *Rouge* calling for funds for the Bolivian guerrillas. (Included in the appendix.)

In view of its weakness, the POR (González) was quite unable to mount any guerrilla effort. The ELN took the initiative and launched the tragic Teoponte front which resulted in the death (mostly by execution after surrendering) of some fifty dedicated young revolutionists.

In October 1970 the internal contradictions of the ruling class and its army under the impact of a rising mass movement led to the foundering of the Ovando regime

and its replacement by the Torres regime. The POR (González), as we have seen, responded by once again proclaiming the strategy of guerrilla warfare. The front-page article that *Combate* devoted to this was reprinted with approval in *Rouge*. (See *Rouge*, December 7, 1970, p. 16.)

Disoriented by the guerrilla line and unable to overcome its organizational and political weaknesses, the POR (González) could not capitalize on the opportunities offered by the situation but it did gain some recruits and make a little headway in establishing itself in the workers and peasant movement.

The period since the downfall of Torres is in some ways the most tragic of all. The Fourth Internationalists in Bolivia moved from ultraleftism to opportunism — and with the full support of the majority of the United Secretariat.

The Anti-Imperialist Front (FRA)

After the fall of Torres the POR (González) once again, as always, called for the initiation of armed struggle. Was this correct? We say, no! Comrades Germain and Maitan say, yes!

The rightist coup was a terrible blow to the mass movement. It did not represent the triumph of fascism as the POR (González) claims, nor was it a defeat of such proportions as to settle the class relationship of forces for a historic period. But the masses will not take the offensive overnight. They will begin with minimal struggles, slowly regaining the confidence necessary to once again go into action as a class against the dictatorship.

Under these conditions of at least partial retreat, it is either adventurism or pure rhetoric to call for "armed struggle." In order to open the "armed struggle," which, we were told, would flare up on the scale of a civil war as soon as Torres fell, the POR (González) joined with the betrayers of the Bolivian revolution who had formed the FRA.

Up to now the FRA has not carried out any armed struggle. But it has had a certain success inside Bolivia in bringing the left under the control of the reformists. It has played up to the desire of the masses for "unity" in order to counteract criticisms of their betrayal under Torres and to block the independent expression and growth of currents that might be critical of their program. This was the real purpose and function of the FRA.

Comrade Germain assures us that it was correct to join the FRA because it has called for socialism. Comrade Germain even points to Major Sánchez, the nominal head of the FRA, as calling himself a Marxist-Leninist. But Comrade Germain tactfully avoids mentioning who else belongs to this front. The question of the composition of this front, "organized for the conquest of power" and the establishment of "socialism," is nonetheless of some interest.

The largest single organization in the FRA, which also calls itself Marxist-Leninist and claims to be for socialism, is the pro-Moscow Communist Party of Bolivia. The leaders of this party lie when they say they are for a socialist revolution. They supported Torres's bourgeois government and helped block the workers taking an inde-

pendent course.

Another strong component is the PRIN, a splitoff from the MNR. It is led by the bureaucratic leader of the C. O. B., Lechín. Lechín never has and never will fight for socialism.

Also in the FRA are the Socialist Party of Bolivia, and the POR (Lora). Both of these organizations helped betray the workers under Torres.

A small sector of army officers and ranks associated with Torres are also to be found in the front. Torres himself joined for a period and then withdrew. (He recently formed a new exile group in Argentina and claimed that the FRA in reality ceased to function early in 1972.)

Along with the reformists are a few ultraleft groups. There is the Guevaraist ELN, the Maoist PCML, and a small student group the MIR, now largely defunct. In addition to these forces and possibly some other scattered groupings is, of course, the official section of the Fourth International.

Is it permissible to make a common front with these groups, including the pro-bourgeois traitors of the revolution? The answer depends on what type of front it is. We are willing to undertake common actions with almost any workers organization, or a petty-bourgeois grouping, in the interest of the working class or in the interest of an oppressed nationality. In the latter case we can even participate in an anti-imperialist front with national bourgeois forces so long as we maintain our complete political and organizational independence. But we have our own program, which we counterpose to the reformist programs of all these organizations. Our program and *only our program* points out the correct road for the working class to take power. We cannot make a front for the "conquest of power" with reformists. It is unprincipled to make a common *programmatic* front with the Communist Party, POR (Lora), PRIN, etc. We, as Trotskyists, are not fooled by their empty and demagogic talk of socialism and revolution, or Marxism-Leninism.

It is not surprising that all these reformist groups endorse calls for "armed struggle" against the "fascist" Banzer regime. The presence of guerrilla-oriented groups, especially the ELN, only helps provide a left cover for the reformists whose political line is at best a return to a reformist bourgeois government like that of Torres, Perón, or Allende.

Comrade Germain's central argument on why it is permissible and correct to join the FRA is that its *program* is correct. The truth, however, is that its program is not Trotskyist. To join a front on the basis of its program means breaking with a fundamental principle of the Trotskyist movement. This is how Trotsky explained our attitude toward common platforms in considering the question of a united front against fascism:

"Election agreements, parliamentary compromises concluded between the revolutionary party and the Social Democracy serve, as a rule, to the advantage of the Social Democracy. Practical agreements for mass action, for purpose of struggle, are always useful to the revolutionary party. The Anglo-Russian Committee was an impermissible type of bloc of two leaderships on one common political platform, vague, deceptive, binding no one to

any action at all. The maintenance of this bloc at the time of the British General Strike, when the General Council assumed the role of strikebreaker, signified, on the part of the Stalinists, a policy of betrayal.

"No common platform with the Social Democracy, or with the leaders of the German trade unions, no common publications, banners, placards! March separately, but strike together! Agree only how to strike, whom to strike, and when to strike! Such an agreement can be concluded even with the devil himself, with his grandmother, and even with Noske and Grezesinsky [the head of police in Berlin under the Social Democrats]. On one condition, not to bind one's hands." (*The Struggle Against Fascism in Germany*, pp. 138 and 139.)

The FRA has a common platform. In fact the reason given by the POR (González) for joining the FRA is that the Bolivian left should unite under a common program and that this is necessary for the triumph of the socialist revolution.

"For quite some time the organizations of the Bolivian left have felt the necessity of uniting in a front in order to put an end to sectarianism and to bring all of the revolutionary forces together behind a common program.

"This unity, which was concretized in the formation of the FRA, must be maintained as one of the necessary premises for the triumph of the socialist revolution in Bolivia." (August-September 1972 *Combate*.)

In this same article the POR (González) explains that the main weakness of the FRA is that it underestimates the military side of a military-political perspective.

This front cannot conduct mass work in a revolutionary sense. What it does will be guided by the reformist wing, which is dominant. If the reformists split away, ultra-lefts will take over. Today the FRA insists on all its participating members following discipline at all levels and in all mass work. To give political support to this front disorients the workers movement and miseducates our own cadres in an opportunist direction. While we should propose concrete united-front tasks and actions to other organizations, we must refuse to participate in any programmatic front or to accept discipline under the reformists or ultra-lefts.

Reinforcing Illusions

We have already pointed out how Comrade Germain cites the FRA joint program as being for "socialism," etc. In Comrade Maitan's IEC document we find some very odd formulations regarding the organizations that betrayed the workers under Torres. Comrade Maitan uses phrases like they "did not understand" or "forgot"²⁹ when speaking about the necessity to prepare the workers for armed struggle.

No, the CP, POR (Lora), and Lechin's PRIN did not forget. And it is not true that they did not understand. We might say that about the youth in the ELN but not about the "great majority of the leaders of the labor movement,"³⁰ as Comrade Maitan puts it. No, these people knew exactly what they were doing under Torres and what they are doing today in the FRA. We must have no illusions with regard to these organizations and their leaders.

Comrade González has joined Comrade Germain in arguing that all the groups in the FRA are for socialism and consider themselves to be Marxist-Leninist. But we do not go by what they claim to be but by what they are.

In this connection, comrades should read the excellent article by Comrade Nahuel Moreno in the *International Socialist Review* of February 1973, which takes up the nature and politics of the FRA and explains the correct Leninist attitude toward such fronts.

Germain Versus Maitan (II)

One peculiar aspect of the present discussion on Latin America has been the sustained effort by Comrade Germain to claim that the Ninth World Congress resolution did not really call for guerrilla warfare, especially rural guerrilla warfare.

Yet Comrade Maitan, as we have already seen, states once again in his December 1972 IEC Bolivia resolution explicitly that the line was guerrilla warfare. These two opposite interpretations appear in formal documents presented in the name of the IEC Majority Tendency.

Comrade Maitan's presentation is much more accurate than Comrade Germain's. But since Comrade Germain's presentation is the latest reinterpretation, it is worth noting some of the implications of his explanation, especially regarding the discussion on Bolivia.

Comrade Germain's explanation is to be found on pages 4 and 5 of his document. His "summary" of the Ninth World Congress line has very little to do with the actual resolution passed at the last world congress. That resolution stated that Latin America had entered a "prolonged civil war on a continental scale," that civil war would have "rural guerrilla" warfare as its central axis. This projected not only a specific form of struggle but predicted what social layer would be in the vanguard of the struggle. "The most probable variant," the resolution explained, "is that for a rather long period the peasants will have to bear the main weight of the struggle. . . ."

Technical preparation was the fundamental task for all Trotskyists. The initiation of guerrilla fronts could be "unilateral" or even "come from abroad" because it could "stimulate a revolutionary dynamic."

Comrade Germain forgets all this in giving his "own" later version. One of the most interesting parts of his version is the limitations he now places on which countries the Ninth World Congress line can be applied to.

At one point he writes, "Where the traditional reformist petty-bourgeois or bourgeois leaderships still control the mass movement, as in many semi-colonial countries, these conclusions are also uncalled for. Where the decaying bourgeoisie still rules essentially through bourgeois democratic forms the analysis doesn't apply either. It is specific to a given phase in a given context, in Latin America and in the present it only has practical application in a few countries for our movement."³¹

If this limitation is to be taken seriously, we should be told in which countries the line is presently "applicable." Such concreteness would certainly help clarify the issues in the discussion.

Let us note a few countries in which according to Com-

rade Germain the line does not apply. One is Chile, which is still ruled "essentially through bourgeois democratic forms," and another is Argentina, where the "traditional bourgeois leadership [Peronist] still controls the mass movement" and which is now entering a period, although possibly brief, where the country is ruled "essentially through bourgeois democratic forms." But if, on his criteria, we eliminate Chile and Argentina, we eliminate the two Latin American countries where prerevolutionary situations exist. This alone would put Comrade Germain's selective line into question. It also increases our curiosity as to what specific countries Comrade Germain may have in mind.

Here Comrade Maitan comes to our aid. On page 182 of the *Discussion on Latin America* (1968-72) bulletin, Comrade Maitan specifies what countries the majority at the Ninth World Congress had in mind. "It is no secret to anyone that in our discussions before and during the congress, we had in mind chiefly Bolivia and Argentina."

Unfortunately, Comrade Germain's new qualifiers have eliminated Argentina. What about Bolivia? Comrade Maitan informs us in the IEC resolution (voted for by Comrade Germain) that the Bolivian mass workers movement in spite of everything "has long remained under the grip of bourgeois or petty-bourgeois movements or caudillos and has not ceased to be under the ideological influence of petty-bourgeois revolutionary nationalism even in the recent period under the military reformism of General Torres."³² But if we correctly understand Comrade Germain's document (which Comrade Maitan voted for), we would also have to exclude Bolivia. It's a country in which the mass movement is controlled by bourgeois or petty-bourgeois leaders.

Shifting Positions

Does the tangle of contradictions between and within the writings of the IEC Majority leaders simply reflect individual idiosyncrasies or could it reflect a muddled but definite shifting in their positions? A careful study of the full discussion reveals a definite evolution in the views of the IEC Majority, however much they may try to deny it.

At the time of the last world congress it was held, and it has since been repeated various times, that all of Latin America is in a prerevolutionary situation. But today without explanation the continental "prerevolutionary" situation has disappeared from Comrade Germain's and Comrade Maitan's contributions. The general line of the Guevaraist continental civil-war strategy has begun to fade. This change more or less paralleled the shift in mood

of the "vanguard" elements in Europe and Latin America away from Guevaraism.

The trend today in Latin America is away from ultra-leftism toward opportunism. This often takes the form of a combination of ultraleft and rightist positions. The position of the Cubans has also shifted along the same lines.

Rural guerrilla warfare was already on the wane at the time of the last world congress, but in the southern cone of Latin America a resurgence of urban terrorism with a populist political basis (Tupamaros, left Peronists and the PRT (Combatiente) were the notable examples) maintained the interest in guerrilla warfare. With the decline of the Tupamaros in Uruguay and the rise of the Peronists to power in Argentina, even this variant of guerrilla warfare will tend to decline at least for a period.

The articles and line of the IEC Majority have drifted and shifted in the same direction. At first the call for rural guerrilla warfare was made explicitly and unashamedly. With the decline of rural guerrilla war and the rise to prominence of the ERP in 1971, with its populist milk and meat distributions, factory raids, and kidnappings, the position shifted to the need of armed struggle to "build" the party by "rooting" into the masses. Comrade Maitan even argued that the Sylvester kidnapping was an example of rooting in the mass movement.³³ Comrade Germain in his recent document gives the example of factory raids as proof of rooting by the PRT.³⁴

But this shift takes place under pressure from the right. Thus it is not surprising that the PRT (Combatiente) has cut loose from Trotskyism while the POR (González) and the majority of the United Secretariat find themselves supporting the Bolivian FRA.

The IEC Majority is also under heavy pressure from the ranks of the Fourth International, who in their majority reject the line of the last world congress on Latin America.

The result has been a desire to downplay the importance of the debate over Latin America and to seek for a new formulation maintaining the ultraleft vanguardist adaptation of the world congress while abandoning the now discredited formulations of 1969—the continental civil war and prerevolutionary situation, rural guerrilla warfare thesis. This floundering attempt to change the schema without acknowledging the mistakes of the past is responsible for the flight from fact to fancy and for the deep contradictions in statements of the IEC Majority regarding the last world congress resolution on Latin America, the PRT (Combatiente) in Argentina, and the POR (González) in Bolivia.

August 22, 1973

1. "In Defence of Leninism: In Defence of the Fourth International," *International Internal Discussion Bulletin*, Vol. X, No. 4, April 1973, p. 8.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 10.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 14.

4. *Intercontinental Press*, April 13, 1970, p. 336.

5. *Ibid.*

6. "Report on Bolivia and Argentina," *SWP Internal Information Bulletin*, No. 5 in 1972, p. 4.

7. "In Defence of Leninism: In Defence of the Fourth International," p. 9.

8. "Argentina and Bolivia—The Balance Sheet," *IIDB*, Vol. X, No. 1, January 1973, p. 21.

9. *International*, September-October 1971, pp. 64-65.

10. "In Defence of Leninism: In Defence of the Fourth International," p. 13.
11. *Ibid.*
12. *International*, September-October 1971, p. 59.
13. "Put the People's Assembly on the Road to Socialism!" *Intercontinental Press*, June 21, 1971, p. 575.
14. "Interview with Hugo González Moscoso," *Quatrième Internationale*, March-April 1973.
15. "In Defence of Leninism: In Defence of the Fourth International," p. 13.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 9.
17. "Argentina and Bolivia—The Balance Sheet," p. 20.
18. "In Defence of Leninism: In Defence of the Fourth International," p. 8.
19. *Writings of Leon Trotsky*, 1933-34, Pathfinder Press, p. 323-24.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 322.
21. "In Defence of Leninism: In Defence of the Fourth International," pp. 9-10.
22. "Bolivia—Results and Perspectives," IEC Resolution, IIDB, Vol. X, No. 6, April 1973, pp. 10-11.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 8.
24. "Once Again on the Revolutionary Perspectives in Latin America—Defense of an Orientation and a Method," *Discussion on Latin America* (1968-72), p. 85.
25. "Bolivia—Results and Perspectives," pp. 8-9.
26. "In Defence of Leninism: In Defence of the Fourth International," p. 11.
27. "A Contribution to the Discussion on Revolutionary Strategy in Latin America," *Discussion on Latin America* (1968-72), p. 65.
28. "Bolivia—Results and Perspectives," p. 10.
29. *Ibid.*, pp. 6, 9.
30. *Ibid.*, p. 9.
31. "In Defence of Leninism: In Defence of the Fourth International," p. 5.
32. "Bolivia—Results and Perspectives," p. 11.
33. "Let's Keep to the Issues, Let's Avoid Diversions!" *Discussion on Latin America* (1968-72), p. 183.
34. "In Defence of Leninism: In Defence of the Fourth International," p. 17.

APPENDIX I: The Ovando Government and the Bolivian Situation

From *Intercontinental Press*, April 13, 1970, p. 328.

[The following resolution was approved unanimously at a special national meeting of the POR (Partido Obrero Revolucionario — Revolutionary Workers party, the Bolivian sec-

tion of the Fourth International). The meeting was held last November under clandestine conditions owing to government persecution.]

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1. The Development of the World Revolution and Imperialism's Defensive Measures

In order to correctly understand the events that have occurred in Bolivia since September 26, 1969, it is essential to place them in their context as part of the general situation in Latin America and the world. These developments must be seen as an expression of the relationship of forces between the advancing revolution and the counterrevolution which is defending itself by every available means — from war and terrorism to even staging "revolutions" itself in some colonies and semicolonies in order to stave off big-revolutions.

The imperialists' great offensive, which escalated in the early 1960s, especially in the Vietnam war, could not halt the slow disintegration of their domination of the colonial and semi-colonial world. In Cuba and Vietnam, their extraordinary military and economic power was defeated. The colonial revolution suffered a number of setbacks which were at times severe blows — the partial defeats of the anti-imperialist forces in Latin America represented by the advent of military dictatorships and a damming up of the workers movement; the ouster of Nkrumah in Ghana; the counterrevolution in Indonesia; the Arab defeat at the hands of Israel; the elimination of Odinga Oginga in Kenya; and the defeat of the guerrillas in Bolivia in 1967 with the murder of Che. However, such blows could not alter the relationship of forces favoring the revolution. After these setbacks, the colonial revolution resumed its advances, beginning in Cuba and Vietnam. And this time it is coupled with a ripening revolution in the imperialist centers themselves.

The defeat of imperialism in Vietnam is already an accomplished fact, a fact with far-reaching repercussions

on a world scale. The imperialists who tried to intimidate the revolutionists through military terror in Asia now have to retreat before the indomitable determination of the Vietnamese masses, suffering a loss of prestige not only in the eyes of the Asian peoples but of the entire colonial world. Moreover, this war and the Yankee defeat are producing economic and political repercussions in the United States — such as inflation, the dollar crisis, and a radicalization of the black and student masses that is stimulating the emergence of a new revolutionary vanguard — all of which constitute a kind of time bomb in the very heart of the most powerful imperialism.

It is also an obvious fact that the imperialist offensive in Latin America, which has been carried on primarily through military regimes, is being defeated. It has proved impossible to crush the guerrillas in Venezuela, Colombia, and Guatemala. After a downturn, owing primarily to internal crises provoked by the capitulation of the Communist parties, the guerrilla movements in these countries are now picking up new momentum. In other countries like Brazil, Chile, Uruguay, and Ecuador, guerrilla movements are emerging, dealing spectacular blows to the imperialist oppressors and their national lackeys. Moreover, in Argentina and Mexico a mass movement, combined with insurrectionary-type direct-action methods, is shaking the foundations of capitalism.

Defeated militarily in Asia, severely challenged in the Near East, and shaken and outflanked in Latin America, Yankee imperialism is faced with an urgent need to readjust its policy toward the southern continent. In the

ranks of the Yankee plutocrats themselves voices of alarm are being raised in the face of the advancing revolution which cannot be contained or still less crushed by essentially military means. These voices are recommending prudent changes designed both to appease the discontent of the Latin-American masses and to improve the image of the bourgeois governments so that they can gain some credibility among their own masses.

Rockefeller's junket through Latin America as Nixon's emissary alarmed the Yankee governmental circles because it showed the precariousness of the bourgeois governments and military dictatorships. In many areas these governments could not guarantee his safety and in others they received him only in airports or in isolated places surrounded by bayonets and with an impressive array of security forces. Nixon's envoy was greeted by the peoples not as a friend but as public enemy No. 1. The report Rockefeller made upon concluding his tour reflects this alarm. It is a warning of the dangers existing in this part of the world to the capital invested by the imperialist companies and to the "Western way of life." Inspired by a fear of losing imperialist positions, his recommendations call for improving U.S. relations and strengthening the alliance with the Latin-American bourgeoisies. They call for correcting the deficiencies of the Alliance for Progress, which is to become "Action for Progress."

Behind the Rockefeller report and Nixon's speech on Latin America, there is an apprehensive tendency at work. Prompted by the imperialist defeats, this tendency wants to maintain U.S. domination on a dual basis — social and economic concessions as well as military power. It is true that the idea of combining armed and social counterinsurgency was already present in the Alliance for Progress. However, a clearly greater emphasis was placed on a military offensive, the social and economic aspect being quite weak.

Rockefeller made a number of spe-

cific recommendations in both the political and economic areas which reflect the more flexible attitude developing in the imperialist center under the impact of the blows dealt by the revolution. They show an attempt to sugar-coat colonial exploitation with some beneficial programs. On the political side, Rockefeller's recommendations were to create a Latin-American Security Council; rearm the national armies; and drop the Hickenlooper, Symington, and Reuss amendments. His economic recommendations were the following: tariff preferences for developing countries; higher import quotas for the Latin-American countries; stabilizing raw-materials prices at levels reflecting fair wages; supporting regional common markets and banks; revision of regulations requiring use of American shipping; new coffee agreements; longer-term loans; replacing projects with complete financial programs; financing of superstructural improvements; lowering interest rates, eliminating the additionality clauses which require aid recipients to spend equivalent amounts in the U.S., restructuring of interest payments on the foreign debt, and other such measures. The new right [as opposed to the "new left"], the modern right, has learned from the failure of McNamara's policy of trying to maintain the stability and internal peace of every country solely through security measures (the army, the police, and special security forces). This new right proposes bold changes, including "revolutions" in order to head off greater explosions which would sweep away imperialist domination. That is, they favor giving concessions rather than losing everything.

This Yankee right is tied to, or we might say associated with, the Latin-American bourgeois reformist movements. It is the force orienting those currents and governments that talk about opposing communism by attacking social ills, that maintain that continental defense and the inter-American system must include not only military means but measures of economic and social development. What all these currents are seeking in reality is to preserve the capitalist system, to gain better conditions for defending it. The changes they propose vary according to the peculiarities of each country—the depth of the crisis in each country and the level of revolutionary ma-

turity. However, all these changes are always within the framework of the system of imperialist oppression. One thing is clear: the advance of the revolution is forcing imperialism and its native lackeys to use new tactics, to use more refined or subtle methods of colonial exploitation. But this shift in tactics cannot deceive the masses and the revolutionary vanguard of Latin America. Imperialism is still imperialism and many of the advocated reform measures have been blunted in the bureaucratic and administrative machinery, frustrating the hopes even of the bourgeois sectors. Moreover, as long as the relationship of forces favorable to the revolution is maintained, minute concessions and a few crumbs will not pacify the masses but will feed the revolutionary flames in Latin America. Every gain gives the masses an awareness of their own power. The inexorable march toward socialism will continue. Confronted with this fact, imperialism will soon present its old face once again—its true nature as the policeman of colonial exploitation relying unequivocally on military force. It is already preparing to do this by planning the

organization of the Latin-American Security Council and rearmament of the local armies. But if the exclusively military offensive and later the combination of force with their so-called development plans have not succeeded in breaking up the revolution, another change of tactics will avail them nothing. Their historic destiny is marked out; it is to fall in order to make way for the new socialist society.

Now we must determine the place of the Bolivian military government in this process taking place in the world and in Latin America in which imperialism is defending itself by resorting to preventive measures.

The emergence of the Ovando government was an intelligent preventive response by the bourgeoisie to the unstable situation in Bolivia. It is the system's most serious attempt to contain the revolution rising and maturing from below by means of a "revolution" manipulated from above. It does not matter if this operation is carried out at the expense of some individual financial interests so long as it maintains the structure of imperialist domination.

2. The Guerrilla Movement and the Rise of Workers' Struggles Are Forcing the Generals to Take Defensive Measures

The estimation of the preventive causes of the emergence of the Ovando government is confirmed by the introduction to the "Mandato Revolucionario" [Revolutionary Mandate] of the armed forces and by the initial and repeated statements of the new ministers and military chiefs.

In the first statements formulated by General Ovando and in the introduction to the Mandato Revolucionario, the ouster of Siles Salinas was justified as follows:

a) The stand of the armed forces was precipitated by the danger threatening the national institutions as a result of the advance of the forces of the extreme left and the growing activity of the guerrillas.

b) By foreign intervention in the form of guerrillas.

c) By the Siles government's incapacity to combat the terrorist adventure.

d) To prevent the "Polandization" [national collapse] and Vietnamization of Bolivia.

e) Because of the need to confront the anarchy from a "revolutionary" standpoint and not by the mere use of violence, which is self-exhausting.

These pronouncements are quite clear and reveal the true aims of the new civilian-military government. The same thing is happening as in November 1964 when a popular insurrection also endangered the institutions of capitalist society. The generals have moved to confront, with the means they felt most appropriate, a new rise and mobilization of the people, of the worker, peasant, and student masses, whose most energetic and dynamic expression is the guerrilla movement.

Shortly before the ouster of Siles Salinas, the military chiefs announced that the guerrilla activity had not been eradicated despite the blows suffered by the ELN [Ejército de Liberación Nacional—Army of National Liberation] and the murder of Inti Peredo. This amounted to a confession that the army's plans had failed. Repres-

sion could not break the revolutionists. So now after a military offensive to soften up the opposition, new methods will be tried. Underlying this can be seen the army's fundamental objective of preserving the system and isolating the guerrilla movement. In one of his speeches, the commander of the armed forces, General Tórrez, clarified the regime's character still more by saying that "the army has stolen the banners of the guerrillas."

It must be stressed that the army sees as its responsibility preservation of the capitalist system in Bolivia. However, in the conditions of the crisis of the bourgeoisie and its parties, and of the armed revolutionary advance of the ELN guerrillas, this result can no longer be expected from purely repressive means, which, moreover, have already failed. An economic development plan is necessary. This is the new philosophy of the military nucleus that inherited power from President Barrientos.

To understand the desperation of the military chiefs who see the capitalist state crumbling, you must recall the very grave crisis of the regime that appeared already during the Barrientos dictatorship, the profound crisis of the bourgeois state apparatus that threatened to sweep away all the so-called national institutions. This was expressed, among other things, in the action of the minister of the interior, Antonio Arguedas;* the rebellion of then chief of staff of the army Vásquez Sempértégui; the tensions and frictions in the ruling circles themselves (the parliament, the judicial system, the executive); and the scandalous deal over the Matilde mine, building the gas pipeline to Argentina, and many other deals which enriched a sector of the rulers. And all this was against the backdrop of the country's endemic economic crisis—a chronic budget deficit; interest on the foreign debt absorbing 15 percent of annual income, as Rockefeller brought out in his report; a constantly declining per capita income (US\$150 in 1950 and US\$80 in 1968, according to Chancellor Medeiros's report to parliament). But the most serious thing was that this

* Arguedas sent a copy of Che's diary to the Cuban government and denounced CIA domination of the Bolivian state apparatus. See "How the CIA Runs Bolivia," *Intercontinental Press*, September 23, 1968, page 770.

objective situation was becoming a spur to the struggle of the masses, who were drawing behind them broad sectors of the church and the intellectuals. In this context, the guerrillas were no more than the extension of that revolutionary mass movement whose development had been cut off and whose spread had been limited by the massacres, the repression, and the jailings of the military. While Che's guerrilla movement had broad popular support in 1967, the reappearance of the guerrillas in 1969 under Inti Peredo occurred in a much riper situation. In these circumstances, the students, priests, workers, and radicalized sectors of the middle class lost their hesitations and accepted armed struggle as the road to national and social liberation. This popular attitude of accepting and supporting the guerrilla road is what sustains and fuels the guerrilla movement. The people have not been scared off; no terror gnaws at their vitals. For the people, the guerrillas seem like the first Christians, who were devoured by the beasts in the Roman circuses but whose places were taken by other fighters inspired by their faith and confidence in victory.

3. The Armed Forces Holding Power Have Become the Political Party of the Bourgeoisie

The armed forces seized power in Bolivia in November 1964. The traditional bourgeois parties had lost their historic validity. They showed themselves incapable of understanding the world and national situation, or the new relationship of forces in effect. Worn out, ossified, divided, and subdivided, these parties became useless for defending the order established by imperialism and native capitalism against a workers and popular revolution.

This political vacuum, as General Ovando once called it, was filled by the army, which began to act like a political party of the bourgeoisie.

The entire military establishment assumed characteristics belonging to a political organization. In the context of enjoying numerous privileges, well-paid administrative posts, and a 300 percent wage increase, all of the military, from generals to sergeants, received political instruction from Yankee technicians, in addition to their

Exclusively military repressive measures proved ineffective. In the conditions described, continuing this course would have led toward a catastrophic explosion and precipitated a majority of the masses to the side of the guerrillas. The military high command understood this. Instead of confronting the people directly, mounting armed guards around the mines, exercising unrelenting persecution and violence that exhausted itself without changing anything, it needed a new tactic. In order to prevent the catastrophe, it had to "make a revolution" from above, liberalize the regime and loosen the halter imposed by the imperialist concerns, which was strangling the country's economy. The military high command had to steal the banners to which the guerrillas were rallying the people, as General Tórrez confessed. The hangman's rope and the murderous machine guns the military had used against the miners had to be hidden behind a development program and behind the name of "revolution." Great and catastrophic sicknesses must be combated with drastic medicines. That was the choice the bourgeois system was confronted with in Bolivia.

antiguerrilla and urban counterinsurgency training. The general staff of the armed forces was converted into a political committee, or central committee, of the army-party. An important qualitative change took place in the armed forces; they are no longer the old armed forces or the old army. This peculiar development has consisted of a *politicalization of the officer corps and the institutionalization of its political character*. This in turn engendered a *militarization of political activity on a national scale*.

The party-army, or armed political party, has monopolized political power uninterruptedly since November 1964. It has governed the country in various forms—a military junta (Barrientos-Ovando); a constitutional government (Barrientos-Siles), and now a civilian-military junta (Ovando).

These various forms have been purely a matter of appearances and have been dictated by the tactical needs of the military's domestic and interna-

tional relations. Whatever the form, the same military dictatorship propped by armed force was still behind it. Never has the capitalist state looked so much like a simple armed body than now. Having absorbed all powers, the military commanders can boast that "We are the state!"

This does not mean that differences have ceased to exist within the army-party, including cliques and exclusive fraternities, all of which want to grab the best positions, from the presidency of the republic on down. But these groupings act like factions of a political party; they have a common denominator—defense of the capitalist structure. Their differences are over how to approach this task.

At no point did the Siles Salinas government break the continuity of the military dictatorship. In practice Siles did not govern. He was a fictitious president lacking the power to

name even subordinate officials in the local administrations (e.g., Valenzuela in Cochabamba). His unusual talent for playing a front man's role led him to tolerate such a situation. The ruling force was always the army-party, which, with its regional divisions, its air and naval forces, controlled the country and carried out its decisions behind Siles's back.

Depending on its needs, the army-party has created and dissolved civilian political groups or hitched old mini-parties to its chariot, trying to give the impression that it had a base of support. Representing no organized political forces, the civilian personalities who have passed through the cabinets have never carried any weight; their function has been reduced to playing the role the party-army assigned them in accordance with its changing tactics.

4. The History and Social Character of the Army-Party

By our works we shall be known, General Ovando said. That is gospel truth. To be sure, we already know them by their works and we know what the Bolivian armed forces are capable of.

The statements of the generals would be enough to reveal what is behind the reorganization of the government. In jurisprudence "the confession of the accused is full proof." But in politics this criterion is insufficient. What is decisive here in understanding the essence of a state, in measuring a revolutionary process and gauging the potential of its leaders, is determining its social or class nature. Such an analysis prevents errors of judgment in the face of at times contradictory and confused passing situations.

The armed forces are a component of the state. In our country they represent the ruling classes, which are tightly bound to imperialism. In this period of world war between socialism and imperialism, the Bolivian armed forces are actually part of the international army of imperialism, whose head is in the Pentagon. This truth is so elementary that even the children know it.

After it was routed by the armed people in 1952, the Bolivian army was rebuilt by imperialism. General Ovando admitted this when he said that the military received Yankee arms

behind the back of the MNR [Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario—Revolutionary Nationalist Movement, the ruling party from 1952 to 1964]. Its top military commanders as well as its middle-ranking officers have gone through special courses in Panama. In the Miraflores fortress, alongside the Bolivian general staff offices, the American military commission carries on its work. Yankee advisers train the special antiguerrilla and urban counterinsurgency units. The armed forces of Bolivia have been built up, trained militarily, technically, and armed by the Pentagon. And this so-called military assistance continues today after the nationalization of the Gulf Oil Co. and when General Ovando declares that he is at war with imperialism.

Because of its role as the lever of the system, its overbearing attitude deriving from its privileges, the Bolivian military caste has been conservative and a defender of the "established order." Bolivian military history is a history of massacres of the workers and peasants and of coups d'etat to block the advances of the masses. Just in the period since 1964 we have to note the two massacres in the Catavi-Siglo Veinte mine in 1965, the massacre in Milluni and Alto la Paz in the same year, the Saint John's Day massacre in the Siglo Veinte and Hua-

nuni, the occupations of the trade-union headquarters, the destruction of the labor-owned radio stations, as well as other such incidents. All of these actions were carried out under the command of General Ovando, who exercised the supreme authority over the army, and the present team of military rulers.

If this is the history of the army forces, which today are the ruling party-army, it would be strange that in the twinkling of an eye, without debates or serious internal crises, this entire institutionalized body changed its mind, cast off its past, and became progressive, revolutionary, and anti-imperialistic. What kind of a miracle is this?

We do not deny the possibility of a change in sectors of the army influenced by the technical, scientific, and military triumphs of the socialist camp and by the defeat of the imperialists at the hands of the advancing revolutionary masses. The class struggle does not spare any organization, however monolithic, and the army will not be an exception. But only revolution, revolutionary struggle, will disintegrate the oppressor army, freeing sectors that will go over to the people and join a new liberation army emerging from the ranks of the people. In the tradition of Lenin, we do not believe that the army and its commanders will make an about-face as a result of simple persuasion or any awakening of "their conscience." The force that will divide this army, demoralize it, and win for the people any progressive sector that might exist within it will be revolutionary struggle. That is the historic lesson of all revolutions.

But it must be made very clear that an instrument like the army-party is not qualified to head a revolution leading to the national and social liberation of Bolivia. In the present period in world history of transition between two systems and modes of production, revolution means a direct struggle for socialism. The road of civilization and progress for the backward peoples leads through the overthrow of the capitalist classes holding power and the defeat of imperialism which is their underpinning.

Moreover, the military rulers themselves say that they are not trying to create a socialist society and that they do not propose to elevate the work-

ing class to power. We stress that the army-party has replaced the traditional bourgeois parties which are in crisis and has assumed the task of preserving the capitalist system within the structure of imperialist domination. But the present Bolivian political conditions and the catastrophic economic crisis require extreme measures. The country has been reduced to the status of an international beggar. It is being strangled by the control of the imperialist concerns and manifold American organizations. In this situation also the ruling army lacks the finances for maintaining, and still less for modernizing, itself. These difficulties can only be met with drastic medicine, by sacrificing a sector of the exploiting and oppressor classes themselves. The policy of the rope and massacre had failed, while the insurrection headed by the guerrilla movement threatened to destroy all

the underpinnings of the system. In these circumstances and in harmony with the American new right, the military had to steal some popular banners and "make a revolution" against imperialism. So, we are seeing military officers educated by the Pentagon and headed by Ovando, who only months before was in the USA as a special guest of the top American brass, taking on the coloration of "left nationalists."

This is nothing new. In certain circumstances, in order better to defend their interests, the oppressing classes find themselves forced to "move to the left" and make some concessions. But having retained power in their hands, thanks precisely to this maneuver, these oppressing classes quickly take back what they have given and even increase their profits once the moment of difficulty is past.

propriation of surplus value by capitalist enterprises. Both state and cooperative ownership operate within the laws of capitalism. And the entire country remains a part of the structure of imperialism.

As for the proposals to assure national sovereignty, the contradictions in the program of the army-party are evident and demonstrate its limitations and weaknesses. On the one hand, the program declares that the state will recover the natural resources turned over to foreign companies under disadvantageous conditions, or that it will enforce a fair sharing of the profits. Later it states that foreign investment coming in to develop the country will be protected. Here we are confronted with another demagogic absurdity. No foreign imperialist concern invests in backward countries to develop them. What the foreign investors are looking for is a high rate of profit and their policy is one of looting the country. Therefore, all the concessions for the exploitation of natural resources made by semicolonial countries are harmful to the national interest and none contains or recognizes a "fair share" for the state. The history of Bolivia, of Latin America, and the entire colonial and semicolonial world shows this in tragic dimensions. Protecting private foreign investment means ignoring this experience and, in practice, opening the gates of the country to imperialist colonization.

The formulations on industrialization, protecting national industry and capital are out of the bourgeois arsenal and assume a utopian independent capitalist development in Bolivia.

National sovereignty and underdevelopment are interdependent problems which can only be solved outside the framework of the imperialist-capitalist system. The underdevelopment and backwardness of the colonial and semicolonial countries have increased the development of the imperialist centers. We are a poor, underdeveloped country because the imperialist center takes the social surplus or the economic residue available for investment produced in the country. It does this not only through direct exploitation by foreign concerns but by means of the economic and social structure created by imperialism in which trading relationships play a very important role. A serious and

5. The Theoretical and Political Content of the 'Mandato Revolucionario'

The above conclusion is confirmed by the programmatic document released by the armed forces under the name of "Mandato Revolucionario." As a work of political theory, it barely reaches the level of a bourgeois reformist program, with the typical populist phrasemongering used to conceal such objectives.

The central and leading ideas of this program can be summed up in the following points:

1. A national model of state organization. A system neither "exclusively capitalist nor exclusively socialist." Coexistence of various types of ownership (state, cooperative, private).

2. National sovereignty over the sources of production; recovery of natural resources turned over to foreign companies on disadvantageous conditions, or a readjustment of the state share of the profits of the operations.

3. Heavy industry based on the mines and an industrial revolution in the countryside.

4. Protection of national capital and industry, and guarantees for private foreign investment.

5. A study of the possibility of raising wages and introducing profit sharing.

6. The right of self-determination and relations with the socialist countries.

7. National unity and an alliance of classes.

As can be seen, these planks are not new. They were popularized by the right wing of the MNR and, in a situation of a crisis endangering the system, they represent a bourgeois program.

The proposition of a state of undefined character, neither capitalist nor socialist, is an absurdity from the standpoint of political science. Everybody knows that the state is a repressive historical entity which arose to guarantee the privileges and interests of the ruling class. The capitalist state protects the bourgeoisie in its appropriation of the social surplus produced by the workers. A workers or socialist state protects the interests of the workers in power; it destroys the roots of capitalist exploitation and creates the conditions for building socialism. There can be no intermediate kind of state, neither capitalist nor socialist. This is the ABC of the theory of the state, which even the capitalist theoreticians admit. If this formulation is resorted to, it is out of a need to confuse the masses. Moreover, the coexistence of state, cooperative, and private ownership does not change the nature of the state because in essence the Bolivian regime is still based on wage-labor exploitation and the ap-

responsible policy, a revolutionary policy, that really tried to develop Bolivia would have to break this circle of dependence and exploitation. There can be no development as long as the economy is tied in with the imperialist system.

Bourgeois programs like the "Mandato Revolucionario" have already failed under the MNR in Bolivia, Frei in Chile, Betancourt in Venezuela, Belaúnde in Peru, and under other such regimes in backward countries. After failing in its terrorist military repression, the army is taking up the program of the government it ousted in 1964, now touting the same program dressed up in populist verbiage. The army-party, which has taken over the task of preserving the system by fulfilling the role of the bourgeoisie and its parties, will also fail. As long as the country stays within the framework of imperialism there will be no real development, national independence, or solution of its chronic crisis. Moreover, it is evident that the masses are not willing to sacrifice themselves for industrialization in the context of economic dependence and exploitation. The masses are not renouncing their class interests, and we already have conflicts which in their development will lead to a confrontation with the Ovando government. Once it has failed in its mission of saving the capitalist system by means of a feeble bourgeois program, the army will return to its repressive offensive, as in 1965.

Nationalizing the Gulf Oil Co., which the Ovando government found itself forced to do in view of the resistance of this imperialist concern to raising the state's royalties, was a bourgeois step. As an isolated measure, the nationalization will remain enmeshed in the structural webs of capitalism without benefiting the people in any real way, as was the case with the nationalization of the mines.

We must be conscious of the fact that nationalizing the Gulf Oil Co. was a drastic measure the army-party resorted to for the purpose of grappling with the debacle of the bourgeois system. It is true that this measure harms the particular interests of one imperialist consortium but it is also apparent that it has served momentarily to take some steam out of the revolutionary forces that were about to explode. Spokesmen for imperial-

ism have justified this step, although they do not like it. Rockefeller is among them. For him it is now a choice between the "new breed of progressive officers" who are appearing in Latin America and the *barbudos*, that is, the revolutionists.

From the theoretical standpoint, the "Mandato Revolucionario" does not go beyond the positions of bourgeois reformism and revision, which are based on the utopian idea of a progressive bourgeoisie and a division of the revolutionary process into two distinct and separate stages. These theories have already been condemned by history. In this period of imperialist domination, capitalism and the national bourgeoisie can never remedy backwardness and underdevelopment. There is no "revolutionary bourgeoisie." Therefore, the role of liberating the peoples and leading them to progress falls to the revolutionary socialist forces, to the working class.

The triumph of the Cuban revolution meant the burial of bourgeois reformism and revisionism. Fidel Castro's words in his speech concluding the first OLAS conference were very precise in this regard:

"There are times when political documents, called Marxist, give the impression that someone has gone to an archive and asked for a form: form 14, form 13, form 12; they are all alike, with the same empty words. . . . And in what way is this different from a catechism, and in what way is it different from a litany, from a rosary? . . . Because there are theses that are 40 years old; for example, the famous thesis concerning the role of the national bourgeoisies. How hard it has been to become convinced, finally, that this idea is an absurdity on this continent; how much paper, how many phrases, how much empty talk have been wasted while waiting for a liberal progressive, anti-imperialist bourgeoisie.

"And we ask ourselves if there is anybody who, at this time, can believe in the revolutionary role of a single bourgeoisie on this continent?"

Our position is clear. Bolivia's backwardness and underdevelopment will not be cured by the half-way measures of a bourgeois program. These evils can be cured only by a socialist revolution led by a revolutionary army of national and social liberation arising out of guerrilla warfare. They

can be cured only by a revolution with the objective of creating a new state and a new society in Bolivia following along the road opened up by socialist Cuba, a process that will culminate with the expulsion of imperialism from all of Latin America.

In order to support its postulates, as could be expected, the "Mandato Revolucionario" of the armed forces calls for the formation of a social alliance, or class front of the bourgeoisie, the middle class, and the worker masses. The MNR governments also proclaimed themselves multiclass but all the workers know that their policy was bourgeois, antiworker, and ended up serving imperialist interests.

The Ovando government is appealing for the support of the worker masses. But its program does not mention a single concrete problem of the working class. It offers only to study the question of higher wages and profit sharing. While giving guarantees to national capital and protecting private foreign investment, the Ovando government has rushed to freeze wages. This is no more than a repetition of the economic policy in force from the time of the MNR, and continuing under Barrientos, of shifting the weight of the crisis onto the backs of the workers.

In the area of international policy, maintaining relations with the USSR has long since ceased, in its political effects, to be a revolutionary measure for a capitalist state. To the contrary, the presence of the USSR in countries where there are violent revolutionary crises represents support for moderate and conservative tendencies. The USSR proclaims and practices peaceful coexistence, is an opponent of guerrilla warfare and the masses seizing power by violent revolution, and it advocates the peaceful road. Over and above the economic accords, these positions of the USSR are politically convenient for the Ovando government. Faced with the spread of guerrilla warfare, the Colombian bourgeoisie also resorted to establishing relations with the USSR. As Fidel Castro said, relations and economic cooperation between the USSR and bourgeois governments shaken by revolutions do not help socialism.

The conclusion is unequivocal. The "Mandato Revolucionario" as a program and the measures taken by the Ovando government belong to the ar-

senal of a desperate bourgeoisie in a catastrophic crisis. The bourgeoisie finds itself forced to resort to certain reforms that appear bold and radical in order to contain and break up the overpowering revolutionary process headed by the guerrillas and in order to remedy its mortal financial crisis. Rather than be shattered by a revolution, it is trying to prolong its existence even if it means sacrificing some of its interests.

Shaken by the advance of the guerrillas and the radicalization of the masses, the army-party has adopted a leftist language. But its objectives go no further than wanting to modernize the bourgeois state, to rejuvenate it from above, to put a new coat of paint on its facade without, however, changing the real causes of the national backwardness. The eloquent speeches of the military commanders have not made a dent in the structure of national and imperialist ex-

ploitation. For example, Ovando declares that he is in a war to the death with imperialism. But what kind of a war is this when imperialism continues to maintain the Bolivian army and when the imperialist Peace Corps and military missions are still operating in Bolivia? This war is a fixed game, like the boxing matches that are decided in advance, where the winner is already known.

The struggle for Bolivian national independence is a much more serious question and it has not been solved with the nationalization of the Gulf Oil Co. National liberation is bound up indissolubly with social revolution and can only be achieved by defeating capitalism, defeating imperialism, and building socialism. This is the lesson of Cuba. The road that our country and Latin America must follow is that of the victorious Cuban revolution!

6. The New Lineup of the Parties Toward the Ovando Government

As we have said, the "save-the-capitalist-state" operation mounted by the army-party is aimed at politically disarming the masses and the opposition groupings that are called leftist.

The initial result has been the arousal of expectations among the people and the appearance of hopes in broad sectors. This has enabled the officers to relax the military encirclement of the mines without risk, giving the impression that we are returning to a democratic climate.

With these measures and the nationalization of the Gulf Oil Co., the military command has moved to fight for the leadership of mass mobilizations, as was evident in the demonstration of last October 21. The army accepts mass mobilization as long as it is under its direction and control.

In the heat of this process, some deviations favorable to the military operation are already appearing, which must be unmasked.

a) The bourgeois and petty-bourgeois parties are rushing to pledge their unconditional support for the Ovando government. Through "national left fronts" they are trying to link themselves to it. This is the attitude of the FSB [Falange Socialista Boliviana — Bolivian Socialist Pha-

lanx], the MNR, PRIN [Partido Revolucionario de Izquierda Nacionalista — Revolutionary party of the Nationalist Left], and the PDC [Partido Demócrata-Cristiano — Christian Democratic party]. At the same time the government is promoting the creation and development of its own parties—the ANR and the PRN [Partido de la Revolución Nacional — Party of the National Revolution]. All these formations converge in their opposition to socialism, to the proletarian revolution, and to the guerrillas. In the last analysis, these currents are defenders of the capitalist status quo. Riding on the coattails of the ruling military officers, they seek to slip into the state apparatus by virtue of canalizing and leading the mass mobilization. They are selling themselves on the basis of delivering popular support. Moreover, it is they who have assumed the task of providing the political theory for the "Ovandista left national revolution." These acrobatics by notorious opportunists anxious to exploit the advantages of power have no great importance. The masses are already moving away from them with a sure-sighted discernment.

b) More important are the deviations that may occur in the workers move-

ment, developing out of the trade-union bureaucracies and the old leadership of the COB [Central Obrera Boliviana — Bolivian Workers Federation]. In these leaderships there is a mixture of pro-Soviet revisionists and reformists with a socialist veneer, who are supported by CP and PRIN activists.

The deviationist views of these opportunists are far from making a careful estimate of the interests of the working class and the needs of real economic and social development of the country through a revolution achieving national and social liberation. They start by accepting the claim, solely on the evidence of official declarations and without any sociological analysis, that the Ovando government embodies a real revolution. The only thing that is missing, according to them, is the people, a mass mobilization. The revolution, they say, is a vertical one and in that lies its weakness, a weakness which it can overcome by basing itself on the people, incorporating the masses into the government. The slogan of these opportunists, therefore, has been "Workers to Power," "The People to Power." They call on the officers to bring the workers into the regime. They complement this by presenting Ovando with a program to carry out, in the belief that the officers will move on from nationalism to socialism. For these opportunists, defending the nationalization of the Gulf Oil Co. includes giving support and political confidence to General Ovando.

This is the ideological context in which the Communists, the left Prinitas and other petty-bourgeois groups are operating, although with their own characteristics.

The Communists add their ancient cliché (Form 12, 13, 14, as Fidel would say) that the contradiction between the oppressed nation and the oppressor imperialist center takes precedence over the class struggle. They continue to use this argument to justify their bankrupt thesis of "revolution by stages" and the role of the "progressive bourgeoisie." With the establishment of diplomatic relations with the USSR, the Communists will have attained all their aspirations and will soon come out as Ovando's best defenders.

As for the Lora splinter group, which has been an instrument of provoca-

tion for years, it is devoting itself, as it has in the past, to discrediting the guerrillas. During the repression that started in July, this bourgeois poltroon spent his time condemning the guerrillas in little communiqués, which the papers published for him, and in giving lectures ridiculing the heroic and valiant conduct of the ELN fighters. In reality, the behavior of this yellow ex-revolutionary is gratifying to the counterrevolutionaries. Claiming to "evaluate" the guerrilla movement, he always tried to discredit it before the masses. His present position, as in the past, is politically yellow and cowardly and confined to mere syndicalist and economist activism. He continues spinning theories about a "mass insurrection" in the abstract and for a vague far-off time. "The conditions do not exist now," "the masses are not ready for the revolutionary program." For this ex-Marxist, ex-internationalist, and ex-Trotskyist, the conditions never exist. As a bourgeois poltroon, Lora is frightened by revolution and still more by the noise of arms that the guerrillas make. Lora's fate is to end up like Tristán Marof, a mediocre and dishonest writer. In his counterrevolutionary views regarding the guerrillas, Lora already has a fitting companion in Ricardo Anaya.

The other splinter group, personified by the ex-Portista [member of POR—Partido Obrero Revolucionario—Rev-

olutionary Workers party, the Bolivian section of the Fourth International] Amadeo Vargas, has no life but that breathed into it and allowed it by the military establishment. Usurping and exploiting the name of the POR and the Fourth International, this agent of the bourgeoisie has stood up to openly support and glorify the military caste and Ovando. He calls them "part of the world revolutionary current." Reaching the culmination of his political degeneration, he denies the need for revolution, claiming that "power must be taken little by little." With his cult of the masses and spontaneous mass mobilizations which at bottom conceal his impotence to take a part in the process, Vargas reduces the revolutionary program to a simple platform of economic gains. Now he has become an active coordinator of the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois parties supporting Ovando. This bourgeois agent has nothing in common with the POR or the Fourth International.

The radicalized masses and the revolutionary workers have nothing in common with all these opportunistic, tail-ending, and capitulationist tendencies. From the beginning of the guerrilla movement in 1967, these splinter groups have ceased to have any historical validity, becoming a crust on the mass movement which must be cleaned away.

7. Promote an Independent Mass Mobilization Led by the Revolutionary Army of National Liberation for the Conquest of Power

The Ovando government, the army-party, and its "Mandato Revolucionario" declarations and messages do not embody a popular and workers revolution. They are not part of the revolution for national and social liberation that is advancing in Latin America and the world. To the contrary, they are a by-product of a bourgeoisie at bay, struggling to survive; they are obstacles, barriers, which a decaying capitalist society throws up to halt a revolutionary advance. Thus, they are a manifestation of the impotence and the retreat of the bourgeoisie.

We Marxist-Leninist, Trotskyist revolutionists must draw a line of fire between ourselves and this government and all the opportunistic tendencies

supporting it. Our duty is to prevent the Bolivian masses from being deceived and led into a defeat. Revolutionists cannot help to confuse the masses so that they will support a government that is not their own.

The principled and revolutionary position we proclaim before the masses is *independent action and no political confidence* in the Ovando government, its bourgeois program, or the army-party and its operation to rescue the capitalist system.

But not only this. In unity with the masses, we Marxist-Leninist, Trotskyists stand up as a political alternative, as the builders of an independent revolutionary power opposing the mili-

tary government.

This is what differentiates us sharply from the other tendencies that claim to represent the working class. While they place their hopes in Ovando and the officers who call themselves "nationalists," continually appealing to them to become revolutionists, we advocate a real revolution, a revolution with a socialist content.

Since Ovando is a representative of the bourgeoisie, it is naïve, if not stupid, to appeal to him to accomplish tasks which belong to the revolutionary proletariat and its vanguard. Calling on Ovando to give the workers a share in the government amounts to a betrayal because it would subject them to bourgeois control and leadership. It is a different thing to advocate the slogan of "Workers to Power" under the leadership of the workers' vanguard and through an armed revolution. This is the revolutionary Marxists' strategy for seizing power. The rest is shameful tail-ending of impotent petitioners who hope that somebody, anybody but them, will take on the responsibility for making the revolution. The difference is clear; the opportunists resign themselves to a policy of applying pressure while remaining hitched to the cart of the bourgeoisie. We pose our own independent alternative for organizing the revolution and seizing power.

Revolutionists do not abdicate their role of leading the people to victory on behalf of anyone. We are convinced that socialism is not built with patches and crumbs begged from imperialism. We must remind any naïve elements who, dazzled by the reforms Ovando has carried out in self-preservation, might think they see an alternative road to liberation along Ovando's path that the system of imperialist exploitation, that the power of the bourgeoisie will never be destroyed by small conquests. In order to break this power, a real revolution is needed, which means the destruction of the structure of the entire system of exploitation. Because if this power is not broken and the bourgeoisie remains in control, these small conquests will be absorbed by imperialism. Bolivian history is rich in examples that teach this lesson.

Two basic tasks arise from this revolutionary position:

1. *Promoting, impelling, and leading an independent mass mobilization by means of a transitional program.* The

military's operation to rescue the bourgeoisie and the bourgeois state has forced it to relax the repression of the unions. Having failed in its attempt to destroy the unions, the government is now moving to animate the unions with the aim of hitching them to its cart. This makes possible a certain democratic leeway which must be utilized to the maximum. We must provide the driving force for a reorganization of the entire workers movement from the individual unions on up to the COB, based on an independent classline. But trade-union reorganization must be combined with struggle for a program of economic, social, and political demands. We must resume the struggle from the level it had reached when the repression came. This is not a new struggle starting from zero, but one which will incorporate all the gains and experiences of past years and will be enriched by all the conclusions drawn by the workers in these last five years of military terror. In its organizational aspect, the mass mobilization will be based on the COB as the unifying center of the working class, the peasantry, the students, and the poor sectors of the middle class.

The following points must be central to a transitional program providing impetus to a mass mobilization: reestablishment of workers control in all private and nationalized industry; expulsion of imperialist concerns from control of the national resources; restoration of the miners' wages to the level of May 1965, combined with a general raise for all workers in the country; restoration of the jobs of 3,000 workers fired because of political and union activity and occupation of closed factories; promoting a real agrarian reform to rescue the peasants from their poverty; and opening the primary schools, the high schools, and the universities to the hundreds of thousands of young people who are getting no education or professional training. This program must be understood as the bridge that will lead the people to workers power and socialism, and agitation around it must be conducted in conjunction with a revolutionary strategy.

2. We must promote a mass mobilization, raising the class struggle to its highest level, in order to unleash a revolution and take power. Revolution is a process shaped by the class struggle. It requires flesh-and-blood revolutionists and an organizational

instrument capable of taking power. We are living in a revolutionary age when most of the conditions which the Marxist classics list as necessary for taking power are present. We must now construct the appropriate instrument for accomplishing this task.

In the present situation in Bolivia of a militarization of politics and total control of the country by an army-party, a situation which is part of the process going on throughout Latin America, the way to construct this instrument and take power is armed struggle — concretely, guerrilla warfare.

Guerrilla warfare is still a valid method. The blows suffered and the losses of men and equipment are not important. However painful, all these losses can be repaired. The important thing is to be clear on the fact that there is no other path for real revolutionists. The illusions conjured up by Ovando will quickly vanish and be dissipated by the crack of the army's guns firing on the masses. The process is heading toward a confrontation. But victory or defeat in this confrontation will depend on the extent to which a correct solution has been prepared.

The revolutionists and the workers vanguard must remember 1964 and 1965. Only those who have arms and are determined to use them, relying on their own strength, can take power.

An insurrectionary mass mobilization, no matter how broad, will end up being defeated by modern armies functioning as the political parties of the bourgeoisie. Mexico City and Córdoba are examples of this.

During the MNR regime, the COB unified the power and strength of the Bolivian masses. But this power was shattered, evaporated in the face of the preventive coup of the army commanded by Ovando and Barrientos. There are some who have not learned from reality and want to repeat the old bankrupt schemes.

The mass insurrections in Mexico City and Córdoba and the COB in Bolivia were defeated because they lacked two elements: a) Preparation and determination to take power by themselves. They limited themselves to pressuring the capitalist system in order to obtain some benefits. A mere policy of pressure does not arm the masses either ideologically or materially, and opens the way to defeat. b) An armed instrument or military

organization. You cannot take power with leaflets, street jingles, or speeches. You need a military organ, prepared, trained, and capable of meeting the armed force of the capitalist army.

Also there will be a new defeat in Bolivia if we let the opportunists and capitulationists gain control of the trade-union organizations and put them to sleep with their pacifist lullabies.

The sign of the times is war. Armies have come to replace the traditional parties of the bourgeoisie and have been converted into armed political parties. In order to confront them, revolutionists must also create an army, a revolutionary army. Otherwise, the mobilized masses will stand naked against the guns of the bourgeoisie. If in Bolivia today the army-party has taken a turn, trying to give the impression that it is with the people and leading a revolution, it is only owing to tactical measures aimed at preventing a greater spread of revolution — as we have said. Once this plan has failed, the repression will return.

But this people's army cannot be organized from the beginning on the basis of large units and heavy armament. It must necessarily begin with small guerrilla nuclei which, forged in victories over the enemy, will become a great rebel army that will take power alongside the peasant and urban masses.

In this direction, assimilating the lessons of the Bolivian experience and the needs of the militarily surrounded masses, the guerrilla movement arose in 1967 under the command of Che and reappeared in 1969 with Inti Peredo.

Despite the defeats suffered, we reaffirm the validity of guerrilla warfare. Therefore, the duty of every Marxist-Leninist revolutionary is to join in this conception. Giving life to the guerrilla movement and the revolutionary army is intimately bound up with revolutionary mobilization of the masses; this will be the culture medium of the guerrillas, as Che said. Guerrilla warfare is the continuation by other means of the class struggle; it is the culmination of the mass movement.

Here is the fundamental task for Marxist-Leninist revolutionaries — *mobilize the masses in a revolutionary struggle for the seizure of power in conjunction with, and under the leadership of, the revolutionary army!*

APPENDIX II: For Bolivia

[The following is a translation of a *Rouge* supplement published in October 1969.]

* * *

The Corruption

On the brink of economic bankruptcy, since 1964 Bolivia has been under a military regime which instituted a pitiless dictatorship. Imperialism and the bourgeoisie have made the masses suffer from their policy of looting the country and their incapacity to regulate seriously the smallest economic problem. The only way the system can survive is through savage repression. All the political organizations are illegal, except the puppet groups which, at home or abroad, support the regime. The trade-union organizations are also banned. All efforts toward rebuilding of the unions have been violently suppressed. In the factories, the military occupation continues in a climate of terror. The miners' districts resemble concentration camps.

The clique which came to power in the last coup d'etat is attempting to give itself a liberal image by nationalizing the holdings of the Gulf Oil Company; this palace revolution reflects the concern of American imperialism over the revolutionary upsurge on the continent—and the necessity it feels of maintaining military juntas that play demagogically on the nationalist aspects of the anti-imperialism of the masses so that they serve their purposes better.

The Revolutionary War

The insoluble governmental crisis (of a General Ovando or the others), Bolivia's geographical position in the heart of the continent, makes this country both the weakest link in the imperialist domination of Latin America and also a strategic site for the development of the revolution on a continental scale—in view of its common frontiers with Peru, Brazil, Paraguay, Argentina and Chile.

That is why Ernesto Che Guevara installed the general staff of his army in Bolivia. His assassination could not keep down a new burst of the armed struggle for long. The ELN (Army of National Liberation), under the command of Inti Peredo and the POR (Workers Revolutionary Party, Bolivian section of the Fourth International) directed by Hugo González Moscoso, holding faithfully to the road laid out by Che's first guerrillas, together raised the torch again.

In order to allow the development of the mass workers and peasants movement, muzzled at present by the white terror, there is no other way out for the Bolivian revolutionists except to take up arms, except revolutionary war against the system.

The Repression

After the publication of the manifesto "We shall return to the mountains," the execution of the traitor Honoratio Rojas (responsible for the ambush at Vado del Yeso, where ten of Che's comrades fell in 1967) marked the resumption of the guerrilla offensive.

The repression intervened at this decisive moment. Fol-

lowing a stool pigeon's tip-off, it struck at the militants of the ELN and the POR. Inti Peredo died in battle in a house in La Paz. The police are searching for Hugo González Moscoso; his home was plundered. A threat was made to execute him without trial if captured. Underground supply depots of the ELN and the POR, containing arms, radio equipment, surgical and medical supplies, were seized.

The Necessary Support

This blow is not fatal. It severely cuts into the reserves of men and supplies patiently accumulated and prepared during two years of underground activities following the death of Che. Nevertheless, none of the guerrilla organizations has been dismantled; the massive support from the cities and countryside should allow the merciless struggle to be taken up again. During the underground period, the Bolivian revolutionists reorganized their network, re-established contacts. For this they need our support, our active support and not just our verbal support; not just the solidarity of press releases.

At the threshold of a new stage, from now on they must have the weapons required by their politics. In an underdeveloped country where an underground revolutionary cadre can live on 75 francs [\$15] a month, the thousands of dollars collected should aid in building the revolutionary army, with all the means they need to bring down the pro-imperialist bourgeoisie.

The Communist League appeals for financial and political support to the Bolivian Revolution.

The Communist League is setting up a solidarity fund for its sister organization, the POR of Bolivia.

The POR and Armed Struggle

The POR, which has taken part in all the great revolutionary struggles of the Bolivian people since the end of the second world war, has sunk deep roots in the mines in the course of its history. It was outlawed in January 1967 at the start of Che's guerrilla campaign. The Trotskyists of the POR publicly supported Che's guerrilla struggle and played their role of revolutionary militants in the mines and universities by arousing support for the guerrillas. Theirs was the only party to explain to the masses that the armed struggle was the continuation of their struggle and that they should support it vigorously (in the POR manifesto, "All the people are on the side of the guerrillas"). The POR likewise carried on work among the soldiers, explaining the objectives of the guerrilla struggle and the political and economic causes for its appearance. Since being banned, the POR has lived in the strictest clandestinity, devoting all its efforts to again launching revolutionary war.

* * *

Against the internationalization of the forces of repression under the leadership of U. S. imperialism we must organize the international solidarity of militant revolutionists and their organizations.

Let us help the Bolivian Revolution by supporting the Bolivian fighters materially, let us give financial aid to the POR in order to strengthen the armed struggle.

APPENDIX III: Despite the Setbacks, Guerrilla Warfare Continues to Be the Way to National and Social Liberation

[The following is a translation of an article that appeared in *Combate*, organ of the Partido Obrero Revolucionario, Bolivian section of the Fourth International, in the issue dated the first fortnight of November 1970.]

* * *

As in October 1967, the theorists of the failure of guerrilla warfare as a method for taking power have reappeared. Lacking serious political arguments, they have returned like vultures with their thesis to feed on the bodies of those who fell at Teoponte and on the partial setbacks of guerrilla warfare. Eager to justify their capitulations, betrayals, and class collaborationism, revisionism—without examining the circumstances and causes that led to the defeats—is turning each setback into a political argument against armed struggle and guerrilla warfare. They are always the ones who bet on the winners and admit the winner is right.

In 1967 the butcher generals and their civilian lackeys said that Che was defeated because he didn't have popular support, and that consequently, guerrilla warfare didn't correspond to the reality in Bolivia. Today, the scab trade unionists, the revisionists, are talking about the destruction of guerrilla warfare, echoing the words of General Reque Terán. There are those who still maintain that the direct action of the masses triumphed, winning in contrast to armed struggle, and they call the government of General Torres a victory.

Partial Setbacks and Tactical Errors

What the pacifist trade unionists don't understand is that the defeats and setbacks suffered by the guerrillas were partial. That the errors they might have committed were tactical and not strategic. In other words, that the conception of taking power for socialism by means of armed struggle continues to hold, and is applicable for the entire present period. The scab trade unionists are the ones who have the least right to talk about the errors made in the guerrilla war. From his comfortable bourgeois armchair the revisionist or trade unionist who only knows how to put forward paper petitions, so as to yield on them in opposition to the interests of the working class, and who knows nothing about armed struggle, displays aggressiveness toward the fighters and enjoys pointing out mistakes.

Armed struggle is a difficult undertaking, and in the course of its development is dealt blows, failures and defeats. But whoever chooses this course of struggle, starting from the real conditions in the country and in Latin America, contrary to the cowards, doesn't do so with the idea that it is an easy, short struggle, but rather with the idea that it is the course that has to be followed if we want to make a revolution and take power.

Independently of the risks of each guerrilla front, above and beyond the personal qualities of the fighters, in spite of the loss of valuable lives, guerrilla warfare continues to be the road for taking power.

Justification for Guerrilla Warfare

The bourgeois cowards, scab trade unionists, and butcher generals don't need to give their consent to fighters and guerrilla warfare. Guerrilla warfare has already demonstrated its worth and political significance. Its appearance in 1967, Inti's continuation of it, and its reemergence at Teoponte has transformed the political situation in Bolivia, raised the class struggle to the level of the question of power for achieving socialism, and raised the consciousness of the workers, showing them that it is possible to confront imperialism and its national lackeys. If in fact guerrilla warfare has undergone military setbacks up to the present, it has scored considerable political victories. One cannot ignore that guerrilla warfare has smashed gorillaism, broken the army's monolithism, and is the principal cause for the continual crises of power that are shaking the country.

It is the presence of guerrilla warfare that has broken the encirclement of the mines, spurred the growing resurgence of the workers movement. If today these same scab trade unionists can talk to, even sell themselves to the incoming government, it is because guerrilla warfare has forced imperialism and the bourgeoisie to loosen their noose of oppression, so as to prevent an insurrectional explosion fanned by guerrillas.

Guerrilla warfare has accomplished much more politically in a short time than the economist and trade-union reformists in the last twenty years. The revisionists like to refer to the setbacks of Teoponte, to talk about the youth who were sacrificed, etc., but they forget that during the last two decades, with their pacifist sermons, their spontanéist adventures, they have led the working class into defeat after defeat, and massacre after massacre. If we're going to judge the methods by the number of fallen victims, so-called direct action comes out with poor odds, because it didn't "raise the consciousness of the masses or lead them to victory." It is a shameful burlesque to maintain that General Torres is or represents a triumph of the masses.

Reappraisal of the Struggle

It isn't that we have closed our eyes to the setbacks of guerrilla warfare. But to us its causes are very clear and have nothing to do with a strategic conception of armed struggle. Through the experience that the fighters gain through their action, they will correct their mistakes. Of this we are sure. The sacrifice of the heroic guerrillas will not be in vain; it will soon yield fruits, liberating Bolivia from imperialist and capitalist oppression.

APPENDIX IV: New Methods of Struggle

[The following is a translation of an editorial that appeared in *Combate*, organ of the Partido Obrero Revolucionario, Bolivian section of the Fourth International, in the issue dated the first fortnight of November 1970.]

* * *

Music pleasing to the ears of those who have adapted to the status quo, to the timorous who worship themselves and their pocketbooks, finally to the false revolutionists who are socialists in word and bourgeois in deed can be heard coming from the North American Embassy.

All of them have a common denominator, from Ambassador Siracusa to the armchair revolutionists. They want to live quietly, in peace. Guerrilla warfare has disturbed their sleep and digestion. The methods of struggle have to be changed so that imperialism can continue oppressing the country, so that capitalist enterprise can continue exploiting its workers, so that the opportunists can pursue their careers under the cloak of the generals in power. The flock has to return its respect to law and the established order.

The interests of an imperialism that is searching for social stability for its investments and those of the indigenous capitalists who want to continue exploiting surplus value are thereby joined to the positions defended by the supporters of the peaceful road and the worshippers of spontaneism and direct action of the masses. Therein lies a common interest in burying the guerrilla struggle as a method of struggle for taking power.

A former university rector and a scab trade unionist had the strange idea of declaring that "guerrilla warfare strengthens the right," and that "mass action triumphed during the October political crisis, whereas guerrilla warfare lost at Teoponte." And based on this falsification of history they both drew the conclusion that the methods of struggle have to be changed. As we know, General Reque Terán and the North American Ambassador also favor "a change in the methods of struggle."

But what is interesting is that those who are recommending a change in methods never practiced guerrilla warfare, but rather were always fighting it. And if they are now standing up, exaggerating the setbacks of Teoponte so as to pose a change of methods, it is because guerrilla warfare is having an impact, it has entered the consciousness of the people, and it has been transformed into an acquisition of the masses. Guerrilla warfare as a method for winning power has been transformed into a force that is preparing the struggles of tomorrow.

Far from strengthening the right or imperialism, guerrilla warfare has altered their course, made them retreat. Faced with the armed rising of the people, imperialism has been forced to ease up on its methods, to make concessions. The armies have been forced to raise the banners of reformism with the aim of blocking the guerrillas and isolating them from the people. The ones who are strengthening the right wing of the bourgeoisie are those who are adapting to their legality, those who are under the illusion that capitalism will peacefully hand over power. This is the outcome sought by imperialism, which has now become the electoral game.

During the October political and military crisis the masses were not victorious. Instead, the victory of General Torres was a defeat for the revolutionary masses and a victory for the army as an arm of the bourgeoisie. The October crisis demonstrates the limitations of direct action of the masses. A general strike can lead to workers power only if at the same time a Revolutionary Army exists that has emerged precisely through armed struggle. In the absence of this workers army, the mobilization of the masses only serves to shield a sector of the bourgeoisie, if it doesn't end in a bloody massacre.

Those who have to change methods of struggle if they truly consider themselves to be revolutionists and are prepared to free Bolivia from imperialist oppression are those who are bedazzled by and falling asleep to the sweet music broadcast from the North American Embassy.

APPENDIX V: The Current Situation in Bolivia: An Interview with Hugo Gonzalez

From *Intercontinental Press*, June 14, 1971, p. 544.

[Hugo González Moscoso, leader of the POR (Partido Obrero Revolucionario—Revolutionary Workers party, the Bolivian section of the Fourth International), gave the following interview in late April to Jean-Pierre Beauvais of the French Trotskyist weekly *Rouge*. We have translated the interview from the May 17 issue of *Rouge*.]

* * *

Question: How would you characterize the present situation in Bolivia?

Answer: Since Torres came to power, the situation has been marked by great instability. Ovando's exit was a clear manifestation of the disintegration of the Bolivian regime and of the only organization still capable of defending the interests of the local bourgeoisie and imperialism—the army, or rather the army-party, inasmuch as this is the role it really plays.

Totally discredited by his daily clashes with workers and students, Ovando had to be replaced. However, despite the advice of the American em-

bassy, the military chiefs could not agree on a substitute. The support Torres enjoyed from the workers and students enabled him to win out. The armed forces then apparently regrouped around Torres under the slogan "no victors and no vanquished."

This development, in fact, accelerated the crisis in the armed forces, which are now split into two, if not several, factions. The right wing is entirely manipulated by the State Department and the CIA and by their Brazilian military hirelings. On the other hand,

a nationalist wing, which, as an added attraction, claims to be revolutionary, is trying to follow a policy of bourgeois reform that involves making secondary concessions to the mass movement, with the evident aim of co-opting it.

One thing must be clearly understood, however. *Despite the divisions that have weakened it, in the last analysis the army, the military party of the bourgeoisie, still holds power.* [Emphasis in the original. — IP] Thus, the attempted coup January 10 and the recent events in Santa Cruz province must be viewed in the context of the split in the armed forces.

As regards the attempted coup January 10, of course, the facts are quite clear. The officers implicated in this affair are notorious CIA stooges.

The aborted coup in Santa Cruz is interesting, inasmuch as it revealed some very precise plans worked out by the imperialists. The province of Santa Cruz covers more than a third of the country's territory. Unlike the other regions, it is a zone of plains and forests extending uninterruptedly into Brazil.

The principal economic activity is carried on by the big tropical plantations, but the mineral and petroleum resources, unexploited in the main, are enormous. With the direct participation of officers and agents of the neighboring Brazilian regime, the imperialists tried to lay the groundwork for a separatist movement in this province, a movement that would base itself on the big landowners.

The imperialists were not aiming for an immediate success. They will carry out their plans if the revolutionary forces take power in La Paz. The March operation, in which some military leaders laid siege to the provincial capital, organizing demonstrations of planters and agricultural workers—who in this type of large landholding system are bound to their employers like slaves to masters—was intended to put Torres on notice and blackmail him with a threat of secession by the province . . . Everything was directly stage-managed by Washington and Brasilia.

Q. What is Torres's position toward the sectors of the army hostile to him?

A. Torres is not a "comrade," that is, an ally of the popular forces, as

some reformists and, above all, the Bolivian Communist party would have us believe. Basically he represents and defends his caste—the army—as part of his job of defending the class to which he belongs, the bourgeoisie. In this sense, he has had one clear objective since he came to power—to reunite the armed forces and, of course, reunite them around himself. All his efforts, all his steps pursue this aim. Of course, in the face of a mass mobilization of the workers, students, and certain sectors of the peasantry, he is forced to compromise . . . but that is only a technical step necessitated by the weakness of this regime. And he hopes, once the unity of the armed forces is restored, to bring the mass movement to heel.

For our part, we do not think that Torres will achieve his objective. The fissures in the army are too wide. The right-wing officers and the American services are too mistrustful of Torres, who, they think, is a captive of the worker and student mobilization. The most probable outlook is for a right-wing coup d'etat sweeping him away rather rapidly and for a severe repression to follow.

Q. What is the attitude of the working class toward Torres and perspectives like that?

A. One thing is clear. While they support Torres against threats of an extreme right coup d'etat, the most combative and advanced sectors of the working class do this only half-heartedly. In reality, they are struggling to impose their own solution to the Bolivian crisis, that is, a workers' and peasants' government that would be definitely and concretely anti-imperialist and socialist.

The history of these last months in Bolivia indicates this fact clearly. Thus, at the time of the January 10 coup, about 4,000 miners came to La Paz from the mining regions. They came in trucks with large stocks of dynamite expropriated in the mines. Officially, they came to defend the Torres government. When they arrived in La Paz, they went, still armed, to the presidential palace and demonstrated there. They offered a very strange type of support.

For several hours the miners demonstrated, shouting "Down With Imperialism," "Long Live Che," "Social-

ism Yes, Betrayal No," "Long Live the Guerrillas" . . . Torres did not dare come out, as they called on him to do. Finally he made a speech heavily larded with demagoguery. Unsatisfied, the miners continued to demonstrate. At last, after twenty-four hours, they agreed, under the pressure of some of their union leaders and thanks to some "economic" concessions by Torres, to return to the mines. This is one example among many indicating the mood of the Bolivian working class today.

But we must also take account of the attitude of the reformist union leaders and the Communist party. They are supporting Torres. And all their activity is taken up in maneuvering to channelize the energy of the masses and the mass movement into supporting the regime.

This attitude is reflected very concretely in the matter of arming the workers. This problem is on the agenda, and the consciousness of the workers themselves has reached the point where they raise it every day. The forms taken by the demonstration I have just described are a clear indication of this.

The reformist or CP leaders continually evade this question and try to divert this tendency, this demand, which would be a powerful asset for the workers when the time comes for them to impose their own solution and stop playing the role of arbiter between two factions of the army, an extremely dangerous role and one which they will not long be allowed to play, as we have seen. In attempting to carry out their policy, the reformist leaders have the advantage of not inconsiderable influence and even a certain prestige. Let us not forget that they were the victims of severe repression in the previous period.

Q. Much has been said about the People's Assembly, which, notably, was formed after the January 10 coup d'etat. What is the POR's position with regard to it?

A. This assembly was formed in the confusion at the time of the unsuccessful right-wing coup d'etat of January 10. It tended to try to become a workers' parliament, taking charge of organizing the response to the actions of the extreme right. As early as last October, we advanced the idea of form-

ing such an organization in our propaganda work. This idea was, in fact, taken up by many other sectors of the Bolivian left.

Confronted with the development of the People's Assembly, and once the danger of the rightist coup was passed, Torres took an extremely defensive attitude. Eventually, he chose to try to co-opt it. He took up a series of demands raised by the People's Assembly and granted it official recognition.

In the People's Assembly, which includes all the leftist parties and unions, the COB [Central Obrera Boliviana — Bolivian Labor Federation] plays the decisive role.

Thus, several positions have been expressed within the People's Assembly as to this body's future and what perspectives should be set for it.

The right, that is the reformists, uphold the idea that the People's Assembly should put itself at Torres's service, support his policy, and abdicate all powers of its own.

One centrist-type position calls for having the People's Assembly play the role of a bourgeois parliament, that is, keep a check on the executive branch.

The left wing, to which the POR belongs, has developed the idea that the People's Assembly should be a body that would discuss national problems and solutions for them but would leave the power in the hands of the mass organizations (unions and popular militia or people's army).

The situation is quite different today, in fact. The People's Assembly is hardly more than a kind of national parliament where the most important sectors of society are represented. The working class has a certain percentage of the seats, along with the peasants and the middle classes. Fur-

thermore, every organization that participated in the "People's Command" set up at the time of the [October 1970] coup d'etat has two representatives. It must also be noted that the People's Assembly does not meet regularly enough to be able to organize the popular forces.

In the present situation, thus, its perspectives are extremely limited. An acute political crisis might revive it, but that is not certain. The POR comrades in the People's Assembly, whether they represent the party directly or some union, hold no illusions. They are using the People's Assembly as a forum, as a platform. That is all.

Q. In the present situation what activities is the POR carrying on and what perspectives is it following?

A. In the present context, the party's work follows two main lines. On the one hand, we are striving to link ourselves with the masses and, over and above this, increase our forces. On the other, we are preparing internally for future confrontations, as a revolutionary party must do in a situation such as we have analyzed and in line with the developments that we expect to occur.

To pursue these two tasks at the same time, to combine them, is an extremely difficult thing. Under the Ovando government the party operated in completely clandestine conditions and was totally absorbed in armed work. Since last November, after Torres came to power, we have been able to redevelop our legal work aimed at the unions but also the peasants and the universities, where we had done very little before.

On the basis of our political analyses and program, we have registered

a number of gains and increased our strength markedly. But this was also a result of the prestige we gained in our previous armed work shoulder to shoulder with the ELN [Ejército de Liberación Nacional — National Liberation Army, the guerrilla force led in 1967 by Che Guevara].

Through our program we won the leadership of several small unions of urban workers. Last December our line was adopted in full by the La Paz Department [Province] congress of trade unions. In the universities we have won a large following, which is completely new for us, recruiting from the best student cadres in all the schools. Soon we are going to begin work aimed specifically at high-school students.

This growth in our mass influence is reflected in the progress of our publications. Our paper *Combate* comes out regularly each month. We are also publishing a monthly student paper and in the coming months we will put out a theoretical magazine.

But obviously this work cannot be capitalized on, or have any meaning in the long run, except in the context of preparing our organization for armed struggle. In the present unstable situation we look on everything as temporary. The repression that is to come will signal the start of a new stage of armed struggle on a scale previously unknown here.

This armed struggle will be a highly diversified one and will encompass the various sectors of the Bolivian population, from the miners to the peasants and including the students . . . Fundamentally it is this stage we are preparing for by trying to take full advantage of the opportunities offered us by the present situation.