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The Crisis of the LCR and the En Marcha Split

By the Political Bureau of the Liga Comunista of Spain (formerly Encrucijada
tendency of the LCR (Liga Comunista Revolucionaria))

I. The LCR at the Crossroads

1. The mobilizations against the War Councils of Burgos [military trials], in December 1970, opened a period of new importance in the class struggle in the territory of the Spanish state. Connecting up with the wave of the new rise of the world revolution experienced since 1968, they gave our country its character as one of the weakest links in the combined crisis of imperialism and Stalinism. The development of a broad layer of a struggling vanguard of the proletariat, youth, and other oppressed layers, who are ready for the most radical struggles, has more and more led since then to the greatest possibilities to carry forward the fundamental task of revolutionaries: *to go forward in the building of the Leninist-type party on the basis of the maturation of those vanguard sectors and on the basis of its struggle against the influence of reformists, centrists, and "leftists" through a resolute course toward the masses.* This is a course of preparing the proletariat and the oppressed masses with a view toward the general strike that will defeat the dictatorship, placing the question of power on the agenda.

All this suggested tasks that went far beyond the four ideological principles and the four radical tactical acquisitions of the various "leftist" groups that emerged in 1969-70, among whom was *Comunismo*. Because of this, the unprecedented rise since 1970 provoked the continual and unending crisis of all these groupings, which were unable to counterpose a total revolutionary political alternative to the reformist bankruptcy. The bulk of these currents had been moving, since their evasive centrist and "leftist" beginnings that couldn't effectively confront the sell-out line of the Spanish CP, toward growing direct adaptations to Stalinist politics or to syndicalism. On the back of this rise in struggles, and basing itself on this incapacity, Stalinism has been able to take advantage of a larger margin of maneuver in order to try to overcome the storm of its own crises, which continue deepening as the Carrillo leadership must go further in its offers of a "liberal" solution to the bankruptcy of Francoism. In fact, while the CP's policy of a "Pact for Freedom" [Pacto para la Libertad] unceasingly revolves toward new rightist readjustments, the mass struggle, pushed by the deepening of the contradictions, clashes with growing fury with this policy, going beyond it with an intensity never before seen. This feeds a process of erosion of the CP leadership's control over the vanguard fighters and over its own ranks, which are continuing to give rise to split-offs, despite the restraining role played by the

spectacle of the generalized political shipwreck of the centrist and "leftist" formations that lack a revolutionary program that would permit them to overcome their impotence and get firmly involved in the rise of the mass struggle.

2. The LCR's fight between the beginning of 1971 and May 1972 presupposed that greater possibilities for building the proletariat's revolutionary alternative to the crisis of capitalism and the dictatorship would arise from among these groups.

The LCR, which arose from the *Comunismo* group, was marked to a great extent by the common features of the generation of "leftist" and spontaneist groups of 1969-70. But it differed from them because of its understanding of the need to put the *strategy* of proletarian revolution, based on scientific foundations, and the *building* of the Marxist-Leninist party on the basis of this, in the commanding position, governing any other question. And above all, it was conscious that the resolution of such tasks could not be approached on a "national" level, but that it had to be linked up with the tradition of the revolutionary workers movement through the Marxism-Leninism of our time, Trotskyism, organizationally linking itself to the struggle to build the Fourth International.

Drawing closer to the Fourth International provided us with a general view of the world revolutionary rise since 1968, and with strategic elements that enabled us to place the crisis of Spanish capitalism, which was accelerating since the beginning of the last decade, within it. Later on we will underline how the positions worked out from this, which were clearly insufficient, tried in a disorganized way to patch over the open crevices by immediately going beyond the initial — exclusively "tactical" — projections under the blows of the spread and the radicalization of the workers and students actions we intervened in. For the moment, we will summarize these advances in the definition of the Revolutionary General Strike against Francoism, as a perspective of centralization of all the present actions of the proletariat and the oppressed masses.

These fragmentary developments, that surpassed those of any centrist or "leftist" organization, provided the basis for a tenacious fight to build an organization reaching into the principal areas of the country, which, through a centralized intervention around campaigns of agitation and propaganda (union elections, generalized struggles in SEAT, Ferrol, Vietnam, etc.) began to take hold not only among the student youth, but also in the workers

vanguard in various areas. The recomposition of the student movement in places like the University of Madrid or the middle school in Barcelona cannot be explained without the Liga. At the same time, the Liga was the leading force in popularizing and beginning to put into practice the methods of direct action and the forms of mass proletarian democracy in the workers movement, in various factory struggles. In particular, the dissemination of the experience of committees elected in assembly, and the practice of self-defense through pickets, was indissolubly linked to the constant struggle of the LCR. This is, in general terms, the LCR's credit side of the balance-sheet.

3. Nevertheless, when drawing up a balance-sheet of this period, we should recognize how insufficient, for going forward toward the fulfillment of our tasks, our willingness to struggle to build the party, which was and is our goal, turned out to be. We were barely armed with some strategic advances that were incorporated without order or arrangement, and we were disarmed by concepts that were foreign to the Leninist methods of party building. The central axis of our policy was, in reality, composed of some "tactics" for building the party that were foreign to these Leninist methods. *The reference to Marxist principles, as well as the strategic plans we worked out, were nothing more than fragmentary additions, subordinated to those "tactics" with which we tried to win an audience and militant forces within the worker and youth vanguard outside the vicissitudes and needs of the class struggle.* We lacked the sharpest weapon that we revolutionaries can employ for this: *the assimilation of the Transitional Program, the founding document of the Fourth International.* The consequence was that the LCR in no way surpassed in a radical form the "leftist" and centrist currents' inability to respond to the tasks of a period that we ourselves defined as the period of the Revolutionary General Strike.

In fact, the increase in the mass struggle obliged us to break through *Comunismo's* character as a circle and a theoretical group in order to respond to the immense possibilities to move forward in building the party in close liaison with the ongoing battles. Only the Transitional Program, bringing us the revolutionary Marxist method, was able to arm us to define the central tasks of the period and to assimilate the method of their accomplishment, the method of building the revolutionary party, the Fourth International. And actually, the *Comunismo* group ended up choosing the Fourth International through the conviction that *only its programmatic bases could constitute the point of departure in the effort to build the party.* A clear example of how the *Comunismo* group, in its last stage, struggled in the greatest confusion, but with the greatest sincerity, to open this path for itself, was the preparatory work for a conference, at the end of 1970, in which for the first time a correct presentation of the role of democratic demands, in particular the union question, was made and the problems of the Workers United Front and the Proletarian Front Government were approached. After these advances two things happened. First there was an acceleration in the rise of struggles, which through fights like the large construction strikes of 1970 ended up leading to the mobilizations against the Burgos Councils [military trials]. Second, the *Comunismo* group

began to study the Transitional Program. Of course such advances were still not sufficient to lead to a total break with "leftism" (for example, we persisted in our incorrect positions regarding the Workers Commissions.) But it would have made it possible to lay the basis for this break in case it was deepened, which didn't happen. One must see why. The reason is that, in the following months, the advance in understanding the method of the Transitional Program was supplanted by the adoption of the "policy of initiatives in action," a line of building the sections of the Fourth International in capitalist Europe, whose bases were defined at the FI's ninth congress. We stopped thinking about the need to approach the problem of the Proletarian United Front. We also gave up developing a strategy around the crisis of the dictatorship that we had begun, since all we needed at the time, according to the advice of some members of the French Ligue Communiste, was a "tactic of building the party." Thus, this policy successfully achieved the goal that its promoters in the world Trotskyist movement had assigned it: it eased a centrist group's entry into the Fourth International . . . on the basis of helping it to preserve its errors (cf. the method followed with the PRT).

According to this policy, we tried to build the Trotskyist organization, winning the best elements of the worker and youth vanguard, through "pushing forward actions capable of carrying along the healthiest part of the vanguard" without seeking to respond to the needs of the development of the workers and popular movement. What was involved was an orientation that was not aimed at the participation or pushing forward of mobilizations of the masses around their needs, an orientation *that did not confront the vanguard with these tasks*, but rather was centered around the development of "revolutionary actions of the vanguard" capable of showing which road the masses should follow. *All our efforts were directed toward asserting ourselves as a more "dynamic" "pole of reference" than the others, establishing, by example, the boundary between reformism and the class struggle.* Our whole policy was aimed at achieving a preponderance in the sectors of the worker and student vanguard that had broken with reformism, seeking to achieve this *outside of a revolutionary orientation toward the masses*, a task we left for *another "phase" of party building.* This policy was a reflection of, and in its way a factor in, the deepening of a growing adaptation to the centrism and "leftism" that was predominant in the "new vanguards" which we wanted to win, at the expense of pushing a class-against-class line capable of really confronting the new fighters with the collaborationist line of the Stalinist and union leaderships, capable of sharpening the contradictions between these leaderships and their members, capable of really ridding the centrist and "leftist" militants of their ultraleftism. The "unity in action" with the "revolutionaries," which was counterposed to the policy of workers united front, expressed the refusal to offer a vanguard, swamped by the tasks that the mass struggle raised, a revolutionary response to reformism. The other side of this coin was the abandonment of the tasks involved in fighting the Spanish CP's policy within the mainstream of the workers and popular movement, and the sectarian attitude toward the Workers Commissions, which are the Spanish proletariat's organizational expression under and against Francoism.

4. In this way, in a situation in which the explosion of generalized battles of growing scope, prepared by a thousand battles in the factories, sectoral mobilizations, etc., freed ever broader layers of fighters, making them open to action counterposed to the policy of the petty-bourgeois leaderships, and despite our having gone further than any other organization in the development of a line of generalization of the struggles—both in the objectives and in the methods of fighting—our rejection of a proletarian united-front line, our lack of understanding of the role played by the Workers Commissions and the role the Trotskyists should play within them, the exemplarist propagandism to which we reduced these objectives and methods of struggle, extraordinarily limited the scope of the orientations put forward by the LCR and the very possibilities of the LCR's development in the working class.

In its turn, our intervention in the student movement made us lose a large part of the advantages that a superior understanding of the general political dynamic of the struggles furnished us, to give us the strict goal of trying to spin off a fringe of the vanguard as the force to carry out our "organizational campaigns." This policy established a superficial activist orientation, sprinkled with spectacular visions, which placed us in the wake of the movement or made us follow its vicissitudes without trying to give it either objectives that would strengthen it, or an adequate organization. A so-called *"dialectic of the sectors of intervention,"* far removed from the Marxist dialectic, made us unable to play a role in *providing a backbone for the student movement, in the unification of the struggles of the student youth and the workers in the field of education, and in its link with the struggles of the working class.* Accentuating the very limitations of the isolated student movement, *it also held back the positive influence that the student movement could have exercised in the workers movement, and the aid that it could have lent it as a dynamic component of a strategic alternative of a class United Front against the dictatorship, while largely leaving the carrying out of a mass line in the university to the corporatist currents.* Thus, this policy, which cynically attempted to use the student movement as an "instrument" in service of a "tactic" of party building, in fact introduced "leftist" concepts into the organization, which have taken root and begun to grow in the culture medium of the student movement and further on of the scattered "successes," pushed in the medium-run a process of the loss of influence of the Trotskyists in the youth.

To all this must be added the profound waste that this meant for the organization, and the elevated repressive cost—sometimes affecting whole sectors—that the course of minority gadfly initiatives assumed.

The contradictions of our intervention very quickly made the carrying out of corrections necessary. The class struggle, for most of 1971-72, was running over our initial estimates. Every day the combativity and the radicalization of the masses was getting stronger. With the rise of struggles, the formation of new layers of vanguard workers caused an unequal, but real, increase in the number of those struggling in the Workers Commissions, which we had deprecated, strengthening the influence of the CP fraction, which has hegemony in the Workers Commissions. The "far left," taken unawares by this unexpected "recupera-

tion" of Stalinism, saw no other means of "correcting" and "linking itself to the masses" than to move toward ever more rightist positions. This is how the decomposition of "leftism," its passing over to an unstable "radical centrism" and, most recently, to "right centrism" has been produced.

The result of the famous tactic of winning the vanguard and winning hegemony in the far left was the *inability to seize upon the crisis of the "leftist" groups—because we had fallen into the same vice—*and these crises were invariably resolved in the direction indicated. Even worse: each change in the course of these "vanguards" brought with it the need to change our "tactic" of party building, in order to adapt it to the new characterizations of the "new vanguards," the "far left," etc. *There the programmatic remnants that we spoke of before were introduced, used to cover each new step in the struggles and each new version of the "policy of initiatives."* The confusion that resulted from these successive versions made the militants more and more unable to understand the LCR's policy. In reality, what was involved was a course of partial, empirical corrections, forced by the events in the class struggles, corrections that did not in any way break with the basic concepts that had animated our method of building the communist organization: *THE WINNING of the advanced workers without a revolutionary strategy of mobilization of the masses.* This focus, deeply disdainful of Marxism and the working class, condemned us to follow the secondary phenomena, adapting ourselves, always with a delay, to the latest fashion in the "vanguard," which we imagined with a method typical of centrism to be in a process of permanent "desectarianization." We did not begin from the *objective requirements* flowing from the crisis of Spanish capitalism and its dictatorship, from the needs of the masses and the dynamic and laws of their mobilization, which were what really produced the processes of differentiation within the organized workers movement. Refusing to begin from the objective demands of the movement as a whole, we took part in the same blindness and impotence of the "far left."

The expression of this debacle, the first congress of the LCR, at the beginning of 1972, was the impasse at which the superimposing of versions of the policy of initiatives and the lack of an orientation for confronting the question of Stalinism and the Workers Commissions was concentrated. At the same time, it was the culmination of internal confrontations with a heavy bureaucratic character between the method of opportunist corrections, with which the leadership already intended to get out of the bankruptcy of the initial formulations of the policy of "initiatives," and the resistance of another part of the organization, still determined to hold on to the penultimate version of this policy, with greater leftist weight and strong resistance to the opportunist sliding that was introduced in each correction.

The congress could not approve a single paragraph, not a single letter. Nevertheless, in a context of new explosions of generalized struggles—Ferrol—and of general worsening of the crisis of the so-called "far left," the leadership of the LCR found itself obliged to speed up and deepen the corrections, to move out of the impasse the first congress found us in. This is how the crisis broke out: in May 1972 the Central Committee remained divided

in two tendencies, whose fight within the same organization ended in December with the splitting blow of the minority tendency of the party that supported the Ninth World Congress.

5. *The crisis that was made obvious in May 1972 opened a crossroads, expressed in the counterposed positions of both tendencies.* For the comrades of the En Marcha tendency, the errors and the critical situation our organization had fallen into were reduced to the persistence of some "sectarian relations with the organized workers movement." That was all. It was a question, then, of solving the situation by simply taking several more steps toward the "desectarianization" that the whole "new far left" was taking, steps that culminated in the "entry in the Workers Commissions" and the tactical formulation of the united front "sui generis." In reality, the largest hole in the policy of initiatives took the most plaster: the new version of this policy consisted of adding, to the "tactic" based on the "far left," a complementary "tactic" whose center was, in fact, long-term entryism in the Workers Commissions (the first expression was the leadership's insistence on an ultraopportunist concept of *discipline in action in the Workers Commissions*). The adaptation to centrism and "leftism" was complemented with signs of the beginning of an adaptation to Stalinism, based once more on *confusing the existing leaderships and their politics with the natural orientation of the masses*.

The Encrucijada tendency felt that behind the sectarian attitude with respect to the Workers Commissions there was a *crass ignorance of the laws of mobilization of the masses, of relations between classes and organizations, as well as between rank-and-file militants and leaderships, under the conditions of the death agony of capitalism and the crisis of revolutionary leadership*. From this flowed the lack of understanding of the ties that link the struggle of the working class and the struggle of communists to build the party, which was expressed in a viewing of party building as a "subjective" process, *outside the mobilization and evolution of the working class as a whole*. This was the essence of all our errors, one of whose expressions was our sectarian attitude with respect to the Workers Commissions.

It was precisely a debate over these points of method that would permit the restructuring of all the previous strategic advances on firm bases. A debate that could not be separated from a *critical review of the process followed by the LCR, nor from its insertion into the international polemic*. And this debate required the *application of the method of party building outlined in the Transitional Program, but sidestepped in the formation of the LCR*.

Our defense of the need for absolute clarity regarding the principles of the revolutionary strategy was the precondition for putting a stop to the step toward successive impressionistic analyses, intimately linked to opportunism in the tactic inherently based on an erroneous conception of party building. Moreover, a whole pattern of positions developed by the En Marcha faction before, and above all after, the split show that the *next step* is the development of a *theory based on adopted opportunist tactics, pointing directly toward the revision of basic concepts of revolutionary principles and strategy*. Revisionism regarding a crucial point of the method of building the

party is accompanied, sooner or later, by the break with ever more basic aspects of the program of the permanent revolution. The final result of this entire process can only be in one form or another, liquidationism: the theoretical and practical abandonment of the task for which the Fourth International was founded, in favor of some "new vanguard."

II. The Fundamental Differences

6. *Two concepts of the Transitional Program.* The LCR since its formation, and the En Marcha comrades later, have defended the Transitional Program as a venerable "classic document" whose present practical value is reduced to that of a sample case of demands and slogans, *isolating them*, on the one hand, *from the Leninist method of party building*, and on the other hand, *from a clear understanding of the character of the period that makes this party necessary and makes it possible to build it as a party of the working class, in the course of the class's struggles*.

In the face of them, we have not vacillated in defining the Transitional Program as the "Communist Manifesto of our epoch," without meaning by that that we convert it into a Trotskyists' "red book," nor claim that it can be assimilated without taking into account the events of the second world war. But we do maintain that those events were nothing but specific expressions of the development of the general laws of capitalism and of the mobilization of the masses in the historic period, which the Transitional Program continues being the explanation of and which it expressed in a summary form. That is, the period of the death agony of capitalism, whose "world situation as a whole is chiefly characterized by a historical crisis of the leadership of the proletariat." (*Transitional Program for Socialist Revolution*, Pathfinder Press, 1973, p. 73.)

To the extent that the crisis of imperialism and Stalinism is aggravated, to the same extent the need to carry out the *central strategic task of the period: the building of revolutionary parties, sections of the Fourth International*, is increased. Greater possibilities for successfully achieving this task are offered by the method sketched out in the Transitional Program: the conscious and organized intervention of revolutionaries *in the very course of the daily struggles* (tying their inevitable collision with the degrading tendencies of decadent capitalism, through a system of transitional demands and methods of struggle and organization directed openly against the very bases of the bourgeois order), which allow the transformation of the explosions of revolutionary spontaneity into revolutionary consciousness, separating the proletariat from its sell-out leaders and advancing in the building of a new leadership capable of leading the proletariat to the taking of power.

The En Marcha comrades, identifying the Transitional Program as a program of action—out of date—and furthermore, viewing it in a way that loses sight of the fundamental content of principles and methods that the founding document of the Fourth International summarizes, can assert that, in any case, this "program" can only be useful for a party that is already strong. In order for this strong party to be built, they rush along the road of setting up of an apparatus outside the class. They do not see that *the method contained in the Transitional*

Program is the only means a small group has of becoming a mass revolutionary party. We, on the other hand, assert that only if we totally grasp the transitional principles and methods contained in the 1938 "Program" will we be able to go forward in concretizing it to specific conditions, to their evolution, to the changes in the relationship of forces between classes and the new experiences of the masses, through the detailed and minute development of the *program of the Spanish revolution, intimately linked to the growing insertion of the Trotskyist group into the revolutionary process of the masses, and its ability to establish ties of leadership with them.*

7. *The Marxist method and the "En Marchista" "strategy of transition."* In one of the En Marcha comrades' basic documents, they defined what they call the "strategy of transition" in this way: *"the strategy of transition is founded on a systematic analysis of the fluctuations of the level of consciousness in order to mobilize them in action."*

On the other hand, we have maintained that a revolutionary policy should analyze the fluctuations in the moods of the masses at each moment, as the terrain that the *pedagogical application of a strategy based on the objective situation* should operate on. As Trotsky points out: "The program is adapted to the fundamental and stable elements of the situation, and our task consists of adapting the mentality of the masses to those objective factors. . . . The crisis of society is the base for our activity. The mentality is the political arena of our activity. We should give a scientific explanation of the reality and clearly expound it to the masses. This is the difference between Marxism and reformism." Trotsky seriously put us on guard against the danger of confusing the *necessary pedagogic adaptation* to the level of consciousness of the masses, which should lead to a policy intransigently based on the objective conditions, and *political adaptation* to the petty-bourgeois currents who might predominate in the audience of the masses, or of the vanguard, at a given moment.

We have no doubt that the concept put forward by the faction of splitters has an authentic "strategy of transition . . ." *from opportunist back-sliding of one type to opportunist back-sliding of another type.* In fact, this method was the method of developing the Liga's [LCR] entire policy, and experience already presents us with a balance-sheet. It was through "successive systematic analyses" of the conjunctural characteristics and tendencies of the movement, and of a part of its vanguard, that we were adopting one or another "tactic of party building" fitted to those changes. But to convert conjunctural and marginal tendencies (which are rapidly counter-balanced and modified by others) into fundamental tendencies of a whole period, is the basis of an impressionist method of analysis that can only lead to an adaptation to apparent reality, to forgetting the deep tendencies that are going to be forcibly imposed, to the adaptation to the "strategy" of the predominant currents at each moment *rather than having a revolutionary strategy.*

This exalting of the "fluctuations" is inseparable from the castration of the significance of the Transitional Program. The impressionist analysis keeps redeciding on a new policy of party building, frequently baptised with the name "tactic." In Latin America they have taken much bolder steps: what is already involved is a *strategy* that

openly supplants the method of party building outlined in the Transitional Program. Following the needs of the "tactic," random elements of the revolutionary Marxist "classics" are referred to, perverting them and beginning the process of their revision. This is the role they assign to a "Transitional Program," which is reduced by them to a simple catalog of demands of an undoubtedly incalculable historical value, but that no longer is useful for intervention . . . And it is logical, then, that En Marcha would decide to adopt this "strategy of transition" since they were experimenting with it through their own organized activity: first organize and act in relation to momentary tactics, then develop a political policy. *This is exactly the general method of centrism.* Defending themselves against our accusations, the comrades asserted that "in order for this present objective condition (of the Transitional Program) to be made into a subjective necessity, you need an organization; in order for its theoretical expressive to come to be understood and assumed in all its breadth, organized activity is necessary" (La Liga en Marcha). This justifying, limiting coloration—"in all its breadth"—does not manage to eliminate the profound revision implied by this concept; in fact, *the masses* make the objective needs subjective through their practical activity, but *a revolutionary organization and a revolutionary practical activity are only constituted around a revolutionary program,* based precisely on the objective needs and laws.

8. Where does the method that begins from the fluctuations lead? What is its political significance? Our own history and the accentuation of En Marcha's errors and contradictions sufficiently illustrates this.

First this method is applied to successive versions of the "new far left" and the "new vanguards." At each moment, the politics predominant in the "new far left" are made into the "natural" expression of the vanguard layer that arose out of the struggles, breaking with the reformist apparatuses. It was asserted that the features of this or that rising grouplet directly reflected the "structural" characteristics of the radicalization . . . until that grouplet went into a crisis a few months later. Later, the same method was applied to Stalinism, instead of determining this traditional current's hegemonic place in the class struggle by means of its ties with the working class internationally and in Spain, woven during the Civil War and strengthened by its role in the backbone of the proletariat under Francoism. Instead, En Marcha uses a *bourgeois sociological method* to maintain that the spread of struggles, with the awakening of large battalions of "backward," "immature" proletarians, "filled with millions of democratic illusions," especially the "new sectors," makes the CP's program "more credible." In the full tendency struggle, the comrades gave a fuller formulation to these moves toward *adaptation to the pressures of Stalinism.* They asserted that "the spontaneous consciousness of the proletariat is not in contradiction with either syndicalism or Stalinist reformism, but is in contradiction to communism" (an assertion copied from the French comrades, according to whom the French working class was "spontaneously Stalinist").

Each "reorientation" of the "tactic" of building the organization has taken place through the incorporation of a new objectivist analysis of this type, since such analyses

are cornerstones for justifying these tactics. Thus the discovery of "spontaneous Stalinism" was the basis for introducing the tactic of united front "sui generis." The panorama remained defined in the following form: the layers of vanguard fighters who have broken with the reformist apparatuses (an undoubtedly important phenomenon, which constitutes one of the aspects and factors of the rise of the mass struggle, of the specific radicalization of the period) are considered by En Marcha as isolated from the processes which are developing within the vanguard controlled by reformism, and from the processes that are taking place in the radicalization of the masses. The workers movement as a whole, the broad workers vanguard in its majority, the masses, *naturally tend toward Stalinism or syndicalism*. In contrast, the "new vanguards" can be either predisposed toward revolutionary Marxism (as it was thought in an early phase of the LCR and probably also in the more triumphant early times of the French Ligue), or toward the supposedly "revolutionary" positions of the "far left" in general (which is what is coming to be thought in a second period, after the disillusionment of the previous period). In any case, the ravages of this method inseparably link confusionism toward "new vanguards," on which they think of basing the building of the party, with lack of understanding of the workers movement and the mass struggle, on which they think one cannot base the building of the party.

This objectivist concept not only discards, "for this phase," the ability to advance in building the party through a course toward the masses (they are "spontaneously" Stalinist or syndicalist). It considers the sell-out leaderships to be a "natural reflection" of the mass movement since it defines the orientation of the mass movement precisely through the growth or lack of growth in the influence of the Stalinist, syndicalist, or centrist organizations, through the number of working-class fighters in these organizations. *According to them, the class has the leadership it deserves*. The conclusion is that the leaderships have no responsibility whatsoever. And neither do the Trotskyists. This is where En Marcha's irresponsible rationalizations come from.

As our development has shown, this method can have very varied results according to the type of impressionism in play at any given time. *The common feature is to always confuse the proletariat with its leaderships, to systematically belittle the always latent contradictions between the militants and their leaders. From this, an ultra-left policy can be developed, which believes that it is impossible to beat the reformists in the course of the mass struggles, and which seeks an outlet in "exemplary actions" of the vanguard that, supplying the apprenticeship of the masses, would make the proposals of the revolutionary organization credible, thereby achieving the miracle that appeared impossible*. But it also includes, in particular after the failure of the previous policy, *a tail-endist position with respect to the Stalinist and syndicalist leaderships, whose influence over the workers movement and whose betrayals are interpreted as a reflection of the fatal immaturity of the masses. And it is also possible to combine the two variants, which today in different proportions characterize En Marcha's politics*.

It is not strange, then, that the En Marcha comrades justify, at the same time, terrorist or guerrillaist strategies, policies of initiatives in action, tactics of united front

"sui generis," or that they defend voting for the Union of the Left in the French elections of 1973 . . . and that tomorrow (why not?), the left wings of the socialist parties might play the same role that the "new far lefts" play today, as a new "natural" expression. Will the method of building the party be to cover up for the leaderships, to justify their legitimacy?

9. *An apparatus concept of building the party*. The comrades of the splitters faction introduce some notes of optimism in their earlier assertions, admitting that the beginning of a revolutionary situation will be the point of departure for a decisive advance in building the party capable of leading the assault for power. Of course, this situation, as Trotsky says, makes it easier for "a weak party to be able to transform itself into a strong, potent, party provided it clearly understands what the course of the revolution is and provided that it has experienced cadres who don't abandon themselves to the intoxication of words or to fear in the course of the repression."

But here a grave problem is raised for them. If on the one hand they assert that the reformist leaderships "can only be displaced by building the revolutionary organization," on the other hand they maintain that Stalinism and syndicalism are the politics that correspond to the spontaneity of the working class of our country. How, then, will it be possible to build the party capable of eradicating Stalinism from the ranks of the proletariat?

The factionalists answer us picking out Leon Trotsky's statement that at the moment of the revolutionary crisis "the consciousness of the class advances rapidly, is converted into the most dynamic element of the situation and the party has the possibility to lead the immense majority of the proletariat to the assault for power." But the comrades "forget" that in the same document Trotsky asserts that *"such a party should exist before the revolution, since the training of cadres demands a considerable period of time, and the revolution leaves no time for it."*

These conclusions by Trotsky, drawn from a long revolutionary experience, condemn both the spontaneist position that sees the achievement of this task as the culmination of the revolutionary process of the masses, more or less aided by propaganda around the program (Lambertism for example), as well as the position that feels that what is involved is simply building "an organization," a process of building that obviously can't be based on pushing and organizing the workers movement, on its development, since the workers movement is spontaneously Stalinist, until the "deus ex machina" appearance of the "organization," in the revolutionary moment changes the situation.

So we ask the splitter comrades, how do you build even the skeleton of this party's cadres if, during this period, the orientation of the masses is "still" in contradiction to the communist program, but not to the syndicalist and Stalinist programs? How do you make progress in building the party when confronted by leaderships that are the political expression of the class?

The existence of "new vanguards" that are rich ground for the "revolutionaries" resolves none of this. For us the appearance of broad vanguard elements outside the control of the reformist apparatuses is one of the factors of a rise that opens great possibilities for building the party *in the course of the struggles of the masses*. But the very characterization that En Marcha makes of the

"new vanguards," conceiving of them as something isolated from the dynamic of the mass struggles—and the policy the comrades put forward for their conquest—might perhaps sustain "the building of an organization," but will not be sufficient for the formation of the party of the Fourth International.

In the same way that the Lambert and Vargas [split-off from Lambertists], sects do, the En Marcha comrades, by establishing a Chinese wall between the revolutionary situation and the preparatory period, have to establish a schema of building the party by stages. For the Lambertists and Vargaists, during the preparatory period it is a question of limiting oneself to "*upholding the program*" and *propagandizing for it.* For En Marcha, what is involved is "*building the organization.*" Only in the second stage will the question of the program and the masses be dealt with. Actually: "Revolutionary consciousness of the masses is not a direct consequence of the pre-revolutionary situation, but requires an organizational base that is the party, the building of which is the *central task* of the period" (La Liga en Marcha). The Transitional Program asserted that the crisis of humanity was the crisis of *revolutionary leadership.* For En Marcha this reduces itself to the *crisis of the organizational bases.* But this only means that the En Marcha comrades have renounced, "in the present phase" at least, the struggle for the building of the *Trotskyist party* within the framework of mass actions and on the basis of the Trotskyist program. Basing themselves on the "new vanguards," which they separate from the tasks of pushing forward the mass movement, they will try to "build the organization," with which, in the other stage, perhaps they can "inject," as they say, the program into the masses. (Lamentably, with another result that these "new vanguards" take as a political expression to the "new far left," this building of the organization will have to be accomplished within a course of adaptation to the "new far left," building with it some "adequate instrument." We will return to this later.)

10. *Strategy and tactics in the policy of "winning hegemony within the new vanguards."* The Marxist method of party building is inseparable from the scientific development of a revolutionary strategy. The more the tensions between classes are sharpened, the more imperative is the necessity of this strategy. Thus, in the rise of the mass struggle against the Francoist dictatorship, the overcoming of the lack of strategic bases, which has paralyzed and damaged numerous attempts at building the party after initial breaks with reformism, imposed itself with the most striking clarity. What was necessary was to define the peculiarities of the permanency of the revolutionary process in Spain, to analyze the relations between classes and to capture the dynamic of their contradictions, to define a system of alliances, the connection between tasks and objectives of the revolutionary process. There was a need for seriously worked out general strategic lines bringing the lessons of the international revolutionary workers movement to life in the specific situation of Spain. General lines that might be capable of being a backbone for an entire political intervention, beginning from some fundamental axes, advancing from this to more complete intervention and strategical development on all levels. Thus,

setting out from prior acquisitions, the new line of the LCR (today the LC) was based on the initial development of a strategy of class united front for the defeat of the dictatorship (see the following part). The En Marcha comrades don't have an equivalent that we know about, nor do the majority of European sections. And for a good reason.

Thus the comrades are disposed to "build their organization" on the fringe of the development of the movement of the class as a whole; this organization will allow them, then, to "alter the relationship of forces with reformism." For this, one only needs to employ the most diverse techniques and "tactics." This is their method of "building the party." Thus, today they are dedicated to pushing "revolutionary actions of the vanguard," counterposing them to the struggles that are still under the aegis of the reformist leaderships. In a revolutionary situation it will be possible to counterpose what have been called "arousals of struggles of revolutionary content behind transitional demands" to the action of the masses still led by the sell-out leaderships. But taken as a whole, *what you have here is an ultraleftist "strategy,"* which abandons the attempt to separate the proletariat from its leaderships and to aid it in choosing a revolutionary leadership in the only way it can do that: through its own mass experience. It is, for this reason, a renunciation of building the Leninist combat party. Inspired without doubt by this strategic concept, which is the concept of the POR (Combate) under Torres and of the PRT-ERP at all times, the comrades of En Marcha "respond" with their "violent actions of the vanguard" to the attacks of the bourgeoisie. They think that the masses will learn in this way, and that they, placing themselves at the head of the "new vanguards" will build their organization that allows them to defend the program in a realistic way.

Every one of their "great deeds" carried out against the windows of banks, embassies, etc., as well as the repercussions of these deeds in the workers movement—provides them with confirmation of the idea of the stupidity of the militants influenced by Stalinism and of the need to direct themselves to the "privileged" sectors, which, because of their "structural" quality, constitute an "appropriate terrain" for the revolutionaries, redoubling their search for "new vanguards" and "far lefts" who value their "revolutionary initiatives." Of course, they don't cease throwing out one call after another *to the masses* from their perch on Mount Olympus, ignoring—and therefore covering up for—the leaderships. Of course, they don't abandon their presence in the united bodies, like the Workers Commissions. They continue being in them despite their absolute lack of confidence in the militants who compose them and in the effect of the struggles on their consciousness. This lack of confidence prevents them from carrying out a point-by-point battle with reformism over each concrete requirement for pushing forward struggles, prevents them from doing systematic work. What is involved is "being there," making the necessary concessions to the reformist leaderships, in order to be able to give forth, from time to time, with ideological sermons. Here too the En Marcha comrades could find a guide for conduct in the policy of the POR (C) with regard to the Popular Assembly.

But whether it puts more emphasis on the tailendist aspect or on the exemplarist aspect, the basic thing is the

unity of focus of the tactic of party building. In this light, it seems clear that the various "tactics" of party building develop a coherency and implications that convert them into a "strategy" that is counterposed to the Leninist strategy of party building. It is clear that for this type of temporary and opportunist eruption onto the political scene through spectacular "appearances" and "popularization" of slogans outside the concrete process of the class struggle, no great analysis is needed (at least not beyond the analyses of the last turn of the "far left"). Like all *propagandism*, it lives on ideological schemas that the En Marcha comrades baptize with the name strategy.

In fact, the comrades protest: they are the great defenders of the "strategy of transition," of the "strategical" orientation!! of "workers control," etc., etc. Actually, the "elements" of the revolutionary Marxist program come into play with a view toward their propagandistic use. For their propagandistic-exemplary campaigns they need some ideological themes. Workers control, translated into a "Trotskyist" fetish, offers them the weapon for "getting into" the question of the economic struggle, outside the present requirements of struggle for class independence and against the Stalinists. These requirements are better served today by the pushing forward of the *mass struggle* for elementary economic and social demands, and for all the democratic liberties, with methods of direct action against the bosses, the CNS [fascist unions] and the repression, and providing the experience of *united and democratic bodies of direct mass struggle* (committees elected and subject to recall through assemblies). Among other things, only the development of an experience infinitely vaster than at present with those committees makes it possible to seriously raise the question of workers control as a pole of agitation and struggle. En Marcha's "workers control" is deprived of all *real* strategic meaning. But, at the same time, with an intrusion into factory struggles that happily glides along without regard to the real demands that the revolutionaries must develop in the face of Stalinism's liquidationist policy, a policy that is characterized, above all, by *refusal to push forward an effective struggle through more basic economic and democratic demands*. In an obvious way, repression and the "armed struggle" constitute another pole of this propagandism: the analyses of the crisis of the dictatorship are reduced to the most schematic form of clamor about "the growth of the repression" (of course!), and the political alternatives that the Trotskyists must give to all the alternatives of the bourgeoisie and its reformist agents in the workers movement are also more and more reduced to the abstract assertion of a curious form of "self-defense" that through ideology becomes "offensive," and that, of course, is not raised as a *task of the workers movement*, being reserved as the *birthright of the "revolutionaries."*

This is its abstract conception of strategy: *ultrasimplified schemas that dissolve the complexity of an entire period, centering attention on a pair of fetishized elements, abstracted from the framework of class contradictions, alliances, tasks, objectives.* . . . It is the method of the dogmatic calendar for the "decisive battles" in Europe, the method that sustains the guerrilla strategy in Latin America. But, forcefully, it leads to a total distortion of the tactic: because soviets, workers control, etc., are going to be put on the order of the day, the axes of the intervention today are soviets, militias, workers control. And with

these propagandist stews they cover up for the opportunism of their "tactics" of "party building," they justify them through these anti-Marxist analyses.

Lamentably, such a schema of political action, based on the ideological and practical opportunism (which finds in first place the means of a simplistic differentiation with respect to Stalinism) is not an unknown thing: the Maoist groups, to go no further, have offered us clear examples of such a "revolutionary" policy. With the advantage that they did not compromise either the name or the elements of the Trotskyist program while doing so.

11. *The question of the united front.* The concept of the united front defended by the splitters who support the turn of the ninth congress that falls completely within this same schema, constitutes one of its fundamental facets. For them, the policy of united front of the class breaks down, *on the one hand, into a totality of "tactics"* that, in the best of the cases, have no other common thread than the evolution of the diverse "relationships of forces" between the reformist apparatuses and "revolutionaries," and in the worst cases are nothing but a cover for the opportunist adaptation to the reformist apparatuses where the pressure of these apparatuses is strongest. The united front is *one more tactic among other tactics*, a new shortcut in building the party, necessary in some specific stages of the rise of workers and popular struggles and in relation to the "relationship of forces" established "between reformists and revolutionaries." On the other hand, it includes the proclamation on holidays of a *vague and abstract general principle of "unity of the class,"* which En Marcha prevents from having a concrete political form by refusing to develop a total strategy of class united front against the dictatorship as an alternative to the CP's total line of "pact for freedom."

The En Marcha comrades seek an alibi for their refusal to push the *class-against-class* line by denouncing the centrist deviation of converting the united front into a supreme principle, as the Lambertist do. The Lambertist "strategy" of the united front in reality constitutes an elevation of the tactical methods of the united front (like a National Strike Committee) to a strategic principle. The propagandist pressure in favor of this "unity" is then substituted for fighting to push forward the proletarian struggle on the basis of a program of class independence, for really striking at Stalinism through it, and for advancing in the building of the party. For them, propaganda around the forms of united front among "traditional" organizations substitutes for the method of building the party put forward in the Transitional Program.

Well we deny that there is the slightest possibility of fighting these positions that serve as flank-guards for the apparatuses through the positions that the En Marcha comrades maintain, breaking down the policy of united front into disconnected elements: the gaseous principle of unity on the one hand, the "tactics" on the other. In fact, *both perversions of the united front policy correspond to forms of adaptation to different opportunist positions.* They are symmetrical perversions, although the degree of their development and consolidation cannot be the same. Both are characterized by separating the united front from the totality of work that constitutes the Transitional Program, and from the pushing of class independence within the workers movement through struggles that free

the masses, as a basis for building the party.

The united front policy does not constitute a casual artifice that is outside the party building method sketched out in the Transitional Program, as the En Marcha comrades assert after having dissolved the unity of such a method into a pharmacist's list of demands and slogans.

The method of the Transitional Program is simply to help "the masses in the process of the daily struggles to find a bridge between present demands and the socialist program of revolution" (*Ibid.*, p. 75). The building of the revolutionary leadership is *inseparable from the proletariat's being arrayed as a class in the face of the bourgeoisie*. From this flows the statement that "*all the sections of the proletariat, all its layers, occupations and groups should be drawn into the revolutionary movement*" (our emphasis, *Ibid.*, p. 75).

The "central task" that these conditions impose on the Fourth International is "to liberate the proletariat from the old leadership, whose conservatism is found in complete contradiction with the catastrophic situation of declining capitalism and is the principal brake on the historic process." The role played by the traditional leaderships as an obstacle and a brake has one of its clearest expressions, both on the historical scale and in the daily struggles, in the *political and organizational fragmentation of the class*. But *despite* the reformist leaderships that predominate in the organizations the workers have at their disposal, these organizations continue to be reservoirs of the proletariat's willingness to fight, which the proletariat wants to use as instruments in its struggle.

If the Transitional Program proposes the building of the party in the course of the mobilization of the masses through a "system of transitional demands, stemming from today's conditions and from today's consciousness of wide layers of the working class and unalterably leading to one final conclusion: the conquest of power by the proletariat" (*Ibid.*, p. 75) *this method necessarily includes that each one of our transitional demands should lead "to one final conclusion," that the workers should break with all the traditional parties of the bourgeoisie in order to establish together with the peasants their own power.*

Thus it remains clear that the policy of class united front does nothing but bring to life the fundamental focus of the strategy of the proletariat—class-against-class—already defined by Marx and Engels, *in the conditions of division of the proletariat introduced by the successive capitulation of the traditional leaderships of the workers movement in the face of imperialism.*

The rejection by En Marcha of the line of the proletarian united front is, in reality, the expression of its rejection of the Marxist concept of the party as the most advanced faction of the class. We communists openly maintain *that the unification of the proletariat as a class is only possible on the basis of the revolutionary program and through the building of the party that supports that program*. In the face of those spontaneists and syndicalists presuming to put the interests of the class over the interests of the party, we assert with Trotsky that "it is not possible to formulate the interests of the class in any other way than in the form of the program; it is not possible to defend the program in any other form than by creating a party." But, *at the same time*, we assert that the party will only be created in the struggle for the regroupment of the proletarian ranks against each

blow of the class enemy, pushing forward the struggle through objectives and means that are capable of breaking the workers from the bourgeoisie and its lackeys, stirring up and organizing the proletariat's loss of confidence in all the class conciliation solutions, forging the united proletarian bloc on the basis of its political independence synthesized in the proletarian program. Only in this struggle can the "*development of the proletariat in its consciousness, i.e., the building of the party*" (Leon Trotsky) take place.

The policy of united front is counterposed on all levels to the fundamental focus of the reformist apparatuses, the line of Popular Front in its different versions, which isn't a "tactic" either but rather one of the principal strategic expressions of the progression of the Communist International over to the side of the bourgeois order in the 1930s. The united-front policy counterposes the policy of revolutionary alliances of the proletariat to the policy of class collaboration; it counterposes the independent objectives, forms of struggle, and organization of the class to the minimum programs, to legalistic and pacifist methods. To any coalition government of workers with representatives of the bourgeoisie, which is the *maximum political expression of the popular-front line*, it counterposes the struggle for the Workers Government, the maximum political expression of the proletarian united-front line. We Trotskyists have not forgotten the tragic experience of the 1936 workers vanguard in general, and of Nin and his friends in particular. Our second congress, faced with the collaborationist line of the CP and its "Pact for Freedom," defines a revolutionary line of class pact against the dictatorship, aimed at preparing its downfall through the Revolutionary General Strike, through the struggle for the growing unification of the workers actions in the face of the bureaucratic channels of the regime and its repressive apparatus, through pushing forward the leading role of the proletariat in the mobilization of the rest of the oppressed; with methods that place before the workers organizations and fighters the tasks of class-against-class struggle that require a break with the bourgeoisie at all levels, for the establishment of a class solution to the bankruptcy of the dictatorship of Big Capital.

As we will see, this strategic orientation *can only come alive through tactics that transmit it*, tactics that, under conditions of the proletariat's extreme division, acquire a decisive importance for the pushing forward of a class-against-class line in each concrete moment, tactics *that are totally subordinated* to the pushing forward of the mobilization of the masses on the basis of their independence with respect to the bourgeoisie, and to the struggle by Trotskyists to build the party.

This is why the question of the united front becomes the underlying element of all the differences between the two tendencies, operating as the detonator of a much broader debate. It was through this question that the whole problem of building the party was raised: *with what policy is the communist organization built*, and with what policy is the expulsion of the reformist positions that have hegemony inside the workers movement advanced, in this way "changing" the "relationship of forces"? Through its opportunist way of looking at the united front, En Marcha was simply expressing that it substituted the fetishization of some programmatic themes

—whether soviets, workers control, or armed struggle— for the task of developing a total strategic alternative to the crisis of capitalism and its dictatorship, and to the politics of Stalinism. This fetishization of programmatic themes developed into ideological maximalism that used "Trotskyist" phrases to cover over a line of exemplary gesticulations that preferred to play hide-and-seek with the CP rather than really confront it in the actions of the class.

12. *The question of the "new far left."* The appraisal of the "new far left" is a fundamental point of difference with the En Marcha splitters. For them, the "new far left" constitutes a "permanent" and "irreversible" "structural reality" of the period, within which in a static form they see some "progressive" features, which they constantly overestimate and embellish, and some "limitations" and "confusions" about which we have to be understanding and benevolent.

These currents serve as a vehicle for the break of a layer of militants from the Stalinist apparatus, a layer that, given the rhythms of the CP's crisis and the delay and contradictions in the struggle to build the Trotskyist party, can attain a relative numerical importance. *The break of these militants*, which has a generally progressive thrust in conditions where a revolutionary party doesn't exist—or confronted with the errors of the revolutionaries who fight to build this party—not only is congealed within the initial framework, but moreover is deformed by ideologies that are nothing but subproducts of the backwardness imposed on the workers movement by Stalinism. In a period of sharpening of the class contradictions, *each day that the "progressiveness" of these groups remains confined within the centrist framework, the risk increases that they will be transformed into the opposite.* These groups fix the evolution of their members, hindering them from arriving at a complete break with the policy of the reformist apparatuses, condemning them to total paralysis at decisive moments (for example their role as centers of impotence in recent generalized struggles in Barcelona by "platforms of the Workers Commissions" [platforms are one of the horizontal layers of Workers Commission coordination], and throwing them into demoralization or into a return to the reformist fold.

Conscious of the political space that this current occupies in the present period, we communists do not determine our policy toward it through psychological considerations as the split faction does, *but rather through the objective role it plays in the class struggle: that of a left cover for the apparatuses and an obstacle to the construction of the party.* This is an objective role that we must combat through implacable criticism, based on political clarity and total honesty, at the same time that we begin from the revolutionary will and the break with reformism of the militants of this current and of the layers of the vanguard in which they are based, in order to push it forward on the basis of the policy of united front.

The LCR's development in regard to these positions was nothing more than moving from *organizational sectarianism* to the "unitary tactic," *always* preserving the keynote of political concessions to centrism and ultraleftism.

Thus, the "unitary tactic with the far left" is another tactical expression of the broad range the splitters have.

In this case what is involved is a complementary instrument to their tactic of "united front." An instrument allegedly aimed at "pressuring and going beyond" the reformists, it must be put into practice at the cost of not fighting the centrist currents, it sufficing to "base oneself on its willingness to fight and . . . time," hoping that they will be organizationally desectarianized (and unified) without the political combat that this signifies.

For us, the unity of the proletarian front, in practical action against capital, also includes the formations of this type. In the face of each worsening of the capitalist contradictions, in the face of each attack by the dictatorship, we must propose an alternative of unification of the battle ranks of the proletariat which, based intransigently on the line of independence of the class, causes the centrist and "leftist" groups to become conscious of what a real break with the reformists means and to fight for positions capable of moving the mobilization of the masses forward, and with this, to widen the gap between the leadership of the CP and its members that is opened with every class confrontation.

This is the only attitude that permits us to combat the "new far left's" tendency to move toward right opportunism¹ and that enables them to see an alternative in Trotskyism when their positions enter into a crisis as a result of the rise of the struggles and the experience of their impotence in fighting reformism. In contrast, with the condescending posture of the En Marcha comrades, who place themselves with the "new far left" on the fringe of the bulk of the movement, the only thing that has happened, is happening, and will happen is that the centrist and leftist militants, when they question their own politics, also question those of En Marcha and discard it as an alternative, since they see it affected by the same impotence. The balance-sheet of several years of evolution of the "far left" toward the right while the LCR was unable to polarize even a single part of the crisis of the leftists and centrists, but rather continued adapting to them, is absolutely clear. We believe that it is also the balance-sheet that various comrades drew from the disarming that the line of the ninth congress has caused the Latin American Trotskyists when they fell into the bankruptcy of Guevarism.

On the other hand, the alleged "special unitary tactic with the far left," as would be bound to happen with such "tactics" given the method of the En Marcha comrades, ends up acquiring strategic dimensions. We have already alluded to the fundamental role that the comrades attribute to the "new far left" in the overthrow of the dictatorship, including in the resolution of a situation of dual power, while they downplay the role that numerous militants and lower bodies of the CP will without doubt play in the revolutionary general strike without having yet broken with the CP. In the face of these strategic plans, which give an incredible emphasis to the "progressive" political aspects of centrists and "leftists," new problems are raised.

13. *A decisive ambiguity.*

In fact, in everything expressed up to here we have been approaching a fundamental ambiguity in the plans of En Marcha. We are not referring to the continual changes

in "shading" in the definitions of these abstract figures called "new vanguards" and "new far lefts," and in the eternal problem of characterizing them and delineating their borders, which is a theme of eternal disputes. We are referring to the question of where the "new far left" and the Trotskyist organization stand in relationship to each other. It is a problem that none of their documents definitively resolves. Whenever it appears they have developed a position, a little later formulations appear that seem to contradict it, and the subtlety of the phrases is wrapped in the densest fog.

If the "new far left" has a decisive role to play in the defeat of the dictatorship, even up to the point that "its transformation" and the transformation of the "new vanguard" led by it is the only way "to build the organization," why not go further to consider the great benefits of centrism and "leftism" in the revolutionary situation and the revolutionary crisis? But then, why have a Leninist party?

We think that there is no need to revise Marxism, that there's no need to throw the Transitional Program aside. It would make things much clearer if the En Marcha comrades, if their perpetual search for the "new vanguards" permits it, would take the time to answer this question once and for all. Why conserve classical formulations about the need to build the party while immediately making a subtle "dialectical turn" and changing the contents to the point of making us unable to understand anything. Moreover once upon a time there was a Michel Pablo who toyed in similar ways with the role of Trotskyism and of the Stalinist bureaucracy, or other petty-bourgeois leaderships, also to justify "tactics" that, among other results, brought the Fourth International to the edge of destruction in many countries.

III. Differences over Fundamental Aspects of the Permanency of the Revolutionary Process in the State of Spain

Initially, both tendencies were in agreement over the general features of the strategic perspective for Spain. Nevertheless, in the course of the debate, and particularly since the split, important points of difference on this level were opened up. The whole framework of differences that were expressed in the previous period and that centered around the problem of building the party, *could not help but result in new differences around the character of the period that made its building necessary and possible.*

14. *A voluntarist concept of the general strike.* The sharpening of all the contradictions of an extremely weak capitalist system, caught between the worsening of the imperialist crisis on the one hand, and the rise of the workers and popular movement on the other, has converted into a pure utopia both the perspective of the evolution of the dictatorship toward a democracy in the hands of Big Capital, as well as the displacement of the dictatorship under the pressure of a workers and popular movement that would remain respectful to sectors of Big Capital and its institutions.

Big Capital sees itself obliged to tie itself to the old Francoist machinery, in the way one is tied to a hot rivet. Actually, the maintenance of this machinery, rather than palliating any of the basic problems characterizing the present situation, more and more sharpens them. Beneath them, the

uncontainable rise of the proletarian and popular struggles strike every-which-way at the already decaying fascist instruments for the control and repression of the proletariat and the masses. The only viable alternative for the bourgeoisie to try to hold back this precipitous rise is, in the final analysis, to set up an ever more ferocious repression against the working class and oppressed people. From this flows the constant reenforcement of the repressive apparatus, which, in contrast to the fascist appendices within the masses, has not yet suffered any serious dislocation under the heavy attack of the class struggle.

The Liga has been making these analyses from the beginnings of its founding. Nevertheless, the En Marcha comrades not only have not deepened these analyses, but rather, simplifying them more all the time and impoverishing them, they go so far as to draw clearly erroneous conclusions which are fitted like a shirt to the body of their method of party building.

On the one hand, their peculiar concept of the strategy of transition begins to obscure the permanency of the revolutionary process. It becomes ever more difficult to see, in their writings, *if they really make a distinction between the overthrow of the dictatorship and the overthrow of capitalism.* The rejection of the slogan of a real constituent assembly, as well as the ideological use of workers control, educate the militants in the illusion that the extension of democratic committees, and even more the rise of soviets, signify that the revolutionary positions have already defeated the influence of the reformist alternatives. The transitional slogan of the workers government is ever more confused, then, with the dictatorship of the proletariat. These ultra-leftist confusions decisively weaken Trotskyism's basic weapons for battling Stalinism and other "democratic" opportunisms.

Inevitably, a clear back-sliding toward *voluntarist* concepts of the overthrow of the dictatorship has been produced, an overthrow that in some of the En Marcha documents has been made to depend on the existence of a revolutionary leadership. We Trotskyists have asserted that the unevenness in the degree of decomposition of the bureaucratic apparatuses of the fascist regime, and the great unevenness between this decomposition and the strengthening of the repressive apparatus, not only are the consequences of the unevenness in the process of rebuilding of the proletariat, but rather, at the same time, together with the legalistic and pacifist line of the reformist leaderships, provide capitalism with a margin of maneuver to blunt and hold back the great class confrontations. To arm the proletarian vanguard demands an uncompromising fight against the Stalinist sermons regarding the "national strike," the "demonstrative general strike," and against all those who hope for a collapse of the regime from within, or for a uniform mobilization that suddenly spreads throughout the country, in which the dictatorship would dissolve away like a lump of sugar. But it also requires a clear struggle against the voluntarist concepts toward which En Marcha is moving. In fact, to attribute the determining role in frustrating intentions for a terrorist military coup to the "new far left," and to attribute to it a decisive place in the unleashing of the general strike, tends toward considering the general strike as an "event" that depends on the implantation and "initiatives" of the "revolutionaries." Logically it provides them with the rationale for not having to concern themselves with how to insert their activity into the

effort of preparing the proletariat for the tasks of the general strike *through every one of the day-to-day struggles, minimal though they might be.* There will be Francoism until such time as the "revolutionaries" have grown. Well, the explosion, or the chain of generalized revolutionary explosions that will constitute the general strike, must be conceived of above all as the *culmination of broad experience in direct action by the masses, which has already begun to develop,* and of processes of radicalization of the vanguard *that are not restricted to the layers influenced by centrism and leftism.* These confrontations will obviously be produced *despite* the line of the CP, *at the cost of its being bypassed,* but only those accustomed to totally identifying the proletariat with its leaderships, as is the case of the splitter faction of the LCR, can pass over the fact that numerous fighters and organizations of the CP will be won by the radicalization and will participate in the fights, on the front line of the general strike, *before they stop being Stalinists.*

What conclusion do we Trotskyists draw from this analysis of the period of the general strike? The conclusion we draw is the need to prepare the proletariat and masses with an eye toward the inevitable tasks of the general strike, to start out from their present efforts and find the means to generalize the struggles, putting before them the target of the overthrow of the dictatorship and the slogans that push that goal forward, spreading and consolidating, to the greatest possible degree, the experiences of the instruments of workers democracy (committees elected and subject to recall in assemblies, unified and democratic workers commissions, their forms of coordination among themselves and with the organs of other layers in struggle, etc.), and making the broad vanguard of the class more capable of increasingly setting in motion, centralizing and defending the actions of the whole class.

But the fundamental thing is to define the relations between the tasks raised by the period of the general strike and the advance in building the party of the Fourth International in Spain. One of our theses says: "The fact that we are clearly conscious that our action *is not absolutely a determining factor of this process,* is not translated into an attitude of opportunist passivity. The spread of slogans of direct action and workers democracy to vast sectors of the workers and youth, and the winning of the capacity to lead them *does* depend on our struggle. These, despite their limits, will not cease having repercussions in the breadth and depth of the confrontations of the revolutionary general strike. The maturation of an extensive wave of advanced workers, on the basis of positions of class struggle, and the accentuated discreditment of the Stalinists, centrists, and leftists *does* depend on our struggle. On this struggle *does* depend the constant improvement in the conditions that permit the Trotskyist political line and organization to win a layer of vanguard workers, youth and revolutionaries of other layers, *tirelessly forging the embryo of the Leninist party that, through the explosion of the sharp class collisions impelled by the fall of the dictatorship that lead to the general strike, arrives at the point where it constitutes the absolutely determining factor in the situation, deciding those class collisions in favor of the taking of power by the proletariat.*" (Strategic Theses approved in the Second Congress.)

And with this we come to the third great point of difference. In this situation, the decisive thing will be the capacity

of the Trotskyist party to win hegemony in the proletariat and to carry it to the assault on the bourgeois state. This is a task that no "new far left" is going to resolve for the communists, and the ability to achieve it can't be improvised; *anyone who would negate the building of the party now is not going to miraculously achieve it in the heat of the mass rising.* The one-sided emphasis on the "far left" not only produces a voluntarist version of the general strike, but, as we have already asserted, disguises the fact that the central task is nothing but building the party of the Fourth International. And today we cannot build this party except through a course toward the masses, a course inseparable from a struggle *to the death* against Stalinism, Social Democracy, syndicalism, and *against all* the variants of centrism and ultraleftism.

If the world experience of the workers movement should not suffice, the experience right here in Spain would be enough to clarify these problems. The crisis of the system will bring the masses to dislocate the entire edifice of the bourgeois order through their mobilizations, as they did in 1931-37, not as a result of the work of any "new vanguard," but rather encompassing, as one of its elements, the radical wings that every revolutionary process produces. But if the crisis of capitalism brings the masses to this point, it is absolutely unable by itself to give rise to the revolutionary leadership. And this is not provided by the "radical" wings of the vanguard, nor the centrist and "leftist" currents; the POUM [centrist party] and the CNT /syndicalist trade unions/ were absolutely incapable, and in no way is the present "new far left" superior to them. Even more, the fundamental factor in the degeneration of Nin [ex-Trotskyist POUM leader] and the Left Opposition, which marks the formation of the "inadequate instrument" that was the POUM, was the *adaptation to the CNT,* coupled with a sectarian attitude toward the reformist workers forces. And this was, neither more nor less, the road of the abandonment of the program and of support to the Popular Front. We Trotskyists cannot ignore this experience. For this reason, one of the first points in our second congress has been the total acceptance of the balance-sheet of the POUM drawn by Leon Trotsky.

15. *The En Marcha leadership disarms the members in the face of the Popular Frontist alternatives.* The sharpening of the class struggle polarizes the camps in society and in the workers movement. All the pseudo-alternatives occupy the subordinate place they deserve (no matter how "radical" and noisy they may be) and the coherent programmatic alternatives definitely confront each other. In the end, arrayed around the Popular Front, the collaboration of classes, besides its most important promoters, are the altar boys like the CNT and the POUM, the centrists, and "leftists" of all times.

Following in the steps of the [French] Ligue Communiste in the March 1973 elections, the En Marcha comrades have opened a door that can only lead to a dead end. The attitude they adopted regarding the "Assembly of Catalonia" is the clearest expression of the opportunist dynamic contained in their rejection of fighting for a proletarian class united-front alternative.

In fact, while the bourgeoisie as a whole closes ranks behind the Franco dictatorship and behind the efforts of this dictatorship to stop the advance in the generalization of struggles, some bourgeois politicians, in the "democratic

opposition," insist that in order to stop the growing dynamic of the workers and popular actions it is necessary to "concede" political liberties. Big Capital, all its factions, closes its ears to these proposals, conscious that, despite their good will, the CP and other reformists cannot in any way guarantee the result of such an operation. This does not preclude that the bourgeois "democratic opposition" politicians, and the program that they represent, might not be a spare card for Big Capital when the mass struggle has sunk the dictatorship. *Nor does it preclude that these demagogic bourgeois politicians, the bourgeoisie's left wing, might even today play an important role in stopping struggles through their alliances with the reformist leaderships of the workers movement.* The CP, concretely, is dedicating all its efforts to building the so-called "Pact for Freedom," in which it is trying to include bourgeois politicians of the "democratic opposition" as a bridge toward other sectors of the periphery of the political circles of the regime, and with the hope of incorporating bishops, generals and factions of Big Capital. The whole policy of the CP is aimed at subordinating the mass struggle to this plan of alliance with the bourgeoisie. The most advanced point of the coalition of bourgeois politicians with the reformist leaderships is in Catalonia, where the so-called "Assembly of Catalonia" has been formed. What does this represent, what attitude is required of the Trotskyists, what is En Marcha's attitude?

We must again cite another of the fundamental theses approved in our second congress:

"We Trotskyists have nothing in common with the pedants who downplay the influence of the alliances of the reformist leaderships with bourgeois politicians 'who don't represent anybody' (as the republican politicians who represented nobody nonetheless presided in 1936-39 over the disaster of the proletariat). Whatever might be the present importance of the concrete forms of the "Pact for Freedom," these forms are already working as a war machine against the advance of the mass struggle toward the Revolutionary General Strike. The 'Assembly of Catalonia,' the 'boards,' and 'democratic coordinating committees,' and similar bodies, are expressions of an *alliance between the 'democratic shadows' of Big Capital* (who generally try to present themselves as champions 'of the people,' and more concretely of the middle class, without having to forget the presence of direct connections with the bank) *and the leadership of the CP and the other reformist leaderships of the workers movement,* flanked by the bodies of the workers commission-type or other layers they control. Depending on the time and place, the incorporation of radicalized petty-bourgeois groups, of centrist groups like Bandera Roja [Red Flag], or even repentant 'leftists,' can give a certain life to these 'boards,' 'assemblies,' or 'coordinating committees.' But the essential thing is that in the alliance that they reflect, *although the mass influence belongs to the organizations of the working class, the program is the program of the 'liberal' bourgeois opposition* (of which the reformist leaders try to give the most consistent version) *which has the political hegemony."*

This is the *class content* of such bodies, which various centrist groups, among them En Marcha, try to disguise. Some define the Assembly of Catalonia as a conglomeration of "democratic and anti-Francoist" petty-bourgeois forces, more or less paralyzed by the policy of the CP.

The En Marcha comrades, for their part, make the following analysis: "no faction of it (the bourgeoisie) is formally represented in the Assembly of Catalonia." "There exist . . . various politically petty-bourgeois organizations, but they don't represent the real mobilization or radicalization of any sector of the petty-bourgeois masses, these organizations are really political ghosts, they are the only participants that Santiago Carrillo [head of the CP] has found for his discussions." Therefore, "the principal force and the great pusher of said Assembly is the PSUC [Spanish CP's name in Catalonia]." Decidedly the comrades do not understand the politics of alliances, nor do they take into account that in the imperialist epoch the bourgeoisie more and more acts in these cases through "shadows," "ghosts" if the word pleases them. Leon Trotsky, in "Lessons of Spain, The Last Warning," asserted: "Politically the most striking is the fact that the Spanish Popular Front lacked in reality even a parallelogram of forces. The bourgeoisie's place was occupied by its shadow. Through the medium of the Stalinists, Socialists, and Anarchists, the Spanish bourgeoisie subordinated the proletariat to itself without even bothering to participate in the Popular Front." (*The Spanish Revolution*, Pathfinder Press, p. 309) What must be noted is how the traditional scorn among the leftists in Spain for these bourgeois politicians "who don't represent anybody" leads the En Marcha comrades, with their bourgeois sociological organizational conceptions of hegemony, to turn on its head the *class character* of the Assembly of Catalonia. They explain its class character by the class character of the *organization* that is today its basic mainstay (manifestly the class character of the CP is *working class*). This anti-Marxist method of analyzing the class character of the Assembly of Catalonia ought to lead them to support it. This is what the French comrades did at the time of the elections, calling for a vote for an embryonic Popular Front with the excuse that its organizational force was a workers party. But the Marxist method, before all, takes into account the *class character of the program* of these bodies. This is what the second congress of the LCR (now the LC) has done.

"The 'minimum' programs of those class collaborationist bodies are the embodiment of the pledge to isolate out some democratic liberties and elementary demands, excluding not only the transitional demands of the economic and political type, but also various democratic objectives of a radical style. Prostration before private property and the bourgeois state is the sacred oath of the members of those bodies, and this necessarily carries with it the abandonment of any pretense of demolishing Francoism. The bourgeois 'democrats' are not favorably inclined to dissolve all the special repressive bodies. They decline to demand responsibility for the crimes of the dictatorship, and in its place they call for 'amnesty for both sides.' They are partisans of maintaining all the military pacts signed by the dictatorship, and hardened enemies of the self-determination of the oppressed nationalities, in whose face they spit the promise of 'conceding' to them some statutes of autonomy, in order to maintain the violence and oppression over these peoples. *This is the program that the leaderships are adapting to, that they are making their own.* When they propose, on these bases, some 'free' elections and a 'free' Constituent Assembly, one must understand these demands within the framework of the

maintenance, intact, of the apparatus of repression built up by the dictatorship, in which a provisional government without any institutional character, formed by representatives of Big Capital and the Army, would be able to convoke elections when it appeared they could dominate the situation, with the guarantee of the leaderships of the proletariat."

But after analyzing the composition and the program of these machinations, the Marxist method requires consideration of their practical activity.

"This *program* carries grave practical consequences. Its most immediate expression is the fight against the general strike that the Stalinist leadership is developing: the reformist leaderships who promote these bodies and participate in them are unable to avoid bringing the programs and methods of combat that correspond to the requirements of those bourgeois politicians whose alliance is valued above everything else into the practical activity of the mass struggle, placing basic obstacles in the path toward the general strike. "*The zero forces*" that their bourgeois components represent, their "zero strength," doesn't bother the reformist leaderships. On the contrary, this very "weakness" carries with it greater efforts by the reformist leaderships to show their "goodwill" by stopping struggles, in order to develop and broaden the bourgeois clientele by making them comfortable in these ways. If the intervention of those bourgeois bodies is sometimes apparently reduced to the point of breaking communications, this is because among them they leave the role of faithful spokesperson of the bourgeois positions to the CP leadership, to the press and apparatus controlled by this leadership, and, above all, to its faction in the Workers Commissions. Once these leaderships have done everything possible to choke off the drive of the masses by cutting off its generalization, when the mobilizations are in decline, then they sing hosannas to the combativity of the workers and orchestrate the 'democratic' festivals with which the bodies belonging to the Pact try to capitalize on the previous mobilizations.

"For this reason, we Trotskyists have an attitude that is completely opposed to those who try to combat the 'passivity' of the Assembly of Catalonia with initiatives to convert it into a center for mobilization. We state that *these bodies have certainly been present in the mobilizations*, and precisely for this reason the struggle against this traitorous alliance, the struggle for the workers organizations to break all their ties with the bourgeoisie, the struggle for the unity of the proletarian ranks based on this independence with respect to the class enemy occupy a fundamental place. And this fight is all the more important when one takes into account that these bodies already constitute *embryos of an alternative government of a coalition* between the workers organizations and the bourgeoisie that will be necessary to hold back the masses when Francoism is liquidated. Already today they express their whole meaning as a 'democratic' knot tied around the neck of the proletariat by the politicians of Big Capital who utilize the strength of the workers organizations through the betrayal of their leaderships."

These are the Marxist positions, the positions based on the Transitional Program. Faced with them, the En Marcha comrades assert an ambiguous generality, i.e.: "The LCR judges the effectiveness of the Assembly of Catalonia from the point of view of its effectiveness for the mass move-

ment. And the judgment is negative." How must one understand this? Starting from mobilizations? However, a few days after this statement, the Assembly of Catalonia mobilized some 10,000 people. What is clear is the lack of a Marxist criteria, which judges the "effectiveness" beginning, first of all, by its class character and the program. Having mistaken the class character of the Assembly of Catalonia, En Marcha's attitude has to be necessarily the same as toward a front of reformist workers organizations. And at the time, when the En Marcha comrades split, they stated that one would have to demand "that the bourgeois parties leave the Assembly of Catalonia." Later, they have not dared to take the next step, which was to enter this regroupment, as the POUM entered the Generalidad de Catalunya in 1936. But since their analysis already dismisses the existence of "bourgeois" forces in its midst, the road is more open than ever for taking this step, especially when more and more centrist forces are entering the Assembly of Catalonia all the time. Obviously the leadership of En Marcha has to count on the resistance of its members, against whom it factionally moved to deny them the right to fraternal discussion of these questions. We appeal to these members to prevent their leadership from taking the same road that Andres Nin followed, the road of being the "radical" flankguards of reformism and class collaboration!

IV. A Policy of Class United Front or a Policy of 'Initiatives in Action that Attract the New Vanguard': Some Tactical Implications

16. *For a class pact against the dictatorship.* The alliance with the "liberal" bourgeoisie, in the "progressive" sectors of Big Capital, the Church, and the Army in the pact "for freedom" which the CP eulogizes, is presented to the workers by the CP leadership as a "broadening of the front for the struggles." We tell them: this pact can only lead to constraining, diverting, and dividing these struggles. This alliance, in detriment to the class program and methods of struggle of the proletariat, and adopting the program and methods of struggle of the bourgeois politicians, is today sabotaging the advance toward the general strike, and tomorrow, after the overthrow of the dictatorship, will be the cover for the preparations of the bourgeois counterrevolution.

On the other hand, a united front pact of all the factions and organizations of the working class would open the *possibility* to give satisfaction to the interests of the proletariat and also to the progressive aspirations of the rest of the oppressed classes and layers. Today it would facilitate their polarization around the working class in the process of generalized action against the dictatorship of Big Capital.

Every step in the unity of the proletarian front enlarges these possibilities. But it *doesn't guarantee* anything. Decisive guarantees can only be given by the program of class independence and the proletarian methods of struggle put forward by the communists.

Thus the policy of united front today flows from the most vital needs of the workers and popular movement. It is *necessary* to organize generalized struggles, that can win, putting forward plans of struggle for the whole class; it is necessary to defend every isolated battle, organizing

solidarity in other sectors; it is necessary to enable the proletariat to aid the revolt of other oppressed sectors and to put itself at the head of their mobilization against the dictatorship. It is necessary to prepare, through all of this, the instruments that make it possible to enlarge the torrent toward the general strike and to increasingly coordinate it. In opposition to the legalistic methods of pressure, of negotiation, pacifistic methods that go with the politics of the Pact for Freedom, in opposition to a policy of unity of the workers with the democratic shadows of the bourgeoisie, and to all the opportunist positions that go with it, which are inseparable from demonstrative or pacifist concepts of the general strike, the policy of the united front counterposes the methods of direct action of the proletariat and the masses, the motor force of the generalization and unification of the struggles, through a break with all the bureaucratic and legalistic bridges of conciliation (bourgeois courts, CNS, policy of collective contracts of the dictatorship, etc.), through the development of self-defense from the present pickets with the perspective of the workers militia. *To the "minimum" petty-bourgeois program of the reformists, the policy of united front counterposes the struggle for a program centered on the direct action of the masses behind democratic and transitional demands* that are able to push forward, organize, and lead the present upsurge of the workers and popular struggles toward the destruction of the dictatorship and the satisfaction of all the elementary and basic necessities of the masses. In opposition to any type of coalition government of the workers with representatives of the bourgeoisie, whose goal is to save private property and the bourgeois state when Francoism falls, we counterpose the struggle for a Workers Government which carries the destruction of Francoism through to the end and guarantees all the democratic and national liberties, which expropriates the big landlords and capitalists without compensation, which imposes workers control over production and the monopoly of foreign trade, and which arms the proletariat.

In this direction, we call on all the organizations that speak in the name of the proletariat, to which other layers of the oppressed in struggle will be added, to break all pacts with the bourgeoisie and to unify, from today on, their efforts to push struggles forward toward the general strike that knocks over the dictatorship and installs a government forged in the fire of the struggles, without any minister from the bourgeoisie.

This is the orientation we Trotskyists are today fighting for, an orientation that our second congress has approved in its basic outlines, and that implies the intransigent pushing of a class line and the advancement in building the party capable of defending that orientation against all the class collaborationist lines. Thus, as one of our basic documents says: "every practical step in the unification of the proletarian front opens immense possibilities. But it doesn't guarantee anything. The guarantees can only flow from the program of class independence that we communists put forward."

The splitters faction is added to the choir of the rest of the "far left" in its deprecation of the need to put forward a united front pact alternative to the line of the pact for freedom. It is differentiated from the rest of the "far left" by making sporadic abstract propaganda in favor of the Proletarian Front, and above all in favor of soviets.

17. *Regarding the tactical methods of united front.* We have already pointed out the consequences that it has for the *necessary* utilization of the tactical methods of united front. The rejection of the method of building the party sketched in the Transitional Program, which outlines its development through persistent efforts to put forward a mass line on the basis of a program of class-against-class struggle, leads inescapably to downgrade the methods of united front to the category of apparatus tricks. In this area, the En Marcha comrades are loyal followers of the concepts propagated from *Rouge* by Comrade Weber regarding the united front, and whose basic spirit Comrade Bensaid has recently defended in the same newspaper, in an article about the French Ligue Communiste's policy in the elections of 1973. The reasoning of this comrade was that the Ligue Communiste was today able to participate in the elections—with a policy of voting for the Union of the Left on the second round—because "it felt strong"; the correct policy for a little group, "wanting above all to educate its members and sympathizers," would have probably been abstention. The objective meaning of these positions is: let's build a strong organization with an ultraleftist line, educating our militants and sympathizers against any illusion about unity, if necessary facing the need for unity of the combat front of the proletariat which the proletariat experiences in the entire process of its struggles, developing, during the elections, an abstentionist policy, i.e., a policy of neutrality between the bourgeois parties and the workers parties. Thus we will get to be strong enough to be able to participate in the elections, without risk of miseducating our militants and sympathizers by the fact that, in place of having a policy that tends to free the workers from the illusions that are inevitably mixed in with their positive tendency toward unity, we unfurl a policy of reenforcing such illusions by supporting an embryonic Popular Front. In a grotesque manner, this is the unavoidable logic that the policy of initiatives in action and the apparatus concept of building the party leads to. We should recognize that the En Marcha comrades have not gone that far, either in theory or in practice. For the moment, this type of position has helped them to justify the essence of the LCR's ultraleftist past, pushes them on a dangerous road in questions like that of the Assembly of Catalonia, and keeps them tied to positions in regard to the methods of united front in which opportunism alternates with sectarianism.

Since the beginning of the decade, under the pressure of exacerbated exploitation and oppression, the mass movement has expressed a series of fundamental requirements and features, that the next period is going to more and more accentuate. These requirements and features include: the extension of the radius of action of the workers battles and their spread to peripheral layers of the proletariat, through struggles that intensely stimulate each other; the extraordinary propagation of unifying demands, economic and political; the radicalization in the growth of the forms of struggle in the face of fascist channels, expressing the necessity that the actions of the workers try to escape from the fragmentation imposed by these fascist apparatuses and to raise the unity of the class in struggle, on the basis of the assemblies; the tendency for these assemblies to demand their control over the organs of the vanguard (groups, committees, commissions, etc.) which have pushed

forward the struggle; the workers will resist in response to the criminal blows of the repression, and the incipient popularization of pickets to extend and defend the actions.

What do all these characteristics show us? They show us that ever more important sectors of the class feel the need to fight as one, extending their struggles and unifying them in spite of the various divisions, against all the bureaucratic compartmentalizations imposed by the dictatorship . . . concentrating all the power dispersed in thousands of actions into blows by the whole class that are ever more decisive against the dictatorship. They show us that, to do this, it is vital to go beyond the "legal channels" of Francoist division, to break with them in direct mass action. And they show that, in this fight, through progressively sharpened frontal collisions with the repressive apparatus, the class tends to satisfy its needs to decide for itself the objective, methods, and perspectives of its struggle, through workers democracy.

The present phase, in summary, more than ever puts the struggle of class-against-class, the independent action of the masses against capitalism and its dictatorship on the agenda. The radicalization of the actions is deepening and in a simultaneous manner a powerful tendency toward unity in the face of the deep division of the workers organizations is also deepening. The more the contradictions are sharpened, the more the working class will accentuate these needs. The more its willingness to struggle as a whole unit is developed — and at the same time, its pressure for unity on the diverse organizations that present a panorama that is extraordinarily fragmented into different and counterposed formations, and especially marked by the predominant influence of the reformist leaderships, among whom the CP occupies an obvious place. In the face of the needs of a class-against-class struggle, in the face of the urgency of pushing forward a united front against the capitalist exploitation and oppression of decaying Francoism, the traditional reformist, Stalinist, syndicalist, and Social Democratic leaderships have systematically shown themselves more disposed to intensify their efforts toward one or another faction of the bourgeoisie. Cynically exploiting the theme of workers unity, they have used it as bait in order to trap the militants, who have sprung up out of the struggles, into lines that are antagonistically counterposed to the proletarian united front, lines transfixed by the spirit of class collaboration.

But the mass movement, pushed forward by the brutal capitalist contradictions, has not stopped colliding with such policies, continually going beyond them in practice and placing the militants in very sharp conflicts with their leaders.

This has been expressed in the constant falling away of militants and organizations from the Stalinist and syndicalist orbit, in the setting up of new circles and nuclei that break with these leaderships right from the start, giving rise to a heterogeneous and confused current, but one that is capable on certain occasions of class-struggle initiatives that have mass influence.

Through this course, the blows of the radicalization have penetrated into the very fiefs and sanctuaries of reformism, in a thrust that is moving toward the great industrial centers.

As a consequence of all these processes, the traditional leaderships of the workers movement, above all on local levels, have more than once been seen to be forced, in

order not to lose control over the mass movements and their own members, to take steps in breaking with the bourgeoisie that they would have preferred to avoid, accumulating new contradictions through this.

The broad field that all the above offers for united front activity must take into account, moreover, the precipitous development of the struggles of the students, youth, teachers, etc. These struggles raise the need, before all else, to assert the political hegemony of the proletariat, preparing it to place its struggles in the center of the revolt of all the oppressed. The line of class united front and the methods that serve as a vehicle for it, are the only means to go forward in this direction. But at the same time, the audience and the capability for massive and autonomous mobilization that we Trotskyists can win in these sectors, can increase the scope of our policy of unification of the workers front around a class line.

For us the utilization of the methods of united front is a *constant* aspect of the revolutionary policy, a constant that will take shape at each particular moment with an uneven scope. This scope, totally or partially propagandistic, or even directly aimed at pushing mass actions under the pressure of the communists, does not depend on the "relationship of forces" of the apparatuses that En Marcha talks to us about. It depends on the dialectical relations between the energy of the mass movement, its contradictory ties with the traditional apparatuses, on the dialectical relations between the rank-and-file militants and their leaderships, the extension of the positions and experiences of the class struggle within the proletariat and other sectors and its vanguard elements, and the political clarity, organizational size and militant strength of the communist vanguard.

But whatever our forces may be, we Trotskyists must tirelessly defend, by formulating concrete tactical and organizational objectives and proposals, the putting forward of united responses, mass responses, against each of the aggressions by capital and the dictatorship against the proletariat and the people. We will fight in order that these are taken up by all the organizations of the working class. We will defend them even in those cases where we face very unfavorable conditions, which limit the development of this orientation to a fundamentally propagandistic plane, due to "our relationship of forces with the apparatuses." Whatever size a communist organization might be, there is nothing "opportunist" if, at the same time that it is engaged in developing an independent dynamic of agitation and promotion of mass actions to the maximum degree possible, it also goes before the entirety of the working-class organizations and militants *with what they should do* in these concrete circumstances, since they speak in the name of the proletariat. Taking as a starting point the daily confrontations between classes, even if quite limited, permits a sector of the working-class fighters, including some who still trust the reformist leaderships, to begin to see what these reformist leaders ought to do. In contrast, En Marcha's typical way of acting is to issue direct calls to the masses, avoiding any form of placing the responsibilities on the sell-out leaderships which the reliance of the confidence of the bulk of the workers movement imposes on them.

In places where the achievement of a minimum influence in the class and accumulation of militants imposes direct responsibilities on us in the agitation of the masses and

the practical organization of struggles, we will not wait for the response of the reformist leaderships before pushing forward the struggle for the real needs of the workers, trying to pull along the militants who rely on these leaderships. We shouldn't lose sight of the fact that the more pressure there is from the worker and popular masses, pressure we tenaciously dedicate ourselves to deepening through systematic agitational, propagandist, and organizational work, these leaderships will be forced to take steps that help the struggle, or they will be pitilessly unmasked. If we are successful in this endeavor, we warn the workers in advance about the possible betrayals by the reformists and centrists, at all times safeguarding our political and organizational independence and freedom to criticize, before, during, and after the actions, while at all times tirelessly building the communist organization.

And all this becomes that much more important in proportion to the increase in *the need and the practical scope* with which the recourse by Trotskyists to these methods is raised.

18. *Differences regarding the role of the workers commissions and work in them.* While we propose the alternative of a class pact against the dictatorship in our propaganda, presenting it to the different workers parties and organizations, in each situation in the class struggle, in the face of the different concrete needs we go to these parties and we try to put forward agreements with them on a response to these needs. We cannot acquit these leaderships of their responsibility before the eyes of the workers, when in reality it is they who sabotage practical revolutionary action in bodies of the workers commission-type and everywhere else. We Trotskyists specifically seek to push forward this practical action. We try in all cases to arrive at practical agreements, at concrete calls and compromises. But we are not at all interested in bringing out propagandistic manifestos that have a hybrid political content, whose only role would be to cover up the political betrayals of these leaderships with the endorsement of the joint signing of a manifesto with the Trotskyists that does not commit them to anything real. We are conscious that in the majority of cases, under present conditions, these very specific and temporary forms of united front between parties offer a small margin of control over the opportunist leaderships, they have a scope of mobilization that is frequently limited, and are easily transformed into alibis to turn ones back on the needs of the struggles. This prevents us from viewing these forms day by day as the fundamental concretization of our fight for the united front.

On the contrary, the rebuilding of the proletariat of Spain in its struggle under and against Francoism has been achieved, starting out from a specific arena, around the formation of broad united vanguard bodies with a base in the plant, bodies that under the special conditions of Francoism are not limited in any way to just trade union tasks, but rather are impelled by the very dynamic of the class confrontations to play a role as representative bodies of the class struggle in all areas. The contradictions introduced in these bodies—workers commissions—by the reformist hegemony has led to a serious crisis for them, numerous deformations, with particular gravity the more the levels of coordination are raised. Even now, their adjustment to the needs of the

struggle under conditions where mass unions and parties don't exist, make these factory-based bodies a structural factor of first importance in the whole development of the class struggle. Furthermore, to the extent that other layers of the population have entered into struggle, they have had to imitate, with differences, the model of the united bodies of the proletariat that have been shown in all cases to be the most capable for providing a structure for the movement.

It is in the Workers Commissions that we Trotskyists think the fundamental organic base of the united front of the militant proletariat is found. To their stable character are added the advantage of their greater link with the mass movement, the fact that they serve as the principal source for the crystalization of the broad vanguard, and their greater capacity for mobilization. They are, then, the bodies most exposed to the pressure of the struggles, to the radicalization of the masses in struggle. In addition, the Workers Commissions constitute the traditional organizations which have played an important role in almost all the significant mobilizations for a decade. We Trotskyists, in order to counteract the fragmentation of the movement and advance toward generalized battles, push forward the Workers Commissions as democratic bodies of the united front of the vanguard workers, open to all those who struggle. We feel they should play a fundamental role in giving rise to struggles of the whole class, and in the rise of the committees elected and subject to recall in assemblies, and in their coordination, moving toward higher *organic forms* of the united proletarian front.

At the same time, the experience of the past decade, and especially of recent struggles, show the ability of the Workers Commissions to centralize the fight of all the layers in struggle by coordinating with the united bodies of those layers on the basis of the objectives, methods, and forms of proletarian mass organization. Therefore, while in our propaganda we raise the need for the Workers Commissions and the united organizations of other classes to form the Class Front against the Francoist dictatorship—under the stimulus of the parties that are based in the working class—with respect to each plan of joint struggle that we propose in a specific situation, with respect to the need to support a struggle or to organize a joint action, we try to push forward the effective coordination of the Workers Commissions and those bodies that can develop those actions with the objectives, forms of struggle, and organization that can make the coordination effective.

This is, then, the organic pivot of our efforts, in which we try to make the influence that we are able to gather in any workers sectors, or any sector of other layers, felt. Far from counterposing the higher forms of class unity, such as elected committees, to the commissions, we think that the commissions are the vehicles best able to push them forward. Far from subordinating the commissions to a dynamic of pacts between parties, and as a function of the respective characterizations that we have outlined, we resurrect the banner that presided over the birth of the commissions: For the unity of all the workers parties, organizations, and militants in the Workers Commissions! And for this, the first point in the proposals we normally make in meetings with other parties is to push the unification of the Workers Commissions

in order to carry out specific actions through the appropriate objectives, forms of struggle, and organization, and we raise the idea that the parties have to back and support all the accords of the commissions that mean a step forward for the struggle.

This is what we mean by our assertion that the Workers Commissions have to be the fundamental organic basis for a pact of proletarian unity, for the preparation, through the pushing forward of the present struggles, of mass action leading toward the defeat of the dictatorship through the revolutionary general strike. This defense of the role of Workers Commissions as organizing centers of the class-against-class struggle, of the proletarian alternative for the various oppressed layers that are today entering into battle, rises up as an alternative to all the intentions to subjugate the Workers Commissions as appendices to the "democratic" boards of alliance with the bourgeoisie, to all the centrist intentions to reduce them, in an open or hidden manner, to the role of unions, which facilitates the line of the CP.

In reality, the CP's need to base itself on bodies whose characteristics are those of an organic framework of the workers front is the sharpest point in Stalinism's contradictions. From this it flows that, since they cannot do without the commissions due to the fact that mass unions don't exist, they mutilate and sabotage them at every step, in order to be able to use them in the service of a political line that runs contrary to the class thrust that created the commissions. In particular, to the extent that the road of the generalized struggle is entered, the contradictions of a policy opposed to the struggle being generalized by direct mass action—the only form of generalizing it in the face of the dictatorship—are sharpened even more, to the extent that the proletariat appears at the head of the oppressed masses in the struggle: *the coordination of the Workers Commissions with other layers constitutes in practice an operant alternative to the boards and assemblies of the "pact for freedom."* From this it follows that the Stalinists today accommodate themselves to the syndicalist and centrist efforts to confine the commissions to a supposedly simple trade union role that is impossible under Francoism. And they put all their energy into the groups associated with the "Pact," and where these don't exist, into agreements between parties with the bureaucratic participation of commissions.

A very clear alternative is in play for the workers movement. Nevertheless, the comrades of En Marcha have other concerns. To them it doesn't matter as much that they might be the ones who push the practical revolutionary action of the masses with the most effectiveness, as that the name, propaganda, and "revolutionary" actions of their organization are seen and heard, in the most spectacular way possible. At the same time they want to give a boost to the "radical" groups of the "far left," which have so little weight, in many cases, in the movement. For that reason, it is important for them to put the accords between parties in the foreground, where their signature can "autonomously" shine.

In parallel fashion, they line up with numerous centrists, syndicalists (and with the Stalinists themselves) in attempting to reduce the Workers Commissions to what is in fact a quasi-trade union level. According to the En Marcha comrades, the growth of the Workers Commissions, through the present struggles, will be achieved in the

form of a stable layer of commissions which will remain organized around immediate objectives, without taking into account that this is going to be impossible given the dynamic that the contradictions of capitalism and the dictatorship in crisis will impose on the struggle. At a time when the advance in the generalization of the struggles more than ever underlines the type of needs that Workers Commissions will have to take on, the En Marcha comrades ignore what has already for the last nine years been totally obvious to everyone but the blind syndicalists. Recently in a Barcelona coordinating committee meeting, an En Marcha comrade asserted: "The Workers Commissions don't have a political alternative to the dictatorship." To this a leader of the CP very correctly responded, "Yes they do have one: the Pact for Freedom." It is En Marcha that doesn't have an alternative. At the beginning, the En Marcha comrades were greatly worried about a line that would, independently of the situation and the state of spirit of the masses, make the Workers Commissions take up the "totality of the Party program." To prevent this danger, the comrades' alternative has been to propose, as an alternative to the Pact for Freedom, to the Popular Frontist minimum program, a "platform of action for an entire period," i.e. a "red" minimum program. The comrades ought to learn that "the present epoch is distinguished not for the fact that it frees the revolutionary party from day-to-day work but because it permits this work to be carried on indissolubly with the actual tasks of the revolution." (*Transitional Program for Socialist Revolution*, p. 75) "It is necessary to help the masses in the process of daily struggle to find the bridge between present demands and the socialist program of the revolution. This bridge should include a system of *transitional demands*, stemming from today's conditions and from today's consciousness of wide layers of the working class and unalterably leading to one final conclusion: the conquest of power by the proletariat." (Emphasis in original, *Ibid.*, p. 75.) We are also against *ultimatistic and sectarian methods* leading toward the Workers Commissions "signing" the Trotskyist program. But we don't, therefore, leave the program to one side, nor will we artificially limit what the Workers Commissions should take on. We communists fight for the Workers Commissions to make the alternative of unification of the proletariat around a program of class independence, which is nothing but the Transitional Program, its won, so that the Workers Commissions are endowed with the necessary weapons to respond to the dynamic of the present struggles with economic and elementary democratic demands advancing toward transitional measures and the workers government which must carry them out. In contrast, those who try to limit "programs of stages" will have to go running in search of a new program of change every time the masses develop a new aspiration. And this is called being dragged by the movement (by the predominant currents in it). We do not determine what should be done in the Workers Commissions through the process of radicalization that the vanguard workers will follow, but rather beginning from the tasks that are going to be *objectively* imposed we accelerate the very process of radicalization of these workers.

In conclusion, the characterization of the Workers Commissions that the En Marcha comrades make is a photograph of the poor deformations imposed by the Stalinists,

syndicalists, and centrists, that ignores their whole development and their present reality. And after this recognition, their own method leads them to adapt themselves opportunistically to the "backwardness" and the "minimal level" that they imagine in the Workers Commissions. It is not only that they are mistaken in considering the Workers Commissions in fact like unions, but also that *they are unable to do the union work of revolutionaries.*

Nevertheless, the comrades have a revolutionary will. From this flows their bad conscience about dedicating themselves to the "vital needs" of the masses, which for them is something apart from the revolutionary program. Therefore their congress had to end the resolution on intervention in the Workers Commissions stating: "Our autonomous work is not one determined by 'what the Workers Commissions can agree to' or 'what the masses understand.' We constantly try to modify the state of spirit of the class, the level of consciousness of the vanguard, preparing the confrontations of tomorrow that, only if this is done, will be able to arrive at victory. We must resort to a 'pedagogy in action' that for the moment only involves a part of the broad workers vanguard, without, at the beginning, having a mass influence. But the criteria of intervention of the revolutionaries is not immediately determined only by the state of spirit of the masses, but also by the objective situation, and finally, by the ultimate interests of the proletariat."

In this one paragraph ("Resolution on the Intervention in the Organized Workers Movement," No. 18) the whole logic of En Marcha's intervention is contained, all its ignorance of Marxism, all its scorn for the working class, including its sickly obsession to "differentiate itself" from reformism through marginal operations that hide the capitulations it makes in practical activity. The revolutionaries represent the historic interests . . . *when they are outside the Workers Commissions, doing "autonomous work," initiatives that reach the new vanguard (they think), "pedagogic initiatives in action" breaking windows or burning tractors. With this, they cover the need to not determine their intervention "solely on the basis of the state of spirit of the masses," but "also by the objective situation. . . ."* Said another way, the "non-autonomous" work, the intervention in the Workers Commissions, is determined by "what the masses understand," has nothing to do with the historic interests, only with the immediate interests (which might be contradictory or at least unrelated to them), interests which, "naturally," the Stalinists and syndicalists must represent. Said more briefly, *to capitulate and ease ones conscience.*

Moreover, the En Marcha comrades exclaim that to defend and propagandize around the revolutionary program, the whole program (!), is propagandism. But we are going to see how *their minimal "platform of the period" introduces propagandism.* En Marcha's whole concept of *tendency work* shows where the propagandism lies. And this point of tendency work is the last one that we are going to take in reference to the tactical methods of united front in the workers arena.

At the same time that we defend the entirety of the program in propaganda and in the ideological struggle within the Workers Commissions and outside them, we communists respond to *every one* of the blows of the bourgeoisie and dictatorship by raising themes of a portion

of this program, as the only ones that respond to the needs that the workers have raised. The communist faction carries out a permanent work of concretizing its program to the objective situation at each moment, in the form of *plans*, of proposals of action, that embrace the needs that push forward the struggle at a specific point and time, taking into account the situation of the movement as a whole. On the basis of these *concrete alternatives alone is it possible to draw together militants from other organizations or companeros who recently entered the Workers Commissions into common struggle.* Through these partial battles, a current will develop within the Workers Commissions, a tendency that through each concrete action will develop the class-struggle positions. Through this tendency work, from "the bottom up" *a lever of the mass struggle*, it is possible to draw layers of workers toward communist positions. Although the efforts of the Trotskyists and their sympathizers to set up the tendency are *permanent, such a tendency cannot be a stable organization due to, among other things, the degree to which the party has been built*, but is rather a perspective of continual work that takes shape in more or less temporary groupings. The party, the communist faction, is the backbone of the class-struggle tendency that pushes the mobilizations of the masses forward according to an independent class line.

In contrast, the splitters' faction proposes the creation of a stable "revolutionary tendency," around an agreement on nine points that are *neither the program of the party nor reduce themselves down to the objectives that the projecting of a class-struggle line require at a given moment.* This mutation presents a *sectarian face*, closing the road to a layer of the vanguard temporarily coming together in action by demanding their signature, *outside a dynamic of struggle*, on a list of points projected bureaucratically through propaganda. It is an old bureaucratic-sectarian aberration of the establishment of a tendency. But once more these leftist features are the other side of the opportunist coin. In fact, only opportunists could think that their nine points suffice to guarantee that a grouping will be able to provide correct alternatives at every moment. To think that this framework exists outside the party is a trait of centrists. *The communist faction in the Workers Commissions, i.e., the LCR's cells and the sympathizers gathered around them, who have an understanding of events, of the laws that move them, of the tasks that are indicated, an understanding that the Marxist program gives them, are the only ones able to permanently provide the necessary responses for the class. They are the only "permanent revolutionary tendency" in the Workers Commissions.*

After our criticisms, and worried by their own assertions, the En Marcha comrades changed their position to emphasize that such a revolutionary tendency will be formed through a "process," that it won't happen tomorrow, etc. Without abandoning propaganda for the nine points, they asserted the necessity of present tendency work, around concrete aspects of the intervention (temporary groupings of the militants in the Workers Commissions who favor the holding of an assembly, the election of a strike committee, the organization of self-defense pickets, for example). This "turn" away from the sectarian aspects strengthens the opportunist face, opening the door

to a policy of uniting "radical" currents on the basis of minimal agreements artificially limited with respect to the most opportunist wings within these "radical" currents. On the other hand, consistent with the execution of the plan of work in the Workers Commissions carried out by the comrades, they continue to abstain from raising *concrete alternatives that embrace the totality of practical needs at a given moment*, they continue to refuse to *systematically propose plans of action*. They prefer the "temporary" aspects (for example the self-defense pickets, a proposal that serves to "delineate" but nothing else *when abstracted from a total plan*).

In its two aspects, their concept of tendency work has a common basis: *it is not established in relation to the objective practical needs of pushing forward the class struggle, but rather in relation to continuing ties with the "far left."* Consequently, in both versions it is a question of a propagandist focus, which doesn't take the objective necessities of pushing the mass struggle as its point of departure. Though they may persist in denying it, not only the "platform of the period" but also the very form of establishing "temporary" groupings are only "instruments of ideological conquest of the vanguard within the Workers Commissions," and it must be added, instruments of centrist conquest of the centrists. Apart from this, their whole practice is being based on the combination of partial, ideological, abstract propagandism around elected committees, or pickets, or other "aspects" not tied to the entirety of the needs of a given situation *on the one hand; and on the other*, their cultivation of marginal groupings, marginal as a result of choice, semisplittist and unable to push forward any mass action together with their esteemed "revolutionaries" of the "new far left."

V. Forward in Building the Party of the Fourth International in the State of Spain

After its split, the LCR (today LC) directed the following appeal, published in *Combate*, No. 11, to the En Marcha comrades: "Comrades of the minority faction of

the LCR, the second congress of the LCR is not a factional congress, it continues to be yours and ours. Preparations for it are under way. You have a place to discuss in it. Not through a representative to discuss the split, but rather through representation that is proportional to your strength and in order to carry on the Trotskyist debate that the split has interrupted. With a view toward democratic representation at this congress, we renew our proposal for a parity commission in which representation of each tendency in the Fourth International should be included. For our part, we are convinced that, despite the split which we fought against with all our strength, the debate continues to be possible and necessary."

The En Marcha comrades continued ignoring this appeal, as they had ignored our proposals to avoid the split. And what is more serious, they deepened, day-by-day, in practice, the opportunist positions in whose defense they had carried out the split. The second congress of the LCR (today LC) is saddened by this course of increasing separation from Trotskyism, which moves them further and further from building the party of the revolution in Spain, and from the Fourth International. Moving out from this congress, with two organizations, two parties, having remained firmly established, the LC will try to deepen the debate around building the party within the Fourth International, and *at the same time*, will strengthen itself to make the positions of the Transitional Program play a living part in the class struggles, fighting to help the incorrectly oriented militants of En Marcha so that, in the face of the blows of the class struggle, they may stop their opportunist course and involve themselves in the communist struggle to build the party.

September 1973

1. In a document of the second congress of the LCR (today the LC) which was sent to *Quatrieme Internationale*, the magazine of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International, we analyze this evolution in the years 1969-73.

The Beginning of a Revision of Marxism

By E. Germain

In the document "In Defence of Leninism: In Defence of the Fourth International," we specified four points of Marxist theory on the national question in the imperialist epoch, points that seemed dangerously misunderstood by the majority of the Canadian section:

1. The need to make a distinction between supporting all demands for self-determination advanced by the oppressed nationalities on the one hand, and support to nationalism, a bourgeois and petty-bourgeois ideology that can be used against the struggle for the emancipation of the exploited and oppressed masses on the other.

2. The need, since the beginning of the revolutionary process in the backward countries, to consider the national question as inextricably linked to the agrarian question and to other tasks of the bourgeois-democratic revolution that have not been carried out in these countries; *that is, the need to avoid considering a phase of "national liberation" as a separate entity distinct from the overall process of permanent revolution in these countries.*

3. The need to make a distinction between the role of the national question (and of democratic demands in general) in the backward countries and its role in the imperialist countries.

4. The need to approach the national question, as Lenin said, by beginning:

"... not on abstract and formal principles but, first, on a precise appraisal of the specific historical situation and, primarily, of economic conditions; second, on a clear distinction between the interests of the oppressed classes, of working and exploited people, and the general concept of national interests as a whole, which implies the interests of the ruling class; third, on an equally clear distinction between the oppressed, dependent and subject nations and the oppressing, exploiting and sovereign nations. . . ." ("Preliminary Draft Theses on the National and Colonial Question," *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 145.)

We believe that fundamental aspects of the Marxist theory on the national question are involved (not just those cited above, obviously, but rather all the aspects on which there was disagreement during the discussion). After reading Comrade Gus Horowitz's discussion bulletin, "Comrade Germain's Errors on the National Question" (*International Internal Discussion Bulletin*, Vol. 10, No. 10, July 1973), the least that can be said is that his position is not clear in this regard. In fact, he has succeeded in covering twenty-four densely packed pages without giving the slightest resemblance of a reply to the questions that have been raised; instead he dredges up spu-

rious quarrels over interpretations, presents us with a scholastic study of "quotations" and "counter-quotations," and refrains from dotting the i's and crossing the t's where this is required for clarity in the debate.

Unfortunately, resorting to these subterfuges can only confirm the impression that has already emerged from the documents of the Canadian section cited in "In Defence of Leninism: In Defence of the Fourth International." We are confronted with the beginning of a revision of Marxism, a beginning whose implications are pregnant with consequences in many areas.

Once Again: Permanent Revolution and Revolution by Stages, Or How to Unscramble Scrambled Eggs

We have emphasized what in our opinion constitutes the fundamental basis of the theory of permanent revolution, that is, the fact that semifeudal, imperialist, "national" capitalist, and other relations of exploitation *overlap* to such an extent in the backward countries that it is absolutely impossible to make a distinction between "stages" in the revolutionary process. The dynamic of the class struggle is decisive, no matter whether the revolutionary struggle first breaks out against a foreign colonial or imperialist power, whether it first breaks out against despotic "national" oppression, or whether it is first set off by the agrarian revolution or by strikes of students or workers. And if the revolutionary process is to escape being throttled by counterrevolution, its leadership must pass over to the working class allied with the poor peasantry. This is true not only because the "national bourgeoisie's" ties to imperialism render it incapable of leading to victory the struggle for national independence, but also and above all because the peasants begin to occupy the land that belongs to them, and the workers begin to challenge the exploitation in their factories. *By virtue of its class interests the bourgeoisie inevitably passes over into the camp of counterrevolution:* this is the basic reason why proletarian leadership is indispensable for a victorious revolution, even in backward countries.

The fact that the bourgeoisie only vacillates in the struggle for national liberation is just a single and minor aspect of a much broader phenomenon: its opposition to the interests of the proletariat and the poor (and even middle) peasantry compels it to slide over into the camp of counterrevolution.

Comrade Horowitz makes solemn declarations to the effect that he is in agreement with this highly orthodox

exposition of the theory of permanent revolution. He states he is completely satisfied with our outline of the *combined* character of the tasks of the permanent revolution. But once he enters the polemic, he makes it clear that what he is really trying to do is to unscramble the white of the egg from its yolk insofar as combined development is concerned:

"Two experiences are worth noting in this regard: the liberation struggles in Palestine and in Bangladesh. In both of these struggles similar democratic nationalist demands (?) were put forward and won wide mass support: 'for a democratic, secular Palestine' and 'for a democratic, secular Bangladesh.' Proponents of these demands include (!) bourgeois and petty-bourgeois nationalists. The leadership of Fateh, for example, a petty-bourgeois nationalist organization, was the main popularizer of the demand for a democratic, secular Palestine. Naturally the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois nationalist leaders did not have any intentions of advancing the socialist revolution. They interpreted these slogans in their own way, linking them to their own class programs which are opposed to the program of Marxism. Does this mean that revolutionary Marxists are duty bound to *oppose* these democratic demands and *counterpose* to them on all occasions specifically socialist slogans?

"No, not at all. These democratic demands correspond to the interests of the proletarian and peasant masses: for political democracy; for separation of religion and the state; for a specific expression of national self-determination (a unitary Palestine, an independent Bangladesh). Revolutionary Marxists have the duty to advance demands like these, at the same time to show how the petty-bourgeois and bourgeois nationalists betray the struggle for these demands, and point to the socialist revolution as the only way to achieve them. For example, in raising the demand for political democracy, revolutionary Marxists differentiate themselves from the Menshevik-Stalinist concept for forming a classless democratic state, a formula which generally conceals the goal of forming a bourgeois state.

"These demands, linked with other democratic, immediate, and transitional demands indicated in our transitional program, have the potential for mobilizing the oppressed proletarian and peasant masses in struggle against their oppressors and exploiters." (Horowitz, p. 9.)

Comrade Horowitz's entire scholastic confusion is summed up in these two paragraphs.

No one in our movement has ever denied that even a struggle for an independent *bourgeois* state in Bangladesh would be progressive. We have written quite clearly that it is the duty of revolutionary Marxists to support *every* demand that expresses oppressed nationalities' right to self-determination. The right to their own state is the most fundamental expression of self-determination. We do not understand, therefore, who it is among us that Comrade Horowitz is polemicizing against on this point.

Comrade Horowitz then manages to say in one sentence the exact opposite of what he said in a previous sentence. First he says we support the demand for a "democratic Bangladesh" or a "democratic Palestine"; then he says we "differentiate" ourselves from the Menshevik-Stalinist concept of a "classless, democratic state." But the slogan for a "democratic and secular Palestine" or a "democratic and secular Bangladesh" is characterized precisely by the fact

that the class nature of the state has not been specified! Perhaps by this formulation Comrade Horowitz *means to imply* a workers state. But 99.99 percent of the Palestinians and Bengalis who read or heard his call for a "democratic, secular Palestine" or for a "democratic, secular Bangladesh" would understand this slogan as meaning precisely a "democratic state" without a specific class content, something that could only serve as a cover for a *bourgeois state*. Thus if revolutionary Marxists advance this slogan *themselves*, that means (whether one wishes it or not) that they are declaring themselves in favor of a bourgeois-democratic state.

Comrade Horowitz's line of argument focuses exclusively on "slogans" and is totally propagandistic. Underlying this argument is the concept that so long as there is no mass revolutionary party it is impossible to do anything but carry out propaganda work. But once the question is approached from the point of view of *revolutionary Marxists' intervention in the struggle*, a sage dosage of slogans is no longer the priority. It is then appropriate to *anticipate the dynamic of mass struggles*, and to emphasize in particular the aspects of the struggles that permit the dialectic of permanent revolution to unfold fully.

This means that once the Arab or Bengali revolutionary process is set in motion, revolutionary Marxists are duty bound to explain the following to the workers and peasants:

"We are opposed to all national and imperialist oppression. We support an Arab republic, an independent Palestine and Bangladesh, even if bourgeois. But we do not make a distinction between the struggle for national independence and the struggle for distributing the land. Take up the arms you are offered, seize them when they are not offered; fight the imperialist oppressor, but do not limit yourselves to fighting the foreign enemy. Occupy the land! Form peasant leagues! Organize the workers in unions! Never forget your class interests, which are irreconcilably opposed to those of the landlords and the "national" capitalists. Mobilize the maximum number of forces possible in the revolutionary process, *under a leadership independent of the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois nationalist leaderships*. Your national and social liberation is at stake, and the one is indissolubly linked to the other."

Naturally, it is difficult to describe this language as "nationalist." But it is the language of Trotskyists who understand the *combined* character of the revolution.

At the beginning of the growth of the mass movement, no one can tell whether or not a certain line will carry the majority of the workers and peasants. In other words, no one can tell at what point in the revolutionary process the proletariat, supported by the poor peasantry, will be able to gain hegemony over the revolutionary process, wrenching it away from the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois nationalist parties. But it is certain that it is the duty of revolutionary Marxists to fight along these lines *right from the beginning*. With this aim in mind, demands for agrarian revolution and for defense of the material interests of the working class must be linked *from the beginning* with demands for national liberation. It is obvious that propaganda *focusing* on the slogans "for a democratic, secular Palestine" and "for a democratic secular Bangladesh" does not permit attaining this goal. These so-called slogans, incidentally, are not, as Comrade Horowitz states, advanced by everyone, including the bourgeois

and petty-bourgeois leaderships of the national movement. They are *deliberately* put forward in the struggle by the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois leaderships in order to *separate* the agrarian revolution and the emancipation of the working class from the struggle for national liberation. By providing a cover for this classical maneuver, by going so far as to become an accomplice, Comrade Horowitz abandons the theory of permanent revolution and goes over to the concept of revolution by stages.

What is the actual meaning of his thesis that it is necessary to support the slogans mentioned above while "at the same time [showing] how the petty-bourgeois and bourgeois nationalists betray the struggle for these demands"? Apart from a purely propagandistic concept of the struggle ("unmask the traitors by driving them into a corner"), it involves the notion that before the role of the bourgeois leaderships can be called into question, they must first be *put to a political test* to prove that they will not go "all the way" in a struggle for national independence.

It is not as easy as Comrade Horowitz thinks to carry out this political test in a rapid and convincing manner. Consider the task of "convincing" the Algerian peasants that the leading wing of the ANL [National Liberation Army] around Colonel Boumédienne did not go "all the way" in the struggle for national independence. That will perhaps convince a few who have already made up their minds, but it will hardly sway the broad masses before they go through a number of painful experiences.

It is much easier, however, to convince them of the fact that the agrarian revolution has not been achieved. They can see this every day. But making this argument pay off politically would have required establishing an indissoluble link between national liberation and the agrarian revolution from the very beginning of the Algerian revolution.

According to Comrade Horowitz's thesis, in the mass movement in the backward countries the differentiation between the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois leaders of the national movement on the one hand, and the revolutionary vanguard on the other, revolves essentially, if not exclusively, around the question of who is the best "nationalist." We counterpose to this the thesis that the differentiation appears above all through the struggle for *specific* (peasants, workers, democratic, and even national) *demands in which class interests place the bourgeoisie and the well-to-do petty-bourgeoisie on one side of the barricades, and the workers and poor peasants on the other.* Comrade Horowitz's thesis leads toward a "revolution by stages," while ours leads to the classical application of the theory of permanent revolution:

"Really to arouse the workers and peasants against imperialism, is possible only by connecting their basic and most profound life interests with the cause of the country's liberation. A workers' strike—small or large—an agrarian rebellion, an uprising of the oppressed sections in city and country against the usurer, against the bureaucracy, against the local military satraps, all that arouses the multitudes, that welds them together, that educates, steels, is a real step forward on the road to the revolutionary and social liberation of the Chinese people. Without that, the military successes and failures of the Right, semi-Right or semi-Left generals will remain foam on the surface of the ocean. But everything that brings the oppressed

and exploited masses of the toilers to their feet, inevitably pushes the national bourgeoisie into an open bloc with the imperialists. The class struggle between the bourgeoisie and the masses of workers and peasants is not weakened, but, on the contrary, it is sharpened by imperialist oppression, to the point of bloody civil war at every serious conflict." (Leon Trotsky: "The Chinese Revolution and the Theses of Comrade Stalin," May 17, 1927, in *Problems of the Chinese Revolution*, p. 22, University of Michigan Press edition.)

And further:

"Insofar as a victorious revolution will radically change the relation not only between the classes but also between the races and will assure to the blacks that place in the state that corresponds to their numbers, thus far will the social revolution in South Africa also have a *national* character.

"We have not the slightest reason to close our eyes to this side of the question or to diminish its significance. On the contrary, the proletarian party should in words and in deeds openly and boldly take the solution of the national (racial) problem in its hands.

"Nevertheless, the proletarian party can and must solve the national problem by *its own* methods.

"The historical weapon of national liberation can be only the *class struggle*. The Comintern, beginning in 1924, transformed the program of national liberation of colonial people into an empty democratic abstraction that is elevated above the reality of class relations. In the struggle against national oppression, different classes liberate themselves (temporarily) from material interests and become simple 'anti-imperialist' forces." (Leon Trotsky: "On the South African Theses," April 20, 1935, in *Writings of Leon Trotsky, 1934-35*, pp. 249-50, Pathfinder Press. Emphasis in original.)

Alas, Comrade Horowitz as well is beginning to "transform the program of national liberation of colonial people into an empty democratic abstraction" by focusing his position on Palestine and Bangladesh around such slogans as "for a democratic, secular Palestine" and "for a democratic, secular Bangladesh," and by not putting the *combination* of national, democratic, and agrarian tasks, and the defense of the democratic *and material* interests of the workers and poor peasants at the center of the revolutionary Marxists' propaganda and agitation in the colonies, *from the very first stage* of the revolutionary process.

This has nothing to do with underestimating the importance of national demands. What is involved is an understanding of the fact that *they can only be fully realized when the poor peasants and workers rise up and organize themselves independently.* And this is only possible on the basis of defending *their own class interests*, not on the basis of some classless "nationalism."

The deviations Comrade Horowitz's thesis can lead to was demonstrated by Comrade Tony Thomas when he sought in *The Militant* to defend Trotsky's interpretation of the Second Chinese Revolution against the Maoists. In his article, we find the following:

"The major tasks confronting a revolution to win national liberation for China included driving out the imperialists and smashing the reactionary Chang Tso-lin government; unifying the country; distributing the big landholders' lands to the hundreds of millions of peasants;

establishing democratic liberties; and laying the groundwork for the industrialization and development of China. In addition to these democratic tasks *affecting the nation as a whole*, the growing working class in the cities was faced with vicious economic exploitation at the hands of both Chinese and foreign capitalists." (*The Militant*, August 31, 1973. Emphasis added.)

To state that the agrarian revolution—the distribution of land—is a task that "affects the nation as a whole" is to close your eyes to the fact that not only the big landholders (who are also part of the nation), but also and especially the bourgeoisie, own the peasants' land; and the fact that far from "unifying the country," the agrarian revolution necessarily *divides* it along class lines. In an article published two weeks later, Comrade Tony Thomas correctly describes how the development of peasant mobilizations necessarily pushed the Chinese big bourgeoisie into the counterrevolutionary camp, given its ties to the big landholders. But, prisoner that he is to revisionist formulations à la Horowitz, he nonetheless persists in labeling as tasks that "affect the nation as a whole," tasks that are really *the tasks of an irreconcilable class struggle between two parts of the same nation*.

The inextricable overlapping between national liberation and the agrarian revolution, between all the tasks faced by a revolution in a backward country, means that *national liberation in regard to imperialism cannot be accomplished without destroying national unity and class collaboration* within the oppressed nation.

This is the dialectic of the permanent revolution.

Oppressed Nationalities' Right to Self-Determination and the Struggle Against Nationalist Ideology

We now have a better understanding of the logical connection between revolutionary Marxists' unconditional defense of the right of oppressed nations to determine their own destiny—of the right of colonial peoples and national minorities to form separate states if they so desire—and of all concrete demands that express this right, on the one hand; and, on the other hand, their relentless struggle against all nationalist ideology.

It is precisely because national liberation can only be achieved when the proletariat, allied with the poor peasants, has won the leadership of the revolutionary process; because it cannot win this leadership unless it organizes itself (as well as the peasant masses) independently of the nationalist bourgeoisie, on the basis of defense of its class interests; and because it can only organize itself in this way by continually developing the masses' distrust of and opposition to the "national bourgeoisie" and its petty-bourgeois nationalist appendages; it is for all these reasons that the struggle against the nationalist ideology of national unity, of national exclusiveness, of "classless" national collaboration, is absolutely indispensable. *Above all, it is indispensable even for accomplishing the national tasks of the revolution.*

Comrade Horowitz can only extricate himself by either making a pirouette and *identifying* the national-democratic demands of the oppressed masses with bourgeois and petty-bourgeois nationalist *ideology*, or by continuing to drift from Trotskyist positions to Menshevik-Stalinist positions

of revolution by stages:

"It is true, of course, that the bourgeoisie of the oppressed nation tries to use nationalism for its own class interests—up to a certain (!) extent and then only as a thoroughly deceptive and mystifying ideology. But what Comrade Germain fails to see is that in the era of permanent revolution, the nationalism of the masses of the oppressed nationalities tends to mesh with socialist consciousness not bourgeois ideology, because (!) the real momentum of the struggle for nationalist goals tends to mesh with the socialist revolution not the bourgeois revolution.

"Rather than 'substituting' or 'covering' for internationalism, the nationalism of the oppressed directed against their oppressors will tend to impell oppressed nations (!) in the direction of internationalism—provided, of course, that a revolutionary Marxist leadership is present to help advance the political consciousness of the masses. It is in that sense that we support the nationalism of oppressed nations." (Horowitz, p. 12.)

Thus we have "nations" oppressed as a whole, which will become internationalist provided, of course, that there is a "Leninist combat party," the notion our international minority is so fond of. But aren't nations, even oppressed nations, divided into social classes that are already well defined (with the exception, of course, of those we have called attention to in "In Defence of Leninism": Afro-Americans, Chicanos, South African Blacks, etc)? Are the bourgeoisie and the well-to-do petty-bourgeoisie no longer part of the nation? Have they too become "internationalists"? Isn't internationalism the result of educating working people in the spirit of irreconcilable class opposition, *not only in regard to imperialism but also in regard to their own bourgeoisie?* And how can workers' class consciousness be labeled "nationalist" when it *combines* the struggle against imperialism with the class struggle against the landlords, the comprador bourgeoisie, and the "national bourgeoisie"? Does "nationalist" ideology imply a class struggle within the nation itself?

Once again, the notion underlying Comrade Horowitz's thinking is that of a revolution that first goes through a national stage. During this stage, according to his concept, all the classes are united against the national oppressor, and the "Leninist combat party" wins leadership of the national struggle bit by bit by proving it is a better fighter for "nationalism" than the bourgeoisie and the petty bourgeoisie. But this concept, which is the only one that provides a logical and coherent basis for glorifying the nationalism of the oppressed nations, is in total opposition to the theory of permanent revolution, which holds that revolutionary Marxists must from the outset educate working people in the spirit of an irreconcilable class opposition toward their own bourgeoisie.

Comrade Horowitz agrees with our definition of nationalism as an ideology that was correct in the past. But what is the content of this ideology if not national solidarity, national collaboration, against foreign enemies? To deny this is to go against the whole of Marxist literature on the subject. To acknowledge it is to acknowledge that the *nationalism of oppressed nationalities, far from tending to overlap with socialist consciousness, is an obstacle on the path toward attaining this consciousness.* For socialist consciousness is a proletarian class-consciousness based on an understanding of the class struggle,

whereas nationalist ideology seeks to deny or subordinate an understanding of the need for proletarians to carry out their class struggle against their own bourgeoisie, and seeks to establish supposed common national interests against the foreign oppressor, interests which, as Lenin rightly said, are actually those of the ruling classes.

Let's take up once again the example of Bangladesh. What is the content of the nationalist ideology of Mujibur Rahman and the Awami League? "East Bengal is oppressed by Western Pakistan. Everyone will work together to create an independent Bangladesh—workers, poor peasants, kulaks, intellectuals, important and minor government officials, artisans, the commercial and industrial bourgeoisie, usurers, and the agents of imperialism." How does a revolutionary Marxist reply to this? Does he simply say, "Fine, but this struggle will only succeed under proletarian leadership"? That would be opportunism of the Maoist variety. Does he say on the contrary, "No, I disagree because we are content with defending our material interests as workers and peasants"? This would be economist sectarianism, with a good dose of opportunism (which, moreover, would become the dominant feature if this response is suggested from abroad, and still more so if suggested from a country that is oppressing Bangladesh).

In contrast to these two false responses, the correct reply is obviously the following:

"We support an independent Bangladesh 100 percent because the peasants and workers cannot liberate themselves as a class if they are still oppressed as a nation. For this reason we will be in the front lines of the fight for an independent Bangladesh. But we have no desire to exchange a pack of foreign hangmen and bloodsuckers for a 'national' team of hangmen and bloodsuckers. We will therefore organize independently of you, Mr. Awami League leader and Mr. representative of the exploiters. We will form our own workers and peasants organizations. We will fight with our own arms, although when necessary we are prepared to make tactical agreements with you for an anti-imperialist united front. But we will educate the working masses in a spirit of fundamental distrust in you, because you are our exploiters. In addition to independence we want land, bread, and the cancellation of debts. You are not only incapable of giving us all this, but when the time comes you will try to disarm us and crush us completely."

Is this language, which conforms completely to the teachings of Trotsky, the language of "nationalism" or support to "nationalism"? The word would have to be emptied of all its content in order to arrive at this unlikely conclusion. As long as the working and peasant masses remain prisoners of nationalist ideology they run the risk of following Mujibur, and over the course of several years too. They can only free themselves from this grip by learning, through independent leadership and organization, to make a distinction between the struggle for their just national-democratic demands on the one hand, and the mystification of nationalist ideology, based on the supposed solidarity of all the classes of a single nation, on the other.

In "In Defence of Leninism" we established that Lenin and Trotsky always defended this basic distinction between nationalism as an ideology on the one hand, and the

defense of oppressed nations' right to self-determination (and of every concrete demand that expresses this right) on the other. Comrade Horowitz in no way replies to this argument. In place of a reply he offers us—after a warning about scholasticism!—a bagful of quotations in which Lenin and Trotsky are opposed to nationalism and a number of others in which they seem to support it. Talk about scholastic sophistry!

The Marxist method does not consist in weighing a certain number of quotations from the classics against each other, but in understanding the *logic* and *internal coherence* of a theory in order to determine the interrelation between its different parts. It is therefore impossible to challenge the fact that for Trotsky the importance of the national question in the colonial and semicolonial countries is indissolubly linked to the solution he proposes, that is, a class struggle of workers and poor peasants, in a revolution based on the inseparably combined nature of the national and social tasks. The logic of such a theory leaves no room for any apology for or adoption of "progressive nationalism" on the part of revolutionary Marxists. This is why Horowitz has been unable to find a single quotation from Lenin suggesting support to the supposedly "progressive" nationalism of oppressed nations.

The two quotations from Trotsky that Horowitz gives us show exactly the contrary of what he says they mean. He was particularly unfortunate with the quotation about Catalan nationalism (Horowitz, p. 13). Actually, *two pages after* the passage cited by Horowitz, Trotsky gives his thoughts on the matter in two sentences that are as clear as a rap from a billyclub, a quotation that Horowitz is very careful not to cite:

"I have already written that Catalan petty-bourgeois nationalism at the present stage is progressive—but only on one condition: that it develops its activity *outside the ranks of communism and that it is always under the blows of communist criticism*. To permit petty bourgeois nationalism to disguise itself under the banner of communism means, at the same time, to deliver a treacherous blow to the proletarian vanguard and to destroy the progressive significance of petty-bourgeois nationalism." (Leon Trotsky: *The Spanish Revolution: 1931-39*, Pathfinder Press, New York, 1973, p. 155. Emphasis added.)

A few pages later, Trotsky speaks of the need for a "principled struggle against petty-bourgeois nationalism" in Catalonia. (*Ibid.*, p. 189.)

We have denounced the fact that the LSO [Ligue Socialiste Ouvrière], the Trotskyist organization in Quebec, became an attorney for petty-bourgeois nationalism and even went so far as to disguise a general strike of public workers as a "patriots' struggle." What was involved here was not, therefore, a matter of considering the petty-bourgeois nationalism of an oppressed nationality as progressive in relation to the bourgeois nationalism of the oppressors. It was actually a matter of introducing the fraud of "progressive petty-bourgeois nationalism" into the ranks of the proletariat and its communist vanguard. Trotsky's verdict on this attempt by Alain Beiner, for whom Gus Horowitz is now playing the role of attorney, is clear, plain, and expressed in terms much more violent than ours.

Comrade Horowitz was overjoyed with his discovery of a letter Trotsky sent to the Indochinese Bolshevik-

Leninists September 18, 1930. Finally, he has found "Trotsky's clearest and most explicit statement in support of the nationalism of the oppressed." (Horowitz, p. 13.) Once again, scholasticism is the method.

Trotsky wrote thousands of pages on the tactics of revolutionaries in the backward countries. Is it possible to seriously believe that his "real" position on the national question in these countries has remained hidden in a 1930 letter that had never been published in English before, and not in the chapter of the *History of the Russian Revolution* devoted to the national question, nor in *The Permanent Revolution*, nor in his writings on the Chinese question, nor in his comments on the tasks of revolutionaries in India?

In July 1939 Trotsky wrote "An Open Letter to the Workers of India." India was at that time the most populous colony in the world, and had at the same time the broadest national-democratic and anti-imperialist mass movement. If Trotsky was really of the opinion that the nationalism of an oppressed nation is progressive, one would expect that his letter would exalt Indian nationalism, an oppressed nation if ever there was one. But this letter does not contain a single word about the supposedly progressive "Indian nationalism." On the contrary, it educates the working people in the spirit of irreconcilable class opposition in regard to their own bourgeoisie:

"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." (*Writings of Leon Trotsky: 1938-9*, Pathfinder Press, New York, 1969, p. 38. Emphasis in original.)

In order to win a "free hand" in relation to the "national bourgeoisie," to assure complete independence in regard to the bourgeois Congress Party—for whom nationalism was the main ideological weapon for preventing the independent organization of the proletariat—should revolutionaries in India have applauded nationalism or criticized it, should they have exalted it or tried to eliminate it from the ranks of the working class? To pose this question is to answer it.

But what does Trotsky say in the letter to the Indochinese Oppositionists, the letter Comrade Horowitz is so enthralled with?

"The declaration states quite correctly that the nationalism of the bourgeoisie is a means for subordinating and deceiving the masses. But the nationalism of the mass of the people is the elementary form taken by their just and

progressive hatred for the most skillful, capable, and ruthless of their oppressors, that is, the foreign imperialists. The proletariat does not have the right to turn its back on *this kind* of nationalism. On the contrary, it must demonstrate in practice that it is the most consistent and devoted fighter for the national liberation of Indochina." ("Letter to the Indochinese Oppositionists," *International Socialist Review*, September 1973, p. 41.)

What is Trotsky saying here, if one wishes to grasp the content of his reasoning rather than engage in a scholastic manipulation of quotations?

1. That the nationalism of the oppressed colonial bourgeoisie is reactionary, "a means for subordinating and deceiving the masses." On this important point, even in this "unique" quotation, Trotsky confirms our position, and not Horowitz's, on this crucial point.

2. That the nationalism of the exploited colonial masses is "the elementary form" taken by the hatred for imperialist exploitation. There is nothing objectionable about this statement. Trotsky in no way states that the peasant masses are following a progressive ideology, but rather that they are making use of some elementary notions to give vent to their class indignation. The task of revolutionary Marxists begins from this means of expression, but it certainly does not consist in adapting to it.

3. That to grasp what there is of a positive nature in this "nationalism" of the peasant masses, the proletariat "must demonstrate in practice that it is the most consistent and devoted fighter for the national liberation of Indochina." We are obviously in complete agreement with this formulation. We have repeated over and over again that the task of revolutionary Marxists is to unconditionally defend the just national demands of the masses. But nowhere in this quote does Trotsky say that the proletariat "must demonstrate in practice that it is the most consistent and devoted representative of nationalist ideology"! He would be very careful not to present such a thesis, which would be in contradiction to his entire life's work.

We see therefore that Horowitz cannot even use this unique quotation he thinks he has found in support of his thesis of *identifying* nationalist ideology and the struggle for national liberation.

In accordance with Lenin and Trotsky, our entire argument is based on the need to distinguish between the two. Comrade Horowitz never has anything to say about this distinction. All the rest is therefore just scholastic sophistry.

Nationalism, Multi-class Mass Party, and Class Struggle

In order to demonstrate that the thesis of the "progressive nationalism" of oppressed nations is only a false generalization of the specific case of Blacks and Chicanos in the United States, we have posed the following question: Can a slogan calling for a "mass nationalist party" with an unspecified class content, which the SWP has advanced for Blacks and Chicanos, be exported to a colonial or semicolonial country that has already experienced deep class divisions?

Horowitz begins by stating that the absence of Black or Chicano bourgeoisie of any consequence is not the reason why the SWP has been able to advance this slogan. (Horowitz, p. 15.) But a few pages later he him-

self admits:

"One of our central tasks is to promote a mass break from the bourgeois parties along working class lines. This is necessary to advance the independent organization of the working class as a whole. Our call for a labor party fits into this framework. So does our call for a Black party. And in *this* regard, the fact that Black people are overwhelmingly proletarian in composition, that there is only an inconsequential Black bourgeoisie, and a relatively weak Black petty bourgeoisie, is an important factor. Under these specific conditions, all indications are that an independent Black party would be a proletarian party, albeit in nationalist guise. (Horowitz, p. 18. Emphasis in original.)

In general, the argument is acceptable. But what conclusion must be drawn from it? Obviously that wherever a bourgeoisie has already arisen in an oppressed nation, wherever the petty bourgeoisie is not so weak, wherever the bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie are already making systematic use of nationalism to prevent the formation of an independent workers party, it would be criminal folly to call for the formation of "mass nationalist parties" that could only be multi-class parties controlled by the bourgeoisie or the petty bourgeoisie in its wake.

Following the logic of this correct position, Comrade Horowitz states that it would in fact be incorrect to call for a "mass (nationalist) multi-class party" in Quebec, Palestine, Bangladesh, Ceylon, etc. We are happy to learn of this conclusion, which is the same as ours. But three questions arise immediately:

If the call for an "independent Black party" and for an "independent Chicano party" is in fact *the exception and not the rule* insofar as the oppressed nationalities are concerned, isn't it also necessary to conclude that the situation—that is, the class structure—of some oppressed nationalities is an exception in relation to the others? This is precisely the thesis that we defended in "In Defence of Leninism: In Defence of the Fourth International."

If the call for an "independent Black nationalist party" is an exception and corresponds to the exceptional class structure of a few nationalities, isn't it necessary to conclude that the character of nationalist ideology (corresponding to the objective situation and class structure) is different for Black Americans, Black South Africans, and Chicanos on the one hand, and for all the other oppressed and exploited nationalities on the other hand? How can you say in the same breath that the *class structure* is exceptional but that the *social function* of nationalism is identical?

If comrade Horowitz holds simultaneously—like a tight-rope-walker balancing on a high wire—that the exceptional situation of Black Americans justifies using the slogan "for a mass Black nationalist party" in the U. S. but does not justify the use of a similar slogan for the greater part of the oppressed and exploited nationalities (although multi-class nationalism is supposedly "progressive" in the case of all these nationalities), how does it happen that a number of minority comrades, not quite so adept at this balancing act, lose their footing and pass over directly to the call for a "mass, independent Puerto Rican party," a "mass, independent Algerian party," etc.?

At least this is what came out during the oral discussion preparing for the SWP 1973 convention. We would

be happy to learn that Comrade Horowitz could categorically deny this statement, and that nothing more about it will be heard in the world Trotskyist movement. The adoption of such a line would be a disaster for revolutionary Marxists in the colonial and semicolonial countries.

It is Comrade Horowitz who is inconsistent on this point, and not the "extremists" in his faction. For if the nationalism of oppressed nations is progressive, what argument would he use to refuse to base a "mass party" on this "progressive" and highly popular foundation?

Up to this point, everything in this document has obviously been concerned with our rejection of having *revolutionary Marxists* in colonial and semicolonial countries advance the slogan "for a mass nationalist party" of such and such nationality. It is something quite different to determine what tactic they should adopt in regard to parties or "fronts" of this sort that come on the scene independently of their own propaganda or initiative.

In this case, a class analysis must be made to determine the real nature of this mass "party" or "front," taking into account its program; its social composition; its objective role in society; the extent to which it engages in real struggle against the imperialists, the oligarchy, and their allies; the way it intervenes in the class struggle, etc., etc. . . . Support to actions or movements launched by such formations is far from excluded. But the orientation of revolutionary Marxists would remain an orientation of promoting an autonomous organization for the worker and peasant masses, an organization that is independent of any bourgeois and petty-bourgeois nationalist leadership. An organization of this sort could eventually arise from the left wing of such a mass "party" or "front," and once that happened revolutionary Marxists would have to promote its consolidation and its separation in regard to the nationalist leaderships.

Among the arguments we have used against the "exploitation" of the slogan for an "independent party" of oppressed nationalities beyond the boundaries of the United States, there is one, of some importance, that Comrade Horowitz takes exception to: the possibility of the "national" bourgeoisie in colonial and semicolonial countries forming a formally independent bourgeois state that would become a powerful weapon of oppression against the worker and peasant masses. In the United States, it is impossible to conceive of the appearance of an independent bourgeois Black or Chicano state. The very formation of such a state would presuppose the total disintegration of the U. S. society and capitalist economy. But in the rest of the world the threat of seeing essentially nationalist agitation deviate toward the creation of new puppet bourgeois states is quite real.

No, replies Comrade Horowitz: In the event of powerful workers struggles, it is *theoretically true but unlikely* that "there is no fundamental class interest which would prevent imperialism from transforming any such [oppressed] nationality into independent puppet states"! (Horowitz, p. 7. Emphasis added.) Of all Comrade Horowitz's arguments, this one is the most improbable. What he considers the most "unlikely" has actually occurred, in more than 80 countries around the world since the first world war, from Finland and Poland in 1918 to India and nearly all the old colonies after the second world war.

Sectarians draw the conclusion that it is better to turn one's back on the national question. They are obviously wrong. But opportunists who refuse to criticize nationalism are deaf, dumb, and blind in the face of half a century of world history. How can it be seriously denied that nationalism has been the main ideological weapon used by the ruling classes in all these countries to slow down and smother the independent class struggle of the workers and peasants? How can you call for the proletariat to organize independently and then refuse to attack the main ideological barrier on the road to such an independent organization—the ideology that says common interest "against foreign oppression" must unite the landlord, capitalist, kulak, intellectual, poor peasant, and worker?

We Have not Changed Our Orientation

Comrade Horowitz tries, though without much conviction, to counterpose documents we have written in the past to "In Defence of Leninism: In Defence of the Fourth International." He wishes to demonstrate that we have changed our position on the national question, in fact, that we have taken a giant step backward in relation to our previous positions. But it is sufficient to examine the documents he cites to discover that our position remains exactly what it always was.

Comrade Horowitz begins by quoting passages from our intervention in a debate with Maxime Rodinson in March 1971, reprinted in the French magazine *Partisans* (No. 59-60) and in the *International Socialist Review* (March 1972). These passages state that a distinction should be made between the nationalism of the oppressors and the nationalism of the oppressed. But in "In Defence of Leninism: In Defence of the Fourth International" we said exactly the same thing:

"This principled opposition to nationalism does not imply an identification between nationalism of oppressor nations—nationalism of scoundrels, as Trotsky used to call it—and the nationalism of oppressed nations. It especially imposes on communists who are members of oppressor nations the duty to concentrate their fire upon their own oppressive bourgeoisie, and to leave the struggle against petty-bourgeois nationalism of the oppressed to the communist members of the oppressed nationalities themselves. Any other attitude—not to speak of the refusal to support national self-determination struggles under the pretext that they are still led by nationalists—becomes objectively a support for imperialist, annexionist or racist oppressors. But all these considerations do not imply a support for bourgeois or petty-bourgeois nationalism by revolutionary Marxists of the oppressed nationalities, leave alone 'unconditional support.' After all, Alain Beiner like Michel Mill were discussing the attitudes of Québécois Trotskyists, not the attitude of Anglo-Canadian revolutionary Marxists." (*International Internal Discussion Bulletin*, Vol. 10, No. 4, April 1973, p. 33.)

Does the last part of this paragraph contradict the orientation I defended in the debate with Maxime Rodinson? Not at all. Because that orientation included the following passage, which Comrade Horowitz takes care not to quote:

"I have been asked a question concerning Palestinian nationalism and my attitude vis-à-vis the nationalism of

the countries in the Third World in general. In my opinion, this is a matter that must not be oversimplified. When we say that the struggle for national liberation of Third World people, of oppressed peoples, is a just struggle in contradistinction to the imperialist countries attempting to maintain their oppression of these countries, we are by no means saying that *every political and ideological* manifestation of this struggle is progressive. . . . A distinction must be made between the objective historical significance of a *mass struggle* and the various ideological, political, and theoretical currents competing for the allegiance of the society and oppressed people involved.

". . . the influence of reactionary ideologies must be combated in the theoretical field *within the revolutionary camp*. But the existence of these reactionary ideologies must not be used as a pretext for refusing support, support which is absolutely justified from the Marxist point of view, to the liberation struggle of a clearly oppressed people." (*International Socialist Review*, March 1972, pp. 38-39.)

And in "In Defence of Leninism: In Defence of the Fourth International," we stated in the same way:

"Sectarians and opportunists alike fail to make this basic distinction between the struggle for national self-determination and nationalist ideology. Sectarians refuse to support national self-determination struggles under the pretext that their leaders—or the still prevalent ideology among their fighters—is nationalism. Opportunists refuse to combat bourgeois or petty-bourgeois nationalist ideologies, under the pretext that the national self-determination struggle, in which this ideology is predominant, is progressive. The correct Marxist-Leninist position is to combine *full support for the national self-determination struggle* of the masses including all the concrete demands which express this right on the political, cultural, linguistic field, with the struggle against bourgeois and petty-bourgeois nationalism." (p. 33. *Emphasis added.*)

It is clear that there is absolutely no difference between these two positions—the one defended in 1971 and the one defended in 1973.

The second "forgotten example" cited by Comrade Horowitz is supposedly that of the booklet I wrote against Healy in 1967. The only quotation Horowitz can produce to support his thesis that I have supposedly changed my position since then is one concerning the fact that . . . the Cuban revolution both resolved the national question and liberated Cuba from dependence on American imperialism. But he "forgets" to mention that the two paragraphs concerning the anti-imperialist character of the Cuban revolution are preceded by four pages about the solution of the agrarian question. He also neglects to point out that I nowhere characterize the Cuban revolution as a "national liberation struggle," but rather as a process of permanent revolution in which the agrarian revolution and the anti-imperialist struggle are (in that order!) the most burning tasks. There is not an atom of difference between this position and the one defended in "In Defence of Leninism: In Defence of the Fourth International."

To discover a "difference," Comrade Horowitz has to undertake a sleight-of-hand maneuver that comes very close to falsification:

"The booklet goes on to argue in chapter eight against the SLL's abstentionist line toward the national libera-

tion movements and its political myopia which says that there is no colonial revolution but only a proletarian revolution. Some of the same arguments can be directed against Comrade Germain's latest document, which says that it is confusing to speak of a national liberation struggle rather than a process leading to a socialist revolution." (Horowitz, p. 14.)

What did we really say in our "latest document"?

"For that reason, it is confusing, to say the least, to present any revolution in a backward country—be it the Algerian revolution, the Cuban revolution, the Vietnamese revolution, the Palestinian or the Arab revolution—as a 'national liberation struggle.' The Trotskyist way of looking at these revolutions is as *processes of permanent revolution* in which the struggle for national liberation, for agrarian revolution, for full democratic freedoms for the masses, and for defence of the class interests of the working class are *inextricably combined and intertwined*, whatever may be the aspect of that struggle which appears in the forefront. . . ." ("In Defence of Leninism: In Defence of the Fourth International," p. 31. Emphasis in original.)

There is not so much as a comma here that cannot be found in the classic texts of Trotsky on this question. Horowitz comes dangerously close to the Stalinist polemicists who accused Trotsky of having substituted "socialist goals" for the "bourgeois-democratic goals" of the revolution (the notorious accusation of having advanced in 1905 the slogan "Down with the Czar; long live the workers government!"). *The only way he was able to do this was by surreptitiously substituting the words "socialist revolution" or "proletarian revolution" for the words "process of permanent revolution,"* which are in my text. Now, the process of permanent revolution is precisely the process that leads to the dictatorship of the proletariat by means of a struggle to achieve in the first place the tasks that were not accomplished by the bourgeois-democratic revolution, above all the agrarian question and the national question.

If Comrade Horowitz finds himself caught up in a sleight-of-hand maneuver of this sort it is because—despite all the ritual references to "other democratic and transitional demands" that must be "joined with national demands"—he is being irresistably swept toward the logic of "revolution by stages" by his revisionist position on nationalism.

What he believes is that there is first a "national liberation struggle" which, without regard to the agrarian revolution and the class struggle, leads to a "socialist solution," because the "Leninist combat party" surpasses its petty-bourgeois and bourgeois rivals in . . . nationalism!

It is clear that our "changed positions" have been created out of whole cloth by Comrade Horowitz. No trace of any such "change" survives the slightest analysis of the documents.

'Subjectivism,' Objectivism, and Class Struggle

We are now at the very heart of the debate. Comrade Horowitz accuses us of being guilty of a "subjectivist explanation for the theory of permanent revolution." He quotes the following passage from "In Defence of Leninism: In Defence of the Fourth International" to support

his thesis:

"Revolutionary Marxists do not reject this Menshevik theory of stages only or mainly because they stress the inability of the national bourgeoisie to actually conquer national independence from imperialism, regardless of the concrete circumstances. They reject it because they refuse to postpone to a later stage the peasant and workers uprisings for their own class interests, which will inevitably rise spontaneously alongside the national struggle as it unfolds, and very quickly combine themselves into a common inseparable programme in the consciousness of the masses." (p. 31.)

Just comparing this quotation with those from Trotsky at the beginning of the present document is enough to assert that Trotsky did not reason any differently. But Horowitz now takes a more "conscious" step toward revisionism and replies with the following:

"No, Comrade Germain. It is not because we 'refuse to postpone' these struggles (a *subjectivist* explanation), but because the struggles for the pressing bourgeois-democratic demands including national liberation (but of course not limited to this task) are inextricably and objectively intertwined under present conditions with the socialist revolution." (Horowitz, p. 9. Emphasis in original.)

Here we have a Marxist for whom the class struggle is a "subjectivist" phenomena; we will certainly have seen everything under the sun by the end of the debate now under way within the Fourth International. We state firmly—in accordance with the experience of *every* revolution in the backward countries in this century—that the struggle of workers and peasants for their class interests will arise, *inevitably and spontaneously*, in the course of the struggle for national liberation. What is involved here is really a historical, social, and objective phenomenon, not just a case of "subjectivism."

But is it true that under present conditions, which we suppose means the imperialist epoch, the struggle for national liberation as well as struggles for other "pressing bourgeois-democratic demands" are "inextricably and objectively intertwined with the socialist revolution," as Comrade Horowitz says? If it is true, how do you explain the fact that *in the great majority of cases the struggle for national liberation has not led to a "socialist revolution"?*

Once again Comrade Horowitz's accusations are like Freudian slips, revealing the dialectic of a tendency struggle in which Comrade Horowitz has been pushed further and further along a revisionist path. For by falsely accusing us of "subjectivism," it is really his own objectivist error—an error of quite some magnitude!—that he reveals.

In reality it is absolutely false to posit that the struggle for national liberation is "inextricably and objectively intertwined under present conditions with the socialist revolution." So long as the struggle for national liberation is led by bourgeois parties or groupings, or by their petty-bourgeois junior partners, these leaderships will do everything in their power to *prevent* not only any "link-up" between the present national struggle and a future socialist revolution, but even an independent mobilization of workers and peasants during the national struggle. There is no "objective" dynamic, "no pressure of circumstances," "no internal logic of the historical process," that leads to such a link. *It can only come about through the independent organization of workers and poor peasants,*

through the proletariat and its revolutionary vanguard's gaining hegemony in the revolutionary process, and through the political defeat of the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois nationalist leaderships of the national movement.

But in order to create the necessary political and subjective preconditions for the elimination of the bourgeois leadership from the revolutionary process, the workers and peasants must begin without delay to struggle for their own class interests. The bourgeoisie has every interest in limiting the objectives of the emancipation movement to the sole question of national liberation. The bourgeoisie's allies and accomplices—even when they call themselves "communists," and sometimes even "Trotskyists" (as was the case in Ceylon), and regardless of all their "socialist" verbiage—seek to demobilize and paralyze the class power of the proletariat and the poor peasantry. Their eternal refrain is: national liberation comes first, then we'll see about the rest. Stalin and Bukharin sang a version of this plaintive ballad during the Second Chinese Revolution: first, it's necessary to support the Kuomintang expedition toward the north; when the anti-imperialist struggle is won we'll start thinking about distributing the land and forming soviets.

Revolutionary Marxists, on the contrary, use all means possible in the attempt to develop the struggle of the workers and peasants for their own class interests; they do this right from the start of the revolutionary process in a backward country, including in cases where the struggle opens around objectives of national liberation. It is all these teachings of Trotsky that Comrade Horowitz now derides as "subjectivist." *Only if this class struggle of the poor peasants and workers leads to a powerful and massive class organization*—soviets, in a word—will it be possible to achieve the tasks of the bourgeois-democratic revolution through the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat, allied with the poor peasants.

And only in that case—that is, if the workers, the peasants, and above all the revolutionary Marxists follow our "subjectivist" conception—will it be possible to establish in practice, i.e., in the political arena, an "inseparable" link and an "intertwining" between the accomplishment of these tasks and the socialist revolution. To view this intertwining as an "objectively given fact" means a complete failure to understand *the struggle to the death*—Trotsky speaks of an inevitable and bloody civil war—that will arise between the bourgeois and proletarian forces within the movement for national liberation. It means a complete failure to understand the dynamic of the class struggle that dominates this entire process. It means taking a step toward breaking with Marxism.

Our Supposed 'Errors' on the National Question

Comrade Horowitz tries to take up the counteroffensive by uncovering our supposed "errors" on the national question. But as in his attempt to demonstrate that we supposedly modified our previous positions, he comes home from the hunt empty-handed; there's nothing in his knapsack but wind.

The first "error" he discovers is that we "underestimate" the importance of national struggles, and that we do this right in the middle of a period in which the national question has a growing importance for the world socialist

revolution. This argument strangely resembles the classic Stalinist argument that Trotsky "underestimated" the peasantry. It has precisely the same merit—that is, none.

Nowhere have we belittled the importance of the national question. Comrade Horowitz would have done better to have said that we are in no way inclined to "underestimate the national question," inasmuch as we are from a country where two nationalities live, nationalities whose aspirations and conflicts have for decades been intertwined with the class struggle in the most diverse and manifold forms. When it came to convincing the Trotskyist movement of the crucial importance of the colonial revolution; when it came to understanding the explosive character of such problems as the Flemish question, the Walloon question, the Quebecois question, or the Basque question; when it came to grasping the importance of the Ukrainian question in the present stage of preparation for the antibureaucratic political revolution in the USSR; when it came to all of these questions, not only did we never show any sign of any such "underestimation," but it would even be difficult to demonstrate that we have shown signs of being slow to raise these questions, in comparison with the leaders of the minority. Comrade Horowitz cannot provide the slightest proof to the contrary.

In "In Defence of Leninism: In Defence of the Fourth International" we repeat again and again that it is the duty of the proletariat and its revolutionary vanguard to support all mass struggles for concrete demands concerning the right of oppressed nationalities to determine their own fate. We state this over and over again in theory, and we carry it out in practice.

What lies behind Comrade Horowitz's attack on our supposed "underestimation" of the national question is our stubborn and *consistent* refusal to *identify* support to the mass movement for national liberation with capitulation to the petty-bourgeois or bourgeois nationalist ideology that may dominate this movement during a certain phase of its development. Yes, the task of revolutionaries in the oppressed nations is to extend the most resolute and energetic support—with *methods* appropriate to proletarian struggles—to oppressed nationalities' struggles for self-determination, combined with an uncompromising ideological and political critique of nationalist ideology. For nationalist ideology is an ideology of class collaboration against "the common foreign enemy," an ideology for which we try to substitute the development of proletarian class consciousness. This class consciousness is based on an understanding of the irreconcilable character of the differences between the interests of the workers and poor peasants on the one hand and the "national bourgeoisie" on the other. It is also based on proletarian internationalism, that is, on the common interests of the workers of all nations.

One supposed "proof" of our "underestimation" of the national question is the fact that we state there is an important difference between the semicolonial and colonial countries insofar as national oppression is concerned.

In advancing this argument, Comrade Horowitz forgets that we have stated quite clearly: 1) that the formally independent states formed by the "national bourgeoisie" are puppet states; and 2) that the national bourgeoisie can *initiate* the struggle for national liberation, but cannot carry it through.

To draw from all this the conclusion that the India,

Algeria, and Egypt of today are oppressed nations that have yet to win their right to self-determination—in the same sense as when they were colonies—is to once again cross the dividing line between dialectics and sophistry. If colonial slavery really continues to exist after a backward country has won national independence, how can you justify the support revolutionary Marxists gave to the war in China—even under the leadership of Chiang Kai-shek—against Japanese imperialism's attempt to transform it into a colony? How can you justify the support the Fourth International rightly gave to the Algerian war of national liberation against French imperialism? Weren't these wars justified by the fact that they led in the direction of a socialist revolution? Here it is Comrade Horowitz who verges on a position that "underestimates" the importance of the national question in a sectarian fashion, notably the importance of the struggle for *even formal* independence.

Replying in advance to Horowitz, Lenin wrote:

". . . if we want to grasp the meaning of self-determination of nations, not by juggling with legal definitions, or "inventing" abstract definitions, but by examining the historico-economic conditions of the national movements, we must inevitably reach the conclusion that the self-determination of nations means the political separation of these nations from alien national bodies, and the formation of an independent national state. . . .

"Not only small states, but even Russia, for example, is entirely dependent, economically, on the power of the imperialist finance capital of the 'rich' bourgeois countries. Not only the miniature Balkan states, but even nineteenth-century America was, economically, a colony of Europe, as Marx pointed out in *Capital*. Kautsky, like any Marxist, is, of course, well aware of this, but that has nothing whatever to do with the question of national movements and the national state.

"For the question of the political self-determination of nations and their independence as states in bourgeois society, Rosa Luxemburg has substituted the question of their economic independence. This is just as intelligent as if someone, in discussing the programmatic demand for the supremacy of parliament, i.e., the assembly of people's representatives in a bourgeois state, were to expound the perfectly correct conviction that big capital dominates in a bourgeois country, whatever the regime in it." ("The Right of Nations to Self-Determination," *Collected Works*, Vol. 20, pp. 397-399.)

And further:

"The independence Norway 'achieved' in 1905 was only political. It could not affect its economic dependence, nor was this the intention. That is exactly the point made in our theses. We indicated that self-determination concerns only politics, and it would therefore be wrong even to raise the question of its economic unachievability. . . .

"In this situation it is not only 'achievable,' from the point of view of finance capital, but *sometimes even profitable* for their trusts, for *their* imperialist policy, for *their* imperialist policy, for *their* imperialist war, to allow *individual* small nations as much democratic freedom as they can, right down to political independence, so as not to risk damaging their 'own' military operations. To overlook the peculiarity of political and strategic relationships and to repeat indiscriminately a word learned by rote, 'imperialism,' is anything but Marxism." ("A

Caricature of Marxism and Imperialist Economism," *Collected Works*, Vol. 23, pp. 48-51.)

It is clear that we are in good company with our "spurious argument" that gaining formal national independence ends national oppression and achieves the right to self-determination. Perhaps Comrade Horowitz will accuse Lenin as well of having used a "semantic trick"?

The real substance of the question, we state once again, can be grasped quite easily despite the artificial, scholastic mist Comrade Horowitz has created. Throughout the imperialist epoch there are many different links between the economic and military dependence in relation to imperialism on the one hand, and political dependence as well as national oppression on the other. This is why *complete accomplishment* of the tasks of the national-democratic revolution is only possible by wrenching a country out of the domain of international capital. But the *overlapping* of colonial slavery, economic exploitation, financial domination, and military pressure does not mean there is an *identity* between them. Semicolonial countries cannot be identified with colonial countries without falling into sectarianism and "underestimation of the national question." The national independence won by such countries as India, Algeria, etc., cannot be called purely "illusory." It is the product of a process of anti-imperialist struggle, of a process that has been frozen since its inception and has not been completed, but that has nonetheless produced real results.

The colonial bourgeoisie makes careful and conscious use of nationalist ideology in order to freeze the struggle on the level of conquering no more than "formal political independence" (although acquiring a few small slices of imperialist property at the same time wouldn't displease them). Revolutionary Marxists try to transform this struggle into a process of permanent revolution in the course of which the national democratic tasks *as a whole* will be accomplished through establishing the dictatorship of the proletariat, which will then permit the revolution to go over to the solution of socialist tasks. But this is neither the inevitable product of "objective conditions" nor the natural outcome of "national aspirations." It is the result of the unfolding of the independent class struggle of the workers and poor peasants.

The *political* significance of this analysis becomes clear right away in light of the political tasks of revolutionary Marxists. Take once again the example of Bangladesh. When the struggle for national independence broke out under the leadership of the Awami League, what was the task of revolutionary Marxists? Was it to state that this struggle was "illusory" and that there could be no national independence without a socialist revolution? That would have been infantile sectarianism. Was it to state that the struggle for independence should have been supported "because it is inextricably linked to the socialist revolution," and that revolutionary Marxists should try to be more nationalist than Mujibur Rahman? That would have been opportunism of a no less infantile sort. Furthermore, the two positions would amount to the same thing inasmuch as they are both incapable in practice of winning sectors of the masses away from the influence of the national bourgeoisie. The correct position would be to support the struggle for national independence while seeking to organize the workers and peasants in an independent

manner by advancing at the same time the specific class objectives already mentioned above: occupation of the land, arming of the people, cancellation of debts, expropriation of the big foreign and "national" landlords, the conquest of democratic rights for the masses, etc. Once it is actually won, national independence paves the way for the struggle for all these objectives, provided that the proletariat and its revolutionary vanguard adopt a correct position at the very beginning of the struggle.

The second "error" we are supposed to have committed on the national question allegedly consists in our having "put primary emphasis in the national struggle on the danger that nationalist demands will play into the hands of the bourgeoisie of the oppressed nation, rather than on the proven potential that nationalist demands have shown for advancing the class struggle." (Horowitz, p. 5.)

The formula "nationalist demands" belongs to Horowitz and was never used by us. We have systematically counterposed the concrete, just demand expressing the struggle of the masses against national oppression—which we support 100 percent—and nationalist ideology, which must be fought. Nor have we "put primary emphasis" on the struggle against this ideology. We have simply underscored the fact that a correct Leninist approach—that is, one that is not one-sided and takes into account all the aspects of the question—must *combine* support to the just demands of the masses with the struggle against nationalist ideology. The "error" we are criticized for is in reality a criticism of Lenin, who wrote quite unequivocally:

"The interests of the working class and of its struggle against capitalism demand complete solidarity and the closest unity of the workers of all nations; they demand *resistance to the nationalist policy of the bourgeoisie of every nationality*. Hence, Social-Democrats would be deviating from proletarian policy and subordinating the workers to the policy of the bourgeoisie if they were to repudiate the right of nations to self-determination, i.e., the right of an oppressed nation to secede, or if they were to support all the national demands of the bourgeoisie of oppressed nations." ("The Right of Nations to Self-Determination," *Collected Works*, Vol. 20, p. 424. Our emphasis.)

For Lenin, the struggle for just national demands and the struggle against bourgeois and petty-bourgeois nationalism in the oppressed nations are the two indissoluble aspects of the same class-struggle policy. By dropping the second aspect of this Leninist orientation in practice, Comrade Horowitz little by little transforms it from a class-struggle policy to a policy of class collaboration. The "error" he has discovered in our position is that we have remained faithful to the Leninist and Trotskyist tradition, which consists in relentlessly combining these two aspects of revolutionary policy on the national question.

On the Attempt to Apply the Theory of Permanent Revolution to the Imperialist Countries

Comrade Horowitz has committed the methodological error Lenin had already warned Marxists against fifty-three years ago, when he wrote his theses on the national and colonial question. Instead of beginning with a "precise

appraisal of the specific historical situation and, primarily, of economic conditions," and instead of making a "clear distinction between the interests of the oppressed classes, of working and exploited people, and the general concept of national interests as a whole, which implies the interests of the ruling class," Comrade Horowitz begins with an abstract and formal principle: in the epoch of imperialism, the "nationalism of the oppressed" is progressive because it is "inextricably linked to the socialist revolution."

The most serious consequence of this error appears in the mechanical transposition of the theory of permanent revolution to the industrially developed countries, the imperialist countries.

In "In Defence of Leninism: In Defence of the Fourth International," we wrote as follows on this point: "The whole notion of applying the formula of permanent revolution to imperialist countries is extremely dubious in the best of cases. It can only be done with utmost circumspection, and in the form of an analogy." (p. 34.) This is "simply wrong," retorts Comrade Horowitz. "The permanent revolution can indeed be applied in the advanced capitalist countries, and the Trotskyist movement has been doing so for a long time. . . ." (Horowitz, p. 7.) As proof, he offers us . . . *one* quotation from Trotsky, taken from an internal discussion at the beginning of the 1930s concerning an American comrade, Weisbord. We are once again confronted with scholastic sophistry. To find out what Trotsky thought about the theory of permanent revolution, there is no need to study his classic works or to analyze the internal logic of his theory; it is necessary instead to collect a bunch of quotations and hunt through them for a "peg" for everything one is trying to smuggle in.

The question is so elementary that one is almost ashamed to refer to it. Trotsky's theses on the permanent revolution state clearly: "*With regard to countries with a belated bourgeois development*, especially the colonial and semi-colonial countries, the theory of permanent revolution signifies that the complete and genuine solution of the tasks of achieving *democracy and national emancipation* is conceivable only through the dictatorship of the proletariat as the leader of the subjugated nation, above all of its peasant masses." (*The Permanent Revolution*, Pathfinder Press edition, p. 276. Emphasis at beginning of sentence added.) In the "Transitional Program" Trotsky wrote:

"The relative weight of the individual democratic and transitional demands in the proletariat's struggle, their mutual ties and their order of presentation, is determined by the peculiarities and specific conditions of *each backward country* (our emphasis) and to a considerable extent by the *degree* of its backwardness. Nevertheless, the general trend of revolutionary development in all backward countries can be determined by the formula of the *permanent revolution* in the sense definitely imparted to it by the three revolutions in Russia (1905, February 1917, October 1917)." (*The Transitional Program*, Pathfinder Press edition, p. 98.)

This is what the programmatic documents say. Can a casual remark about Weisbord in an internal bulletin neutralize these documents?

We didn't need Comrade Horowitz to understand that there are certain *analogies* between the *combined* tasks

that confront the revolution in an imperialist country and in a backward country. We have explained this at some length in "In Defence of Leninism: In Defence of the Fourth International" (pp. 34-35). But as we said in this document: ". . . it would be pure sophistry to draw the conclusion that no qualitative difference exists between the combined tasks facing the revolution in imperialist countries, and those facing it in colonial or semi-colonial countries, simply because of the undeniable fact that *some* tasks of the bourgeois democratic revolution remain unsolved in the most advanced imperialist nations, or rise up again there. . . ." (p. 34. Emphasis added.)

Since Comrade Horowitz compels us to go back to the ABC's, let's refresh his memory about the *qualitative* differences between the revolutionary dynamic in the colonial and semicolonial countries on the one hand, and in the imperialist countries on the other.

1. The most burning tasks of the revolution in the former countries are the tasks that were not resolved by the bourgeois-democratic revolution (the agrarian question, the national question, national unification, etc.). In the latter countries it is the tasks of the proletarian socialist revolution that are the most burning: socialization of industry and the banks, withering away of commodity production and wage labor, etc.

2. In colonial and semicolonial countries the majority of the population is made up of petty-bourgeois (and semi-proletarianized) elements; in imperialist countries the majority of the population is composed of proletarian elements. Consequently, the struggle between capital and labor wholly dominates the political and social evolution of the imperialist countries, whereas the class struggle in the backward countries takes the predominant form of combining the struggle of the peasants against the landlords and usurers, and the struggle of the "national" bourgeoisie against foreign capital, with the struggle of the workers against the capitalists—making all three elements an essential part of the class struggle.

3. For this reason, every broad-based mass struggle in the backward countries inevitably takes on the aspect of a combination of classes (only one variant of which—a worker-peasant alliance under the leadership of the proletariat—can lead the revolutionary process to victory). In the imperialist countries, every mass struggle inevitably takes on a proletarian and socialist dynamic, given the numerical preponderance of the proletariat in the nation.

4. In the colonial and semicolonial countries, the main tasks of revolutionary strategy and tactics concern the overlapping of the revolution's bourgeois-democratic tasks and the defense of the proletariat and poor peasantry's own class interests; these are the problems of the worker-peasant alliance, of the proletariat's gaining hegemony within the national-democratic movement. In the imperialist countries, the key question of revolutionary strategy and tactics is the unification of the proletarian forces in the broad sense of the term (wage-earners as a whole) on an anticapitalist basis *for the revolutionary conquest of power*. This makes it absolutely essential to clarify the question of the nature of the *state*, to carry out a merciless struggle against all confusion on classless "democracy," and to conduct a relentless education of the proletariat against reformism and illusions about the "gradual," "peaceful," "electoral" road to socialism.

Any consideration about the specific weight of the na-

tional question in the semicolonial and colonial countries on the one hand and the imperialist countries on the other—and of course any consideration about the objective function of bourgeois and petty-bourgeois nationalism—must be integrated into this overall theoretical view. It is clear that if the national question played a qualitatively different role in the Indian or Algerian revolution in the 1940s and 1950s than it does in the Spanish revolution of today, it is not, as Comrade Horowitz thinks, because the Basques represent a smaller percentage of the population but *because the proletariat and the heavy industry predominate in Spain to an extent that is qualitatively different*.

We repeat: stating these elementary truths in no way signifies an "underestimation" of the Basque, Irish, Walloon, Flemish, etc., national question. What it actually does is place the question in a different socio-economic framework and thereby deduce a different dynamic for the revolutionary process. To fail to understand this is to totally ignore the class structure and the class struggle as determining factors for Marxist analysis.

It Is Time to Stop Before It Becomes too Late

When we wrote "In Defence of Leninism: In Defence of the Fourth International," we thought that the minority represented an unprincipled bloc on the national question (and on a few other questions) between the SWP leadership—which was trying to defend a certain Trotskyist orthodoxy, although in a dogmatic way—and comrades like those of the LSA/LSO and those of the PST, who have been pulled along the path of right opportunism. We expected that the leaders of the SWP would become embarrassed by the "excesses" of their allies and try to correct them. This is sometimes a by-product of tendency struggles, and the inducement to make such adjustments is not the least of their positive results.

But this is not what happened. It was the openly revisionist forces in this bloc that began to set its tone and determine the dynamic of its political evolution. It's not Comrades Breitman, Novack, and Hansen who are correcting the errors of Alain Beiner and Moreno. It's Beiner and Moreno who are compelling the SWP leadership to follow in their footsteps.

In this sense, Comrade Horowitz's article is quite revealing. If it must be acknowledged that the SWP leadership approves and supports it, an entire sector of the Trotskyist movement would then be on the path toward open revisionism on the national question.

Despite all his inclination toward scholasticism and sophistry, Comrade Horowitz is honest enough to recognize this. He writes:

"In recent years, the Trotskyist movement (?) has introduced a change in terminology, using the word 'nationalism' not so much to describe its specific origins in connection with bourgeois ideology, but in a more limited sense to describe the simple concept of identification with the nation." (Horowitz, p. 12.)

The unfortunate thing is that with the exception of the Black question in the United States and few rare connected cases of the same sort, this "change" was not introduced "into the Trotskyist movement" as a whole or accepted

by it, but is rather now being surreptitiously slipped into documents by a few comrades who have taken the path of revising Marxism. This revision has enormous consequences.

If all that were involved were a simple question of semantics, the polemic would be of little interest. Unfortunately, the "concepts" correspond to social and political realities. If the "concept" of "nationalism" is used to designate "identification with the nation" (a vague notion, but let's leave that aside for another time), it does not for all that eliminate the fact that these nations are divided into classes and social layers, each with its particular interests and with varying ideologies that tend to express these interests. Comrade Horowitz's use of the "concept" of "nationalism" in a sense that is different from the way it is used by the great majority of humanity in no way changes the fact that there are bourgeois-nationalist parties, that they have their petty-bourgeois nationalist representatives, and that there are attempts on the part of the bourgeoisie of oppressed nations to prevent the working class from organizing in an independent way and from carrying out its class struggle against capitalism, etc., under the pretext of common national interests. All these phenomena, which are decisive for the daily political and social life of oppressed people, do not disappear by magic simply because Comrade Horowitz modifies the traditional vocabulary of Marxism-Leninism. *It is these decisive social and political phenomena that we are concerned with here, and not with "concepts" or semantics.*

These are vital problems for the future of all our sections, present and yet to be formed, in the backward countries. If we were to adopt a revisionist position on the national question, if we were to abandon a merciless struggle against bourgeois nationalism and its paralyzing influence within the working class and the peasantry,

we would risk transforming the Trotskyist organizations into de facto appendages of the bourgeoisie (and, let it be said in passing, into a brake on every consistent struggle for national liberation). This is a matter of life or death for revolutionary Marxists in the semicolonial and colonial countries.

Operating on a mixture of pragmatism and dogmatism, the minority has already opened the door to a serious revision of Marxism through the theoretical implications of its way of "explaining" the victory of the Third Chinese Revolution. (The majority has sought to demonstrate this revision in its document "The Differences of Interpretation on the 'Cultural Revolution' at the Last World Congress and Their Theoretical Implications"—*International Internal Discussion Bulletin*, Vol. 10, No. 22, November 1973.) Now Comrade Horowitz has widened the breach with his revision of the Marxist position on the national question.

But the supposedly orthodox leaders of the SWP, blinded by their passion in the struggle against "ultra-leftism," are now the victims of the objective dialectic of factionalism. The entire history of Marxism testifies to the enormous power of this dialectic. The old German poet Goethe, a dialectician who was not without talent, had already summed it up in his time: "you think you are pushing, but it is you who are being pushed."

The comrades of the minority would do well to stop for a moment and reflect on the objective forces that are pushing them in the direction of a revision of Marxism. There is still time to stop, but it is five minutes before the hour. Otherwise the malady can spread like wildfire and, as Trotsky reminded us, go from a scratch to gangrene.

September 15, 1973

Balance Sheet of the International Minority on Bolivia—in the Harsh Light of the Facts

By Martine Knoeller

Since the Ninth World Congress and more particularly since December 1972, when the discussion period preceding the tenth World Congress opened, the international minority has done its utmost to defend the following thesis on Bolivia:

1. Under the influence of the Latin-American resolution of the ninth World Congress, the Bolivian comrades made a turn to the "strategy of rural guerrilla warfare in Latin America."

2. This turn resulted in a disaster, with the section losing members, influence, internal cohesion, and the possibility of working in the mass movement, etc., because of it.

3. The "strategy of rural guerrilla warfare" prevented the Bolivian section from taking advantage of the possibilities of legal work under the regimes of Ovando and of Torres in 1970-71 and therefore cut the POR-Combate [Partido Obrero Revolucionario—Revolutionary Workers Party] off from mass work.

4. Even when the mass movement took extraordinarily big steps forward among the urban masses, the comrades of the Bolivian section "obstinately clung" to the "strategy of rural guerrilla warfare," turning their backs on the mass movement and all the tasks that would involve.

5. Following the logic of this position, they abstained from or minimized the possibilities of mass resistance against the military coup which was being prepared under the Torres regime, waiting for the "real" struggle for power that would take place after the defeat of Torres and the establishment of the dictatorship.

(On the last point, the formulations of the minority vary but always return fundamentally to this conclusion. We will return to this question further on.)

These five theses together give the impression that the ninth World Congress resolution, breaking with Trotskyism, led to a veritable catastrophe when the Bolivian section tried to apply it. Unfortunately, these five theses cannot withstand the test of facts, as comrade Germain has already shown in "In Defence of Leninism: In Defence of the Fourth International."

Actually, an examination of the facts shows:

1. That the Bolivian comrades adopted their turn toward armed struggle long before the ninth World Congress, which in any case had no authority to impose any tactic whatsoever on a national section.

2. That thanks to this turn, which was approved by the Latin American resolution of the ninth World Congress, the Bolivian section was equipped—more so than any other Bolivian organization claiming to be Marxist—to anticipate the events of 1970-71, to prepare for them, and to intervene adequately in them within the limitations of its still very inadequate forces.

3. That the Bolivian section never applied either a strategy or a tactic of "rural guerrilla warfare." Rather it confined itself in the main to setting up a military apparatus of the party, an activity that never occupied more than a relatively small fraction of its forces.

4. That in so doing, the section was not paralyzed or handicapped in its intervention in the trade unions when these began to function again, nor in its participation in the mass movement when it revived from the defeat of 1964-68. On the contrary, the defense and the beginning of the application of the orientation toward armed struggle increased the influence and the prestige of the POR-Combate among the masses. In particular, these steps permitted the POR-Combate to successfully take its first initiatives, limited of course but highly significant, of arming the masses of workers and peasants organized in their unions during the months preceding the reactionary coup of August 1971.

5. That far from having minimized the danger of a reactionary coup under the Torres regime and propagating the illusion that the "real struggle" would take place later, the Bolivian section was the only workers organization that warned the working class of the inevitability of a reactionary coup, and of the victory of this coup if the workers did not immediately prepare the necessary response: the full-scale arming of the workers and peasants; the creation of soviet-type bodies; the extension of the revolutionary process into the countryside.

One can see that this balance sheet is quite different from the one presented by the minority comrades. Comrade Germain has brought forward all the evidence—based on the facts, the events, the actions, and the documents—to demonstrate that this balance sheet is correct. In an article entitled "Bolivia—Once Again on the Facts" (IIDB Vol. X, No. 14, pp. 24-48, August 1973) Comrade Peter Camejo has tried once again to demonstrate that the "balance sheet" drawn up by the minority is entirely consonant with the facts, without in any way contradicting the essential facts already cited by Comrade Germain.

This is quite distressing for the comrades who study these two balance sheets. How can a section at the same time increase and also diminish in influence among the masses; withdraw from the trade unions and increase its activity in them; send its militants into the mountains and the bush and also work inside the mass organizations; call for the arming of the workers and concentrate on forming small, isolated guerrilla units?

We will examine step by step how Comrade Camejo and the minority comrades surmount this difficulty. The two main methods used are the following: first, by playing on words—that is, using certain terms like "orientation

toward guerrilla warfare" or "strategy of guerrilla warfare" to designate interchangeably either long-term political perspectives or analysis of immediate actions; either the creation of a limited military apparatus, or the main or even exclusive immediate activity of the organization and all its members.

Second, by shifting from one series of accusations to others without referring to either the starting point of the debate or to the initial terms of reference of the polemic.

The minority begin by saying that because of their "orientation toward guerrilla warfare," the Bolivian comrades "turned their backs" on the mass movement. When the facts are too self-evident to maintain this absurd affirmation, they follow up by saying that "even if the POR-Combate intervened in the unions, it did so within an 'orientation toward guerrilla warfare.'" This second version can no more stand the test of facts than the first one, so they end by triumphantly demonstrating that *alongside* its intervention in the unions (which is now presumed to be correct), the POR-Combate still "defended an orientation toward guerrilla warfare" in its publications and general propaganda.

It is clear that these three accusations are contradictory, that they are mutually exclusive, that they cannot all three be correct at the same time. In fact, all three are false — as we will demonstrate.

Did the POR-Combate Maintain an Orientation Toward Guerrilla Warfare Under the Ovando and Torres Regimes?

The first version of what constituted the "orientation toward guerrilla warfare" of the POR-Combate, Bolivian section of the Fourth International, was presented by the minority's principal spokesman on Bolivia, the Argentine Comrade Anibal Lorenzo. As he wrote in 1971:

"When the Gonzalez POR pointed out, very honestly, that there was a power vacuum in October [1971], which the reformist currents left unfilled, it failed to explain why the revolutionary groups could not step forward as an alternative leadership. The answer, as I have tried to show, is that the revolutionists were prevented from filling this vacuum by their guerrillist conception which was completely false and totally divorced from the situation in the country at that stage. Despite the fact that for two years — two years! — there were increasing opportunities for legal work by the proletarian and popular movement, heroic companeros sacrificed themselves in isolation." (*IIB*, "The Lessons of Bolivia," July 1972, p. 13.)

The term "guerrillist conception" or "guerrillist orientation" is used here in a sense that is precise, clear and definite: for two years under Ovando and Torres, the POR-Combate maintained its isolation from the proletarian movement and contented itself with creating guerrilla units.

The document "Argentina and Bolivia — The Balance Sheet" is already more circumspect. This is what it says on the same subject:

"Under Barrientos, the POR (Gonzales) was for guerrilla action rather than concentrating on working in the mass movement. The most serious setbacks, including the disaster suffered by Che Guevara, did not alter their determination. It was the same under Ovando. Under Torres they made some adjustments; but no real turn was involved.

The adjustments were intended only to lay a basis for guerrilla warfare when the mass mobilizations came to an end." (*IIDB*, Vol. X, No. 1, January 1973, p. 22.)

Here they already admit that the POR had made "some adjustments" under Torres, but insist on the fact that fundamentally it had maintained its "guerrillist orientation," which is moreover identified with "guerrilla actions."

Finally, in the document of Comrade Peter Camejo, "Bolivia — Once Again on the Facts," we read the following:

"Our position is that the POR (Gonzales) 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 (Gonzales) 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." (*IIDB*, Vol. X, No. 14, p. 24. Emphasis in original.)

One should note the changes in what the majority is being accused of. According to Comrade Lorenzo, the POR-Combate continued its "guerrilla conception" in isolation from the masses under both Ovando and under Torres, a period of two years. According to the authors of the document "Argentina and Bolivia — The Balance Sheet" (authors including Comrade Lorenzo and Comrade Camejo), the POR limited itself to guerrilla actions under Ovando and maintained this orientation under Torres, where it made "some adjustments" but no turn. According to the third version, the one Comrade Camejo is now offering us, the POR under Ovando was preoccupied with preparations for guerrilla actions to such an extent that it did not *fully* make use of the possibilities open to it for legal work — which implies that it did at least *partially* take advantage of them. As for its activity under Torres, contrary to what he wrote in December 1972, Comrade Camejo now admits that the POR changed its position, made a turn, engaged in mass work, took advantage of legality, but at the same time combined this with "advocating and preparing for guerrilla warfare" and subordinated mass work to the "central orientation" of initiating guerrilla warfare later.

These three positions are, it must be conceded, quite different from each other. Unfortunately, none of them corresponds to the facts.

The only proof that Comrade Camejo brings forward for his new (and quite a bit softened) version of the facts are some quotes from articles written by the comrades of the POR-Combate. But in taking these quotes out of their overall context — that is, in isolation from both the rest of what the comrades wrote and from their practical activity — a totally false impression is created.

When a militant who is not informed about the details of the activity of the Latin American sections reads in a document of the minority comrades that the Bolivian section "was for guerrilla action rather than concentrating on the mass movement," this means something quite pre-

cise: comrades leaving the unions and the factories in order to form small combat groups.

Under the Barrientos dictatorship, there were no legal unions or mass movements in Bolivia. Most of the trade-union and political leaders of the working class, including the reformists, were persecuted, deported, imprisoned, or forced into the strictest clandestinity. It was during this period that most of the activities of the POR-Combate were actually concentrated on military training of the comrades compelled to go underground and on preparation for guerrilla warfare.

But as soon as the mass movement showed signs of reviving at the end of the Barrientos regime and the beginning of the Ovando regime, the POR-Gonzales turned toward all the opportunities open to it for work in the trade unions and in the mass movements, despite the fact that it had been forced to underground *by these regimes* (not by its own choice!), that several of its militants remained in prison or continued to be persecuted, and that harsh repression continued in the unions and the universities.

Here for instance is the platform that it put forward in the miners union, a document that was printed *under the Ovando regime* in its paper *Combate*:

"1. Reinstitution of the wage levels and social benefits of May 1965.

"2. General wage increases in line with the rise in the cost of living since 1965.

"3. Extension of social security status to all temporary workers, and equal pay for "temporary" and "permanent" workers.

"4. Return to the mines of all workers fired for political or trade-union reasons since November 1964.

"5. Integration of the so-called cooperative mines into the nationalized industry. An end to all private exploitation of the mines.

"6. Expulsion of the 'mines police,' agents of the political police, from the mining districts. Use of their barracks for the miners' social service, to be managed by the miners themselves, as in the mines of Playa Verde and Huannuni (where the POR-Combate comrades have already won this right!)." (*Combate*, second fortnight of July 1970.)

And this is the platform of the POR-Combate advanced with great success at the congress of the food industry workers, where it won a majority of the votes:

"1. Minimum salary of 600 Bolivian pesos. Daily bread ration guaranteed for food industry workers.

"2. Integration of all workers into the social security system. Creation of a system of public housing financed by the state.

"3. Salary increase of 50 percent for night work. All work clothes to be furnished by the employers.

"4. Preparation for the creation of cooperatives for the production and sale of flour in order to abolish exploitation and private ownership.

"5. Freedom for all political prisoners.

"6. Organization of literacy classes in all factories, to be under the control of the union.

"7. Support to the revolutionary students. Participation of the working class in the organization of a university that is not confined to the traditional campuses, that goes into the factories and the mines and forms the new men necessary for the national and social liberation of Bolivia.

"8. Organization of classes in revolutionary trade-union political education. The union demands that the COB [Confederación Obrera Boliviana — Bolivian Workers Federation] admit the sons of the food industry workers into the trade-union schools. Creation of a technical school for the food industry, to be run by the unions. The development of working-class sports programs.

"9. The union must fully integrate itself into the new rise of the Bolivian workers movement, in the front lines of the struggle for the triumph of socialism." (*Combate*, second fortnight of July 1970.)

Can one seriously say that an organization that defends such a trade-union platform is only concerned about "preparing for guerrilla actions"; that it obstinately insisted on a "guerrilla line"; and other accusatory formulations of the minority? It would be easy to extend this platform by citing the demands advanced by the comrades of the POR-Combate among teachers, peasants, etc., but we will refrain from this so as not to lengthen unduly this contribution to the international debate.

More important than the documents are the facts. And the facts, which are not denied even by the minority itself, are that the POR-Combate was present in full force among the delegates of the Popular Assembly, who were elected by the trade-union and peasant assemblies. The comrades of the Bolivian section maintain that they held twelve votes out of 180; the minority comrades dispute this figure and give them only six or seven, the same number as the Lora group. But whether it was six or twelve delegates elected by the unions, it should be clear to anyone with even a minimum of trade-union experience that one could not win a sizable number of delegates in January-February 1971 if one began work as late as November 1970. *This fact alone suffices to contradict all the theses of the minority, and suffices to demonstrate that the POR-Combate had engaged in work in the trade unions when it had the possibility to do so, that is, as soon as the trade unions began functioning (more or less) once again.*

If one adds to this another fact—that is, that the POR-Combate rapidly became the dominant force in the trade-union confederation in the region of the capital La Paz, and that its platform was adopted by the confederation's congress in this region—one can understand even better how false it is to say that the POR was isolated from the proletarian movement by guerrilla actions under Ovando and Torres.

In an appendix to his article, Comrade Camejo publishes the main political document adopted by the POR during the Ovando regime, in November 1969. On page 25 of his article (*IIDB*, Vol. X, No. 14, August 1973), he cites one *sentence* supposedly indicating that, according to the POR-Combate, there is only one road to taking power—armed struggle—which must begin by guerrilla warfare. But he glosses over the entire section of that resolution concerning the tasks of the POR, although all the comrades can read it, including the following text, in the appendix.

"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 class line. 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: re-establishment 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.*" [Emphasis added.]

It is in the context of this second section on the tasks of the POR that guerrilla warfare is mentioned as a means of tempering the initial nucleus of a popular revolutionary army, the initial nucleus of the armed masses who will conquer the power. In this same passage, the masses are also warned of the fact that if they are not ready for armed confrontation, the army will crush them again as it did in 1964-65. One can agree or not with the formulation used about the emergence of the people in arms; but it is absolutely clear from the context that this orientation is conceived in strict accordance with the first point—that is, with the mobilization of the masses by means of transitional demands.

It is necessary therefore to reply to the following question: *Can an organization that calls for the mobilization of the masses; that elaborates a detailed program of transitional demands toward this end; that places the bulk of its force of militants in the trade unions, the factories, the independent peasant organizations, and the universities—can such an organization be described as "essentially" preparing "guerrilla actions in isolation from the proletarian and popular movement"; as being "for guerrilla action rather than concentrating on the mass movement"; as being "absorbed by the preparations for the*

guerrilla war"; as applying "guerrilla warfare as the fundamental strategy"? If so, then the minority's "balance sheet" of the Bolivian experience is correct. If not, Comrade Germain is correct to say that there has been a fundamental distortion of the facts.

Moreover, Comrade Germain is not the only person to have passed judgment on the activity of the POR under the Ovando regime, which he set forth in "In Defence of Leninism: In Defence of the Fourth International." Judging this activity *on the basis of the same document* that Comrade Camejo uses today to "demonstrate" that the POR remained "essentially" guerrillaist under Ovando, Comrade Joseph Hansen had this to say in 1970:

"Perhaps *the biggest shift since the world congress* has taken place in the position of the Bolivian comrades. In a unanimous resolution passed in November 1969 (published in an English translation in the April 13, 1970 issue of *Intercontinental Press*), the Bolivian comrades adjusted their position as follows:

'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 class line. But trade-union reorganization must be combined with a 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.'

"In resuming the struggle in the indicated way, the Bolivian comrades outlined in their resolution the main points of 'a transitional program providing impetus to a mass mobilization.' They spelled this out in specific detail in the statement they issued to the mine workers congress held at the Siglo Veinte mine the second week of April (published in an English translation in *Intercontinental Press*, May 11, 1970).

"*Our Bolivian comrades made a correct turn* in resuming activities in accordance with the method indicated in the 1938 Transitional Program. *Trotskyists throughout the world will feel gratified that the Bolivian section was able to make this readjustment.*

"*In practice our Bolivian comrades in this instance handled involvement in 'rural guerrilla warfare' as a tactical question to be judged in the light of the ups and downs of their national situation and in relation to their own needs and opportunities.* But this was one of the key points the minority sought to establish at the world congress as a general concept of our movement." (Joseph Hansen: "A Contribution to the Discussion on Revolutionary Strategy in Latin America," in *Discussion on Latin America* [1968-1972], IIDB Reprint, January 1973, pp. 67-68. Emphasis added.)

So in 1970 Comrade Hansen was of the opinion that the Bolivian comrades had made a "correct turn" in November 1969 in basing themselves on the impetus of the mass mobilisations around transitional demands. He was of the opinion that the mention of guerrilla warfare in this document of the Bolivian comrades derived from

a correct understanding of tactics and corresponded to the theses of the international minority. Two years later, already carried away by factional blindness, Comrade Hansen signs a minority document that states that under Ovando the POR was "for guerrilla action rather than concentrating on working in the mass movement." And in August 1973, Comrade Camejo has the effrontery to draw upon *the same text used by Hansen in 1970* to calmly declare that the POR did not make a turn; that this document did not anticipate concentration on the mass movement; that in this document guerrilla warfare, far from being one form of struggle among others, remains for the Bolivian section the "fundamental strategy." In 1970, "Trotskyists throughout the world" should rejoice about the "turn" of November 1969. In 1973, the "turn" had disappeared and it was necessary to "mourn" the POR's obstinancy in error since November 1969, rather than rejoicing about anything at all.

Comrades examining these facts can draw their own conclusions as to the objectivity of the polemic of the minority against the Bolivian section and as to the seriousness of their "balance sheet."

The POR Faced with the Threat of a Coup Under Torres—Has the Minority Slandered the Bolivian Section?

Peter Camejo is offended because Comrade Germain has accused the minority of distorting the political attitude of the POR-Combate under Torres just before the coup—distorting it to the point of coming close to Stalinist-type slanders. But he hardly proves that Comrade Germain's accusations are without foundation, nor does he prove that the minority accurately presented the policies of the POR during the last months of the Torres regime.

Here are the facts. In his previously cited article, Comrade Lorenzo wrote the following:

"The González POR stressed correctly that the government of General Torres had taken no social or political measures that could define it as revolutionary. But this characterization was only one aspect of the reality, a half-truth that led to the following falsehood:

"Where, then, are the differences among the generals? Obviously they exist. But be on your guard! The difference is a tactical one and concerns how to defeat communism and stop the masses from taking power."

"The result of this method was that the González POR was unprepared for the August events. When they returned to Russia after the fall of the Czar, Lenin and Trotsky issued an immediate call for preparing a working-class insurrection and for no confidence in the Provisional government. *But they never equated Kornilov with Kerensky.* When the White general, taking advantage of the position Kerensky himself gave him, tried to stage a coup, the Bolsheviks made a united front with the moderate leader and took the lead in mobilizing the masses. And the masses defeated the coup by forcing the putschists' troops to desert. As we know, one month later the Bolsheviks took power." [Anibal Lorenzo, op. cit., p. 9. Emphasis added.]

What does this passage say if not: (1) that the POR-Combate, contrary to the Russian Bolsheviks, placed an equal-sign between Kornilov and Kerensky, that is, between Torres and Banzer; (2) that it refused to take part

in a united front with the reformist parties who supported Torres against Banzer; (3) that it prepared neither the masses nor its own organization for the necessary confrontation?

But Comrade Germain published in "In Defence of Leninism: In Defence of the Fourth International" the main passages from the publications of the POR-Gonzales that demonstrate that this "accusation" is nothing less than a slander, quite similar to the slanders of Stalinist origin to the effect that the "sectarianism" of the Trotskyists leads them to adopt a "neutral" position in the struggle against fascism and reactionary coups.

The truth is that the POR-González warned the masses *months in advance* of the danger of a reactionary coup. How that "proves" that they were not prepared for the coup is a mystery that the minority has never clarified. The truth is that the POR-González ceaselessly called on the masses for the full-scale arming of the workers, the peasants, and the students inside the trade unions, the communities, the independent peasant organizations, and the universities in order to defend against the imminent *putsch*. The majority has brought forward the proof of this position; the minority has not furnished the slightest evidence to the contrary. And the truth also includes the fact that from the moment the *putsch* began, the comrades of the POR-González fought side by side with the reformist and "ultraleft" organizations, with the regiment of Major Sánchez and with all those who took up arms against the fascists. What then remains of the accusation of having placed an equal-sign between Kerensky and Kornilov, if not a slander? Does the minority perhaps hold the opinion that the POR-González should not have told the masses of the bourgeois character of the Torres government, the state, and the army for fear of "demobilizing" the masses in the struggle against the fascists? But is that not the classical thesis of the Mensheviks in 1917 and the Stalinists since 1935?

As for the collective document of the minority entitled "Argentina and Bolivia—The Balance Sheet," here is how it describes the position of the POR-González on the question of the coup:

"In spite of the course of the class struggle in Bolivia, the POR (González) held stubbornly to its position that a socialist revolution would occur only via rural guerrilla warfare. Disregarding all evidence before their eyes, our Bolivian comrades remained steadfast supporters of the line adopted at the Ninth World Congress, a line that had ruled out almost everything happening around them (an urban insurrection, a reformist regime, open trade-union work, the possibility of legal preparations, work in the armed forces, etc).

". . . As they 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." (*IIDB*, Vol. X, No. 1, January 1973, p. 21. Emphasis added.)

If indeed according to the Bolivian comrades, "the real struggle for power" could not begin until after the fall of Torres, wouldn't that logically imply that they should

prefer Banzer to Torres? All the same, all revolutionaries worthy of the name prefer conditions in which the "real struggle for power" can take place as opposed to conditions where that is impossible." The *only* proof that Comrade Camejo furnishes for this serious and, we repeat, slanderous accusation that our Bolivian section thought the "real struggle for power" would only be possible under fascism or a military dictatorship is a passage from an interview that Comrade Gonzáles gave to the British comrades, and in which he said:

"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." (IIDB, Vol. X, No. 14, p. 26. Emphasis added.)

It is sufficient to compare the quote of Comrade Gonzáles to the "interpretation" of Comrade Camejo to see the extent to which the interpretation is distorted and slanderous. Where does Comrade Gonzales say that the struggle to prevent the victory of the putsch is impossible or useless? Where does he say that the POR should not waste its forces in the preparation of the resistance to the putsch? Where does he say that the struggle for power is impossible under Torres? Where does he say that it is only under the dictatorship that the "real struggle for power" will begin? Is this not indeed a slander that until now has only been used against the Trotskyists by their Stalinist adversaries?

During the period of the Popular Fronts in France and Spain, Trotsky and the Trotskyists said that if a new revolutionary party was not built in time, this experience would end in a crushing defeat for the proletariat. Obviously it would not be a defeat for all time. The struggle for the construction of the Fourth International, for the victory of the socialist revolution, would continue and would triumph in the end. To "interpret" this position as signifying that after 1936 the Trotskyists believed it would be preferable for "the real struggle for the revolutionary party" to take place under fascism rather than under the Popular Front—what is such an "interpretation" if not a slander?

Has foresight become a crime? Was Comrade Gonzáles wrong in predicting that the military dictatorship would triumph if the generalized arming of the masses, the formation of committees, and the extension of the revolution into the countryside had not previously taken place? Didn't the actual events correspond to this prediction? Would it perhaps have been necessary to add that, after the defeat, there would be nothing more to do for ten years?

The thesis of the minority might have a semblance of truthfulness if the POR-Combate had done nothing under Torres to warn the masses of the imminent *putsch*, to call on them to prepare and arm themselves against the putsch, to lead them toward the full-scale arming of the masses. Comrade Germain has already furnished documentary evidence to the contrary. Let us recall the following passage from the May 1, 1971, declaration of the POR, which also appeared in the paper *Combate* (No 5, New Series):

"Let us not fool ourselves. The innumerable massacres have taught us a lesson. On the basis of that experience, the POR calls upon all the workers, on this first day of May, to organise their armed pickets, their proletarian and peasant regiments. In each factory, in every mine, in every peasant community, in the Universities, it is necessary to organise armed detachments, which will be the embryos of the Revolutionary People's Army. Only in this way shall we definitively crush the fascists in the crisis which they prepare, while at the same time we shall assault the positions of the capitalist regime. Only in that way will the revolution triumph, opening the road to the building of socialism." ("In Defence of Leninism: In Defence of the Fourth International," p. 8.)

This declaration was entitled: "Let Us March on to the Final Assault to Seize Power for Socialism."

The same issue of *Combate* (first fortnight of May 1971) contained an article with the title of "Armed Trade-Union Detachments," where we can read the following:

"No one doubts that the Bolivian right-wing grouped around the armed forces is in the process of preparing a *putsch*. General Torres no longer suits them because he has failed in his task of containing the revolutionary process. This plot is no longer secret; the right wing has even announced it. The Minister of the Interior is constantly publishing information about the putsch.

". . . In the face of this emergency, the only realistic, non-utopian response is to arm the workers. A putsch cannot be avoided by voting resolutions, nor by unarmed and defenseless mass demonstrations. But the arms will not come from the government. They are laughable, those novices who rush off to President Torres to demand arms from him.

"Revolutionaries and workers, we must arm ourselves through revolutionary methods. We must disarm the enemy. We must also purchase arms; for this we must begin campaigns to raise money. The trade unions and the universities must use part of their funds in order to buy arms.

"But arms are of little use if the masses are disorganized. That is why we repeat the slogan put forward by the POR: in each union, organize detachments for training in the art of warfare, in the use of the weapons of war, so that we can use them as well as the enemy can.

"The workers most conscious of their revolutionary role should take the lead in organizing these detachments. Pacifism and reformism are the instruments of the counter-revolution and the enemies of workers power in Bolivia.

"Revolutionary struggle demands that the masses take the leading role. We will overthrow the bourgeoisie when we are armed and ready to fight back on the same level as the army of the bourgeoisie. Otherwise, as we have learned from our past history, we will suffer more defeats and massacres."

To define the orientation of the POR-Combate still more precisely, here is how the communiqué published after the Plenum of the Central Committee of the POR held in Easter 1971 defined the main immediate tasks of the party:

"1. To intensify political work aimed at the masses, in order to pull them away from the influence of reformism and build a really revolutionary leadership.

"2. To intervene toward this end in all the organiza-

tions of the workers movement, no matter what their limitations.

"3. To promote the arming of the workers, taking the initiatives in the formation of armed trade-union detachments.

"4. At the same time, to intensify the military work of the party and the reinforcement of its military apparatus for impending actions closely linked with the revolutionary masses.

"5. The political work directed toward the masses and the military activity of the party are to be balanced against each other, all under the sole and centralized leadership of the party." (*Combate*, first fortnight of May 1971.)

Is that the defeatist language of a party which, impelled by its obsession with guerrilla warfare, considers the defeat to be inevitable and contents itself with preparing to initiate the struggle in the future? Are these the words of an organization that believes the struggle for power is impossible during the rise of the mass movement and must be delayed until after its defeat? Does this language correspond to the definition Comrade Camejo has given of the positions of the POR? Is it the language of "focoism"? Or does this language instead demonstrate that the minority has presented us with a caricature of the positions of the POR, a caricature that in no way corresponds to reality?

Comrade Germain has stressed the fact that the POR did not rest content with writing articles on arming the workers in the unions, and that its militants had begun to carry out this line, on a modest scale, in those places where they could do so: in the Huanuni mines, in the food industry union, among the peasants of the provinces of La Paz and Santa Cruz. Comrade Camejo does not dispute this. Instead, he says that this was the common practice of all the Bolivian left-wing organizations under Torres.

This is a gratuitous statement, one that blurs over the fundamental difference between the Bolivian far-left and the reformist and semi-reformist organizations. The latter, essentially the social democrats, the group around Lechín, the pro-Moscow CP, and Lora, controlled the miners union and the trade-union confederation, the COB. If they had really been won to the idea of the general arming of the working class, how is it that this did not take place?

It is true that these organizations voted resolutions to the effect of "preparing for the formation of workers militias" in the Popular Assembly. It is also true that the miners had regained some of the old rifles they had held before 1964. But nothing was done to group these forces into a real armed detachment, one organized, trained, and prepared to resist the putsch. Only the POR-Combate took steps in this direction, in the trade-union organizations in which it had some influence.

The fundamental reason for this difference is a *political* one. All the reformist and semi-reformist organizations counted on a split inside the army in opposition to the putsch. In this respect, there is a common orientation between Lechín-Lora-Bolivian CP, the Uruguayan CP, and the Popular Unity in Chile. The merit of the POR-González was to have systematically warned the workers against this type of illusion, which has proved to be so

dangerous throughout Latin America over the course of the last three years. Obsessed by the necessity to "work inside the army" and to exploit "differences within the bourgeoisie," some leading comrades of the minority like Comrades Lorenzo and Camejo gloss over this *fundamental* difference of strategy. They still do not understand that without the *previous* arming of the working class, without the *previous* affirmation of the will to struggle for power and to defend, arms in hand, all the allies of the proletariat, even the successes obtained by agitation among the soldiers will be transformed into a deadly trap—as the example of the Valparaiso sailors tragically demonstrated.

Some Other Examples of an Inconsistent Polemic

There are several other examples in Comrade Camejo's document that reflect the technique of forgetting the starting point of the discussion in order to modify the course of the polemic along the way. We will mention two of them.

The minority document "Argentina and Bolivia—The Balance Sheet" accused the comrades of the POR of having joined together, *on the basis of a bourgeois program*, with other formations on the Bolivian left after the victory of the Banzer coup. (*IIDB*, Vol. X, No. 1, p. 22.) Comrade Germain replied to this charge by saying that the program of the Anti-Imperialist Revolutionary Front was not bourgeois since it clearly pronounced itself in favor of socialism and of a revolution under the hegemony of the proletariat. What does Comrade Camejo reply to that? That it is impermissible for revolutionaries to form programmatic united fronts! (*IIDB*, Vol. X, No. 14, p. 31.) But who ever said that the FRA is a "programmatic united front," or that the POR-Combate had joined it for programmatic reasons? All Comrade Germain did was to reject the statement that the FRA had a bourgeois program. Comrade Camejo conveniently ignores the starting point of the polemic and speaks about something else. That's an easy way to always be right . . . even when the facts prove you to be wrong.

Here is another example of the same technique: In "Argentina and Bolivia—The Balance Sheet," the minority said that in order to oppose the impending *putsch*, it was not sufficient simply to call for the formation of workers militias—it was necessary to link this slogan with that of "All Power to the Popular Assembly." And they conclude:

"All this presupposed a clear orientation toward the masses, above all toward the urban workers and miners.

"Even worse than the tragedy of missing a most favorable opportunity for the proletariat to take power was the fact that *no party, including the section of the Fourth International in Bolivia, advanced a correct revolutionary program for the conquest of power.*" (*IIDB*, Vol. X, No. 1, p. 18. Emphasis in original.)

And still more clearly:

"In Bolivia, without a concrete governmental slogan such as calling for power to the Popular Assembly, and without a vigorous campaign to mobilize defensive forces against the impending rightist coup, all talk of armed struggle amounted to nothing but phrase-mongering or ultraleft adventurism." (*IIDB, Ibid.*, p. 20.)

Comrade Germain replied to this argument as follows: (1) that the POR-Combate indeed had a "clear orientation toward the masses and in the first instance toward the workers in the towns and in the mines"; (2) that it had alerted the masses to the danger of a putsch and launched the slogan of the arming of the proletariat as the main means of response; (3) that it had joined to this central demand a whole series of economic, social, and political demands of a transitional character, notably for the creation of democratic organs of workers power at the rank-and-file level, for the extension of the revolution into the countryside, for the democratization of the Popular Assembly and its transformation from a consultative assembly into a genuine decision-making body; (4) that all these demands quite obviously had priority over the slogan "All Power to the Popular Assembly," which the minority wishes to give central importance.

What is Comrade Camejo's response now? It is hardly believable. He says that the slogan "All Power to the Popular Assembly" was launched in Bolivia only by . . . the Bolivian section, and that therefore Comrade Germain is in disagreement with the POR-Combate. (*IIDB*, Vol. X, No. 14, p. 27.) But Peter Camejo "forgets" that the whole starting point of the argument was the supposed incapacity of the POR-Combate to formulate a correct program for the seizure of power, centered around the slogan "All Power to the Popular Assembly," an incapacity that supposedly transformed all its agitation for the arming of the proletariat into mere phrasemongering.

All this confirms the view that the minority's only desire is to win polemical arguments, not to judge an analysis in the light of events. The "balance sheet" of the minority on Bolivia cannot stand up to the harsh test of the facts.

The Organizational Weaknesses of the Bolivian Section

Moreover, there is an internal contradiction in Comrade Camejo's whole line of reasoning, a contradiction that reveals its artificial character. To begin with, he lays heavy stress on the extreme weakness of the Bolivian section, which according to him had less than 100 members. But in the end, the "strategy of rural guerrilla warfare" is supposed to have caused the "disaster" of a Bolivian section incapable of "filling the power vacuum" created in October 1970, not to speak of preventing Banzer from taking power in August 1971. How an organization of less than 100 members could have "filled the power vacuum" even with the best politics in the world—not to mention leading a *victorious* armed resistance against the army—that is what Comrade Camejo doesn't bother to tell us.

The reality is once again different from the caricature sketched by Comrade Camejo. During the period 1969-71, the POR-Combate was considerably stronger than Camejo suggests. Otherwise, it could not have won the positions that it did in the mass movement. But it never had the possibility of becoming a *hegemonic* force in the Bolivian workers movement.

For a long time, this workers movement had been under the preponderant political influence of a bourgeois nationalist party, the MNR [Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario—Revolutionary Nationalist Movement]. It was

only at the end of the Barrientos dictatorship that the majority of workers advanced from bourgeois nationalist positions toward the reformist and centrist positions of the Lechín—pro-Moscow CP—Lora bloc. New and painful historical experiences, and not simply a more "skillful" polemic or a more "intelligent" tactic on the part of the POR, would be necessary before a revolutionary organization of a few hundred militants could break the domination of the "traditional left" over the Bolivian workers movement. Furthermore, it is too soon to tell whether the defeat of August 1971 constitutes such a historical experience or whether the coming rise in the mass movement will again take place under the reformist-centrist leadership of 1968-71.

The POR-Combate suffers and has suffered from important organizational weaknesses. Its mass influence has always been far greater than its capacity to capitalize on this influence, to develop cadres, to recruit militants, to organize cells functioning under real Bolshevik discipline. But this weakness in no way dates from any "turn toward the strategy of guerrilla warfare." It was equally if not more pronounced throughout the fifties and the early sixties as during the period 1969-71.

One of the main causes of this weakness is the cultural underdevelopment of the Bolivian proletariat, one of the poorest in the world, with a very small number of advanced workers, and a similarly limited number of intellectuals prepared to join whole-heartedly and without any second thoughts in building the revolutionary movement. At the beginning of the fifties, the POR was led by a small team of working-class and university leaders of this sort, leaders who were able to play a role in the workers movement all out of proportion to the number of militants in the party.

This team was broken up after the 1952 revolution. One wing, under the leadership of Moler, betrayed revolutionary Marxism, joined the bourgeois government of the MNR, became integrated into the trade-union and peasant bureaucracy, and is today mainly in the social democracy. A second wing, under the leadership of Lora, adopted a vacillating and conciliatory position between the POR and the renegades; it called for an "organic united front" with the left wing of the MNR, that is, with the trade-union bureaucracy led by Lechín. Only the nucleus around Hugo Gonzáles Moscoso remained faithful to Trotskyism and continued to build the POR in opposition to the predominant MNR current. But this group found itself greatly weakened as a result of the two successive splits.

It was weakened still further by the death of Comrade Bravo, leader of the teachers union and one of the principal theoreticians and political propagandists of the POR, as well as by the blows of repression that began to rain down on it during the period 1964-68. It is because of these facts that the POR could participate in the new rise of the mass movement with only very limited forces, and not because of any supposed "disastrous consequences of the turn to the strategy of guerrilla warfare." The comrades of the minority do not tell us how many newspapers the POR published in the period 1965-68; how many militants it had and how much mass work it did (compared with the period 1968-70). However, this is an ele-

mentary requirement to determine whether or not the "orientation toward the armed struggle" actually weakened the Bolivian section and its implantation or not.

Comrade Peter Camejo attempts to counterpose to the analysis of Comrade Germain in "In Defence of Leninism: In Defence of the Fourth International" the passage from the resolution on Bolivia approved by the IEC meeting December 1972 that deals with the insufficiencies of the POR. The passage states that the POR "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-defence as well as under more specialized forms. It marked time too long before taking audacious initiatives that were both possible and necessary." ("Bolivia — Results and Prospects," *IIDB*, Vol. X, No. 6, pp. 10-11.)

There is no real contradiction here, except for those who, even after the experience of Chile, obstinately refuse to understand what the majority is talking about. The POR had a correct political orientation under Torres. Its slogans were correct and have been confirmed by the course of events. It attempted to apply these slogans inside the mass organizations in which it had some influence. But in a prerevolutionary situation, the masses are not won over to correct ideas exclusively or even mainly by oral and written propaganda. The masses are won by action. The experiences they undergo in taking their own actions obviously play the main role in this regard. The experience of exemplary struggles that can serve as detonators plays a not-unimportant auxiliary role.

If the POR had at its disposal a stronger and more effective organization; if it could have taken the initiative

in setting off some armed occupations of the land in the peasant areas where it had a mass influence; if it could have stimulated the formation of trade-union militias on a larger scale in the unions where it had won political leadership—then the impact of its correct ideas over the working class, peasant, and student vanguard would have been far greater than was the case in August 1971. That is what the December 1972 IEC resolution says.

In no way does that contradict the analysis of Comrade Germain. The resolution of December 1972 does not criticize the POR for having neglected "rural guerrilla warfare." Nor does it criticize the POR for having "overestimated" work in the mass movement, or for having "substituted" the call for a general arming of the working class in place of the "strategy of rural guerrilla warfare." It simply states that the *application of the correct politics of the POR under Torres suffered from organizational inefficiency and weaknesses.*

The International has tried and will go on trying to rectify these weaknesses within the limitations of its means, which are modest. The minority could have made important theoretical and practical contributions to this rectification. But by tilting at windmills, by stating against all the evidence that under Ovando and Torres the POR turned its back on the mass movement in order to isolate itself in "guerrilla actions," the minority has missed the chance to make this contribution. It has caused the International and particularly its Latin American sections to waste a lot of time and resources in sterile debates, time and resources that could have been put to far better use in discussing the real problems, and in giving some genuine assistance to the Bolivian section.

October 1973

Communique

On November 17-18 comrades from various European sections of the Fourth International met in Frankfurt to consult about the situation that has arisen in the international prior to the Tenth World Congress (Fourth since reunification).

At this meeting, they reached the following conclusions:

1. The Fourth International is at the present time divided into two powerful currents—the International Majority Tendency and the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction. These currents have differences that are becoming deeper and have been extended to cover most of the immediate problems facing the Trotskyist movement today. We do not accept the concept that at present it is a question of choosing sides and supporting one side against the other. For these disagreements are not only a matter of different theoretical positions, and different strategic conceptions—they flow as well from different evaluations of and conclusions drawn from the experience of our movement, especially since the Ninth World Congress. At times this experience represents only partial aspects of the reality of the world-wide class struggle, which in the last analysis is an expression of the fact that there are objective limits to the unification of the Fourth International as long as it is not a mass international which presents a real international class leadership.

Therefore we must accept the fact that at present the Fourth International joins within its ranks varying political orientations that are unified by the principles of the Trotskyist program and the struggle to overcome the historical crisis of leadership of the proletariat, but are divided by different conditions, experiences, and conclusions drawn from their struggle. We must concentrate on preventing this problem—which can only be solved through the process of building and homogenizing the International—from becoming exacerbated by selfish factional concerns and by the independent dynamic of the tendency struggle, in such a way that calls into question the possibility of continuing to construct the world Trotskyist party.

2. The United Secretariat's recommendations to the delegates of the coming world congress, which we support, have diminished the present danger of a split. But the latent danger of a split resulting from unresolved political differences is not eliminated by this. We do not accept the proposition of a "cold" split in the International, which means having two internationals under one roof that cooperate with one another on a tactical plane and maintain their formal unity only in order to avoid a new Trotskyist scandal.

We defend the conception of the present-day Fourth International as the nucleus of the world party of revolution. Therefore these differences must be discussed further,

even after the world congress, and this debate must thoroughly involve all sections until a solution to the present crisis can be reached on a principled level.

3. The present status of the discussion in the International aids but little in this necessary task. The dispute over the transformation of the LTT into a faction, the transformation of the conjunctural guerrilla strategy of the Ninth World Congress into a general "strategy of armed struggle," and the apologetic character of the international majority's self-criticism over the Latin America orientation, which passes over fundamental methodological and strategic errors, as well as the character of the international majority's theory of the "new mass vanguard," which serves to hide the objective difficulties faced by our sections in adequately responding to the qualitative advance of the European workers' movement—all of this intensifies the present crisis in the Fourth International instead of contributing to its resolution.

4. As far as the discussion on Latin America is concerned, we have come to the conclusion that the Ninth World Congress gave an incorrect orientation for this sector of the world revolution, one which has had negative effects not only on several Latin American sections but on the whole world organization. We also agree that the basic criticisms of this orientation expressed in the LTF's balance sheet on Argentina and Bolivia are correct.

A thorough self-critical evaluation of the Latin America experience is an indispensable precondition for resolving the present crisis in the International. However we do not have the impression that the requisites of formulating an alternative line to that of the leadership majority have been fulfilled up to now. The hardening of positions in this debate along factional lines in our opinion makes it more difficult at the present time to work out a coherent line that can aid in the successful reconstruction of the Fourth International in Latin America.

5. The present international discussion creates serious political and organizational problems for the various currents within the International that agree with neither the IMT nor the LTF. It is especially difficult, given the conception of the debate as a "struggle of two lines," to assure an equal hearing in the present pre-world-congress discussion and an unprejudiced and democratic reception from the ranks. A fundamental reason for this is that these tendencies formed and began common discussions only at a very late date. The late and incomplete publication of discussion documents in some of the sections concerned has also been a contributory factor. Another reason is the necessity of initiating a process of clarification and an exchange on the experiences and perspectives of the

sections we work in, something we consider to be an important requisite for a responsible intervention into the international discussion.

6. Therefore we have decided to conclude an agreement for mutual discussion, information, and cooperation in the preparation for the Tenth World Congress and to fix a time for another international gathering open to the members of the tendencies concerned and sympathetic observers, so that after further study of our mutual positions we can determine our next steps in making a contribution to the world congress and to the resolution of the crisis in the Fourth International.

We request the United Secretariat to publish this com-

munique within the Fourth International.

Frankfurt, November 18, 1973

Albert, Juan, Karl: Steering Committee of the Compass Tendency (West Germany)

Roberto: Tendenza Marxista Rivoluzionaria [Revolutionary Marxist Tendency] (Italy)

Krasno, Reiner: Tendence Contre le Courant [Against the Stream] (France)

Dumas, Lesage (France)

Fraternal observer: H. Sand (Sweden)

Correction

An error in translation occurred on page 16 of "The Mote and the Beam," IIDB Vol. X, No. 18. The first sentence in the second paragraph in the second column should

read: ". . . general socialist propaganda such as the pioneers of European socialism did for decades, propaganda in which certain points of our program—the dictatorship of the proletariat, workers councils—have not appeared."