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# Self-Criticism on Latin America

By the Steering Committee of the  
International Majority Tendency

## WHY THIS DELAY?

A self-critical balance sheet of our orientation in Latin America as it was defined by the resolution adopted by the Ninth World Congress (1969) has long been necessary.

Up to now only partial self-criticisms have been made, particularly in the context of the discussions preparatory to the Tenth World Congress and at this Congress itself.<sup>1</sup> But these were self-criticisms that were already overdue; they were carried out through gradual shifts and their partial character did not permit the coherence of positions to be restored with all the necessary clarity. Erroneous interpretations thus remained possible, with all the risks of political error that this implies.

Why so much delay then?

•For a long time the debate in the International on Latin America was the major factor fueling the tendency and faction struggle. It was in *Latin America* that the factionalism of the International Minority Faction was first manifested. Vilely attacked for analyses or orientations that it did not always hold or were at best caricatures of its positions, the IMT lent priority to defending what it considered essential in its positions against the International Minority Faction.

This was especially necessary since, beyond the polemic, some orientations of the International Minority Faction involved serious political deviations which we even debated publicly.<sup>2</sup>

In doing this the IMT wrongly neglected what should have been one of its tasks: drawing up a critical balance sheet and taking a critical new look at the Latin American resolution adopted by the Ninth World Congress.

•There were disagreements within the IMT itself which also contributed to delaying this self-criticism, since they were badly expressed. These disagreements, particularly with many Latin American comrades, were rooted in an uneven comprehension of the extent of the errors of the Ninth World Congress.

The considerable difficulties, sometimes even the material impossibility, of carrying on a prolonged and serious discussion with these comrades played a negative role.

•Finally, given the objective difficulties of this type, and in the virtual absence of contributions by Latin American comrades of the IMT, the persistent weakness of the full-time leadership team of the International relative to the increasingly pressing and numerous tasks that had to be accomplished contributed in no small measure to this delay.

## 1. A NEW LOOK AT THE CONDITIONS OF ELABORATION OF THE NINTH WORLD CONGRESS

A long period marked by an uninterrupted series of massive and radical mobilizations followed by serious defeats is now coming to a close in Latin America.

The crushing of the insurrection in Santo Domingo in

1965, the establishment and subsequent consolidation of the Brazilian dictatorship (1964-68), the destruction of the guerrillas in Bolivia, where Che Guevara died in 1967, and the subsequent defeat of the workers of this country in 1971, the failure of the general strike in Uruguay (1973) and the regime of terror which followed, the crushing of the Chilean working class after September 1973, and the recent coup in Argentina, to mention only the most important events, have *radically altered* the Latin American political panorama such as it appeared at the beginning of the 1960s.

Just after the revolutionary victory in Cuba, in the euphoria caused by the establishment of the first workers state in Latin America, on the very doorstep of the world's strongest imperialist power, the hour of socialist revolution seemed close to Latin American revolutionary militants, who were inspired by the Cuban example. The objective situation was marked by political instability and explosive social contradictions, products of capitalist and imperialist exploitation; and had not the Cuban revolutionaries just proven in practice that a victorious socialist revolution was then possible?

Under the impact of this victory and inspired by the Cuban example, *a new generation of revolutionary militants* emerged throughout the continent. *Empirically* they broke with a heritage of concessions, inaction, abnegation, and betrayals embodied in the Communist parties of Latin America. A heritage that had led the working class and poor peasants to act merely as passive contributing forces in the political operations of bourgeois sectors or as maneuvering blocs for the political movements of the petty bourgeoisie.

The conjunction of these two factors (structural socio-political instability and influence of the Cuban revolution, in particular on the vanguard) determined the context on the basis of which the Ninth World Congress resolution on Latin America was elaborated. This context was also to be marked by the lessons of the Cuban revolutionary process that were drawn by American imperialism from its own point of view. Whether directly or not, U.S. imperialism was to be *increasingly interventionist* in this region of the world, which is vital to it.

But apart from the analysis of the major trends of political and social evolution of the continent, the resolution was supposed to respond to two series of problems, particularly in the view of the Latin American Trotskyist militants and cadres who participated in elaborating it.

•Inasmuch as these militants and cadres, as well as the essential part of the Latin American vanguard, believed that the socialist revolution was on the agenda in a series of countries on the continent, the Trotskyists had to provide themselves with a strategic orientation integrating a fundamental feature of Latin American reality: *The scope of social contradictions and political instability lent mass mobilizations an explosive character which rapidly and inevitably entailed violent and fierce confrontations with the repressive apparatus of the bourgeois state.* The

Latin American bourgeoisies, which arrived on the historical scene belatedly, during the epoch of the world decline of imperialism, can constitute only fundamentally conservative forces and are too weak to stabilize a system of political rule comparable to that with which the rising imperialist bourgeoisies endowed themselves: bourgeois parliamentary democracy and the body of democratic rights won by the workers movement.

At best, certain Latin American bourgeoisies can attempt a bonapartist policy that aims, among other things, at taking advantage of inter-imperialist competition. But this is not enough to consolidate them sufficiently to resist the mobilization of the masses and achieve a lasting social peace.

It is this context—born of political and social instability and explosive mass mobilizations, with extremely weak political parties of the bourgeoisie—that accounts for the growing and already decisive repressive and political role played by the Latin American armies. It is this context that makes a *prolonged and significant* period of bourgeois democracy *impossible*.

Hence, any revolutionary strategy, if it is to aim at taking maximum advantage of those brief periods in which some democratic rights exist, even partially, and if it is to include the struggle to deepen these democratic rights to the benefit of the mass movement, must *also* include preparation of the masses *and* the revolutionary organization for the inevitable confrontations with the repressive apparatus.

• During this period (1965-70), on the basis of a correct analysis of this objective situation and of the necessities that would flow from it, the Latin American Trotskyist militants adopted a strategy that often boiled down to ensuring and accelerating the processes of transforming their organizations from propaganda groups into “fighting” revolutionary organizations. This transformation was considered a real *precondition* for becoming integrated into the struggles being waged by this new generation of revolutionary militants produced by the impact of the Cuban revolution. It was on the basis of this integration that the Trotskyists were supposed to be in position to win recognition as an integral component of this new vanguard generation; it was on the basis of this integration that they envisaged winning to *the whole* of their political positions the best elements of this empirical vanguard produced by the combined crisis of imperialist rule and Stalinism. While it was correct at the time to pay great attention to the emergence and role of these currents, it was on the contrary false and illusory to try to win them over by means of a strategy that took the form of “conquest by example.”

Nevertheless, the analysis of one essential element of the objective situation was largely confirmed. Nowhere in Latin America since 1969 has the mass movement been able to go beyond a certain threshold without facing fierce and violent repression from the military apparatus. Violent confrontation with the army has quickly emerged as inevitable everywhere. Nowhere have bourgeois democracies been stabilized for prolonged periods, and the necessity of a strategy that enables the mass movement to prepare itself for these confrontations has been confirmed everywhere.

On this precise body of questions, the disagreements with the International Minority Faction were real and profound.<sup>3</sup>

But they were rather well obscured (for the whole International, International Minority Faction, IMT, and others) by *three* series of errors, each linked to each other, committed in the elaboration of the Ninth World Congress resolution.

## 2. WHERE WERE THE ERRORS?

### □ A. Errors of Analysis

The first series of errors contained in the Ninth World Congress resolution concern certain analytical aspects of Latin American reality.

• In this regard a preliminary remark on the method used in the document is required. It was (and remains) obviously correct to begin with the analysis of the overall characteristics of the Latin American subcontinent in order to determine the general features of the economic and social situation. But it was very dangerous to draw indiscriminate political conclusions, without any mediation, for *each* of the regimes of the continent. This led us to exaggerate the degree of instability of most of these regimes.

Nevertheless, beyond this question of method, several errors of analysis were made.

• The first source of these errors lies in the fact that at the time (and this is still partially true today) we lacked a *complete* and *correct* view of the *real* lessons of the Cuban revolution.

This particularly prevented us from having a clear and educative position toward the Latin American revolutionary currents that drew the lessons of the Cuban victory in their own ways, the ways the Cuban leadership itself prompted them. It is not the object of this document to go back over the lessons of the Cuban revolution, about which much remains to be written. Thus, we will only mention a few fundamental elements:

In the first place, it is false to think, as did an entire generation of Latin American revolutionaries, that the victory of the Cuban revolution was the immediate and inevitable consequence of the guerrilla war directed by Fidel Castro. Beyond any possible doubt, the guerrilla war created the preconditions that permitted the victory. But it *did not*, solely through its own action, destroy the power of the *bourgeoisie*, *destroy the bourgeois state* in Cuba.

The bourgeois state in Cuba was destroyed and the bourgeoisie expropriated by virtue of the enormous mass mobilizations that occurred beginning in January 1959 and continued during subsequent years, especially 1960-61.

To be sure, this mass mobilization, this enormous mass movement, was possible only because of the action of the guerrillas, whose role in the fall of the Batista regime and the destruction of its armed bands was essential, thus creating the conditions for the Fidelista leadership being recognized as a mass revolutionary leadership.

In reality, the correlation of factors that led to the victory in Cuba was extremely complex. To assimilate this properly we would have to take account of a whole series of factors. In terms of social relations, for example, the situation was extremely favorable, contrary to the legends peddled by the Stalinists. The “classical” petty bourgeoisie, the class which owns its own means of production or its own land, was extremely small; it constituted the smallest portion of the active population and was much weaker than in any other country of Latin America.

Of course, the industrial proletariat was also small. But alongside it there was a *very large agricultural proletariat* rich in great traditions of struggle, as well as a considerable number of permanently jobless people. This situation created a relationship of forces among the social classes that was very different from and much more favorable than that which prevailed in most, if not all, the countries of Latin America at the time, where the petty bourgeoisie was generally much more developed, prosperous, and stable than in Cuba.

In fact, one of the central features of Cuban society *was the situation of the ruling class*. From the end of the war of independence to the fall of Batista, that is, for about sixty years, this ruling class underwent a very specific historical process of degeneration and even of "self-destruction." This is explained by the very particular and omnipresent forms of imperialist rule and by the integration, effected on that basis, of entire sectors of the Cuban bourgeoisie into the world of Yankee business and gangsterism. Hence, and this was contrary to the situation in a great number of Latin American countries, in the eyes of the masses the Cuban ruling class had no "legitimacy" produced by a historical tradition and experience of real leadership of the country.

Conditions were also very different from those prevailing in the other countries of Latin America in terms of the subjective features. Which particularly accounts for the failure of revolutionary groups when they tried to duplicate the experience of the July 26 movement.

After the Moncada attack in 1953 Fidel Castro and his comrades were prestigious militants known to the Cuban masses. Even in 1956, when the Granma landing took place, their organization was not a tiny little group. It was a known organization with national branches enjoying support and significant aid from the petty and middle bourgeoisie. Concurrently, there was a Communist party which, although it had long had a base in the trade unions and among the masses, had completely discredited itself with its unlikely compromises under the Batista dictatorship, thus creating a considerable *political vacuum* which the Fidelista leadership was rapidly able to fill.

And of course many other elements would have to be integrated into the analysis to give a full account of the complex process that led to the victory of the Cuban revolution.

At the Ninth World Congress we paid the price for this lack of systematic analysis of the Cuban revolution. On the basis of rapid and hasty generalizations, *we did not clearly oppose the incorrect lessons* drawn from the Cuban revolution by the great majority of the Latin American vanguard. Even though what had really happened in Cuba provided us with the necessary means, we did not adequately combat the idea—which cost so many deaths and defeats in Latin America—that a few dozen or a few hundred revolutionaries (no matter how courageous and capable) isolated from the rest of society could set in motion a historic process leading to a socialist revolution. *Apart from the fact that this is not at all what happened in Cuba, we did not clearly affirm that such an idea is false in itself.*

Our ambiguities, our lack of clarity on this fundamental question, constituted one of the sources of our errors in the Ninth World Congress document. Moreover, the discrediting and collapse of the old Cuban CP and the ease

with which the Castroists filled the consequently created vacuum led us more generally to underestimate the weight and role that the Latin American CPs would continue to have; because of this we underestimated the importance of the political and ideological battle against them.

Granted, many of these CPs had experienced or were continuing to experience serious crises linked precisely to the Cuban victory and the policy of the Cuban leadership at the beginning of the 1960s. The case of the Venezuelan CP, reduced to a small nucleus of die-hard unconditional supporters of the Soviet Union after a violent public polemic waged by the Cubans against their orientation, deserves to be recalled.

But it is nonetheless true that at the time of the Ninth World Congress we ill understood the real relationship of forces in Latin America between reformists and revolutionaries (in the trade unions, for example); likewise, we overestimated the process of political maturation of the vanguard issued of the Cuban revolution. This was also the product of the general estimation we made of the evolution of the policy of the Cuban leadership during 1967, 1968, and 1969.

Now, this estimate was erroneous.

• Overall, we thought that after a period of internal confusion and differentiations, the "left" forces had acquired sufficient weight within the apparatus of the Cuban CP and state to guarantee a line of *systematic aid to and development of revolutionary movements in the rest of Latin America*.

That was one of the conclusions we drew from the OLAS [Organización Latinamericana de Solidaridad—Organization of Latin American Solidarity] conference. This did not mean that we considered the orientation of Cuban policy in Latin America to be completely consistent. The ambiguities of the OLAS conference in this regard were obvious. In fact, for us the orientation of the Cuban leadership in Latin America was an open question which would ultimately be settled by what would happen later throughout the continent.

But it is nonetheless true that within this framework our hopes were very much exaggerated as to the possibilities offered by material aid from the Cubans, the character of the political relations between the Cuban leadership and the various organizations claiming adherence to this leadership, and the possibilities of altering the situation in Cuba through a rapid development of the revolution in the rest of the Latin American continent.

We did not understand that the OLAS conference, following which nothing significant or concrete was done, marked the end of an era for the Cuban revolution.

The accentuated dependence of the Cuban economy on the Soviet Union, the growing weight of Cuba's political isolation in Latin America, and the effects of this on the internal situation in the Cuban CP led to an evolution opposite to the one we had hoped for.

It was the temptation of disengagement from and not ever increasing commitment to the continental revolutionary struggle that carried the day. Our estimation of the relationship of internal forces in Havana, on which our positions were based, was false; and for this reason it was not likely that the Cubans would maintain their orientation; the validity of the strategic choices presented in the resolution was explicitly linked to the Cubans' maintaining their orientation.

Che's departure from Cuba in 1966 reflected a qualitative change in this relationship of forces within the Cuban leadership. We did not understand this. *That was the second source of our errors of analysis during the Ninth World Congress.* Given the considerable role the Cuban leadership had played in the emergence of a new Latin American revolutionary movement and given the prestige and weight of this leadership, this turn was to have consequences whose logic escaped us.

The defeats and partial retreats that began to pile up throughout the continent, whose importance we had already underestimated (Peru and Brazil, for example), were to weigh much more heavily in the evolution of the situation. The reformist currents, especially the CPs, were to gain in strength.

As for the organizations and currents claiming allegiance to the Cuban revolution, their crisis, which had generally already broken out, accelerated at varying rates in the various countries, beginning in 1967 in fact. Their military and political failures, in large part consequent to their militarist orientation, which was a product of their interpretation of the Cuban revolution and the strategic conceptions of the Cuban leaders, had already had a disintegrating effect. The evolution of the Cubans, in part a product of these failures, in turn accentuated this process.

Although it was necessary and correct to seek a tactic aimed at unity with these organizations (in spite of and even because of their crisis), at the time of the Ninth World Congress the policy of "integration into the historic revolutionary current represented by OLAS and the Cuban revolution"<sup>4</sup> as it was projected by the Ninth World Congress was, on the contrary, very much mistaken. It was the product of errors of analysis and their implications which we have already mentioned. It was also the product of another error of analysis, this time in regard to *the real state of our forces in Latin America.*

The tasks the resolution of the Ninth World Congress assigned to the Latin American organizations of the International presupposed as solved a number of problems that had not been solved and were even far from solved.

Beyond the erroneous character of the proposal of "integration into the historic current represented by OLAS," establishing unitary relations with the Castroist organizations presupposed a political battle, which alone would have been capable of hardening our sections up against the predictable pressures which, apart from the very specific case of Argentina, resulted in the loss of some comrades of the Bolivian POR to the ELN.<sup>5</sup>

The errors of appreciation of reality, of the orientation and possibilities for political clarification on the part of the organizations claiming adherence to the Castroist current, as well as of the trajectory of the Cuban leadership, disarmed us in face of this battle, a battle rendered all the more necessary by the organizational and political weakness of the sections of the International. Their weaknesses (small base, few cadres, limited assimilation of revolutionary Marxist theoretical and programmatic positions by the militants, hazy structure, the product of an essentially propagandist practice) not only left them unprepared for such a battle but also rendered them vulnerable to external pressure. This fragility of our organizations was particularly flagrant, especially in the Bolivian case, considering the other tasks that were envisaged, particularly "the elaboration of a revolutionary

strategy, bases on the continental experience and the general principles outlined elsewhere in this document, corresponding to the concrete needs and potential of each country or group of countries at a given stage."<sup>6</sup>

Especially since these "general principles outlined" included a series of interlinked political errors.

#### □ B. Disregarding of the Revolutionary Crisis and its Consequences

The most important of these errors lay in the fact that the notion of *revolutionary crisis*—its content, significance, and implications—was pushed completely to the sidelines in the Ninth World Congress document.

Now, this was a fundamental question, especially since one of the roots of the erroneous strategic orientation of the PRT [Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores—Revolutionary Workers Party]—and therefore one of the axes of the discussion that had to be waged—was precisely the absence in the PRT's documents and perspectives of a Leninist conception of the revolutionary crisis.

The resolution of the Ninth World Congress proceeded to make a most dangerous false extrapolation: "Thus not only in a historical sense but in a more direct and immediate one, Latin America has entered a period of revolutionary explosions and conflicts, of armed struggle on different levels against the native ruling classes and imperialism, and of prolonged civil war on a continental scale."<sup>7</sup>

For us, the civil war *is not* proclaimed by the vanguard. It is the product of the mobilization and struggle of the broad masses during a revolutionary crisis in which class antagonisms are laid bare and a situation of dual power develops. It is only then that the mass of the working class can prepare itself and understand the necessity for the confrontation for power between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. Not to understand the importance of this specific experience acquired by the masses in the course of the revolutionary crisis *leads to attributing to them a level of consciousness that they do not in fact possess* and/or to believing that this modification in their consciousness can be the product of a series of exemplary actions carried out by the "vanguard organization." This is what was done in practice by many Latin American organizations from the Tupamaros to the PRT.

Likewise, to suppose that thousands and thousands of workers will permanently enlist in a "revolutionary army of the people" not only to defend their struggles but also to wage offensive actions against the forces of repression is to suppose not only that thousands of workers have understood the necessity of attacking the bourgeois state, but also that this type of organization is not foreign to their immediate needs and their very condition as workers.

Unclear on the totality of these questions, the Ninth World Congress document did not enable us to engage in a political battle against these confusions. On the contrary, it left the door wide open to adaptations and theorizations such as those of the Fifth Congress of the PRT [see International Internal Discussion Bulletin (IIDB), Vol. X, No. 5, 1973].

It is quite possible that a revolutionary crisis in Latin America could lead to partial insurrections and the emergence of an armed, even rural, resistance or that it could lead to a direct intervention by imperialism and the organization of a revolutionary liberation resistance. But

in any event, the revolutionary crisis would mark a *prior qualitative* change in the relationship of forces (including in the military domain) and the entry of the masses onto the scene.

*The risk of falling into a gradualist and militarist outlook was great* once such a hypothesis was dropped and the function of the revolutionary crisis was minimized.

#### □ Strategy of Armed Struggle: An Equivocal Formula

The risk was that much greater in that the Ninth World Congress resolution lent considerable importance to the formula "strategy of armed struggle." This formula has caused much ink to flow in the International discussion since 1969. It was equivocal. In part it was explained by the necessity of stressing the differences that exist between Europe and Latin America from the standpoint of party building (the impossibility of accumulating forces over a long period without confronting the repressive apparatus).

But apart from the fact the formula "strategy of armed struggle" obviously does not provide the necessary instruments for precise elaboration by a section in Latin America, it falsely *identifies* what must be *an element* of revolutionary strategy with *the whole* of this strategy, which could be interpreted—and was—as reducing revolutionary strategy to "armed struggle" alone.

#### □ The Axis of Rural Guerrilla Warfare

The only explicit indication that comes out of the Ninth World Congress resolution on the application of this strategy of armed struggle was the axis of guerrilla warfare:

"Even in the case of countries where large mobilizations and class conflicts in the cities may occur first, civil war will take manifold forms of armed struggle, in which the principal axis for a whole period will be rural guerrilla warfare, the term having primarily a geographical-military meaning and not necessarily implying an exclusively peasant composition of the fighting detachments (or even necessarily preponderantly peasant composition). In this sense, armed struggle in Latin America means fundamentally guerrilla warfare."<sup>8</sup>

The resolution returns to this question further on, once again explaining, "Under the perspective of prolonged civil war with rural guerrilla warfare as its principal axis (. . .) the problem of liaison between the guerrillas and the masses will be a vital one."<sup>9</sup>

Thus, the Ninth World Congress resolution explicitly lent the axis of rural guerrilla warfare "a geographical-military meaning." That is, even if other passages of the resolution seemed to contradict this, the development of guerrilla warfare, of the armed struggle, is relatively independent of the social base it may be furnished by the agrarian question in certain countries.

The political and military perspective of such "uprooted" guerrilla warfare becomes comprehensible only if the meaning of the term "conjunctural" is taken seriously, that is, the immediate applicability of the "prolonged civil war on a continental scale." This presumed that the intensity of class confrontations had attained such a degree that class war was objectively posed for the masses as a military problem to be taken up directly. There is a

coherence to the Ninth World Congress resolution on this question, but it is an erroneous coherence.

Since, according to the resolution, "a situation of prerevolutionary crisis on a continental scale" exists, it was logical to assert that Latin America had entered "a prolonged continental civil war." Hence, the resolution tended to confound revolutionary strategy with "strategy of armed struggle"; the latter was concretized in rural guerrilla warfare, the corollary of which was underestimation of urban mobilizations, that is, underestimation of the role of the proletariat and its organizations.

Thus, while it is true that the resolution did contain criticism of guerrillaism, the weakness of that criticism<sup>10</sup> was the result of the general orientation of the document, which mitigated the criticisms of guerrillaist conceptions previously made in other documents of the International.<sup>11</sup>

It is thus not surprising that the Ninth World Congress resolution served as the framework for the theorizations made by the Argentine PRT during its Fifth Congress, against which we polemicized later.<sup>12</sup> On the precise points which we have just mentioned, the PRT's theorizations were in fact not a fundamental break from the Ninth World Congress.

#### □ C. The Concessions to the PRT

What was the conception upheld by the PRT(C) [PRT(Combatiente)]?

On the basis of a Latin American situation which was considered globally prerevolutionary, the Argentine comrades insisted on the need to put an end to the infernal cycle: rise of the movement of the masses followed by victorious repression carried out by an army not yet decomposed by the revolutionary upsurge and aided, directly or indirectly, by U.S. imperialism. Hence the necessity for the masses (the "people") to make their own army emerge little by little, first through skirmishes, then through confrontations of increasing scope. At the moment (1970-71) this objective necessity of the revolution—a Revolutionary Army of the People (ERP)—can be established only by the Marxist and Leninist vanguard, the PRT. But as this army (the ERP) offers practical proof of its effectiveness in the class struggle, broader and broader popular layers will identify with it. Hence the significance of the *coups de main* of a populist character, the audacity of which was to rise.

The ERP was a mass organization in formation, but the PRT was a vanguard party: "Incontestably, their model was that of the Vietnamese NLF, or more precisely the image of the NLF they derived from the documents of the Vietnamese leaders themselves. . . . The logic of this orientation—although never theorized—was thus the search for zones of 'dual power.' First there was a project in the North (the sugar area of Tucumán), based on historical and regional considerations; then, the events in Córdoba having shown the importance of the cities, the center of gravity of the organization's activity was shifted there. But for the same reasons, priority was given to work in the *villas de emergencia* (shanty towns)."<sup>13</sup>

Finally, the dominant ideology in the PRT was a complex mixture of borrowings from Trotsky, Mao, Lenin, and Che. These comrades analyzed the international situation in very close relation to what they thought to be the politico-military conditions for the seizure of power. In this sense, the role of the bureaucratized workers states (especially China and Cuba at the beginning) was

idealized and the Fourth International's critical analyses (considered too critical) were judged irresponsible in the strict sense of the term (could the Fourth International prevent the imperialist intervention?).

Of course, the text adopted by the Ninth World Congress did not advocate such a conception of the seizure of power, but it was written in such a way that the comrades who upheld such a conception could vote for the resolution and legitimately claim allegiance to it. In any event, it is clear that this is what happened; it is thus also clear that *in reality* the resolution was a political compromise aimed at keeping the PRT (C) in the ranks of the International. The idea of trying to keep in the organization comrades who had given extensive proof of their allegiance to the revolution (and who continue to do so), comrades whose prestige was consistently on the rise and who even requested to be in the organization, was obviously correct, especially since these comrades seemed and claimed to be evolving.<sup>14</sup>

But what was seriously incorrect (and ineffective to boot!) was to carry this operation out at the cost of *political* concessions. If in fact political concessions were required in order to keep these comrades, then it would have been better for them to remain sympathizers maintaining good relations with us. Then, after the Ninth World Congress, it was necessary to provide ourselves with means by which to carry on a dialogue with the Argentine (and Bolivian) comrades and to clearly inform the International of the processes underway.

Why were there "concessions," and concessions of this importance? They resulted from the political errors we made (see A and B). Consequently, the importance of these political concessions was not grasped; in other words, we did not understand the logic of all the implications of this famous document. Undoubtedly, in later creating the ERP, the Argentine comrades of the PRT(C) were acting in line with the gist of the resolution, even though it is true that this or that paragraph could contradict this orientation.

This is also why the necessity of following the development of events very closely was underestimated.<sup>15</sup> To this it must be added that the "spectacular actions" of our Argentine comrades screened this opportunist passivity.

Contrary to an opinion that is widespread in the Fourth International (and even outside it, with vicious intentions), the weaknesses of the document do not derive from the fact that it was allegedly written by "Europeans" living in Paris or London and hence divorced from "Latin American reality." In fact, to a large extent this document crystallized the best theorizations made *at the time* by the revolutionary currents issued of the Cuban revolution.

The resolution on Latin America as it was discussed and then adopted at the Ninth World Congress reflected, as was partially inevitable, the reality of our international organization *as a whole* at that time. It was extremely weak in comparison to the tasks it set itself and little centralized organizationally and even politically; the law of uneven development was thus fully operative, with all the implications this entailed for the *positive* definition of a revolutionary strategy for Latin America.<sup>16</sup>

## SOME CONCLUSIONS

### A. Political

While the document correctly emphasized the nature of

the structural socioeconomic crisis in Latin America, the analysis of the expression of these fundamental trends in the particular social formations of the various countries was approximate or erroneous.

Thus, the document did not arm us to grasp the forms that would be taken by the rise of the mass movement in several countries of the continent at the beginning of the 1970s. While it enabled us to grasp the character of the democratic interlude in Bolivia in 1971, it did not prepare us to comprehend *the character of the workers upsurge*, of its particular forms of organization and political expression (the Popular Assembly). It did not arm us to understand the full significance of the sort of workers response that occurred in Uruguay in 1972: a long general strike organized in the framework of the trade unions.

It did not arm us to understand the dynamic and implications of the return of Perón to Argentina and the character of the "second period" of Peronism that was opened.

Likewise, it did not serve to effectively prepare our ranks to grasp the strong development—beginning in 1972—of a process of emergence of organs of workers power in Chile (the JAPs and their dynamic and then the *cordones industriales* in particular) and to define, from that starting point, the axes of intervention and of political battle. *In fact, these forms taken by the rise of the mass movement in these decisive countries for the class struggle in Latin America required a center of gravity of political attention, intervention, and preparation of cadres different from that of the Ninth World Congress document*, even though it was also necessary to prepare our comrades for the confrontations whose inevitability has been amply confirmed by events since then, once certain conditions had been fulfilled.

Thus, Joe Hansen was correct to criticize the wrong generalizations of the Ninth World Congress document.<sup>17</sup> Likewise, he was correct when he raised questions about our real forces and when he stressed the necessity of polemicizing against the guerrillaist or neo-guerrillaist currents.

That was the positive aspect of a "conservative" dogmatism of the comrades of the International Minority Faction, who ceaselessly reaffirmed the necessity of party building without explaining how to do it.

Nevertheless, since he evaded any response to the four questions posed by the Germain-Knoeller document—questions raising one of the aspects of *how* to build the party in Latin America in the 1970s—he was unable to convince us.

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

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

"3. Does he think, on the basis of the two preceding considerations, that it is the duty of the Latin American revolutionists to carry out a propaganda campaign to



prepare the masses, and above all the vanguard, for the military confrontations inevitable in the near and relatively near future in most of the Latin American countries? Does he think that the revolutionary strategy on whose basis the sections of the Fourth International are built must include a clear, unmistakable answer to this question, which in any case is being discussed by the entire vanguard?

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

Not only have Joe Hansen and the comrades of the International Minority Faction *never* answered these questions—whose relevance scarcely need be demonstrated—but their conservative dogmatism easily accommodated the opportunist deviations of the Argentine PST, for example.

In fact, the differences on Latin America, muddied up by the errors of the majority, concealed much deeper differences (conception of the party, role of bourgeois democracy and its institutions, legalism, crisis of Stalinism), which were better revealed by the other discussions (strategy in Europe).

#### □ B. Organizational

It would be stupid to establish a mechanical link between the Ninth World Congress resolution and the blows suffered by some of our Latin American organizations. These blows fell within a more general political context of systematic and massive repression against the workers movement and its vanguard and of ebb of workers and peasants struggles and ebb of revolutionary perspectives in a great number of countries of the continent.

But this document *opened the way* in the ranks of the Trotskyist movement for orientations which, isolating us from the traditional organized workers movement, in practice placed in question the formation of cadres based in the working class. In this sense, we must assume a moral and political responsibility for what happened to a certain number of militants and organizations in Latin America.

In addition, the Ninth World Congress must be relocated within the context of the history and development of the Latin American Trotskyist movement, strongly marked by essentially propagandistic origins, the continuations of which lasted for a very long period.

The example of the Chilean PSR—its ability to *intervene* in the workers upsurge of 1971, 1972, and 1973, when the first organs of workers power were emerging—is significant in this regard.

Now, the Ninth World Congress document scarcely could have contributed to breaking the Chilean PSR from its propagandist past, a contribution which would have implied a different center of gravity in the preoccupations of the document.

Likewise, as we have already seen, the document could not combat the deviations and political errors of a completely different character of the Argentine PRT.

Finally, it did not at all aid the Bolivian POR in strengthening its ideological cohesion when this organization was under the pressure of Castroist organizations

which at the time commanded a prestige and apparatus much superior to that of the POR. In addition, it fostered the tendency of our comrades at that time to divert their political and organizational attention from what was essential: the organized workers movement. Thus, independent of the consequences of the evolution of the objective situation, the organizational balance sheet of the Ninth World Congress is a heavy one.

Here we have a responsibility which must be assumed, in order to strengthen the process of constructing an international leadership.

The Latin American resolution of the Ninth World Congress was discussed and adopted at a time when a new generation of militants were joining the ranks of the Fourth International.

The political context that had forged the emergence of this new generation was essentially that of wars of national liberation (Algeria, Vietnam) and the victory of the Cuban revolution.

But it was also a generation without great political maturity, a result of its lack of experience in the workers movement.

All this contributed in no small measure to an at best uncritical and at worse enthusiastic acceptance of the resolution on the part of militants who saw this line as an extension of their own trajectory. In this sense, the resolution was an extension of the political origin of this generation at the moment when it was at the beginning of its change.

Hence, the self-criticism is also part of the process of maturation of the entire International and of construction of its leaderships, which also requires a capacity to assume the necessary moral responsibilities and to draw the necessary self-critical balance sheets.

In the present Latin American political conjuncture, at a time when many militants and even organizations, on the basis of a balance sheet of their own past errors, are coming closer to our current, this self-criticism is part of the ongoing process of clarification in the Latin American vanguard. It is only a *necessary first step* in a process of deepening and clarifying our positions on the situation in Latin America and the orientation of our forces there.

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#### Footnotes

1. See Resolution: "Argentina: Political Crisis and Revolutionary Perspectives," especially paragraphs 32 through 37, entitled: "A First Self-Critical Balance Sheet"; Resolution: "Balance Sheet and Orientation for the Bolivian Revolution," especially paragraph 4; Resolution: "Armed Struggle in Latin America." All these resolutions are in *Intercontinental Press*, Vol. 12., No. 46, December 23, 1974.

See also the article "Know Your Own Weaknesses in Order to Better Combat the Minority and Build the International," by Jean-Pierre Beauvais, *International Internal Discussion Bulletin (IIDB)*, Vol. X, No. 25, December 1973; and "Concerning the Debate on Latin America," by the leadership of the Walloon section, *Internal Information Bulletin*, January 1974, No. 2 in 1974, published by the Socialist Workers party.

2. See "On the PST's Joint Support With Bourgeois Parties to the 'Process of Institutionalization'—Declaration of the United Secretariat of the Fourth

International,” in *Inprecor*, No. 5/6, August 3, 1974, [also published in *IP*, Vol. 12, No. 31, September 9, 1974, page 1145]; and “Debate on the ‘Process of Institutionalization’—Statement of the PST Executive Committee and Statement of the United Secretariat,” in *Inprecor*, No. 14/15, December 12, 1974, [also published in *IP*, Vol. 12, No. 31, September 9, 1974, page 1147; and *IP*, Vol. 13, No. 2, January 20, 1975, page 57].

3. There are many examples of the erroneous view of the comrades of the International Minority Faction on the objective situation in Latin America. Among other examples, we may cite the most caricatural. In 1968, a year before the insurrectionary workers mobilization in Córdoba (the *Cordobazo*), Comrade Moreno, who was the leader of the International Minority Faction in Latin America, wrote: “Paraguay and our country [Argentina] are the two most stable countries in Latin America. . . . The situation of the bourgeoisie and broad sectors of the middle classes is relatively stable and the workers movement is in retreat.” And, getting carried away, he predicted “several years of stability for the southern part of Latin America”—in 1968! The southern part of Latin America, it should be noted, includes Chile, Bolivia, Uruguay, and Argentina.

In April 1973 in a report on the world situation delivered to the National Committee of the SWP, Jack Barnes predicted “new democratic concessions from the ruling classes in Chile and Argentina as a by-product of the struggle of the masses.” That was a month and a half before the *Tankazo*, which paved the way for September 11 in Chile!

4. See the Ninth World Congress “Resolution on Latin America,” point 21 (a), page 50 of the IIDB entitled: “Discussion on Latin America (1968-1972),” reprinted January 1973.

5. On this subject see the documents on Argentina and Bolivia of the Tenth World Congress, *Intercontinental Press*, Vol. 12, No. 46, December 23, 1974.

6. See the Ninth World Congress “Resolution on Latin America,” point 21 (c), page 50 of the IIDB entitled: “Discussion on Latin America (1968-1972),” reprinted in January 1973.

7. *Ibid.*, point 10, page 46.

8. *Ibid.*, point 17, page 48.

9. *Ibid.*, point 18, page 48.

10. To illustrate this “complacency,” we may add, apart from the passages already cited, the following quotations from the Ninth World Congress resolution: “In a situation

of prerevolutionary crisis such as Latin America is now experiencing on a continental scale, guerrilla warfare can in fact *stimulate a revolutionary dynamic*, even if at the start the attempt may seem to have come from abroad or to be unilateral (which was the case with Che’s Bolivian guerrilla movement).” (*ibid.*, point 18, page 48, emphasis added.) “Such a conception of the revolutionary strategy of armed struggle and guerrilla war refutes not only the simplistic ‘guerrillist’ idealizations (which reflect a lack of patience with regard to organized action and a hope of substituting improvisations for the whole, often onerous, labor of preparation and organization). . . .” (*Ibid.*, point 19, page 49.)

11. On this point see the article by L. Maitan published in *Quatrième Internationale*, July 1972, pages 22-23.

12. In this regard it is necessary to re-read the letters sent by the majority of the United Secretariat to the leadership of the PRT (IIDB, Vol. X, No. 7, June 1973), as well as the resolutions of the Fifth Congress of the PRT, held in June 1970 (IIDB, Vol. X, No. 5) and the resolutions of subsequent PRT Central Committee meetings.

13. Document on the PRT, *Bulletin de sociologie internationale*, No. 3, November 1973.

14. All of the PRT’s delegates to the Ninth World Congress were later expelled from the PRT. This fact—which demonstrated their good faith, if not their lucidity, when they asserted that the PRT was evolving—did not, however, attract sufficient attention from the leadership of the International.

15. Which in any case was far from easy, for both technical reasons (let us not forget that the PRT was a strictly clandestine organization, the number one target of a military dictatorship) and political ones: the post-1969 leadership of the PRT was extremely suspicious of the International and thus did not facilitate information or contacts.

16. In this regard account must be taken of what the “Center” was materially (which is also a big indication of what it was “politically”). It was extremely limited. (Two or three political full-timers who also acted as the technical full-timers; exceptional trips; ridiculous financing; etc.).

17. See in particular “Assessment of the Draft Resolution on Latin America,” pages 17-28 in: “Discussion on Latin America (1968-1972)” cited above, (originally published in IIDB, No. 3 in February, 1969) and “Report on the Third World Congress of the Fourth International Since Reunification,” pages 52-62 of “Discussion on Latin America (1968-1972),” originally published in IIDB, No. 5 in June 1970.

## **Statement on the Self-Criticism Document on Latin America of the Steering Committee of the IMT**

**By Livio**

I vote against the document on Latin America:

- a) because I consider that the necessary self-criticism was made in the documents of the Tenth World Congress and that the additional elements of self-criticism must be based on an overall political analysis of the whole period;
- b) because the document ignores or deforms the real genesis and import of the orientations of the Ninth World Congress by throwing real possibilities and forced or false interpretations into the same bag;
- c) because I consider that the priority was to approach the discussion on Latin America by beginning from an analysis of the past fifteen years, and the publication of the document in question, regardless of the intentions of the comrades who have signed it, threatens to provoke a shift of the discussion onto a false terrain.

## Resolution on Angola

### International Majority Tendency Draft Adopted by the IEC

[The following resolution, proposed by the International Majority Tendency at the February 1976 meeting of the International Executive Committee of the Fourth International, was approved by the following vote: 44 for, 17 against.]

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#### I

1. The formation of an independent state in Angola is the outcome of a political and military struggle waged by many social and political forces. In spite of the existence of an anticolonialist tradition and the scope of the forces mobilized in the armed confrontation, the struggle went on for fourteen years, because of the following specific factors:

a. Portuguese imperialism's interest in controlling the very considerable resources of the country, especially since it could not seriously rely on a neocolonial reconversion because of its economic and political weakness;

b. the necessity for the fascist regime in Lisbon to maintain its colonial empire or suffer the breakdown of the overall socio-political equilibrium on which it was based;

c. the presence in Angola of a significant contingent of colons who were propelled by their racial interests and privileges to defend the traditional colonial structures to the very end;

d. the character of the Angolan socio-economic structure, which was more developed than that of the other Portuguese colonies, which implied more substantial potential for a dynamic of permanent revolution;

e. the absence of a national bourgeoisie of any degree of solidity;

f. the difficulty for the United States to play the card of neocolonialism at the expense of the old colonial power and to contribute to a relatively peaceful reconversion; this was a result both of Washington's politico-military links with the Lisbon regime in the framework of the Atlantic Pact (which involved aid to the Portuguese army) and of the U.S. desire not to endanger the political equilibrium of the Iberian peninsula (the events following April 25, 1974, confirmed just how well founded this concern was from the standpoint of the imperialists).

2. In the course of the war, transformations occurred that accentuated the weight

of some of these factors and, in the final analysis, reduced imperialism's political maneuvering room. In the countryside the traditional structures were shaken, especially in certain regions, by military operations, "preventive" repressive measures ("strategic hamlets"), and massive immigration (mainly to Zaïre). At the same time, capitalist agriculture based on production for the world market was increasingly strengthened, at the expense of subsistence agriculture. As for the industrial economy, very important foreign investment was made in basic sectors (oil), in the small- and middle-sized transformation industry, and in the commercial network. This process was stepped up at the end of the 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s.

The result of these combined developments was that the relative weight of the capitalist structures increased, the working class became more numerous, as did other wage-earning sectors, the urban petty bourgeoisie was also strengthened, and the bourgeoisies of capitalist countries other than Portugal became increasingly interested in controlling Angola (the United States and the West European powers, mainly Britain). The war was also prolonged because the anticolonialist movement was deeply divided and the neighboring neocolonial states played an extremely ambiguous role. On the one hand, they could not avoid aiding the liberation movements; on the other hand, they tried to control them and fit them into their own political projects, going so far as to become vehicles for imperialist pressure. (The Congolese governments aided the FNLA to the detriment of the MPLA, fostering the wait-and-see military attitudes and equivocal political attitudes of the Holden Roberto leadership; Zambia vacillated in selecting its main ally.)

3. The defeat of Portuguese imperialism was not solely military. In reality, it was determined by the colonial army's inability to crush the armed struggles of the Angolan people, by the major military defeats suffered by the imperialists in Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique, by the fact that the economic burdens of the war were becoming increasingly intolerable for Lisbon, and by the increasingly serious political consequences in the metropolis of the unending prolongation of the conflict.

During the first phase after April 25 the Spinoist project was to accept the accomplished fact of the complete victory of the PAIGC in Guinea-Bissau, to acquiesce to Frelimo's control of Mozambique (while

not abandoning attempts at blackmail and pressure or rearguard battles), and to maneuver in Angola with the aim of preserving more direct influence and more substantial control than in the former colonies. Such an attitude was linked to the far greater importance of Angola to Portugal and to imperialism in general, both economically and strategically. But the decisive element was the division of the Angolan national movement and the possibility of exploiting this division politically and militarily. Because of the revolutionary crisis in the metropolis and the paralysis of the Portuguese bourgeois army, the Portuguese government was unable to carry its operation through successfully and found itself compelled to pull out. But the other imperialist and neocolonialist forces (United States, South Africa, the countries of capitalist Europe, Zaïre, Zambia) plunged into the open breach, thus contributing more or less directly to the outbreak of the civil war.

#### II

4. The Angolan national movement dates back to the 1920s; ideologically, it goes back even to the end of the past century, and it has its roots in anticolonial struggles extending over four centuries. But it was in the middle and late 1950s that this movement began to acquire considerable influence and to express itself in organized forms. The armed struggle began after the colonial regime rejected any concessions and under the impetus of African and world events (formation of a series of independent states on the continent, the Algerian war, the victory of the Cuban revolution, etc.).

Varied social and political forces participated in the movement: the urban petty bourgeoisie, the radicalized intelligentsia, militants and cadres coming out of the proletariat and peasantry, emigrés in the Congo, etc. It is almost symbolic that the initiatives that marked the opening of hostilities (in February and March 1961) were taken by the two social and political components that were active at the time (nuclei emerging from the petty bourgeoisie and poor masses in the cities, essentially under the influence of the MPLA, and nuclei emerging from the peasantry and the emigrés in the countryside, under the influence of the UPA, predecessor of the FNLA). From the beginning, both the breadth of the layers mobilizing or susceptible to mobilizing in the anti-imperialist struggle and at the same time the difficulty in establishing a united political and organizational framework were felt.

5. During the period 1961-1966 the FNLA, led by Holden Roberto, succeeded in establishing a relationship of forces clearly in its favor.

The MPLA, whose original base was essentially urban, was harder hit by the

repression unleashed in the wake of the 1961 actions and did not succeed in developing a base outside of the Cabinda enclave. Especially between 1961 and 1964 the MPLA went through a very critical phase during which, among other things, it maneuvered with small questionable groups and was seriously affected by a crisis of leadership that even led to the departure of the Viriato de Cruz group (a group claiming adherence to Marxism and to Maoist conceptions). Because of its orientation and its international links, the MPLA was particularly hampered by the action of the Congolese government, which sabotaged its activities and tried to eliminate it from the political scene.

The FNLA was in a better position to resist the repression because of its peasant base. It was able to take advantage of its presence in the border regions and the base it had among the masses of emigrés. It enjoyed aid from or tolerance of the successive governments of the Congo. In face of U.S. rejection of requests for material aid, it tried to take advantage of the Sino-Soviet conflict by initiating an opening toward Peking; it succeeded in getting the Organization of African Unity to recognize the government it had set up, the GRAE (Revolutionary Angolan Government in Exile). Even the tribal component (Bakongo)—always stronger in the FNLA than in the MPLA—represented a factor of strength at the time, since it assured, among other things, the vital links with the emigration and the Congo.

6. The situation started to change beginning in 1966. The MPLA took the initiative again and, utilizing the forces it had consolidated in Cabinda and enjoying the tolerance if not active support of Zambia, opened up new zones of operation (in the East, the North, and later in the Northeast). In 1968 the MPLA declared that it held control of one-third of the territory. The strengthening of the MPLA was aided by its more flexible conception of guerrilla warfare and its efforts at organization in the liberated zones, where popular bodies arose in the form of village committees. Thus, it succeeded in overcoming the narrow framework of its previous sphere of action and in emerging as a force operating on a national scale.

During the same period, the FNLA adopted a fundamentally wait-and-see attitude, relying almost exclusively on its bases in the North and its Congolese "rear areas." Pressure from the Kinshasa government contributed to this orientation. Further, the FNLA suffered a split with the departure of Savimbi, who then formed the UNITA. For a long period, UNITA remained very weak, but its existence, under the leadership of a man with very important tribal connections like Savimbi, in any case represented a major obstacle to a national extension of the influence of the FNLA (and, likewise, an obstacle to a supplementary extension of the zone

controlled by the MPLA). The change in the relationship of forces in the field was not without international repercussions: the MPLA strengthened its links with the workers states and the so-called progressive governments (while the FNLA established relations with China); the MPLA achieved a rectification of the attitude of the states of the OAU, a number of which established special relations with the MPLA and, in fact, assured it a status equal to that of the FNLA-GRAE.

7. When the fascist regime in Lisbon collapsed, the Angolan national movement was still divided into three major tendencies. On several occasions, especially in 1972, attempts at unification had been made under the impetus of certain African governments, but without achieving any real results. There were new attempts in this direction in 1974. But it was only at the beginning of 1975 that the Alvor accords permitted the formation of a single government, under the auspices of the former colonial power.

The MPLA was threatened with being put in the position of paying the price for this operation, for three reasons:

—The FNLA and UNITA made a common front, utilizing tribal factors against the MPLA;

—The FNLA and UNITA were favored by the alliance with the neighboring neocolonial governments (with the sole exception of the Congo-Brazzaville, whose influence was necessarily limited);

—The FNLA and UNITA enjoyed the priority support of the imperialist powers.

The MPLA hoped to take advantage of the sympathy of a wing of the MFA—which led it to sow illusions in the MFA and the Vasco Gonçalves government—but in practice it won only very limited and ephemeral advantages in this sphere during the administration of Rosa Coutinho. In addition, it suffered a very deep internal crisis, which divided it into three tendencies and exposed it very dangerously to the influence of neocolonial governments during a certain period.

In this context, the Alvor accords, later confirmed in Nakuru, were the basis of a broad neocolonial operation, at least potentially. But the outbreak of the civil war placed everything in question.

### III

8. The concretization of the Alvor project implied the constitution and maintenance of delicate balances among many interested forces, both Angolan and foreign (compromises among various social layers and different ethnic groups and regional formations, among various political and military apparatuses, conflicts of interest among various neocolonial states and various imperialist powers). Directly or indirectly, the Portuguese situation introduced other elements of disequilibrium and contradiction on several levels.

But in the final analysis, it was the dynamic of the movement of the masses in the cities, especially in Luanda, that played the decisive role in the outbreak of the crisis.

The socioeconomic changes that had gone hand in hand with the colonial war had strengthened the specific weight of the urban layers. With the fall of the Caetano regime, all the previous balances were overturned. Petty-bourgeois layers occupied or hoped to occupy the positions abandoned by the fleeing colons. The intelligentsia wanted to seize the opportunity to play an important role in the administration and in the management of the country in general. The working class, whose numerical strength had been increased consequent to the relative industrialization, organized and mobilized to assert its rights and to achieve less miserable conditions. The proletarian and plebeian masses of the urban slums in turn organized and mobilized in self-defense against the desperate actions of the hardline colonialists and racists.

Strikes, demonstrations, and mobilizations came one after another up to the great demonstration that assembled tens of thousands of people in Luanda and up to the holding of a national assembly of rank-and-file committees (a general strike had already occurred in Luanda in September 1973).

It was precisely the dynamization of these exploited urban layers, who were unable to be integrated into a neocolonial framework, that blew up the structure erected by the Alvor accords.

9. The mobilization of the Luanda masses was not the result of a deliberate political initiative by the MPLA. In large measure it developed independent of the will of the MPLA leadership and largely outside its organizational framework (in fact, the MPLA's apparatus was not yet established when the mass mobilizations broke out). But because of its traditions, its previously developed roots, the character of at least some of its cadres, and its character as a national and not regional or tribal movement, the MPLA was in the best position to benefit from such a movement by enormously expanding its audience. Moreover, the MPLA faced a very concrete choice: either follow the Alvor orientation through to the end by fighting for a strict application of the accords, which would have implied, among other things, the disarming of "civilians" and entering into conflict with the movement of the masses, or integrate itself into this movement and take over leadership of it in an attempt to channel it at the same time. Given all the other elements acting against it and given that it lacked a sufficiently broad base among the peasantry, the MPLA could only choose the second solution.

The FNLA, on the other hand, which has no real base in the cities and which

counted on being the main beneficiary of the Alvor accords, if not immediately at least in the medium term, launched an offensive against the movement of the masses, accompanied by a bloody repression. The aim was to impose its own control in the capital by cutting the ground from under the feet of its rival organization.

For its part, UNITA completed the turn that led it to drop its socialistic demagogy, abandon any attitude of neutrality, present itself to the Portuguese as the partner in the best position to aid in neocolonial reconversion, and line up with the FNLA. Its regional character, which permitted it to win a significant base, also made it easier for it to take positions against the movement of the urban masses in Luanda and to commit itself against the organization that enjoyed the confidence of these masses.

#### IV

10. The concrete genesis of the civil war, the cleavage among the indigenous movements, and the international alignments shed unambiguous light on the fundamental nature of the Angolan conflict. On the one side are fundamentally ranged the social forces that have objective interests in struggling for consistent national independence and in rejecting neocolonial compromise solutions; this potentially inscribes these forces within a dynamic of permanent revolution, of the growing over of the national revolution into social revolution. These forces are: the decisive layers of the urban working class—both in industry and services—layers of the agricultural wage-earners, the plebian masses cast out of the economic and social structure by colonialism, broad sectors of the petty bourgeoisie affected by the wave of radicalization, sectors of the poor peasantry that participated in the armed struggle directly or indirectly and underwent their first experiences in political mobilization and organization by entering into conflict with the structure of traditional rural society.

On the other side stand those forces that cling to the privileges of the past, as ludicrous as these may be, those who have an interest in the establishment of a neocolonial society, those who do not want to sever the imperialist umbilical cord definitively, those who want to defend what remains of traditional society. These forces are: the remnants of the colons, the well-off layers of the petty bourgeoisie, the embryonic nuclei of the national bourgeoisie, the traditional chiefs and their acolytes. The outbreak of the civil war in conjunction with the movement of the urban masses reflects in a condensed—and simplified—form the sociopolitical content of the military confrontation.

The fact that the FNLA and UNITA are supported by American imperialism, the major European imperialist powers, the

racists of South Africa, and the bloc of the most conservative or even reactionary neocolonial states, while the MPLA enjoys the support of the workers states (with the ignoble exception of China), primarily that of the Soviet Union and Cuba, and the neocolonial governments which are still unable to jettison either the traditions of struggle of their national movements or the mass sentiment that still exists or which want to polish up their “progressive” images confirms and strengthens the analysis of the dynamic of the indigenous forces. Moreover, it is clear that a possible victory for the FNLA-UNITA bloc would not only mark a success for the counterrevolution in Angola, with a tragic consequence of bloody repression, but would also strengthen the positions of imperialism in this region of very great strategic importance, would breathe new life into the South African racists, and would lead to the formation of more reactionary regimes in a series of African countries.

11. The intervention of the imperialists in the Angolan civil war was inspired by their need to defend their extremely important economic, political, and strategic interests in Angola itself and above all throughout this region of Africa.

The U.S. government was subject to contradictory pressures: On the one hand, there were tendencies favoring an intervention because of specific economic interests or political considerations. On the other hand, there was resistance from groups that were concerned about the negative consequences for their interests in a series of African states that could result from a basic commitment to the FNLA-UNITA bloc and to the Pretoria regime; further, some politicians were more inclined to play the card of integrating the MPLA into a neocolonialist project. But the overall political and strategic stakes involved compelled Washington to opt for supporting the FNLA and UNITA. If this support has so far not been translated into a direct military intervention, it is because of the situation created by the recent defeat in Vietnam and the fear of provoking a rebirth of the antiwar movement, especially among the Black minority. For its part, the South African regime was propelled to intervene because of its desire to defend long-standing economic interests and because of its concern for maintaining its strategic and political ramparts. The Pretoria regime committed itself especially because it is now being undermined by a serious crisis, a crisis that could come to a head in the event of a victory of the anti-imperialist forces in Angola and possibly in other countries of the region, stimulating the struggle of the most important proletariat of all Africa and placing the very existence of the regime in question.

The action of the Soviet bureaucracy is explained by its desire to play an important political role both in the region and in

Africa in general and its determination not to relinquish at the decisive moment the advantages it may draw from the support it has long-since granted the MPLA. At the same time, the Soviet bureaucracy is motivated by the need to make gains against China in the international communist and workers movement and among the masses of the colonial or semicolonial countries. Nor may it be excluded that the internal situation in the Communist party of the Soviet Union on the eve of its new congress may be involved. The Cuban intervention, while reflecting the basic political accord between Havana and Moscow, has special importance because of the very fact of its massive and direct character; this intervention represents a genuine challenge to American imperialism, in the best traditions of revolutionary internationalism.

12. The definition of the character of the civil war and the comprehension of the potential for a dynamic of permanent revolution, based on the analysis of the social forces and not of the political organizations, are not in contradiction with characterizing the MPLA as a movement with a petty-bourgeois leadership. The nature of the MPLA has been petty bourgeois since its origin, both because of its social composition and because of its political conceptions and orientations.

To the extent that it acquired a mass influence, became an important component of the anti-imperialist movement, and committed itself to a prolonged armed struggle against Portuguese colonialism, the MPLA is, more precisely, an expression of a revolutionary petty-bourgeois nationalist current. The ideological and political influence exercised from the beginning by elements with Stalinist or Khrushchevist training is not in contradiction with the MPLA's ideology as a whole. This is true not only because petty-bourgeois revolutionaries can utilize Marxism, especially a deformed Marxism, as an ingredient in their conceptions, but more concretely because Stalinist theses on the revolution by stages and bureaucratic conceptions of the relationship with the masses tend to coincide with the line of collaboration with the so-called national bourgeoisie, the conceptions of the state and party, and the bureaucratic methods of organization which have characterized and still characterize the MPLA. The fact that the MPLA organized committees in the liberated zones and, immediately after April 25, 1974, called for the creation of committees in the cities must not obscure the fact that these committees were conceived on the basis of paternalist and authoritarian criteria, that the internal functioning of the MPLA itself has always suffered from very serious bureaucratic deformations, that even during the past several months the MPLA's take-over of the mass movement in Luanda has en-

tailed a restructuring of the committees from above, with the elimination of cadres and militants denounced as ultraleftists or anarchists and with severe purge measures.

13. The rapid and substantial successes won by the army of the People's Republic of Angola are not the result solely of military superiority; they are explainable politically above all. While the FNLA and UNITA proved incapable of mobilizing the masses in their zones of influence or of raising the morale of their troops, the MPLA was able to rely on a solid urban base to start from. Up to now, the peasant masses have not played an active role. Nevertheless, their mobilization remains essential not only for a definitive victory in the civil war, but more generally for the future of the Angolan revolution. The decisive point remains the conquest of a broad peasant base. Any possible underestimation of these problems would have very negative consequences not only on the current military conflict but also and more generally on the future of the Angolan revolution. That is why it is a political priority to struggle for an agrarian reform that breaks the power of the large landlords and capitalist farmers, loosens the vise of poverty of subsistence agriculture and its remaining tribal structures, guarantees the small and middle peasants adequate prices for their products and allows them to escape the claws of the middlemen, and aids the population of the countryside in resolving the elementary problems created by the colonial war and the civil war.

At the same time, measures expropriating imperialist property—in any case a legitimate response to the combined military attacks against the People's Republic of Angola—would have the effect of solidifying the ranks of the anti-imperialist forces through concretely demonstrating to the masses that they are being called upon to fight in defense of their most pressing interests.

But the struggle for consistent anti-imperialist objectives must go hand in hand with the revolutionary and democratic rank-and-file organization of the masses. The experiences of the past two years, especially at the height of the urban mobilizations, must be maximally capitalized on by the relaunching of democratic and revolutionary bodies whose leaders are elected by the masses and can be removed if they do not accomplish their tasks, leaders who do not enjoy any material privileges. The strictest respect for democratic rights, including the right of expression of the various political currents and organizations, is a necessity that is particularly felt after centuries of colonization and long years of merciless imperialist repression. A mass democratic revolutionary organization opposing any bureaucratic grip or authoritarian con-

straint also represents a crucially important instrument for the struggle against traditional reactionary structures and tribal remnants.

Militants who have gone through the struggle experiences of the past two or three years and who have assimilated the lessons of the anticapitalist struggles of the masses of other countries, including East Europe, can and must play an important role in this battle. Finally, the anti-imperialist struggle of the Angolan masses will be strengthened to the extent that tight links are established with the revolutionary movements of southern Africa, which, through their struggle, are weakening the racist regimes of Pretoria and Salisbury, ramparts of imperialism in this part of the continent.

14. The catastrophic military defeats of the FNLA and UNITA have compelled the imperialist and neocolonial forces to revise their policy. Some neocolonial governments have already made a turn: They have recognized the People's Republic of Angola and are seeking a compromise with the MPLA. The imperialists of the United States and West Europe could follow them down this road, working out a wide-ranging operation to integrate the People's Republic of Angola more or less quickly into a relatively "progressive" neocolonial project. Well-off petty-bourgeois circles, embryonic nuclei of the "national" bourgeoisie, an entire constellation of profiteers and careerists provide the material base for such an operation. The rightist tendencies of the MPLA, which had already been leaning toward compromise solutions, particularly with UNITA, may play the game through to the end. This project of the MPLA leadership—expressed, for example, in the basic law of the People's Republic—is not at all in contradiction with such a neocolonial operation, as is confirmed, among other things, by the recent overtures toward Zaïre and Zambia.

In face of such a possibility—and in any case to prevent the rapid defeat of the enemy from paradoxically having negative consequences for the revolutionary struggle—it appears all the more necessary to mobilize and organize the masses into democratic bodies that guarantee mass autonomy of any exploiting class and any bureaucratic apparatus. This task, which will not be accomplished by the petty-bourgeois leadership of the MPLA, will have to be taken up on a priority basis by revolutionaries linked to the mass movement.

## V

15. The resolution on Africa adopted at the Eighth World Congress of the Fourth International in 1965 declared in regard to Angola:

"It is clear that a genuine revolutionary Angolan leadership does not yet exist and

that internal conflicts and struggles of the nationalist movement will probably continue to appear for a whole period. In determining which field of action they will give preference, the fundamental criterion for revolutionary Marxists is who at a given stage exercises real mass influence and who is actually fighting, because that is where the logic of the revolutionary struggle most easily permits the formation of a revolutionary vanguard. The line of a leadership or a few leaders cannot be a decisive criterion, all the less so in the case of insinuations or suspicions about this or that person. . . . Without hiding its criticisms and while developing its own concepts on the nature of the Angolan revolution, the Fourth International will continue to solidarize with the forces in actual struggle, which are primarily the peasant forces organized at the present stage essentially in the FNLA. The Fourth International holds that the unification of the FNLA with other existing forces (which the FNLA says it favors in principle) would prove profitable, naturally on condition that it be realized in the struggle, on the basis of a clear anti-imperialist and anticolonialist program, without which the indispensable unity in the armed struggle would suffer."

Although the criteria applied were correct and the analysis of the relationship of forces in the field was basically accurate, a self-criticism is nonetheless necessary; it can be synthesized in the following terms:

a. The February 1964 resolution of the United Secretariat and the resolution of the Eighth World Congress overestimated the possibilities of the FNLA's overcoming its tribal origins and the consequences of its regional dependence and thus of escaping the influence exercised by the neocolonial Congolese governments, vehicles for imperialist pressure.

b. The same resolutions did not take account of the MPLA's possibilities and capacities of relaunching action in other parts of the country and underestimated the role that could be played in that event by its ideology, which is more progressive than that of the FNLA.

c. The Fourth International delayed considerably in the analytical verification of the situation in Angola and consequently in making the necessary political and tactical adjustments. Even the resolution of the Tenth World Congress in February 1974 limited itself to the very general assertion that "the furtherance of the process of permanent revolution . . . can only be carried out on the basis of a clarification within the MPLA and Frelimo" and pointed to "the task of building revolutionary Marxist cadres."

16. In the civil war that broke out on the eve of the formal proclamation of independence, the Fourth International chose the camp of the People's Republic of Angola founded by the MPLA against the

holy alliance of imperialists, racists, and indigenous reactionaries. It stands on the side of the masses who are mobilizing to defend the independence won through a determined armed struggle, to defend their primordial interests against all exploiting layers and classes, both foreign and "national," for the expropriation of the capitalists and landed proprietors and the formation of a workers and peasants government based on democratic revolutionary committees, direct expressions of the masses.

Such an attitude in no way implies that the Fourth International abandons its criticisms of the MPLA leadership, which it characterizes as petty-bourgeois nationalist and not as proletarian communist, and which will not be able to carry out the task of building a workers state. Alignment in the same camp and solidarity in a common struggle are not in contradiction with the indispensable battle for the political independence of the working class and revolutionaries and for the construction of a proletarian revolutionary leadership and a revolutionary Marxist organization.

Angolan revolutionary Marxists unreservedly commit themselves to the military

struggle against the reactionary holy alliance until the definitive victory, for the defense of the People's Republic of Angola, for the complete independence of Angola. In their political campaign they emphasize the necessity for an active and conscious mobilization of the masses, for their organization into democratic and revolutionary committees, the delegates elected and revocable at all times; they further emphasize the defense of democratic rights for all those fighting in the anti-imperialist camp. They carry out an indispensable task of theoretical and political clarification on the nature and strategy of the revolution in Angola by attempting first to regroup the cadres and militants who have already undergone experiences in struggle and mass mobilization and have critically reflected on these experiences.

17. The Fourth International must take an active part in a campaign of solidarity with the People's Republic of Angola organized on a world scale. This campaign should demand the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of all imperialist and neocolonialist forces; it should call for political and material aid from the workers states and the international workers move-

ment, the halt of all shipments of arms and matériel to the FNLA-UNITA bloc, and the recognition of the MPLA and the People's Republic of Angola.

The Fourth International denounces the attitude of the Chinese bureaucratic leadership, which, after aiding the FNLA, is now adopting a hypocritical neutral attitude, thus giving a practical demonstration of the nefarious character of its conceptions and analyses and of a policy based on denouncing the USSR as the main enemy, a policy actually aimed at reaching a compromise with American, European, and Japanese imperialism.

African revolutionary Marxists, conscious that the defeat of the imperialists and neocolonialists in the Angolan civil war would have enormous repercussions throughout the continent, would create favorable conditions for the overthrow of the racist regimes of South Africa, Namibia, and Zimbabwe, and would undermine the bases of the reactionary neocolonial regimes, will campaign for militant support to the People's Republic and the Angolan fighters in the circles of the African political vanguard, in the mass organizations, in the trade unions, and in the organizations of workers and students abroad.

February 14, 1976



# Resolution on Angola

## Draft Resolution of the Leninist Trotskyist Faction

[This resolution is based on the general line of a report presented to the February 1976 meeting of the International Executive Committee by Tony Thomas for the Steering Committee of the Leninist Trotskyist Faction. The report received the following vote: 17 for, 44 against.]

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1. With the invasion mounted by South Africa and the utilization of mercenaries financed primarily by the CIA, imperialist intervention in the Angolan civil war reached a high point at the end of 1975 and beginning of 1976. For revolutionary Marxists and supporters of democratic rights, it was an elementary duty to offer material support to the military struggle against this intervention, and to organize an international campaign under the general slogans of "Hands off Angola!" "South Africa Out of Angola!" and, in view of the threat from American imperialism because of Havana's aid to the MPLA, "Defend Cuba!"

2. The three main organizations involved in the civil war in Angola (the FNLA—Angola National Liberation Front, the MPLA—Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola, and the UNITA—National Union for the Total Independence of Angola) were nationalist in character.

It was incorrect to characterize the MPLA as more progressive than the UNITA or the FNLA, and to designate it as a "revolutionary petty-bourgeois nationalist current" that should be supported, not only in its military struggle against imperialist intervention but also in its political drive for leadership in Angola against the FNLA and the UNITA.

The civil war did not involve a fundamental confrontation between antagonistic class forces in Angola. The three groups were rooted in different nationalities located in different regions of Angola.

The MPLA's base was in the Mbundu areas in north-central Angola and among mestiços (people of mixed African and Portuguese background) across the country.

The FNLA's base was among the Bakongo people in the northwestern area of Angola.

The UNITA's base was among the Ovimbundu in the central and southern regions of Angola.

The three groups won these positions as a result of their participation in the struggle for independence from Portugal,

which began in 1961. Each group contributed significantly to the struggle that eventually forced Portugal out of Angola.

The support offered by the Angolan working class, urban middle class, agricultural workers and poor peasantry, including the most militant layers, to one or another of the three nationalist groups in the 1975-76 civil war tended to follow national, not class differences.

A key element in the war in Angola was the power struggle between the petty-bourgeois leaderships of the UNITA, the FNLA, and the MPLA. The imperialists sought to utilize the power struggle to advance their own objectives. They were aided in this by the frictions, fears, and antagonisms existing between the nationalities, and the exploitation of these divisions by the leaderships of the UNITA, the FNLA, and the MPLA.

The bitter conflict between the MPLA and its rivals did not serve to advance the cause of the working class or the struggle for national liberation from imperialist Portugal.

a. The rivalry tended to exacerbate animosities between the different national groups in Angola. The exploitation of these animosities by the three organizations represented a continuation of the divide-and-rule policy long employed by the Portuguese masters. To unify the Angolan masses in struggle against imperialism, an opposite policy was required—defense of their national rights, including the right of self-determination.

It has been argued that the nationalities in Angola are merely ethnic and regional groupings—not fully developed nations—and that therefore they had no right to self-determination. However, under Lenin and Trotsky the Soviet government guaranteed national rights to peoples who had barely emerged from historically primitive cultures and who lacked many of the national attributes that have developed among the Angolan peoples.

b. The factional rivalry facilitated continued intervention by the imperialists. This was further enhanced by the competition among the three organizations for support from the various imperialist companies in Angola and from other imperialist interests eager to move into Angola.

c. The factional struggle was utilized by the petty-bourgeois nationalist leaders and by the imperialist powers to divert the Angolan working masses from fighting for their own class interests. Under cover of the factional struggle each of the groups stepped up attacks on sectors of the workers and peasants of Angola.

3. In the long-range interests of the international socialist movement, revolutionary Marxists had to maintain their political independence from all three groups. Their duty was to help unite the Angolan working class as a whole and seek to develop its class consciousness as the only social force capable of leading the Angolan revolution to victory. The goal was to advance the concrete struggles against imperialism, against capitalist exploitation, for democratic rights and for political independence.

During the civil war, the central task in Angola remained that of constructing a revolutionary-Marxist, working-class party supported by the peasantry and popular masses as the leadership of the national and social struggle. None of the three nationalist groups could be transformed into such a party. A task still to be achieved, the party will have to be built in conscious political struggle against these leaderships and programs, since all three, or possible new combinations of them stand for the maintenance of capitalist property relations, and are committed to defending the interests of the nascent Angolan bourgeoisie.

In the struggle against imperialist intervention a policy based on advancing the interests of the working class might place revolutionary Marxists in a temporary bloc with this or that nationalist grouping in Angola, depending upon the situation. But at all times revolutionary Marxists must retain their political independence from and opposition to the procapitalist and neocolonial policies of such formations.

4. Only the working class can lead the struggle for national liberation from imperialist oppression to a successful conclusion, inasmuch as this requires abolishing capitalism and carrying out the socialist revolution. Bourgeois and petty-bourgeois nationalist leaderships who defend capitalist property relations objectively defend imperialist domination, despite their nationalist pretenses. This sets them against the interests of the working class and the toiling masses, and forces them to tighten their links with world imperialism.

The defense of capitalist property relations by the MPLA, the FNLA, and the UNITA, as well as their attempts to win support from imperialist allies, placed them, regardless of the intentions or desires of any individuals, in the position of neocolonial opponents to completing the national liberation struggle.

This was shown in a graphic way when all three groups were in the transitional government from January to July 1975. The MPLA, along with the FNLA and the UNITA, agreed on government decrees imposing antistrike legislation, conscription of combative layers of the working class, and crackdowns against the democratic rights of the working masses.

All three groups showed in practice that they stood on a common neocolonialist

program when they accepted the Alvor accords of January 1975, establishing a transitional government under the tutelage of Portuguese imperialism, with formal provisions protecting imperialist property and interests. The three groups reaffirmed this stand when they supported the Nakuru accords in June 1975, which tried to halt the civil war by reiterating the Alvor agreement and further limiting the rights of the masses.

This does not mean that the UNITA, the FNLA, and the MPLA continually carried out frontal assaults on popular mobilizations. At times, the leaderships of these groups, particularly the UNITA and the MPLA, which had more of an urban base than the FNLA, attempted to turn such mobilizations to their own factional advantage in the struggle against their opponents. However, all three feared these independent mobilizations, agreed on the need to bring them under control, and were ready to use the most brutal forms of oppression if necessary. An example was the MPLA's repression of workers and youth organized in neighborhood committees following the expulsion of the UNITA and the FNLA from Luanda in July 1975.

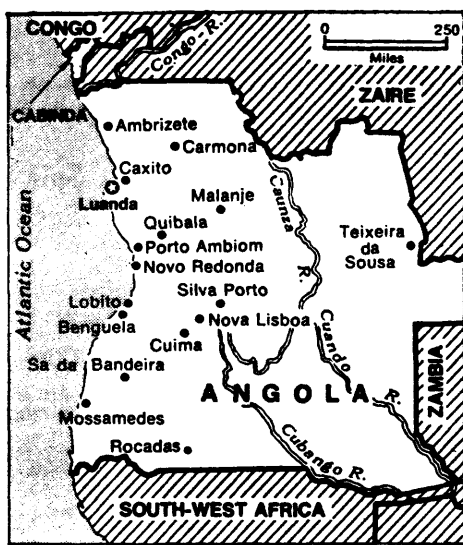
The MPLA's ties with Portuguese imperialism were shown with particular clarity during the period when the MFA designated Admiral Rosa Coutinho to serve as governor of Angola in late 1974.

During both the Fifth and Sixth provisional governments, the Portuguese armed forces provided military assistance and other aid to the MPLA. When the MPLA expelled the FNLA and the UNITA from Luanda by military force in June 1975, the Portuguese command threatened to use its troops to prevent these groups from reentering the city.

In fact, in a statement issued in March 1975, the MPLA attacked the "passivity of the Portuguese Armed Forces in Angola," implicitly calling on the Portuguese regime to play a more active role. In early May, MPLA President Agostinho Neto said that the Angolan "people continue to wait for the [Portuguese] high commissioner and the Portuguese troops to assume their responsibilities."

When the coalition transitional government in Angola collapsed during the summer of 1975, the Portuguese regime transferred administrative control of the country to MPLA-controlled ministries. And when formal independence was declared in November 1975, the Sixth provisional government gave military equipment to the MPLA regime.

5. The leaders of American imperialism did not see any appreciable difference among the three nationalist factions, either in class character, attitude toward imperialist economic penetration, or social and political program. Even at the height of the American-backed South African aggression in the fall and winter of 1975, the MPLA leaders boasted of their "warm" relations with U.S.-owned Gulf Oil and the



South African- and British-owned Diamang, the two largest imperialist concessions in Angola.

During the initial months of the transitional regime, Washington tended to give most of its support to the FNLA. Kissinger appeared to believe that this organization would win out because of its supposedly superior military organization. The State Department and CIA support to the FNLA was also based on the view that it would be more friendly to U.S. interests because of its close links with Peking and the Mobutu regime in Zaire.

The U.S. government gave relatively small amounts of aid to the UNITA in early 1975. This was increased in the summer of 1975 when it appeared that the UNITA might emerge as a potential winner in the conflict because of its apparently broad popular support.

Among Washington's initial aims was achievement of a relationship of forces in which it could balance among the groups, pitting one against another. The Ford administration sought to keep the factional struggle going, the better to exact concessions from all sides and to weaken whatever Angolan regime eventually emerged from the strife.

After South Africa's military intervention, which led the MPLA to appeal to the Soviet Union and Cuba for more aid, the State Department escalated its aggressive moves, increasing its military assistance to the FNLA, the UNITA, and South Africa. Mercenaries were recruited, largely under the auspices of the CIA. U.S. military aircraft brought in supplies; U.S. naval and air units were deployed in a threatening way.

The Ford administration opened a bellicose diplomatic campaign against the Soviet Union, the MPLA, and particularly Cuba. The American imperialists feared the impact that Soviet and Cuban involvement could have on the rest of southern Africa, an area designated by Washington

as part of the "free world." A South African defeat, especially following the withdrawal of Portuguese imperialism's governing apparatus, could inspire the oppressed African masses in Namibia, Zimbabwe (Rhodesia), and South Africa itself. Washington also feared that Moscow would increase its influence in Africa if its support to the MPLA appeared to be the decisive factor in the outcome of the struggle.

6. The UNITA and the FNLA leaderships initially opposed South African military intervention in Angola. In fact, both groups sought to counter the military thrust in the summer of 1975, as did the MPLA. The UNITA, the group having the widest popular support in the area where the initial South Africa attack occurred, and also the closest links with the Namibian liberation struggle, resisted the South African forces militarily in July and August 1975.

In September 1975, in an effort to advance their own factional struggle for power, the FNLA and UNITA leaders reversed their previous stance and allied themselves with the U.S.-backed South African military intervention. This was a gross betrayal of the Angolan and African liberation struggles.

The betrayal was facilitated by the course followed by the MPLA, which pressed the bitter factional struggle and rejected mobilizing the Angolan masses behind an appeal for united action against the invaders. Such an appeal could have been highly effective since large numbers of Angolans viewed the UNITA and FNLA as their leadership.

7. The Kremlin's decision to provide political support and military assistance to the MPLA during the Angolan civil war flowed from the possibility of gaining diplomatic and political prestige in Africa and internationally. The Kremlin also wanted to strengthen its bargaining position within the context of the détente with American imperialism.

In addition Moscow saw the possibility of gains in prestige at the expense of Peking (which supported the FNLA and the UNITA during the conflict) by assuring the victory of the MPLA.

Castro saw the possibility of bolstering Cuba's position in the international arena by responding to the appeal of the MPLA for material support. Castro's move, in bold defiance of the American imperialist giant, encouraged forces in Africa and elsewhere to step up their struggle for national liberation.

Both Moscow and Havana gave political support to the MPLA's petty-bourgeois nationalist leadership. In fact, long before the civil war, Cuba, the Kremlin, and the Stalinist parties that follow it, circulated slanders against the UNITA and the FNLA that hindered, weakened, and divided the Angolan liberation struggle and its supporters internationally.

Neither Moscow nor Havana has critic-

ized the MPLA's attacks on the working class, the youth, known Maoists, Trotskyists, and other political tendencies. They have said nothing concerning the neocolonialist policies of the MPLA leadership, which are opposite to the course that led to the victory of the Cuban revolution.

Despite these negative aspects, the Soviet and Cuban material assistance to the MPLA was decisive in overcoming South Africa's aggression and the pressure from Washington. If the requests of the MPLA for this military assistance had been denied, the imperialists would have been emboldened to launch further attacks on the Angolan liberation struggle.

8. Since the military victory of the MPLA, the trend of events in Angola has confirmed the correctness of this general analysis of the situation.

The correctness of supporting the military struggle against the South African military intervention has been shown by the setback dealt to South African imperialism. The inability of Washington to intervene more directly owing to the swiftly mounting domestic opposition in the United States was an important factor in Pretoria's failure.

This setback and the inability of Washington to directly intervene in Angola have given fresh encouragement to the struggle against South African imperialism in Namibia and in South Africa itself. In Zimbabwe the mass mood has become more militant against the Ian Smith regime.

9. On the other hand, the MPLA regime has not overcome the antagonism among the different nationalities and has not established a regime that has a real base of support among the Ovimbundu and Bakongo peoples.

The UNITA appears to have retained support among the 2.5 million Ovimbundu in southern and central Angola. The UNITA continues to carry out guerrilla operations in the countryside against the Benguela railway and other targets. MPLA officials have acknowledged that this was made possible by UNITA's significant base of support in this region. The support remains after military occupation of the area by the MPLA and the Cuban armed forces, after sending MPLA cadres who speak Ovimbundu languages into the area, after appeals to Ovimbundu traditional chiefs by the MPLA, and after the inclusion of some lower-level ex-UNITA leaders in some of the local administrative bodies.

Some of the FNLA's base among the Bakongo people in northern Angola was eroded by attacks on the civilian population carried out by mercenaries, Zaïre troops, and some of the FNLA forces. But thousands of Bakongo people fled with the FNLA into Zaïre at the time of the advance of the Cuban armed forces and the MPLA.

10. The MPLA's policy toward imperial-

ist investors in Angola is to collaborate with them and to encourage them along lines similar to those followed by other pseudosocialist neocolonial regimes in Africa, although they have carried out some nationalizations in accordance with the common economic program of the transitional government that was drawn up by the Portuguese authorities and agreed to by the UNITA, the FNLA, and the MPLA in June 1975.

The MPLA has encouraged Gulf Oil to resume its operations. The giant American imperialist monopoly can mount pressure on the MPLA government, since income from the Gulf operations alone makes up 80 percent of the foreign exchange of the Luanda regime.

In negotiations on the reopening of the diamond mines, the MPLA has left control of the operations in the hands of Diamang, a consortium of British, South African, Belgian, and American interests. Angola's diamonds continue to be marketed by the Central Selling Organization (CSO), part of the South African De Beers trust.

The MPLA has also agreed to protect the South African-owned Cunene river hydroelectric project located in southern Angola along the border with Namibia. In the past, Namibian freedom fighters had threatened attacks against this project.

11. Within the framework of neocolonial subordination to imperialism, the MPLA regime is attempting to strengthen its bargaining position with imperialism. To that end, the regime has projected more nationalizations in line with the 1975 economic plan.

However, the nationalizations up to now have been basically limited to Portuguese-owned businesses that were abandoned. These have included the Champalimaud steelworks, a cement factory, textile and sugar companies and twelve agricultural complexes. Holdings of non-Portuguese investors in the abandoned businesses and farms are being protected by the MPLA government.

The only nationalization of a major enterprise not owned by Portuguese that has been discussed by the Luanda regime involves the Benguela railroad, which is owned by South African, British, and American interests as well as by the Angolan state. This nationalization is not projected until the railroad pays off its \$40 million debt. Currently, the MPLA regime is subsidizing the salaries of railroad employees at over \$1 million a month.

The MPLA's land policy includes a promise to indemnify Portuguese and other plantation owners who have not fled the country, under projected nationalizations of most plantations. The policy is to encourage former owners who wish to remain as managers and "experts."

Except for these instances, the regime has been campaigning to encourage imperialist investment.

12. In line with its neocolonial policy

toward imperialism and its defense of capitalist property relations, the Luanda regime has continued its attempts to suppress struggles by the Angolan masses for economic gains and elementary political and democratic rights.

The regime has tried to fetter the workers movement through trade-union and "people's power" bodies directly controlled by the MPLA, as well as by exhorting the masses to "sacrifice for the revolution." At the same time the MPLA has repressed those who continue to try to organize independently or to raise demands based on the needs of the working masses.

An important series of strikes took place in the spring of 1976. These strikes were condemned by the MPLA government and by UNTA (União Nacional dos Trabalhadores de Angola—National Union of Angolan Workers), the MPLA-controlled trade union. The regime arrested a number of strikers and has continued its campaign to speed up production and lengthen working hours.

The MPLA regime has also arrested many persons standing to the left of it or politically independent of it.

The regime has employed slanders and frame-ups such as marked its factional struggle against the UNITA and the FNLA. Political dissidents and labor leaders have been called "reactionaries," "ultraleftists," "traitors," "saboteurs," "racists," "divisionists," or "agents of imperialism." They have been arrested or removed from jobs or positions in mass organizations.

Victims of the repression include members of the Active Revolt opposition within the MPLA, various Maoist and other leftist groups, as well as activists in the MPLA associated with organizations among the working masses.

Leaders of the MPLA, such as Nito Alves, minister of the interior in the Luanda regime, have threatened execution of some dissidents. Detention camps have been established.

In line with its neocolonial policy, the MPLA has been consolidating its repressive apparatus. It has reorganized and expanded its police, militia, and armed forces, establishing a permanent military draft.

It has also organized the DISA (Angola Directorate of Information and Security), a secret police force that has played a prominent role in suppressing worker and leftist dissidents.

13. Like similar neocolonial regimes in countries such as Tanzania and the People's Republic of the Congo (Brazzaville), the MPLA regime maintains a series of bureaucratically controlled committees and structures, used to keep the masses in check, although they are presented as organs of "popular power." Through a facade of mass involvement, almost powerless committees, organized from the top down, are used to mobilize and discipline

Angolans for the needs of capitalist production and to guard the MPLA's political monopoly.

Although some of these committees arose as instruments of mass struggle during the period following the April 1974 coup in Portugal, they are no longer independent, having been crushed and placed under bureaucratic control.

The committees are empowered only to carry out a few civic tasks such as teaching people to read and write, instituting hygienic controls, and setting up markets for food distribution. They exist only on a local and regional level. All political decisions are made by the MPLA leaders—no nationally elected bodies of "people's power" are projected by the Luanda regime.

Candidates for the local committees are carefully screened by the MPLA. They can be nominated only by the MPLA or MPLA-controlled mass organizations. Persons deemed by the MPLA leadership to be

former members or sympathizers of the FNLA or the UNITA are not allowed to vote. Similarly, those whom the MPLA charges with practicing "racism," "tribalism," or "regionalism," such as those who might advance demands in the interests of one or another of the peoples of Angola, are also banned from voting under "people's power." Finally those deemed to be guilty of "economic sabotage" and "laziness," the MPLA's favorite terms for labor militancy, are banned from voting. Those likely to be at all independent or critical of the MPLA leadership are banned from "people's power."

14. The MPLA regime in Angola is a neocolonialist regime based on capitalist property relations that include substantial imperialist holdings. It subordinates the needs of the working masses to maintenance of private property. It strikes at any political activity not under MPLA control. The MPLA regime encourages foreign investments and the development of what

it terms "the patriotic bourgeoisie" of Angola.

The only way to advance the liberation of Angola is to carry forward the democratic and social demands of the working class, the poor peasantry, and the urban poor of Angola through a socialist revolution. This is the only road to economic development and independence from imperialism.

The prime need is construction of a revolutionary Marxist party, a party adhering to the program of the Fourth International, the only type of party that can lead this struggle. Such a party can be built only on the basis of intransigent political opposition to the MPLA and its sister petty-bourgeois nationalist forces in Angola.

The Fourth International's most important task in relation to Angola is to help Angolan militants build such a party. And the first requisite for that is a correct line on the Angolan revolution. □