

New York, N.Y.
March 25, 1974

TO LENINIST TROTSKYIST FACTION COORDINATORS

Dear Comrades,

Enclosed is a copy of the report on the world congress given by Comrade Joe Hansen to the membership of the Leninist Trotskyist Faction in New York City on March 12, 1974.

The report will be made available to all members of the SWP as rapidly as possible. It will appear in an Internal Information Bulletin along with a written report by SWP supporters of the IEC Majority, giving their views on the world congress.

Special issues of Intercontinental Press, Quatrième Internationale, and Cuarta Internacional are now being prepared. They will contain the final edited versions of the majority resolutions (political, Argentina, Bolivia, armed struggle, Europe, and the unanimously adopted statutes) as well as the political counter-resolution of the Leninist Trotskyist Faction, and Joe Hansen's counter-report on the armed struggle resolution. An edited version of the ITF Bolivian and Argentine balance sheet may also be published. However, neither the IEC Majority nor the Leninist Trotskyist Faction have finished editing their resolutions, so it is unlikely that the special issues of the magazines will appear before the end of April.

Comradely,

Ed Shaw

Report to New York Caucus of the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction

By Joseph Hansen

I have been asked to present a balance sheet of the Fourth World Congress of the Fourth International Since Reunification (Tenth World Congress) from the viewpoint of the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction. Some of the conclusions I will offer are subject to modification after we have had an opportunity to study the final versions of the documents presented at the congress by the International Executive Committee Majority Tendency. These were adopted by a majority of delegates but were subject to amendment and to editing, and are not yet available.

On arrangements at the congress there was a considerable improvement over the congress held in 1969. The facilities were better in general. For the first time the problem of translations was met in an adequate way. With the up-to-date equipment that was used, it was possible to have simultaneous translations in three languages--Spanish, French, and English. The time for discussion was thus utilized much more efficiently than at any previous congress.

The congress was the largest yet held by the Fourth International. Delegates and observers were present from all continents and all the major countries except the Soviet bloc.

In addition to delegates elected by official sections of the Fourth International, the congress was open to observers from sympathizing organizations--like the Socialist Workers Party--which are prevented by reactionary legislation in their own countries from affiliating to the International. Such observers were invited to express their views on all disputed political questions.

The discussion, which was quite intensive, centered on issues of the greatest importance to the future of the world Trotskyist movement. Some of the differences were sharp and deep-going.

To understand the congress, its limitations, and its outcome, it is necessary to bear in mind the context in which it was held. The context was a crisis in the orientation and leadership of the Fourth International.

The general outline of the development of this crisis can be indicated by noting the key points in the deepening internal differentiation.

The differences can be pegged roughly as having originated in the adoption by the Ninth World Congress of a "turn" that included an orientation toward "rural guerrilla warfare." A minority at that congress voiced strong opposition to the new orientation, predicting that the "turn" could do serious damage to the Fourth International, and that if it were persisted in, it would spread beyond Latin America and begin to impinge on the basic principles of our movement.

The debate on this question was resumed about a year after the Ninth World Congress. Already it was possible to draw certain

conclusions from the test of events, and these were made more emphatic by further developments, including the desertion of the PRT (Combatiente), the official Argentine section of the Fourth International.

The crisis in orientation and leadership of the Fourth International was precipitated by the failure of those responsible for the adoption of the orientation toward rural guerrilla warfare, and later urban guerrilla warfare, to recognize the lessons of the events in Bolivia and Argentina. This was shown by the documents they wrote going to great lengths in the effort to justify their course, and by the extension of their erroneous line in a modified form to other areas. ("The Building of Revolutionary Parties in Capitalist Europe.") Their insistence on their mistaken course was formalized in the positions they upheld at the plenum of the International Executive Committee in December 1972.

The IEC plenum was followed by a sharpening clash over how to resolve the crisis.

The minority sought to reverse the guerrilla war orientation. It sought to gain adequate time for the ranks of the international to discuss the issues. Time was required for the presentation of documents, their translation and distribution, and clarification of the differences through debate. To this end the minority urged postponement of the congress. And at the IEC plenum it called for organization of a tendency to advance this point of view.

The majority sought an early congress. It talked about imposing stronger centralism in the international, a position that aroused fears that if it gained a majority it would attempt to resolve the differences through organizational means. It was reluctant about agreeing to postpone the congress, considering this to be an organizational concession to the minority instead of a genuine need of the world Trotskyist movement as a whole if clarification were to be reached among the ranks on the differences. At the IEC plenum itself, the majority announced the formation of a tendency to defend its positions, naming it the "International Executive Committee Majority Tendency."

At a conference held in Santiago, Chile, March 5-8, 1973, some of the leading comrades in the world Trotskyist movement who agreed with the minority position, formed the "Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency" on a principled platform stating the basis of membership.

Later it was discovered that the International Executive Committee Majority Tendency was in actuality functioning as a secret faction; that is, on an undeclared basis. It was discovered, in addition, that some of its leaders favored working toward a split in the Fourth International.

In face of this evidence, the Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency modified its platform somewhat, adding a call for a change in the leadership of the Fourth International and announcing that it was converting to a faction and assuming the rights of a principled international faction, with the consequent change in functioning that this involved.

As the internal struggle continued to sharpen and to broaden in its ramifications, leaders of both sides recognized the danger of a split that would be politically unjustified.

The Leninist-Trotskyist Faction was particularly concerned over the delays in translating documents into languages other than English, the delay in providing French translations being particularly bad. This signified that the congress would not be well-enough prepared to settle the key issues in accordance with Trotskyist norms. In addition, the existence of a wing in the International Executive Committee Majority Tendency favoring splitting the movement was ominous. It remained to be seen whether those in the undeclared faction opposed to a split could keep them under control.

Yet the International Executive Committee Majority Tendency insisted on holding the congress without further postponements. They cited the statutes requiring a congress at least every three years; and on this they of course had a point.

The outcome of this situation was the unanimously agreed upon ten-point agreement of September 19, 1973. This limited the agenda to five points: (1) the world political situation, (2) the question of orientation in Argentina, (4) European perspectives, (5) statutes of the Fourth International. Other points of the agreement included refraining from expulsions or suspensions or application of disciplinary measures against sections or sympathizing groups, assurances on voting rights, and adoption of the temporary statutes without change. It reaffirmed the commitment to translate and circulate all contributions to the international internal discussion bulletin in at least French, Spanish and English.

Another important item was to hold over for further discussion the following questions: (1) the "cultural revolution" and China, (2) the radicalization of the youth, (3) women's liberation, (4) the Middle East, (5) Vietnam. It was agreed to publish a monthly internal bulletin of up to forty-eight pages for articles on these subjects.

It was also agreed that the next congress would be held within two years.

In face of the deepening and widening differences in the movement as a whole, the ten-point agreement outlined a possible modus vivendi until the next congress. However, it remained to be seen what would happen at the congress itself.

A New Point Added to Agenda

The actual agenda turned out to be somewhat different from what had been agreed on in September. In particular, a point called "Armed Struggle in Latin America" was included--I will come later to the reason for this--so that the actual order was as follows: (1) world political situation, (2) orientation in Bolivia, (3) orientation in Argentina, (4) armed struggle in Latin America, (5) European perspectives, (6) statutes.

Since the resolutions themselves and the reports on them should soon be available for everyone in the Trotskyist movement to read and study, I will not attempt to go into them in detail or even to outline them. For purposes of a tentative balance sheet, I will try to give the gist of the positions. To do this as clearly as possible, I will put them in a certain logical order--which is not the same as the actual order.

First, the positions of the International Executive Committee Majority Tendency:

On the world political situation, they held that there has been a revolutionary upsurge since 1968. The outstanding manifestation of this has been the rise of a "new mass vanguard." They cited Europe as the prime example of these developments, but maintained that similar phenomena are observable elsewhere in the world.

From this they drew the conclusion that the major task facing the Fourth International is to influence and win this new mass vanguard; and that the most effective way of achieving this is through a policy of "initiatives in action."

Comrade Ernest Germain, the reporter for the International Executive Committee Majority Tendency, summarized it as follows: "The problem of initiatives in action is at the center of the debate in the international."

On "Armed Struggle in Latin America," the reporter for the International Executive Committee Majority Tendency, Comrade Roman, made some sweeping generalizations which I will return to later. The resolution falls in place here because it amounts to a generalization of the problem of initiatives in action, of "minority violence," and of "injecting violence into the class struggle."

It includes criticisms of particular formulations made at the Ninth World Congress in relation to the "turn" adopted then, but these are secondary.

The reporter theorized on the question of "armed struggle," viewing the question from the angle of "initiatives" that might be taken by small groups, whatever the eventual link might be between such actions and those of the masses in motion in pre-revolutionary or revolutionary situations.

On the question of perspectives in Europe, the reporter on this point, Comrade Livio Maitan, handled it as a particular application of the position taken by the majority on the political situation in the world as a whole.

Similarly on the question of the events in Bolivia, the reporter, Comrade Serrano, viewed this as a particular application of "armed struggle," maintaining that the orientation adopted at the Ninth World Congress was completely correct as a whole. Whatever criticisms could be lodged fell within the framework of application of the line. In this respect there had been some wrong estimates of the relationship of forces, and some tactical errors had been committed.

Argentina was dealt with in the same way. Comrade Saoul reported that what had occurred in Argentina was an application of the "armed struggle" orientation. The line still remained valid despite the experience with the PRT (Combatiente). The main error in Argentina had been a "militarist deviation." The speakers defending the position of the International Executive Committee Majority Tendency made some self-criticisms for having delayed so long in taking up the deviations of the PRT; but said nothing about having presented the PRT (Combatiente) as a model section, particularly in the way it had carried out the prog guerrilla line of the Ninth World Congress.

As for the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction, its main positions on these questions should be presented in a quite different order inasmuch as its objective was to put up the strongest possible case for reversing a wrong orientation.

On both Bolivia and Argentina, the reporters for the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction, Comrades Lorenzo and Arturo respectively, started from the concrete situations in those countries and the actual experience of our comrades there. This included a résumé of the contrasting results of the application of two different lines in Argentina; that is, the disaster suffered by the Fourth International in the case of the PRT (Combatiente) and the successes gained for the Fourth International by the PST.

Likewise on the question of perspectives in Europe, Comrade Roberto, who was the reporter for the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction on that subject, besides offering a theoretical analysis, emphasized the concrete experience of the past few years, especially in Spain, where the Trotskyist movement has made big strides.

On "Armed Struggle in Latin America," as the comrade explaining the views of the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction, I pointed out how the guerrilla orientation had now been generalized in such a way as to become a line for all continents, as had been predicted by the minority at the Ninth World Congress. I showed how the resolution contradicted the positions held by the Trotskyist movement since its foundation, and warned of the disasters that could be expected from revising the program of Trotskyism on this question.

Finally, on the world political situation, Comrade Jack Barnes, explaining the views of the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction, offered a broad analysis of the objective reality for the past few decades. The purpose of this was to call special attention to the changing pattern of the world revolution, which was now bringing to the fore the leading role of the working class, including in the imperialist centers, and opening up immense new opportunities for the world Trotskyist movement. In taking up the tasks facing the Fourth International, the reporter called for a realistic assessment of the stage of development of the Fourth International and particularly of the resources at its disposal. If this were done, then the world Trotskyist movement had every reason to count on highly encouraging advances in the coming period.

In general, what the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction sought to do at the congress was the following:

1. Clarify the issues, particularly the meaning of the resolution on "armed struggle" placed on the agenda by the International Executive Committee Majority Tendency.
2. Block the would-be splitters, those who were counting on the congress ending in a blow up.
3. Maintain the unity of the Fourth International despite the development of some very deep differences.
4. Prepare the best possible conditions for the next stage, in which our movement can expect big openings in the class struggle in various areas.

A third tendency participated actively in the debate that took place at the world congress. It was announced at the beginning of the sessions. It called itself the Mezhrayonka Tendency.

In its announcement, it said that it was formed to gain equal rights in the discussion and to fight against any split. Its platform consisted of documents advanced for the most part by the Kompass Tendency and a lengthy critique of the IEC Majority Tendency's political resolution which was distributed in French at the world congress itself.

The components of the Mezhrayonka Tendency consisted of the Kompass Tendency in the German section; the Kompass Tendency in the Danish section; the Revolutionary-Marxist Tendency in the Italian section; Comrade Krasno, a member of the steering committee of the Contre le Courant Tendency in France; and Comrade Kailas Chandra, a leading member of the Indian section.

The Mezhrayonka Tendency played a progressive, if brief, role at the congress, dissolving itself after the vote was taken.

On the world political situation, Comrade Luigi of the Mezhrayonka Tendency gave a counterreport based on their document. It was highly critical of the positions of the International Executive Committee Majority Tendency.

On "Armed Struggle in Latin America" the report by Comrade Willi was likewise highly critical, coming close to the position of the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction except on the question of forming an "armed wing" of the party. This flaw made the position of the Mezhrayonka Tendency unacceptable to the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction.

On European perspectives, the reporter for the Mezhrayonka Tendency was comrade Herb, whose position was likewise critical of the resolution of the International Executive Committee Majority Tendency, particularly its concept of a new mass vanguard, which he held to be amorphous and open to all kinds of interpretations.

On Bolivia and Argentina, the Mezhrayonka agreed with the general line of the balance sheet submitted by the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction and did not ask for separate reporters on those two points.

In announcing that it was dissolving, the Mezhrayonka said that this did not affect the components of the tendency. These would be maintained on a national basis and would correspond and collaborate with each other in the coming period.

Significance of the Outcome

The International Executive Committee Majority Tendency carried the vote on its resolutions, although by a narrower margin than at the Ninth World Congress. For example, on Bolivia and Argentina 51 percent of the delegates voted for the IEC Majority Tendency's resolutions, 46 percent for the balance sheet of the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction, and 3 percent abstained.

What is the significance for the Fourth International of this outcome?

It means, in brief, that in face of vigorous and increasing opposition, the ultraleft course on which the international was placed at the Ninth World Congress will be continued until at least the next congress.

First of all, the vote meant reaffirmation of the "turn" of the Ninth World Congress along with rectification of what have been called "unfortunate" or "elliptical" formulations, plus some criticisms of what have been put down as "tactical mistakes" and "wrong estimation of the relationship of forces," and some self-reproof for having failed in time to criticize the tactical errors and political deviations of the now admittedly "non-Trotskyist" former official section of Argentina.

Secondly, the vote meant generalization of the "turn" taken at the Ninth World Congress. The generalization has been codified in the resolution on "armed struggle in Latin America" and the accompanying report. It could be said that the "turn" has now been virtually completed. It goes far beyond Latin America. It includes adoption of a policy favoring "minority violence."

The adoption of this line means that a new stage in the history of the Fourth International has been opened. A key point of program has been revised. The position of the Fourth International opposing "minority violence" in both theory and practice has been revised.

In conformity with this change, the axis of work has been officially shifted toward a supposed "new mass vanguard." That means--above all in Europe--away from the masses who are organized in the Communist and Social Democratic parties and in the trade unions.

Of first concern now are the interests of the "new mass vanguard," or more correctly what the "new mass vanguard" is interested in. The orientation is toward small demonstrations of a "spectacular" nature--"initiatives in action" and "exemplary" deeds.

In this orientation, the one saving point--if it can be called that--is that it includes work among the radicalizing youth, especially in the high schools and universities. But the basis of the approach is a disorienting one that stands in the road of the key task facing our movement of becoming integrated and rooted in the working class.

Lest anyone draw hasty and unwarranted conclusions, the adoption of the new line on "armed struggle" should not be taken as signifying that the Fourth International is beyond reform. It is a situation conducive to sharp internal differentiation and struggle; but so long as democratic centralism is observed and no ban is placed on the organization of tendencies or factions, the Fourth International can be brought back to the correct course on this issue.

In fact, the maintenance of unity at the congress and the organizational conditions that were agreed to at the end of the sessions make it possible to test the line further, to review its results during the preparations for the next congress, and in all likelihood to reverse it at that time.

It should be said, however, that strong centrifugal forces were observable at the congress. It must be said, too, that while the immediate danger of a split was averted and an agreement was reached on measures to help maintain unity following the congress, unity remains precarious. Recognition of this reality facilitates the struggle against a split that would be quite unjustified politically.

The unity of the Fourth International remains precarious because of the nature of the resolution on "armed struggle." It involves the public stand to be taken on current events of an acute political nature.

Unlike broad theoretical questions that can be discussed in a leisurely way within the movement, events involving the use of violence in the class struggle require taking public positions --and without delay.

One of the distinguishing characteristics of the mounting unrest observable throughout the world today has been the recrudescence of primitive and outmoded forms of struggle such as individual terrorism. This is highly symptomatic, signaling the approach of more effective forms of struggle. In anticipation of the great mass actions to come, it is absolutely essential for our movement to take clear public positions on events of this kind that gain wide notoriety. The issue cannot be evaded. To attempt to evade taking a correct public stand would mean political death for our movement.

Thus a heavy responsibility rests on the International Executive Committee Majority Tendency. If they resolve the contradiction between their newly adopted position on "armed struggle" and the classic Marxist position by completely junking the old Trotskyism, this could place the unity of the Fourth International in jeopardy.

The issue, of course, is not confined to an abstract level; it will take very concrete forms. The question depends on how each individual case is handled. Consequently it would be a mistake to attempt to forecast what the variations might be.

A Transitional Situation

The outcome of the congress; that is, the vote and the accompanying organizational agreement on measures to help maintain the unity of the Fourth International, was unsatisfactory to both sides. But it reflected a transitional situation in the world Trotskyist movement that still remains to be resolved. Most importantly, a split was prevented.

The centrifugal forces observable at the congress go back as far as 1968 when the Argentine section split wide open in a struggle involving adaptation to the strategy of rural guerrilla warfare. Since that time splits have occurred in other sections or groups.

The primary cause of the divisions was the influence of Castroism, Ho Chi Minhism, and ultimately Maoism on our movement, the intermediate link being the ultraleft currents that appeared as part of the process of the radicalization of the youth. This pressure, however, could become a major problem for our movement only because it was coupled with the failure of the leaders of the majority to oppose it effectively--in fact by their bending to it.

Another important element in the outcome at the congress was the lack of understanding among the ranks of the issues at stake. This was one of the consequences of the uneven development of the groups and sections of the Fourth International. Some of them are very new and very inexperienced. In addition, the discussion prior to the congress was quite uneven. In some areas the discussion had barely got under way because of the difficulties of translating and distributing documents.

An additional complication was the pace of recruitment. The world Trotskyist movement as a whole has made considerable gains in this respect in the past few years. In the feeling of satisfaction over the number recruited, it is easy to overlook the relative possibilities--what could have been gained--and to miss the meaning of the considerable recruiting that has been scored by competitive groupings during this same period. It is also easy to miss the significance of a high rate of turnover in membership. Consequently one of the harsh tests of the validity of a line--its capacity to win members of the working--class vanguard and hold them--has not come prominently to the fore in this period.

The new recruits, of course, in the first stage of their life in the movement come heavily under the influence of the cadres who first brought them the message of revolutionary Marxism and who are not always above also indoctrinating them along factional lines.

In this transitional situation, the congress could not resolve the issues in a definitive way. A considerable part of the world Trotskyist movement still faces the task of catching up with a discussion that in some areas reached the point of temporary exhaustion.

This uneven situation was reflected in the voting pattern in a number of European sections on the eve of the world congress. High rates of abstention indicated a justified refusal by many comrades to vote on questions they felt had not been adequately clarified.

The reports presented to the mandates commission at the congress confirmed the fact that neither the IEC Majority Tendency nor the Leninist Trotskyist Faction have yet won a majority of the ranks of the International. While a few more comrades actually voted for the positions of the Leninist Trotskyist Faction (5,663 as against 5,277 for the IEC Majority Tendency) the important fact is that neither tendency has yet convinced a majority of the members of the Fourth International.

Under these circumstances, to demand that the delegates at the congress make a decision on a far-reaching new line on "armed struggle" represented, in my opinion, a grave default in responsible leadership.

The Single Most Important Development

The adoption of the resolution "Armed Struggle in Latin America," which was submitted by the International Executive Committee Majority Tendency, was the single most important development at the world congress.

First as to the circumstances of its inclusion on the agenda:

It was originally submitted to the discussion as a statement of position, being published in the English edition of the International Internal Discussion Bulletin in October, 1973; that is, a month after the September agreement on the agenda of the congress.

Later, on the eve of the congress, the International Executive Committee Majority Tendency made a unilateral decision to include it on the agenda in the form of a resolution. This unilateral decision was, of course, in violation of the ten-point agreement defining the preconditions for an authoritative world congress.

Thus many sections and sympathizing groups were unaware that the statement was proposed for adoption as a resolution by the congress even if they had received it, translated it, and made it available for consideration by the membership in advance of the congress. The result was that it was debated in only a few countries. And it was not voted on in most countries as a basis for selection of delegates.

No final version was offered for discussion at the congress. Many extensive amendments were offered after the congress opened and some of these were presented in an incomplete form.

This undemocratic procedure met with strong protests, particularly on the part of the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction. The procedure was clear evidence of the lack of adequate preparation for the congress. In view of the circumstances, it was highly in

order for the International Executive Committee Majority Tendency to request postponement of the congress so as to provide time for discussion of their resolution on "armed struggle" and the selection of delegates on the basis of that resolution.

The leaders of the International Executive Committee Majority Tendency had no adequate reasons to offer for not requesting postponement of the congress in view of their decision to place this question on the agenda. They maintained (1) that they had a "right" as a majority to do this, and (2) that, after all, the question of orientation on "armed struggle" had been one of the central issues in the internal discussion since 1969.

The Leninist-Trotskyist Faction decided in caucus to agree under protest to discuss the question of "armed struggle" as a separate point and to do the utmost in the limited time available to clarify the question. Against the objections of prominent members of the International Executive Committee Majority Tendency, the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction succeeded in doubling the time for discussion of this point from four hours to eight.

The "Problématique" of "Armed Struggle"

The discussion on the resolution was quite revealing. The reporter for the International Executive Committee Majority Tendency, Comrade Roman, said that the question arose for the Fourth International in the context of the economic, social, and political conditions in Latin America but that the "problématique" of "armed struggle" is not confined to Latin America. (The translators are still undecided on how to put the term "problématique" into good English. It appears to mean the technique of posing problems or the set of problems you succeed in getting into a single bag.) In the opinion of the reporter, the Trotskyist movement had not answered the questions posed by the "problématique" of "armed struggle" and it was high time that this was done.

To prove how far the subject extended beyond Latin America, the reporter placed great stress on the pattern of resistance in Spain to Franco's bid for power in 1936. And he sought to construct an analogy that could be applied in considering the events in Chile when the military seized power there last fall.

In addition to that, the reporter sought to establish some general rules that the world Trotskyist movement could apply in situations involving urban uprisings on any of the continents. These rules included the following:

1. Advancing propaganda in favor of arming the working class. This, he maintained, was one of the themes of the Transitional Program, why shouldn't it be advanced like any of the other themes?
2. Carrying on work in the army. This meant not just seeking to democratize the army, or to defend the democratic rights of members of the armed forces, but to split off segments at the appropriate time and place in conjunction with "armed struggle" conducted by small civilian groups.

3. Intervention by the party through "armed struggle" under its own guidance both before and after a rightist coup such as the one seen in Chile.

4. Preparing well in advance for all technical and military contingencies. This did not mean opposition to mass action but it did mean opposition to any "pseudo massist" concepts such as those supposedly displayed by the PST in Argentina.

In addition to the above, the reporter stressed an alleged dialectical relationship between "minority violence" and "majority violence."

Perhaps the most significant item was the statement by the reporter that he was formulating only the first approach and that a lot still remains to be done in working out the "problématique" of "armed struggle."

He said he was all for the Transitional Program but the specific forms it outlines does not provide the answers for new situations.

He ended by promising to follow up this encouraging beginning with theoretical and practical work.

Frequent references to the assassination of Franco's prime minister Carrero Blanco by the Basque nationalists in December were made during the discussion.

A Spanish leader of the International Executive Committee Majority Tendency, for instance, reaffirmed the position that the assassination gave an "impulse" to the class struggle in Spain and caused a crisis in ruling circles. His defense of the assassination followed the classical lines of the terrorist position long ago analyzed and opposed by the revolutionary-Marxist movement.

In showing how the International Executive Committee Majority Tendency had bent to the pressure, the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction pointed to a scandalous headline in the January 11, 1974, issue of Red Weekly, the paper of the International Marxist Group: "Spanish Trotskyists give total support to Carrero Blanco assassination."

Comrade Livio Maitan was perhaps the most consistent in advancing the new line. He argued that the headline of the Red Weekly was in error. The British comrades should not have said "total support"; they should have said "critical support to Carrero Blanco assassination."

Comrade Maitan offered his own version of the resolution on "armed struggle in Latin America," or some very extensive amendments--I am not sure which, nor am I sure of their full content inasmuch as page 2 of this four-and-a-half page draft resolution was missing in the copy I received and a corrected copy was not readily available. Here are two revealing sentences from the pages of the copy I received. In explaining what the resolution on armed struggle passed by the Ninth World Congress was about, Comrade Maitan included the following:

"That it was imperious for sections of the Fourth International, particularly in certain countries (Bolivia, Argentina)--where the threshold of a minimum accumulation of cadres had already been reached, not only to elaborate an orientation for armed struggle, but also to engage in the concrete implementation of such an orientation. Guerrilla warfare was considered the predominant form of armed struggle at this particular stage."

What is new in this is the statement that in Bolivia and Argentina a minimum accumulation of cadres had already been reached. Hitherto the "minimum accumulation" has remained algebraic. Now the arithmetic has been supplied. The number is astonishingly low.

Here is another proposal offered by Comrade Maitan:

"We must reject any cursory characterization, which, under the disguise (guise?) of remaining faithful to the anti-terrorist concepts of revolutionary marxism, would condemn forms of struggle which have been widely implemented in the past few years (expropriations, kidnappings of exploiters, executions of those responsible for massacres and torture, etc. . . .)."

The evidence could hardly be clearer of the influence of alien class pressures. Comrade Maitan proposes rejecting a characterization that remains faithful to the antiterrorist concepts of revolutionary Marxism. And why? Because of the number of violations of those concepts in the past few years!

In defending the orientation toward rural guerrilla warfare adopted at the Ninth World Congress, the reporter for the International Executive Committee Majority Tendency said: "So we lost a section in Argentina. But then we won one in Spain and another in the Antilles."

Comrade Germain added the following comment: "We did not lose one in Bolivia; and this sticks like a fishbone in the throat of Jack Barnes."

More significant was Comrade Germain's silence on the assassination of Carrero Blanco. Despite repeated challenges to state his position, he refused to do so, keeping his lips buttoned on that question.

Comrade Maitan filed a statement for inclusion in the minutes stating that while he had voted for the resolution he disagreed with some aspects of it; but he made no specifications.

A noteworthy reaction was that of Comrade Kailas Chandra of India. He said that he had come to the congress with an "absolutely open mind," but after hearing the speeches on Latin America made by the International Executive Committee Majority Tendency he had "felt quite sad," and had become convinced by the discussion that they were wrong.

The reporter for the majority on "armed struggle" had used a language that was "alien and strange" in comparison with the language used heretofore in congresses of the Fourth International. This was a significant judgment since Comrade Chandra has been a member of the Fourth International since 1939 and belongs to the older generation of leaders.

He said that with respect to Comrade Germain he had admired him and expected a great deal of him. His "psychological block against split" was an admirable thing.

Comrade Chandra said that he had not joined either of the two main tendencies out of fear of a split and the feeling that he could counter a split better if he remained outside of the two main tendencies.

He found Comrade Germain's arguments on Chile "astonishing," particularly the view that one or two thousand armed guards could have saved Allende. Not even ten thousand armed guards could have saved Allende in face of the political training that had been given to depend on the army.

The strategy followed in Bolivia had proved to be a disaster, in the opinion of Comrade Chandra. "Now it is to be realized on a global scale," he said. "It is a bad approach, a dangerous approach."

He ended by calling for reversal of the line of the Ninth World Congress.

Later he told some of the comrades that in India, before coming to the congress, he had misjudged the situation. After what he had seen at the congress, he was convinced that the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction had saved the congress from a split.

In conclusion on this point, let me reiterate that passage of the resolution on "armed struggle" was the gravest development at the world congress. It affects orientation on tasks in an unhealthy way and constitutes a political time bomb.

Agreement to Help Maintain Unity

I have referred several times to an organizational agreement that was reached at the end of the congress to help maintain the unity of the Fourth International. This consisted of reaffirming the agreements previously reached in April and September 1973. The new agreement included general formulas to be followed in determining the status of sections and sympathizing groups in various special conditions. (See Appendix: "Agreement on Measures to Help Maintain Unity of the Fourth International.")

The application of these general formulas aroused protests among members of both sides. Among other things it was clear that the distinction between sections and sympathizing groups was breaking down, and it could create a very bad precedent.

There were other reasons for dissatisfaction. A sector of the International Executive Committee Majority Tendency was particularly unhappy. I think that this was because some of these comrades had been counting on a split and had based their calculations for the future on that perspective.

In any case, there was an extraordinary amount of caucusing by the majority tendency over the nine-point agreement before it was accepted.

Nature of the IEC Majority Tendency

I have spoken about the political conclusions to be drawn concerning the outcome of the congress--that is, that the main line of the Fourth International will continue to be ultraleftist for the next two years.

There are some other aspects that warrant consideration.

The International Executive Committee Majority Tendency can be viewed as a bloc consisting of two tendencies--one that favored a split at the congress. This wing gave every indication of being disappointed at the outcome. The other wing was opposed to a split and sought to circumvent it, seeing that such an outcome would be a big setback for the world Trotskyist movement.

As between these two wings, the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction did what it could to help the wing favoring unity, although it must be added without much encouragement from that wing.

In the final analysis, however, the differences between these two wings, viewed from this angle, may amount only to a matter of tactics. Such differences are not decisive in the long run.

There is still another way of looking at the International Executive Committee Majority Tendency that may prove enlightening; that is, gauging the sociological pressures to which it is responding.

We have refrained up to now from taking up this question inasmuch as it could appear to some comrades to be a mere exercise in epithet-mongering and a diversion from an objective discussion of the political issues in dispute. Up to this point we have deliberately sought to confine our polemics mainly to the political differences. This required careful examination of the concrete experiences of our movement; the facts had to be established as accurately as possible. We sought to examine the connection of all this to the general positions held by the Trotskyist movement since its foundation.

But certain questions remain to be answered; and some of the comrades, especially the Argentinians, have pressed for answers. For example:

1. How are we to explain the attraction of the "strategy of armed struggle" to the leaders of the International Executive Committee Majority Tendency?

2. How are we to explain the blindness of these leaders to the lessons of events showing the bankruptcy of that strategy?

3. How are we to explain their persistence in continuing it with whatever partial self-criticisms?

4. How are we to explain their growing tendency to generalize this line and to convert it into something of universal application?

5. How are we to explain their tendency to elaborate a new theory on it the way their reporter did at the world congress?

6. How are we to explain their striking drift away from the positions long ago reached on this question by the revolutionary Marxist movement?

7. How are we to explain their brazen, or in some instances shame-faced, support of such a terrorist action as the assassination of Carrero Blanco?

8. How do we explain their mounting determination to put this line more and more into practice?

Where are the answers to such questions to be found?

I think that the key lies in their lack of roots in the working class and the labor movement. They lack the steady influence of immersion in the proletariat.

Consider how revealing is their constant preoccupation with the problem of "linking up" with the workers. If you are rooted in the working class this problem does not arise.

Consider again their insistence on small group actions. This is not characteristic of the working class, which prefers to use the most powerful weapon at its disposal--the mobilization of its vast numbers in a cohesive way as seen in strikes.

The rural guerrilla warfare with which these leaders were enarmored in 1969 and for a time after that is characteristic of the peasantry. The action of guerrillas is a sign of a rising peasant movement.

Similarly urban guerrilla warfare, which the leaders of the International Executive Committee Majority Tendency took up next, is characteristic of the lower layers of the petty bourgeoisie of the cities. It is an anticipatory sign of a general proletarian upsurge or an accompaniment of it.

Or take the theory of the wonders to be worked by the "exemplary actions" of individuals or small groups. It is held that such actions set examples for the masses to which they can be expected to respond. But this is quite false. Individuals may respond but not masses.

What the theory of "exemplary actions" on a small scale expresses is the hope of radicalized petty-bourgeois elements impatient about moving ahead. The same holds for the theory of an alleged dialectic between "minority violence" and "majority violence."

From this angle, what does the theory of the "new mass vanguard" amount to?

It consists by and large of a search for ways and means to utilize the radicalized petty bourgeoisie to "link up" with the working class and impel it into motion from the outside.

This is a most telling indication of the isolation of sectors of our movement from the working class and from the labor movement.

Thus we can say that the class nature of the majority line is coming to the fore. Enough evidence is accumulating to make it possible at some point fairly soon to offer a convincing analysis so that the term "petty bourgeoisie" will appear as a correct label and not as an invidious epithet applied to persons.

The distinction between line and persons is very important. The line of the International Executive Committee Majority Tendency represents a bending to the radicalized petty-bourgeois milieu from which many young cadres of the Fourth International have emerged and in which they are still working.

Role of the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction

In conclusion, a few words on how the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction functioned.

It held several meetings in advance of the congress to get acquainted, to hear the latest reports, to exchange impressions, and to discuss preparations. The discussions were exceptionally free and comradely. Such differences as appeared concerned tactical questions. A steering committee was elected to coordinate actions during the congress.

During the sessions, the steering committee was on constant call, while the caucus met almost every day. There were continual reports. Discussions sometimes lasted until early morning.

The faction displayed increasing effectiveness in its organization and functioning. It acted in a disciplined and cohesive way. Throughout the congress there were not more than a couple of speeches that could be said to have been counter-productive.

The Bolshevik way in which the faction functioned was shown by the impact of its arguments and the difficulties faced by the International Executive Committee Majority Tendency in trying to answer them.

For some comrades this was the first time they had traveled outside their country. For many it was the first world congress they had attended. And for most of them it was the first time they had participated in a faction struggle.

It was a tremendous educational experience for them. And it was remarkable to see the comrades develop in such a short time. Of course, it was an intense experience. Moreover, they had the good fortune to be participating in a faction that was a good one, that gave a model demonstration of its principled nature, and of its capacity to play a positive role in the life of the world Trotskyist movement.

The Leninist-Trotskyist Faction sought only limited objectives at the congress. All of these were achieved.

In the discussion, the members of the faction did an extraordinarily good job in clarifying the issues and arguing for a reversal of line in light of the experience of the international since 1969.

They succeeded in blocking any exclusionary moves. For example, a move was on foot to exclude the Chinese section, but this died without ever coming before the delegates.

The campaign that had been waged against the PST and the PRT (Uruguay) was set back considerably. It will be recalled that the PRT (Combatiente) had urged the expulsion of the PST. Instead, all the mandates of the PST were recognized. Representatives of the PST were included as part of the incoming International Executive Committee. Perhaps most important of all, through first-hand encounter the delegates of the International Executive Committee Majority were able to see for themselves that the propaganda used against the PST had to be discounted, and it had to be admitted that the PST is a Trotskyist organization, an integral part of the Fourth International.

Another objective of the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction was to do its utmost to block any splitting moves. Its course was decisive, in my opinion, in enabling the congress to chalk up a success in this respect.

Finally, the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction sought to establish the best possible conditions for the maintenance of unity following the congress. While it remains to be seen how well this works out, the caucus assured the delegates that it would act as a responsible minority in continuing this policy in the coming period.

Following the congress, the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction held a two-day conference in which there was a free and very educational discussion assessing the outcome and what course to follow in the coming period. All of the points I have touched on were taken up there.

Four decisions were made:

1. To try in the coming period to relax the factional tensions that built up before the congress. Both sides as a whole will welcome this, I think.
2. To give the majority an opportunity to make a further test of its line. One can hope that this will not provide further ammunition for the minority when the discussion resumes, but a realistic assessment of that line indicates that the minority will probably face an embarrassment of riches.
3. In view of the nature of the resolution on "armed struggle" that was adopted, the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction will not dissolve but will continue to function in a disciplined, coordinated way.
4. The Leninist-Trotskyist Faction recognizes that the unity of the Fourth International remains precarious because of the possible consequences of the majority line on "armed struggle."

March 12, 1974

Appendix

AGREEMENT ON MEASURES TO HELP MAINTAIN UNITY OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

Adopted by Fourth World Congress Since Reunification
(Tenth World Congress)

1. No exclusion of any groups or members now belonging to the tendencies or factions in the Fourth International.
2. No reduction in status of groups currently recognized as sections or sympathizing sections.
3. Adoption of a general formula to determine status in the following special situation:

In countries where adherents of the Fourth International are divided into two or more groups acting publicly apart from each other no group shall be recognized as a section, but all groups shall be recognized as sympathizing sections. But if the groups in any of these countries fuse before the next world congress, the International Executive Committee is empowered to recognize the united group as a section.

These are exceptional measures not to be taken as setting a precedent of any kind. It is not the purpose of these measures to encourage splits by giving minority groups the hope that they will receive recognition from the International if they leave a section and set up a public formation.

4. No recognition of challenges to mandate claims placed before the mandate commission by sections, sympathizing sections, or groups applying for recognition.
 5. The vote cast on the counterposed political resolutions shall be taken as the criterion in determining the approximate proportional representation in membership of the different tendencies or factions on the incoming International Executive Committee and Control Commission.
 6. Enlargement of the membership of the incoming International Executive Committee to reflect the growth in size of the Fourth International since the last world congress.
 7. Adoption of the following two categories in the membership of the incoming International Executive Committee:
 - a) Full status for members of sections.
 - b) Consultative status for members of sympathizing sections.
- Full members and consultative members shall have the same rights in everything except voting. Full members shall have decisive votes; consultative members consultative votes. For purposes of replacement, alternate members shall be listed according to tendency or faction and placed in numbered rank.
8. Reaffirmation of the ten-point agreement defining the pre-conditions for an authoritative world congress that was unanimously adopted by the United Secretariat September 19, 1973 (IIDB Vol. X, No. 15, October 1973)
 9. As part of the implementation of this agreement, each of the tendencies or factions shall make statements at the close of the congress proclaiming their firm support to maintaining the unity of the Fourth International.