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IN DEFENSE OF THE LENINIST STRATEGY OF PARTY BUILDING

By Joseph Hansen

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IN DEFENSE OF THE LENINIST STRATEGY OF PARTY BUILDING

by Joseph Hansen

The following article is in reply to two contributions to the current internal discussion in the world Trotskyist movement -- one by Comrade Livio Maitan, "Once Again on the Revolutionary Perspectives in Latin America -- Defense of an Orientation and a Method" (in an English translation in International Information Bulletin, No. 2, January 1971, pp. 6-20), and the other by Comrades Ernest Germain and Martine Knoeller, "The Strategic Orientation of the Revolutionists in Latin America" (in English in International Information Bulletin, No. 2, January 1971, pp. 21-32).

I have proceeded on the assumption that comrades will have just read or reread these two contributions and will therefore have the arguments freshly in mind. Since these and my attempted answers are often rather involved, it will perhaps be helpful to indicate the main points I propose to discuss.

The two contributions share a basic position -- defense of a "turn" adopted at the last world congress; namely, an orientation toward the "strategy" of armed struggle or guerrilla warfare.

I will seek to show that this orientation -- contrary to the contentions of the authors of the two contributions -- does not represent a continuation of the views of Engels, Lenin, and Trotsky on guerrilla warfare. Instead, it stands in contrast to their views, and represents a departure from their strategy of building a mass revolutionary-socialist combat party.

I will go into the origin of the position of the authors of the two documents and cite further evidence in an effort to prove that their position represents an adaptation to ultraleftism, that this has already had bad repercussions in our movement internationally, and that it could prove dangerous to the future of the Fourth International if persisted in.

In addition, I will try to show that in the discussion now taking place in the vanguard in Latin America and elsewhere on the subject of the defeats suffered by the protagonists of guerrilla warfare in the past decade and the need to find something more effective, the majority position places us at a disadvantage in presenting the program of Trotskyism, and even plays into the hands of conscious

anti-Leninists.

In passing, I will try to take up all the main arguments presented in the two documents even though this will take us down some side roads and require us to examine a number of exhibits from history. One of the more important items will be an exploration of the reasons for the persistence of certain errors, including the "strategy" of guerrilla warfare.

I will also take up the contention of the majority that no "alternative line" to theirs has been proposed. The truth is, as I will try to show, the majority displaced the previously held alternative line, voting for a new "orientation and method" of guerrilla warfare without drawing a proper balance sheet of the experience in Latin America and elsewhere with respect to the defeats suffered by this strategy, and without a concrete projection of what can be expected to result from the new line.

Without drawing any sharp line between the two documents, which are repetitious in some respects, I have divided my reply into two parts, one for each of the contributions. This division was intended, among other things, to facilitate pointing up the origin of the new orientation and some of the first consequences of applying it.

I.

In Reply to Comrade Maitan

Comrade Maitan's Contentions

Brushing aside what the test of events has shown, Comrade Maitan reaffirms his support of the resolution passed at the last world congress in favor of guerrilla warfare.

The tone he has adopted and the new arguments he advances would indicate that he is persuaded that the best defense is to take the offensive. He implies that quite belatedly I reopened the discussion with the article I wrote last summer, "A Contribution to the Discussion on Revolutionary Strategy in Latin America." (Available in English in International Information Bulletin, No. 6, July 1970.) By way of reply, Comrade Maitan argues as follows:

1. Factual inaccuracies, misreadings or misunderstandings, and flaws in reasoning are to be found

in the criticisms I raised in my article.

2. If the situations in Bolivia and Peru -- as I contended in my article -- changed in a way not expected by the delegates at the last world congress who voted for the resolution on Latin America sponsored by Comrade Maitan and others, the possibility of such reversals was at least referred to in the resolution; and while the alteration occurred with quite unforeseen speed, Comrade Maitan is prepared to make his self-criticism on this.

Still, nothing in Latin America changed in such a way as to require any considerable modification of the basic orientation adopted by the majority at the last world congress -- namely, centering the activities of the Trotskyist movement on preparing for rural guerrilla warfare for a prolonged period (while being ready to shift to urban guerrilla warfare, if this appears feasible, and while not excluding other forms of armed struggle of even more efficacious nature, however unlikely the perspective for these may appear to be at the moment).

3. In Argentina, Comrade Maitan is compelled to admit, things went badly. However, this had nothing to do with the "turn" adopted by the last world congress, which remains valid whatever actually happened. The comrades on the scene made serious errors.

4. In Bolivia, where another bad defeat was suffered, it does not matter. The comrades on the scene applied the line correctly. Circumstances beyond their control caused the defeat. If anything their experience further confirms the correctness of the line of the last world congress, inasmuch as defeats are often a precious source of lessons for the revolutionary movement.

5. The criticisms offered by me are to be understood as deriving from a scholastic approach that offers lip service to the idea of armed struggle while denying it in practice -- in the tradition extending from Karl Kautsky to Rodney Arismendi; that is, from the centrist ideologist of the Second International to the Uruguayan Stalinist leader who seeks to straddle the line dividing those who favor armed struggle from those who favor peaceful coexistence.

6. Guerrilla warfare is a specific form of armed struggle, of the art of insurrection, backed by the full authority of our Marxist teachers. The beginnings are to be found in the writings of Engels. Lenin developed these begin-

nings more concretely, "even giving specific advice on makeup and technical education of partisan detachments." Trotsky approved of engaging in guerrilla warfare under certain circumstances. What Comrade Maitan and those who agree with him are doing is filling in the outlines so admirably anticipated by the great Marxist masters.

The contentions advanced by Comrade Maitan obviously vary in weight and importance. To find a frame within which they may be judged most fruitfully, I propose not to follow his sequence, but to begin by taking his strongest argument -- his appeal to authority.

Engels on Guerrilla Warfare

Comrade Maitan brings in Engels on four items: (1) That Engels studied military questions very seriously. (2) That Engels held insurrection to be an art, subject to certain practical rules. (3) That Engels never changed his opinion on the central point, armed insurrection. (4) That in his letters, Engels "alluded several times to guerrilla warfare, notably with regard to the American Civil War and Poland. He noted, among other things, that geographical conditions were not sufficient for the development of guerrilla warfare if the social conditions were lacking."

Up to now, I do not know of anyone in the Trotskyist movement who has ever disputed these points. What bearing they have in the current discussion remains a mystery.

On the other hand, it takes but little reading of Engels to find that he did not advocate a "strategy" of guerrilla warfare. He considered it an auxiliary in the field of war, or a phenomenon, hardly of major importance, observable or to be expected at certain phases in a war.

Comrade Maitan really ought to admit that Engels was neither a practitioner nor theoretician of guerrilla war as a strategy for winning a revolution, particularly rural guerrilla warfare for a prolonged period on a continental scale.

Lenin's 1906 Experience

In appealing to Lenin, Comrade Maitan refers the reader to three articles. I will provide the precise sources in English to facilitate finding them: "The Political Strike and the Street Fighting in Moscow," dated October 17, 1905 (Lenin Collected Works, Vol. 9, pp. 347-355); "Lessons of the Moscow Uprising," dated August

29, 1906 (Ibid., Vol. 11, pp. 171-178); "Guerrilla Warfare," dated September 30, 1906 (Ibid., pp. 213-224).

It is important, in my opinion, to read these articles in connection with the current discussion, not simply to place Comrade Maitan's quotations in context, but to be able to judge more accurately whether the lessons to be drawn from these articles speak for or against the position adopted at the last world congress.

First of all, on method, a question raised by Comrade Maitan in the title of his article. Although he never explains in his text precisely what he means by "method," he does cite Lenin on the necessity to be concrete. It is a very good quotation, deserving to be repeated somewhat more fully than the version provided by Comrade Maitan

"Let us begin from the beginning," Lenin said. "What are the fundamental demands which every Marxist should make of an examination of the question of forms of struggle? In the first place, Marxism differs from all primitive forms of socialism by not binding the movement to any one particular form of struggle. It recognizes the most varied forms of struggle; and it does not 'concoct' them, but only generalises, organises, gives conscious expression to those forms of struggle of the revolutionary classes which arise of themselves in the course of the movement. Absolutely hostile to all abstract formulas and to all doctrinaire recipes, Marxism demands an attentive attitude to the mass struggle in progress, which as the movement develops, as the class-consciousness of the masses grows, as economic and political crises become acute, continually gives rise to new and more varied methods of defense and attack. Marxism, therefore, positively does not reject any form of struggle. Under no circumstances does Marxism confine itself to the forms of struggle possible and in existence at the given moment only, recognising as it does that new forms of struggle, unknown to the participants of the given period, inevitably arise as the given social situation changes. In this respect Marxism learns, if we may so express it, from mass practice, and makes no claim whatever to teach the masses forms of struggle invented by 'systematisers' in the seclusion of their studies. We know -- said Kautsky, for instance, when examining the forms of social revolution -- that the coming crisis will introduce new forms of struggle that we are now unable to foresee.

"In the second place, Marxism demands an absolutely historical examination of the question of the forms of struggle. To treat this question apart from the concrete historical situation betrays a failure to understand the rudiments of dialectical materialism. At different stages of economic evolution, depending on differences in political, national-cultural, living and other conditions, different forms of struggle come to the fore and become the principal forms of struggle; and in connection with this, the secondary, auxiliary forms of struggle undergo change in their turn. To attempt to answer yes or no to the question whether any particular means of struggle should be used, without making a detailed examination of the concrete situation of the given movement at the given stage of its development, means completely to abandon the Marxist position." ("Guerrilla Warfare," pp. 213-214. Emphasis in original.)

This is the dialectical method, as stated by Lenin, that Marxists must follow in considering new forms of struggle such as the tactic of guerrilla warfare developed by the Russian masses themselves in a great revolutionary upsurge that had placed the struggle for power by the proletariat on the agenda as an immediate issue facing the revolutionary party.

Nowhere in the balance of his article examining the various facets of this new "auxiliary" form of struggle does Lenin so much as hint at the idea of adopting guerrilla warfare as a strategy or as "an orientation and a method" as Comrade Maitan does. Quite the contrary.

"In a period of civil war," says Lenin, "the ideal party of the proletariat is a fighting party. This is absolutely incontrovertible. We are quite prepared to grant that it is possible to argue and prove the inexpediency from the standpoint of civil war of particular forms of civil war at any particular moment. We fully admit criticism of diverse forms of civil war from the standpoint of military expediency and absolutely agree that in this question it is the Social-Democratic practical workers in each particular locality who must have the final say." (Ibid., p. 221. Emphasis in original.)

Even further: "I can understand us refraining from Party leadership of this spontaneous struggle in a particular place or at a particular time because of the weakness and unpreparedness of our organization. I realise that this question must be settled by the local practical workers,

and that the remoulding of weak and unprepared organisations is no easy matter." (Ibid., p. 221. Emphasis in original.)

In fact, Lenin stated flatly: "It is said that guerrilla warfare brings the class-conscious proletarians into close association with degraded, drunken riff-raff. That is true. But it only means that the party of the proletariat can never regard guerrilla warfare as the only, or even as the chief, method of struggle; it means that this method must be subordinated to other methods, that it must be commensurate with the chief methods of warfare, and must be ennobled by the enlightening and organising influence of socialism." (Ibid., p. 221. Emphasis added.)

What was the Concrete Situation?

First of all, Lenin said, Marxism learns from the masses; it does not teach the masses forms of struggle invented by "systematisers." "In the second place, Marxism demands an absolutely historical examination of the question of the forms of struggle. To treat this question apart from the concrete historical situation betrays a failure to understand the rudiments of dialectical materialism."

The same stricture applies, in my opinion, to the positions taken by our Marxist teachers. If we do not consider those positions in the light of the concrete historical situation, we can open ourselves to the charge of failing to understand the rudiments of dialectical materialism. Comrade Maitan may not be open to such a charge inasmuch as he refers us to articles by Lenin that enable us, in connection with other articles written by him in those years, to ascertain the concrete situation in 1905-07 in Russia for ourselves. It is to be hoped that every comrade in the world Trotskyist movement will take the trouble to do this.

One of the rewards may be some clues toward solving a tantalizing mystery. In combing through the works of Lenin for statements that might be cited in association with his own position, however badly they fitted, why was Comrade Maitan able to find so little outside of what Lenin wrote in 1906?

After all, Lenin lived for another eighteen years, didn't he? His interest in the ways and means of winning a revolution remained unflagging, didn't it? Why did he write so little, then, on guerrilla war even as an "auxiliary" form of struggle "subordinated to other methods"?

The context in which Lenin considered the question in 1906 was a great revolutionary mass upsurge that proceeded from "a strike and demonstrations to isolated barricades"; from "isolated barricades to the mass erection of barricades and street

fighting against the troops. Over the heads of the organisations, the mass proletarian struggle developed from a strike to an uprising." (Lenin: "Lessons of the Moscow Uprising," op. cit., p. 172.)

In this immense mass uprising, in which soviets were formed that came under the leadership of Trotsky, it appeared possible to win power. This confronted the revolutionary party with the immediate problem, among others, of organizing the military side of the insurrection. One of the factors in this was guerrilla war which flared without the Bolsheviks having taken the initiative in it.

Lenin, weighing this development, concluded that guerrilla war should be viewed as an auxiliary form of struggle within the context of the "classical" pattern of a revolution headed by a working class fighting for power under the leadership of a revolutionary-socialist party.

Since Comrade Maitan considers this "classical" pattern to be the least likely to occur in Latin America in the coming period, one can gauge how far he stretches things in appealing to Lenin for authority on making guerrilla war the main orientation.

Lenin did not draw up a balance sheet on the party's involvement in guerrilla war. He did, however, draw up a balance sheet of the period in which this occurred. Strange as it may seem from Comrade Maitan's standpoint, Lenin did this by taking up a different "auxiliary" form of struggle -- the active boycott of the elections which the Bolsheviks had called for, and which to them was the counterpart in the electoral arena to opening up armed struggle in the extra-parliamentary field.

As is well known, the revolutionary upsurge dies down, and by 1907, when new elections were set, Lenin proposed participating in them. His article of June 26, 1907, "Against Boycott," includes his balance sheet of the previous period: (See op. cit., Vol. 13, pp. 17-49.)

"Two phases in the development of the Russian revolution now stand out before us in all their clarity: the phase of upswing (1905) and the phase of decline (1906-07)." (P. 29) It follows from this that Lenin had misjudged the situation somewhat in 1906 when he wrote "Guerrilla Warfare." He had not seen that the ebb had already set in. His article "Against Boycott" was intended, as he indicates, to make a rectification of this misjudgment.

"We have already pointed out above," he wrote, "that the condition for the success of the boycott of

1905 was a sweeping, universal, powerful, and rapid upswing of the revolution. We must now examine, in the first place, what bearing a specially powerful upswing of the struggle has on the boycott, and, secondly, what the characteristic and distinctive features of a specially powerful upswing are.

"Boycott, as we have already stated, is a struggle not within the framework of a given institution, but against its emergence. Any given institution can be derived only from the already existing, i.e., the old, regime. Consequently, the boycott is a means of struggle aimed directly at overthrowing the old regime, or, at the worst, i.e., when the assault is not strong enough for overthrow, at weakening it to such an extent that it would be unable to set up that institution, unable to make it operate. [Lenin adds a footnote: "Reference everywhere in the text is to active boycott, that is, not just a refusal to take part in the institutions of the old regime, but an attack upon this regime. Readers who are not familiar with Social-Democratic literature of the period of the Bulygin Duma boycott should be reminded that the Social-Democrats spoke openly at the time about active boycott, sharply contrasting it to passive boycott, and even linking it with an armed uprising."] Consequently, to be successful the boycott requires a direct struggle against the old regime, an uprising against it and mass disobedience to it in a large number of cases (such mass disobedience is one of the conditions for preparing an uprising). Boycott is a refusal to recognise the old regime, a refusal, of course, not in words, but in deeds, i.e., it is something that finds expression not only in cries or slogans of organisations, but in a definite movement of the mass of the people, who systematically defy the laws of the old regime, systematically set up new institutions, which, though unlawful, actually exist, and so on and so forth. The connection between boycott and the broad revolutionary upswing is thus obvious: boycott is the most decisive means of struggle, which rejects not the form of organisation of the given institution, but its very existence. Boycott is a declaration of open war against the old regime, a direct attack upon it. Unless there is a broad revolutionary upswing, unless there is mass unrest which overflows, as it were, the bounds of the old legality, there can be no question of the boycott succeeding." (Pp. 24-26. Emphasis in original.)

Ended along with the boycott, of course, was its complement, engaging in technical preparations for an armed

uprising. Why didn't Lenin draw up a balance sheet on the "auxiliary" form of struggle, guerrilla warfare? He had reason to find the question embarrassing, as we shall see.

How Trotsky Viewed Lenin's Stand

A balance sheet in historical retrospect exists nonetheless. The author of the balance sheet is Leon Trotsky and it is to be found in his biography of Stalin.

In view of its pertinence to the discussion now being conducted in the Fourth International, and the fact that the leaders of the majority position on this question have not mentioned it up to now, I take the liberty of quoting it in its entirety despite its length.

Trotsky has just referred to the period of reaction following the defeat of the 1905 revolution. He continues:

"Terror from above was supplemented by terror from below. [The fight of] the routed insurrectionists continued convulsively for a long time in the form of scattered local explosions, guerrilla raids, group and individual terrorist acts. The course of the revolution was characterized with remarkable clarity by statistics of the terror. 233 persons were assassinated in 1905; 768 in 1906; 1,231 in 1907. The number of wounded showed a somewhat different ratio, since the terrorists were learning to be better shots. The terrorist wave reached its crest in 1907. 'There were days,' wrote a liberal observer, 'when several big acts of terror were accompanied by as many as scores of minor attempts and assassinations of lower rank officialdom... Bomb laboratories were established in all cities, the bombs destroying some of their careless makers...' and the like. Krassin's alchemy became strongly democratized."

"On the whole, the three-year period from 1905 through 1907 is particularly notable for both terrorist acts and strikes. But what stands out is the divergence between their statistical records: while the number of strikers fell off rapidly from year to year, the number of terrorist acts mounted with equal rapidity. Clearly, individual terrorism increased as the mass movement declined. Yet terrorism could not grow stronger indefinitely. The impetus unleashed by the revolution was bound to spend itself in terrorism as it had spent itself in other spheres. Indeed, while there were 1,231 assassinations in 1907, they dropped to 400 in 1908 and to about a hundred in 1909. The growing percentage of

the merely wounded indicated, moreover, that now the shooting was being done by untrained amateurs, mostly by callow youngsters.

"In the Caucasus, with its romantic traditions of highway robbery and gory feuds still very much alive, guerrilla warfare found any number of fearless practitioners. More than a thousand terrorist acts of all kinds were perpetrated in Transcaucasia alone during 1905-1907, the years of the First Revolution. Fighting detachments found also a great spread of activity in the Urals, under the leadership of the Bolsheviks, and in Poland under the banner of the P.P.S. (Polish Socialist Party). On the second of August, 1906, scores of policemen and soldiers were assassinated on the streets of Warsaw and other Polish cities. According to the explanation of the leaders, the purpose of these attacks was 'to bolster the revolutionary mood of the proletariat.' The leader of these leaders was Joseph Pilsudski, the future 'liberator' of Poland, and its oppressor. Commenting on the Warsaw events, Lenin wrote: 'We advise the numerous fighting groups of our Party to terminate their inactivity and to initiate some guerrilla operations...' 'And these appeals of the Bolshevik leaders,' commented General Spiridovich, 'were not without issue, despite the countermanding action of the [Menshevik] Central Committee.'

"Of great moment in the sanguine encounters of the terrorists with the police was the question of money, the sinews of any war, including civil war. Prior to the Constitutional Manifesto of 1905 the revolutionary movement was financed principally by the liberal bourgeoisie and by the radical intellectuals. That was true also in the case of the Bolsheviks, whom the liberal opposition then regarded as merely somewhat bolder revolutionary democrats. But when the bourgeoisie shifted its hopes to the future Duma, it began to regard the revolutionists as an obstacle in the way of coming to terms with the monarchy. That change of front struck a powerful blow at the finances of the revolution. Lockouts and unemployment stopped the intake of money from the workers. In the meantime, the revolutionary organizations had developed large political machines with their own printshops, publishing houses, staffs of agitators, and, finally, fighting detachments in constant need of armaments. Under the circumstances, there was no way to continue financing the revolution except by securing the withdrawal by force. The initiative, as almost always, came from below. The first expropriations went off rather peacefully, quite often with a tacit under-

standing between the 'expropriators' and the employees of the expropriated institutions. There was the story of the clerks in the Nadezhda Insurance Company reassuring the faltering expropriators with the words, 'Don't worry, comrades!' But this idyllic period did not last long. Following the bourgeoisie, the intellectuals, including the self-same bank clerks, drifted away from the revolution. Police measures became more stringent. Casualties increased on both sides. Deprived of support and sympathy, the 'fighting organizations' quickly went up in smoke or just as quickly disappeared.

"A typical picture of how even the most disciplined detachments degenerated is given in his memoirs by the already-cited Samoilov, the former Duma deputy of the Ivanovo-Voznesensk textile workers. The detachment, acting originally 'under the directives of the Party Center,' began to 'misbehave' during the second half of 1906. When it offered the Party only a part of the money it had stolen at a factory (having killed the cashier during the act), the Party Committee refused it flatly and reprimanded the fighters. But it was already too late; they were disintegrating rapidly and soon descended to 'bandit attacks of the most ordinary criminal type.' Always having large sums of money, the fighters began to preoccupy themselves with carousing, in the course of which they often fell into the hands of the police. Thus, little by little, the entire fighting detachment came to an ignominious end. 'We must, however, admit,' writes Samoilov, 'that in its ranks were not a few...genuinely devoted comrades who were loyal to the cause of the revolution and some with hearts as pure as crystal...'

"The original purpose of the fighting organizations was to assume leadership of the rebellious masses, teaching them how to use arms and how to deliver the most telling blows at the enemy. The main, if not the only, theoretician in that field of endeavor was Lenin. After the December Insurrection was crushed, the new problem was what to do about the fighting organizations. Lenin came to the Stockholm Congress with the draft of a resolution, which, while giving due credit to guerrilla activities as the inevitable continuation of the December Insurrection and as part of the preparation for the impending major offensive against Tsarism, allowed the so-called expropriations of financial means 'under the control of the Party.' But the Bolsheviks withdrew this resolution of theirs under the pressure of dis-

agreement in their own midst. By a majority of sixty-four votes to four, with twenty not voting, the Menshevik resolution was passed, which categorically forbade 'expropriations' of private persons and institutions, while tolerating the seizure of state finances only in the event that organs of revolutionary government were set up in a given locality; that is, only in direct connection with a popular uprising. The twenty-four delegates who either abstained from voting or voted against this resolution made up the Leninist irreconcilable half of the Bolshevik faction.

"In the extensive printed report about the Stockholm Congress, Lenin avoided mention of the resolution concerning armed acts altogether, on the grounds that he was not present during the discussion. 'Besides, it is, of course, not a question of principle.' It is hardly possible that Lenin's absence was accidental: he simply did not want to have his hands tied. Similarly, a year later at the London Congress, Lenin, who as chairman was obliged to be present during the discussion on the question of expropriations, did not vote, in spite of violent protests from the Menshevik benches. The London resolution categorically forbade expropriations and ordered dissolution of the Party's 'fighting organizations.'

"It was not, of course, a matter of abstract morality. All classes and all parties approached the problem of assassination not from the point of view of the Biblical commandment but from the vantage point of the historical interests represented. When the Pope and his cardinals blessed the arms of Franco none of the conservative statesmen suggested that they be imprisoned for inciting murders. Official moralists come out against violence when the violence in question is revolutionary. On the contrary, whoever really fights against class oppression, must perforce acknowledge revolution. Whoever acknowledges revolution, acknowledges civil war. Finally, 'guerrilla warfare is an inescapable form of struggle... whenever more or less extensive intervals occur between major engagements in a civil war.' [Lenin.] From the point of view of the general principles of the class struggle, all of that was quite irrefutable. Disagreements came with the evaluation of concrete historical circumstances. When two major battles of the civil war are separated from each other by two or three months, that interval will inevitably be filled in with guerrilla blows against the enemy. But when the 'intermission' is stretched out over years, guerrilla war ceases to be a preparation for a new battle and becomes instead a mere convulsion after defeat. It is, of course, not

easy to determine the moment of the break.

"Questions of Boycottism and of guerrilla activities were closely interrelated. It is permissible to boycott representative assemblies only in the event that the mass movement is sufficiently strong either to overthrow them or to ignore them. But when the masses are in retreat, the tactic of the boycott loses its revolutionary meaning. Lenin understood that and explained it better than others. As early as 1906 he repudiated the boycott of the Duma. After the coup of June third, 1907, he led a resolute fight against the Boycottists precisely because the high-tide had been succeeded by the ebb-tide. It was self-evident that guerrilla activities had become sheer anarchism when it was necessary to utilize even the arena of Tsarist 'parliamentarism' in order to prepare the ground for the mobilization of the masses. At the crest of the civil war guerrilla activities augmented and stimulated the mass movement; in the period of reaction they attempted to replace it, but, as a matter of fact, merely embarrassed the Party and speeded its disintegration. Olminsky, one of the more noticeable of Lenin's companions-in-arms, shed critical light on that period from the perspective of Soviet times. 'Not a few of the fine youth,' he wrote, 'perished on the gibbet; others degenerated; still others were disappointed in the revolution. At the same time people at large began to confound revolutionists with ordinary bandits. Later, when the revival of the revolutionary labor movement began, that revival was slowest in those cities where "exes" [expropriations -- J.H.] had been most numerous. (As an example, I might name Baku and Saratov.)'" (Stalin, pp. 95-99.)

Long as this quotation is, it still does not complete Trotsky's balance sheet. Further on, in the same chapter, he considers a specific incident, the Tiflis expropriation of June 12, 1907:

"The Tiflis expropriation could in no way be regarded as a guerrilla clash between two battles in a civil war. Lenin could not help but see that the insurrection had been shoved ahead into the hazy future. As far as he was concerned, the problem consisted this time only of a simple attempt to assure financial means to the Party at the expense of the enemy, for the impending period of uncertainty. Lenin could not resist the temptation, took advantage of a f opportunity, of a happy 'exception.' In that sense, one must say outright that the idea of the

Tiflis expropriation contained in it a goodly element of adventurism, which, as a rule, was foreign to Lenin's politics. The case with Stalin was different. Broad historical considerations had little value in his eyes. The resolution of the London Congress was only an irksome scrap of paper, to be nullified by means of a crude trick. Success would justify the risk. Souvarine argues that it is not fair to shift responsibility from the leader of the faction to a secondary figure. There is no question here of shifting responsibility. At the time, the majority of the Bolshevik faction was opposed to Lenin on the question of expropriations. The Bolsheviks, in direct contact with the fighting detachments, had extremely convincing observations of their own, which Lenin, again an emigrant, did not have. Without corrections from below, the leader of the greatest genius is bound to make crude errors. The fact remains that Stalin was not among those who understood the inadmissibility of guerrilla actions under conditions of revolutionary retreat. And that was no accident. To him the Party was first of all a machine. The machine required financial means in order to exist. The financial means could be obtained with the aid of another machine, independent of [the] life and of the struggle of the masses. There Stalin was in his own element.

"The consequences of this tragic adventure, which rounded out an entire phase of Party life, were rather serious. The fight over the Tiflis expropriation poisoned relations inside the Party and inside the Bolshevik faction itself for a long time to come. From then on, Lenin changed fronts and came out more resolutely than ever against the tactic of expropriations, which for a time became the heritage of the 'Left' Wing among the Bolsheviks. For the last time the Tiflis 'affair' was officially reviewed by the Party Central Committee in January, 1910, upon the insistence of the Mensheviks. The resolution sharply condemned expropriation as an inadmissible violation of Party discipline, while conceding that rendering harm to the labor movement was not the intention of the participants, who had been 'guided by a faulty understanding of Party interests.' No one was expelled. No one was mentioned by name. Koba [Stalin] was thus amnestied along with the others, as one who had been guided by 'a faulty understanding of Party interests.'" (Ibid., pp. 109-110.)

What About the Transitional Program?

The above quotations are taken from one of the chapters of the Stalin

biography that were completed by Trotsky before he was assassinated in 1940. The views expressed by Trotsky in this chapter undoubtedly represent his final thinking on the subject of guerrilla warfare.

No doubt this accounts for the fact that in the Transitional Program, which he wrote in 1938, Trotsky does not even mention guerrilla warfare, still less rural guerrilla war for a prolonged period on a continental scale.

The section in the Transitional Program concerning transitional steps to be considered in defending the gains of the working class against fascist attack and the counterrevolution in general speaks throughout in terms of the masses and their organizations.

"Only armed workers' detachments, who feel the support of tens of millions of toilers behind them," writes Trotsky, "can successfully prevail against the fascist bands." Tens of millions of toilers behind them!

"The struggle against fascism," continues Trotsky, "does not start in the liberal editorial office but in the factory -- and ends in the street. Scabs and private gun-men in factory plants are the basic nuclei of the fascist army. Strike pickets are the basic nuclei of the proletarian army. This is our point of departure. In connection with every strike and street demonstration, it is imperative to propagate the necessity of creating workers' groups for self-defense. It is necessary to write this slogan into the program of the revolutionary wing of the trade unions. It is imperative everywhere possible, beginning with the youth groups, to organize groups for self-defense; to drill and acquaint them with the use of arms." (Emphasis in original.)

From this point of departure, further developments hinge on the course of the mass movement:

"A new upsurge of the mass movement should serve not only to increase the number of these units but also to unite them according to neighborhoods, cities, regions. It is necessary to give organized expression to the valid hatred of the workers toward scabs and bands of gangsters and fascists. It is necessary to advance the slogan of a workers' militia as the one serious guarantee for the inviolability of workers' organizations, meetings, and press." (Emphasis in the original.)

The culmination of this process is the arming of the proletariat as an imperative concomitant element of the struggle for liberation. "When the proletariat wills it, it will find the road and the means of arming. In this field, also, the leadership falls naturally to the sections of the Fourth International."

In appealing to authority for justification of the orientation toward guerrilla warfare, Comrade Maitan quoted only two sentences from the Transitional Program. Is it necessary, in the light of the evidence, to point out what liberties he has taken with Trotsky's thought on this question in order to bring him into the camp of the strategists of guerrilla warfare?

The Reunification Document

In thumbing through the texts in search of quotations, it is curious that Comrade Maitan decided not to use one of much more recent date. This is the point included in the statement of principles upon which the major groupings in the world Trotskyist movement succeeded in achieving reunification in 1963 after a split that had lasted almost a decade. The point is as follows:

"13. Along the road of a revolution beginning with simple democratic demands and ending in the rupture of capitalist property relations, guerrilla warfare conducted by landless peasant and semiproletarian forces, under a leadership that becomes committed to carrying the revolution through to a conclusion, can play a decisive role in undermining and precipitating the downfall of a colonial or semi-colonial power. This is one of the main lessons to be drawn from experience since the second world war. It must be consciously incorporated into the strategy of building revolutionary Marxist parties in colonial countries." ("For Early Reunification of the World Trotskyist Movement," republished in Intercontinental Press, May 11, 1970, p. 444.)

Until Comrade Maitan chooses to explain why he left out this reference, one can only speculate as to his reasons.

Perhaps his main consideration was that the stand taken by the Reunification Congress on this question stood in the way of the guerrilla-war orientation he came to adopt.

1. The Reunification Congress placed utilization of guerrilla action on the plane of tactics, within the general strategy of building a revolu-

tionary Marxist party.

2. The Reunification Congress confined utilization of the tactic to the "colonial countries."

An additional consideration, which Comrade Maitan may have had in mind in deciding not to cite this document, was that it was drawn up and submitted to the world Trotskyist movement as a principled basis for its reunification by the Political Committee of the Socialist Workers party. The inclusion of point No. 13 shows that the leadership of the Socialist Workers party recognized the role played by guerrilla warfare after World War II in countries like Cuba. This fact does not fit in with the thesis that the SWP leaders belong to the line of "classical centrism from Kautsky in 1910 to Rodney Arismendi" rather than the classical line of revolutionary socialism running from Engels to Leon Trotsky in 1940.

Comrade Maitan appealed to authority in an effort to bolster his position. The effort was counterproductive. Our Marxist teachers were unanimous in regarding guerrilla warfare as a tactical question, at best an "auxiliary" form of struggle within the general strategy of building a revolutionary party, at worst tragic adventurism that could deal heavy damage to the party and set back the revolutionary movement as a whole. In short, they speak for the position maintained by the minority at the last world congress.

A Question of Methodology

Upon completing his selection of quotations, Comrade Maitan states his general conclusion:

"From my brief review of the conceptions of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky, I obviously do not draw the conclusion that the orientation of armed struggle we are proposing for this stage in Latin America flows automatically from these conceptions. That would in fact be using the method we reject as scholastic. Our concern is to emphasize that our conceptions and criteria are part and parcel of the approach of the masters of revolutionary Marxism and no one can accuse us of any ultraleft-tinted revisionism. We are drawing on the generalizations, outlines, and even some extremely valuable anticipations of the past. Our task is to fill in these outlines with a concrete content in the specific conditions under which we are struggling now." (Op. cit., p. 13.)

From the standpoint of methodology,

this is a revealing paragraph. Comrade Maitan states that the orientation he is proposing for this stage in Latin America does not flow automatically from the conceptions developed by Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky.

I would agree on that, and add that neither does the orientation proposed by the minority flow "automatically" from those conceptions. The orientation, even though reached within the general frame of the conceptions developed by our Marxist teachers, must be checked against the reality.

But that is not all. As dialectical materialists we must ascertain how any changes in the reality affect the conceptions developed by our Marxist teachers.

Thus in proposing a change in orientation as far-reaching as the one voted for by the majority at the last world congress, the proponents of that change were duty bound to state how our Marxist teachers viewed the question of guerrilla warfare and how their conclusions should be modified. This was required in order to maintain the continuity of Marxist theory on this question.

But the comrades of the majority did not do this in preparing their documents for the congress, nor did they do it at the congress. It is first now -- after the change in orientation and under pressure from the challenge of the minority -- that Comrade Maitan turns his attention to this task; and we see that he begins in a most unpromising way. He does not even provide a correct presentation of the views of our Marxist teachers.

To be noted additionally in his general conclusion cited above is that having explained that his orientation does not flow "automatically" from the conceptions of Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Trotsky, Comrade Maitan almost immediately qualifies what he has said in such a way as to leave us in doubt. According to him, the method followed in reaching the majority orientation on guerrilla warfare was to draw on "generalizations, outlines, and even some extremely valuable anticipations" and to "fill" them with "a concrete content" taken from the current situation in Latin America. In other words, you set up an empty mold and fill it with material lying at hand.

What if you make a mistake in choosing the "outlines"? Then the corresponding selection of "concrete content" will automatically be wrong. Has Comrade Maitan permitted us to

glimpse the method that led him into his mistaken orientation? If so, he himself has provided us with the label -- it is scholastic.

From Brazil, a Telling Example

The question of the relationship between the guerrilla orientation and the Leninist theory and practice of party building is not confined to our own ranks. It presents a formidable problem for us on a world scale in relation to other currents that have their own theoreticians. I will cite an example that deserves the closest attention.

The November 15, 1970, issue of the New York Times Magazine printed an article by Sanche de Gramont entitled "How One Pleasant, Scholarly Young Man From Brazil Became a Kidnapping, Gun-Toting, Bombing Revolutionary." The article was based on an interview in Algiers with Ladislas Dowbor, one of the leaders of the Popular Revolutionary Vanguard (VPR), who was captured by the São Paulo police on April 21, 1970, tortured, and released two months later on June 14, along with thirty-nine other guerrilla fighters, in return for the release of the kidnapped West German Ambassador von Holleben.

At the age of twenty-six, Dowbor, an economist of Polish ancestry, became converted in 1967 to the view of Carlos Marighella. As is known, Marighella was not a foquista, nor is Dowbor.

Gramont said of Dowbor: "He gives the impression of being a theoretician, who although lacking any aptitude or liking for violent action, has willed himself to participate in the operations of armed groups because they conform with his analysis of the situation in Brazil."

The article quoted Dowbor extensively, placing particular emphasis on his theories. "As Ladislas Dowbor... explained the process," said Gramont, "the decision to deal exclusively in armed actions was not impetuous or improvised, but the result of a careful political analysis."

Here are some of Dowbor's points:

"You cannot build the revolutionary consciousness of a population through political explanations. But military actions can create this consciousness...."

"When we invest a factory and force the manager who is two weeks late with salaries to pay his men, we provoke the army, the police, the press

and the clergy into taking positions against us and in support of the visible enemy. It is then that the workers are able to identify the system as an enemy."

The police have to demonstrate to the bourgeoisie that they are doing their job, and so they organize a repression. "The workers see the police and the army and the press working together and come to recognize that the enemy is not individual but social. And that is already a form of class consciousness."

Dowbor has done some reading. That he has read accurately can be judged from the following:

"Now, this method of creating class consciousness through armed action is very different from the methods that Lenin developed for the creation of a workers' party. If you are mainly concerned with organizing the masses, you address yourself to those classes that are most capable of being organized, like labor, large groups of men with identical interests who are easy to reach. But armed action, which means living in small, clandestine cells, reduces the possibility of contact with the population. We must rely on the repercussions of our actions. If it is a violent action, it will appeal to those parts of the population that are sensitive to violence -- that is, the marginal masses, the unemployed, the favelados.

"Tactically, when you perform an armed action, you don't limit yourself to the interests of one class. You are reaching the masses not through political cells or speeches or pamphlets, but through the fait accompli of violent action. We are not telling them, look, it's better for you to organize a strike against your oppressors, we are saying, here is what we have done against the system. This makes us a mobilization movement, not an organizational movement."

It is clear enough from this explanation that Dowbor, after studying Lenin's theory of party building, believes that it has been superseded. He explains:

"Another advantage of small, radical military groups is that it solves the Leninist problem of how to remain in the vanguard, ahead of the masses. Classical Communist parties run the risk of being outflanked by their own rank and file, but we remain far ahead of the masses by the very nature of our struggle. With us, it is not the masses that fight, but the

political elite."

Such an elite, of course, has its own problems -- to which its theoreticians have addressed themselves:

"We run the risk of isolating ourselves from the masses, since we are fighting and they are not. That is why we do not attempt political education. We do not lecture on socialism or other theories the masses won't understand. Our attacks against the visible enemy are immediately understood."

It is not my intention to suggest that Comrade Maitan shares Dowbor's views. In the current discussion in our movement, Comrade Maitan's contributions are studded with affirmations on the need for party building and the need to avoid becoming isolated from the masses. What I do suggest is that guerrilla fighters of a serious theoretical turn of mind like Dowbor would only laugh at the suggestion that the Trotskyists, in deciding at their last world congress to orient toward guerrilla war, took a general outline provided by Lenin and simply filled it with a concrete content to be found in the current situation in Latin America. They don't need rationalizations of that kind to bolster their own views.

To argue convincingly against the theory espoused by Dowbor, it is necessary to begin by explaining why the Leninist theory of organizing a mass revolutionary-socialist party remains completely valid today. As against Dowbor's theory, which elevates guerrilla warfare into a strategy, it is necessary to demote guerrilla warfare to its proper place; that is, to a tactical level. In this context, Comrade Maitan's repeated references to his record in opposing Debrayism are beside the point. The Dowbors, who exist in other countries besides Brazil, are not Debrayists. In fact, Dowbor explained to the correspondent of the New York Times that one of the basic principles of his movement "was a refutation of the so-called foco...theory of Régis Debray...."

The Theory of the Tupamaros

The Tupamaros hold similar views. They consider the work of formulating a program and of building a mass party to have been superseded. Their fundamental view is that "revolutionary action in itself...generates revolutionary consciousness, organization and conditions." (Quoted in "Uruguay: A Role for Urban Guerrillas?" by Jean Stubbs in the January 1971 issue of

International, p. 38.)

As an example, they cite Cuba: "Instead of the long process of the formation of a mass party, a guerrilla foco is installed with a dozen men and this generates consciousness, organization and revolutionary conditions which culminate in a true Revolution."

They hold this position very firmly: "The basic principles of a socialist Revolution are given and tried out in countries like Cuba, and there's no need to discuss it more. It's enough to stick to those principles, and show -- by deeds -- the path of insurrection to achieve their application."

This contempt for the revolutionary theory and practice of Leninism is fostered by one of the peculiarities of Uruguay of which the Tupamaros are very much aware: "Our armed forces, some 12,000 men [they mean the armed forces of the state], weakly armed and trained are one of the weakest repressive apparatus in Latin America." (p. 40.)

It is instructive that the Tupamaros do not involve themselves in debating over theories as to the relative merits of the variants of guerrilla warfare. Insofar as they display concern for theory, it touches only the key issue separating them from Leninism; that is, the role of a combat party. As they see it, it is sufficient for twelve men to begin exemplary actions of an insurrectional nature and the rest will follow.

What Ciro Bustos Learned from Che Guevara

Another example, this time from Bolivia, will enable us to bring the problem into still sharper focus. The example has the additional advantage that it concerns a "foquista," therefore a "guerrillista" easily answered by Comrade Maitan. It is no one less than Ciro Bustos, who was imprisoned along with Régis Debray on charges of having participated in the guerrilla front opened in Bolivia by Che Guevara.

Bustos, upon being released from prison, went to Chile, since owing to the repression under the Levingston government he could not go to his native country of Argentina. An interview with him was published in the February 2, 1971, issue of Punto Final.

In the interview, Ciro Bustos made clear that throughout his imprisonment in Camiri, Bolivia, he successfully maintained the guise of not being a guerrilla fighter, of being instead a "simple gull" who had been

"taken in" by the guerrillas. He did this at first in order to help protect his comrades. Once begun, he was compelled to continue the role to his "disgust."

The truth is, however, that he was and remains a convinced guerrilla fighter, an advocate of "foquismo," meaning by this "a revolutionary nucleus in action, installed in a definite zone...."

He was asked the following question:

"What changes in revolutionary theory did Che's guerrilla introduce, viewed in critical perspective?"

Ciro Bustos replied:

"'Che's guerrilla,' if you are referring to his action in Bolivia, was the result of his entire trajectory as a guerrilla leader from the Sierra Maestra up to his death. Fidel Castro and the group that brought Che into the Cuban feat, resorted to a method of struggle that has always been used in Latin America, including in the wars for independence and later by Zapata and Villa in Mexico and by Sandino in Nicaragua.

"The change was -- as a method of struggle -- to carry guerrilla warfare from the level of tactics to strategy [llevar la guerrilla del plano táctico al estratégico], and in the political arena [lo político] to establish and demonstrate, in Cuba, that the revolution is not made along the road of sterile ideological 'chit-chat,' but along the road of armed struggle and that for a Latin America, fundamentally peasant, the principal form of struggle is guerrilla warfare. Che, with his permanent elaboration of theory and with his practical example lifted this schema to a high level, where the alternative is no longer national but implies the necessity -- inescapably -- of confronting and destroying imperialism by means of armed struggle, generated and developed throughout the subcontinent as the only possibility of achieving the genuine liberation of our peoples."

The conclusion reached by Ciro Bustos that the peoples of Latin America will achieve their emancipation from imperialism only by taking arms in hand is dead right. No revolutionist will dispute it.

His theory of how this goal is to be reached is simplicity itself. You take guerrilla warfare as it has always been practiced in Latin America and lift it from a tactic to a strategy.

This eliminates the need for any sterile ideological chit-chat about Leninism, Trotskyism, or the role of a revolutionary-socialist party, or the problem of connecting up with the masses.

If you grant the basic premise of this disciple of Che Guevara that it is feasible to convert guerrilla warfare from a tactic to a strategy, it appears to me that the rest of the position taken by Ciro Bustos is quite consistent. In fact, as if in a laboratory experiment -- since he was not present at the last world congress and in all likelihood has not yet heard that such a thing occurred -- he enables us to see in two paragraphs where the basic position of the majority on this question ends up logically.

How Issue Was Posed at Last World Congress

In light of the foregoing, let me remind the leading comrades of the majority of the way the minority at the last world congress insisted upon the importance of regarding guerrilla warfare as a tactic and not a strategy.

It will be recalled that in the preparatory discussion, I submitted a document "Assessment of the Draft Resolution on Latin America." (Available in English in International Information Bulletin, No. 3, February 1969.) At the end of the document, I stressed three points "in order to avoid any possible misunderstanding." Two of these involved international actions, such as campaigns around single situations or single issues, and mobilizing aid for a national section under heavy repression. As was to be expected, these were acceptable to everyone.

The third point concerned orientation in relation to guerrilla war. At the time I could see no reason why the author or authors of the draft resolution on Latin America would not accept this, too. To my surprise, they rejected it. Here is the point:

"(3) A section of the Fourth International may find that at a certain stage of the revolutionary process in its country, it is necessary and productive to engage in guerrilla war, as a specific form of armed struggle. The proviso is that it be conceived as a tactic entailed by political considerations, not as a new-found formula guaranteeing quick or certain success, and that it be within the means available to the section. This holds, it should be added, not only for Latin America but for similar areas elsewhere.

"Finally, in view of the differences

that have emerged over the relative place of guerrilla war as a tactic, it would be well to examine the question more specifically in relation to the Transitional Program. Our movement has already recognized that in certain countries, under certain circumstances, guerrilla war can play a positive role. However, it has not analyzed the negative consequences of guerrilla war if it is attempted in countries, or under circumstances, where it is out of place. Experience would now seem to testify rather heavily for the conclusion that while the appearance of guerrillas can signify a sharp rise in the class struggle, it can also mark a phase of decline, in which case it must be judged as a sign of despair and desperation, one of the symptoms of defeat.

"As a consciously applied tactic, guerrilla war would seem to come under the sections of the Transitional Program dealing with the arming of the proletariat and the linkup between the proletariat and the peasantry.

"A critical study of the varied experience with guerrilla war in a whole series of countries would be extremely useful to put this tactic in better perspective, to relate it properly to political strategy, and to counteract the rather widespread tendency to elevate it into a universal formula and even a panacea." (p. 14.)

The rejection of this point was decisive in dividing the delegates at the last world congress into a majority and a minority. Perhaps some of the comrades of the majority did not understand what was involved. The quotations from Ciro Bustos, from the Tuparamos, and from Ladislav Dowbor will, I hope, make things clearer.

Taken in the light of Comrade Maitan's orientation toward guerrilla warfare, the quotations should also assist in providing a better understanding of the forces exerting pressure on our movement. In face of this pressure and the rejection of the position of regarding guerrilla warfare as a tactic, perhaps it will be understood why we feel some skepticism with regard to Comrade Maitan's assurances that on party building he has not changed at all -- he still holds it to be the ABC of Leninism and a sine qua non.

From a leader who rejects the Leninist concept of guerrilla warfare as an "auxiliary" form of struggle, such assurances are not convincing. I am reminded of the famous line from Bob Dylan: "You don't have to be a weatherman to know which way the wind

blows."

More Than Latin America Involved

In the discussion at the last world congress, the comrades of the majority insisted with some vehemence that the orientation toward guerrilla warfare involved Latin America and nowhere else.

The minority contended that this was an arbitrary and artificial approach that failed to take into account a series of different sets of interrelationships. Here is what I wrote in "Assessment of the Draft Resolution on Latin America":

"Another point to consider is whether the central concept in the draft resolution on Latin America, namely, giving a 'geographic-military' orientation priority over political strategy, can be logically confined to just one continent.

"The Cubans have hardly viewed it that way, and certainly the tendencies immediately under their influence do not view it that way. They incline rather strongly to view it as an internationally valid orientation, except -- perhaps -- in the imperialist sector, about which they have little to say; and the sector of the degenerated or deformed workers states about which they have nothing at all to say so far as the struggle for a political revolution is concerned. It would be very difficult to find convincing arguments to persuade these currents that in the colonial world as a whole the tactic of preparation of and engagement in rural guerrilla war for a prolonged period is valid only for Latin America.

"In fact logic speaks for an opposite conclusion. If the draft resolution on Latin America were to be passed in its present form by the coming world congress, our movement would be hard put to explain why the orientation decided on as good for Latin America was considered to be bad for the rest of the colonial and semicolonial world. It would certainly be contended that such a position is inconsistent and that such a sharp geographical demarcation cannot reasonably be made." (pp. 11-12.)

This view has been confirmed so strikingly that one wonders what prevents Comrade Maitan and those who agree with him from writing about it and drawing the appropriate conclusions. I will leave aside the situation in the Middle East, and even Québec, to take up a development that is absolutely decisive in showing that the orientation cannot be confined to Latin America,

or even the colonial world generally, inasmuch as it has taken place in the central stronghold of the international capitalist system.

The two editors of Scanlan's, a monthly exposé publication in the United States, devoted their entire January 1971 issue of ninety-six full-sized pages to the single theme, emblazoned in colors on the cover: "Suppressed Issue: Guerrilla War in the USA." (The words "suppressed issue" refer to the fact that three printers in the U.S. refused to handle the issue. The editors moved to Canada to publish their magazine, shipping it across the border to subscribers and newsstands.)

The main feature is a section entitled "Guerrilla Acts of Sabotage and Terrorism in the United States 1965-1970." This is a day-by-day listing, running from February 12, 1965, to September 7, 1970, of every "definable instance of left-wing terrorism and sabotage in America since such acts began in 1965" that Scanlan's reporters and researchers could find in the press or in official reports. The grand total, according to their adding machine, amounts to 1,391 cases. (I will leave aside the validity of the list, which is rather dubious.)

In the opinion of the editors, what is occurring -- although the government refuses to admit it -- is "urban guerrilla war in the most advanced industrial nation in the world."

Editor Warren Hinckle is of the view that "if the bombings continue this fall [1970] at the current hurricane pace, it is only going to take someone to say it is so and guerrilla warfare will become a catchword of the 1970's along with women's liberation and the mini skirt."

The authors believe that the Nixon administration is completely unable to stop it:

"The FBI, the Secret Service, the Treasury Department, the Pentagon, the CIA and even the Bureau of Mines are all in on the chase. With all the resources at their disposal to monitor and supervise reputed revolutionaries, it must be a matter of considerable professional and political embarrassment that the combined law enforcement, military, security and spy establishment of the United States has been unable to catch even a literal handful of the thousands of underground revolutionaries who, now as a matter of daily benediction, harass the government with sniper fire or bombs."

Why are they so hard to catch? Because of the effectiveness of their organizational technique. They are divided into tiny cells, consisting of as few as three persons.

What is the social origin of most of these guerrilla fighters?

There are two broad groupings: one consists of members of the black and other nonwhite communities; the other "is the white and middle-to-upper-class citizens of college or dropout age...."

Are these engagers in sabotage and terrorism to be associated with any particular organization?

"The highest profile among the practitioners of this art of the explosionist raspberry," replies Editor Hinckle, "are the Weatherman, who make it a point of principle each time they blow up something to drive the FBI quite crazy by popping up somewhere in the country and telling how they got away with it. It is all a little in the manner of a terrorist's April Fool, but the joke appears always to be on the FBI."

Where did this "new wave of urban guerrillas" get the idea?

"Our object was to document planned guerrilla actions that clearly employed the technique of urban guerrilla warfare as practiced in Latin America." The Tupamaros are mentioned various times. Hinckle refers to the tactics "successfully employed by insurgent forces in Ireland, China, Israel, Algeria, Cuba and currently in Latin American and African nations...."

These tactics "are being experimentally adapted to American surroundings by black urban guerrillas and the burgeoning middle and upper-middle class white revolutionaries who operate with relative impunity from college oriented communities which have become cultural and political 'enclaves' in America."

And who are the theoreticians studied by the new wave of urban guerrillas?

"The revolutionary ideology that Mao defined in his treatises on guerrilla war is regarded in most instances as absolute, major exceptions being his political structure and the encrusted bureaucracy of vertical communism."

Another authority is Régis Debray. "The primary theoretician of the 'new guerrilla' is Régis Debray, a young French philosopher-journalist and close

friend of Fidel Castro....

"Accepting Mao's concept of the guerrillas being one with the people as the sine qua non of a successful guerrilla movement, Debray rejected Mao's principle that 'politics directs the gun.' Rather, it is the gun, in the form of successful guerrilla actions against definable manifestations of imperialism and oppression of the people, which defines and develops successful revolutionary politics.

"This shattering revision of traditional Marxism off's the Communist Party from its traditional and cherished role as the political vanguard which sets the correct 'line' for the people. The guerrillas, through terrorist and military actions geared to gain propaganda successes, gradually politicize and assemble the exploited classes on their side. Communist bureaucrats are left out in the cold.

"What drives most professional observers of the new American revolutionaries to such fits of distraction and disgust is their lack of discernible 'goals,' of 'something to replace what they want to tear down,' their emphasis on the primacy of revolutionary tactics over political structure. Yet this reality, so defiant of traditional politics, is the carefully thought out ideological cornerstone of contemporary guerrilla theory as it is being practiced in Latin America and experimented with under the unique conditions that the United States has to offer any pioneers. The traditional left, and particularly the older left -- from social democrats on the right to leftover descendants of the Luddites on the left -- takes about as much joy in guerrilla politics as Sprig Agnew."

Still another source of the guerrilla gospel is Carlos Marighella. "Marighella's Minimanual of the Urban Guerrilla...is prized as a crime-doer's textbook by American guerrillas."

The editors indicate their appreciation of the applicability of Marighella's prescriptions to the "unique conditions" of the United States by including selections from the Minimanual.

Finally, what is the program of the new wave of urban guerrilla fighters in the United States?

"All American guerrilla groups," Editor Hinckle informs us, "have revolutionary tactics in common, but few share any common ideology. Few, indeed, have a definable ideology or post-revolutionary program. Most are feeling their way along the bombing trail, letting the tactics, as it were, quarter-

back the action in the manner suggested by Regis Debray....

"If the guerrillas can be said to uniformly agree on any goals of American guerrilla warfare in addition to fighting the hated war in Southeast Asia, it would be to support national liberation movements throughout the world and, of course, the black liberation struggle in the United States."

The issue contains some interviews with members of the "new wave" that offer us a rare view of their psychological makeup, including -- according to the editors -- their almost universal use of drugs, ranging from the mildest to the hardest, but for lack of space I will leave these aside.

It would be a mistake to think that this reportage can be dismissed as a piece of propaganda designed to advance the Weatherman group that cannot possibly have much impact in the current situation in the United States. Like all political bids in the radical movement, it requires analysis and an answer by the Trotskyist movement. Its importance can be judged from the fact that the Central Headquarters of the Black Panther party, upon receiving an advance copy of the January issue of Scanlan's, gave it official approval and began serializing it in the weekly Black Panther.

The entire front page of the December 19, 1970, issue of The Black Panther was used to duplicate the headline "Guerrilla War in the U.S.A." A map of the United States from Scanlan's, showing in clusters, graduated as to size, where acts of "armed propaganda" have occurred in the past five years was likewise featured on the front page of The Black Panther as well as an editorial, repeating word for word some of the paragraphs written by Warren Hinckle.

Through The Black Panther, if not through other channels, the issue of urban guerrilla war in the United States has been raised in the vanguard on an international scale. It can be sidestepped only at heavy political cost. What answer should we give?

It is true that a great rise has occurred in the United States in acts of individual violence, not to mention ghetto explosions, or neighborhood flare-ups. The causes lie in the deteriorating economic and social situation and the effort of the capitalist state to repress the resulting dissatisfaction. The escalation of violence is one of the signs of this dialectical interplay.

To recognize this and to seek to turn the radicalization of the Afro-Americans and other oppressed nationalities, the women, and the campus toward constructing the only instrument that can offer a genuine solution -- a mass revolutionary-socialist party -- is one thing. To place the label of "urban guerrilla war" on the radicalization and to seek to divert it into the dead end of terrorism and sabotage conducted by tiny groups, lacking any consistent revolutionary ideology at all and in isolation from the working class, is something else again. A question of basic principles is involved.

To meet this challenge -- which the Socialist Workers party can be counted on to do -- requires, among other things, an effective polemic against the sources from which the "new wave of urban guerrillas" draws theoretical nourishment. This includes not only Debray, but Mao, Marighella, the Tupamaros, the Weatherman experimentalists, and, in general, any ideologist who considers the Leninist strategy of party building to have been superseded by guerrilla action, whether rural or urban.

The Shift in Comrade Maitan's Views

In my article "A Contribution to the Discussion on Revolutionary Strategy in Latin America," I asserted:

"The course prescribed by Comrade Maitan and made official in the Latin-American resolution represents a concession to ultraleftism. This is how it must be characterized objectively." (Op. Cit., p. 12.)

As to how a resolution of this kind could gain a majority, I offered an explanation along the following lines:

First, that some of the radicalizing youth which our movement had recently begun recruiting in various areas were not yet free of ultraleftism. This was to be expected, owing to their lack of political experience. These youth especially admired the Latin-American guerrilla fighters, above all Che Guevara, which of course was not to their discredit -- quite the contrary -- but which did present a problem to be overcome in their further development.

Secondly, a sector of the Trotskyist movement in Latin America had become convinced that we faced an impasse unless we turned to guerrilla action. What was required, as these comrades saw it, was more than a tac-

tical approach to engaging in guerrilla warfare. "They wanted total commitment of the movement as a whole, the elevation of engagement on the guerrilla road into a principle." (Ibid., p. 12.)

It was the combination of these two views among many of the delegates at the last world congress, I said, that provided Comrade Maitan with his majority.

Comrade Maitan's insistence on the need and the possibility of a quick breakthrough provided a platform on which these two sectors could unite. The perspective of gaining leadership of a mass movement, or even winning power in a selected country in short order, was very attractive to some of the impatient youth, and, of course, dovetailed with the thinking of those who visualized guerrilla warfare as having extraordinary powers not available to other means.

The role played by Comrade Maitan was thus of key importance in cementing together the combination.

On Comrade Maitan's own evolution -- which also played a role, naturally -- I said among other things: "It was precisely following this exhilarating expansion of forces [the dramatic growth in the May-June 1968 period] that some of the leaders of the Fourth International, above all Comrade Maitan, began adapting to ultraleftism." (Ibid., p. 12)

In his current article "Once Again on the Revolutionary Perspectives in Latin America -- Defense of an Orientation and a Method," Comrade Maitan -- speaking for himself, if not the others -- protests that even if the formulation "began adapting to ultraleftism" were apt, "unfortunately the chronology is wrong." To prove his point, he states: "From Comrade Hansen's first article itself it can be deduced that I had defined my orientation before May 1968 and thus before the Trotskyist breakthrough in France was concretized in the building of the Ligue." (Op. cit., p. 6.)

I am quite willing to stand corrected on the date of Comrade Maitan's conversion to the guerrilla orientation, all the more so inasmuch as, despite his remark about my insinuating he "cleverly manipulated" the delegates, he does not challenge my analysis of the composition of the majority. Just the same it is regrettable that he himself is not more specific about his own evolution on this question.

The best I can do, going by the available record, is to put it somewhere between two dates.

The first date is 1965. In that year, Comrade Maitan wrote an article "Some Criticisms and Comments Concerning the

Document on the African Revolution" in which he posed "the hypothesis of formation, for example, of a workers state in Egypt in a relatively cold way, without the active revolutionary intervention of the masses at the crucial moment of the qualitative leap." (In English in International Information Bulletin, December 1965. See also my reply in the same issue of the Bulletin, "Nasser's Egypt -- On the Way to a Workers State?")

According to this view, if I am not mistaken, a regime like the one headed by Nasser could create a workers state in a "cold way"; that is, without a revolution, without the mobilization of the masses, and, one supposes, without guerrilla warfare, either rural or urban, or any other form of armed struggle whether viewed as a tactic or a strategy.

The second date is May 15, 1968, the date of the letter sent by Comrade Maitan to the United Secretariat, which he submitted under the title "An Insufficient Document" to the international pre-congress discussion. The stand taken in this letter appears to me to be in polar opposition to the stand taken in the 1965 article. Let me recall the two key paragraphs:

"But it is only by successes or revolutionary struggles at the head of a mass movement in one or several countries that we will be able to surmount our difficulties and present contradictions. What is expected from us from now on is that we demonstrate in practice the historical value of our movement and we will be judged essentially on this basis. This can appear, at bottom, to be an elementary truth, but it is a question of inspiring our whole activity with this recognition. It is a question more precisely of determining in what countries we have the best chance of a breakthrough and subordinating everything to the elementary necessity for a success in these countries, and even, if necessary, in a single country. The rest will come later.

"There are, in fact, several countries where we at present have possibilities for an important breakthrough (youth movement in France, antiwar movement and youth movement in the United States, South Africa with a certain time) and we must unquestionably make an effort in the direction of India, but we must place everything above all on a sector of Latin America and you know very well which one. We must exploit the preparatory period of the congress to convince the entire movement to operate in practice, every day, with this perspective. Permit me to express myself a little paradoxically: it is necessary to understand and to explain that at the present stage the International will be built around Bolivia." (In English in International Information Bulletin, January 1969, Part 2,

In place of a "relatively cold way" -- in which the Fourth International is excluded from playing an active role -- the perspective has veered to concentrating everything on a "breakthrough" whereby a small group of Fourth Internationalists, by picking up the gun, can place themselves at the head of the masses and win power in short order, even if they have to keep repeating the attempt for a decade or more.

My attempt at bracketing the date of Comrade Maitan's conversion may be incorrect. Perhaps it occurred much earlier and he sees no contradiction between his current advocacy of a guerrilla orientation and his earlier view that a workers state can be formed in a relatively cold way, "without the active revolutionary intervention of the masses at the crucial moment of the qualitative leap."

It may be that it all depends on which country you have in mind. In some, the hot way is required. In others the relatively cold way is sufficient.

Even at the cost of my having to make another self-criticism, I hope more material will be provided by Comrade Maitan on this question.

One of the items in the evolution of Comrade Maitan's thinking might have been the internal developments in the Italian section of the Fourth International at that time, when, if I am informed correctly, the bulk of the youth were lost to a Maoist current. But the notorious paucity of records concerning the internal life of the Italian section precludes me from forming a judgment. Perhaps Comrade Maitan can offer us some information on this not unimportant aspect of the question.

Orientations in Other Sectors

Comrade Maitan is vexed at my conclusion that the course prescribed by him and made official in the Latin-American resolution represents a concession to ultraleftism. I stated further -- and I see no reason to change this opinion:

"Consistent application of the course charted by Comrade Maitan would prove disastrous for the Fourth International. The line could hardly be confined to Latin America or even the colonial world generally, for the same ultraleft tendencies to which the adaptation has been made are operative in the imperialist centers. Fostering an ultraleft course in Latin America would surely be paralleled by permissiveness toward ultraleftism, if not worse, in the imperialist centers. In fact, there is evidence that this has already been occurring in the quite different context of conditions

in Britain." ("A Contribution to the Discussion on Revolutionary Strategy in Latin America," Op. cit., p. 12.)

Comrade Maitan brushes this aside with the comment that "while not denying that connections exist between the orientations proposed for Latin America and possible orientations in other sectors, we think that no progress can be made in our discussion by mixing in problems which, if they need be discussed at all, should be taken up in a different context." ("Once Again on the Revolutionary Perspectives in Latin America -- Defense of an Orientation and a Method." Op. cit., p. 6.)

Unfortunately, it is not possible, as we have seen, to cut things up so neatly and so disposably. I should like to insist on the importance of the inter-relationship between the guerrilla orientation for Latin America adopted at the last world congress and the orientation followed by certain other sectors of the world Trotskyist movement.

Blackburn on Urban Guerrilla War

The London Times of January 12, 1971, published an article entitled "The stagnant revolution." A subtitle was still more eye-catching: "Robin Blackburn looks at the New Left in disarray."

The article was not about the New Left in Britain but -- the United States. Blackburn, or course, told it like it is.

"So far," he said, "nothing has emerged to fill the gap left by the collapse of Students for a Democratic Society which split into warring factions last year and in the process completely lost its strength among the mass of students. Today the various revolutionary splinter groups are no larger than their counterparts in Britain and certainly smaller than those in France, Germany, Italy or Japan. Yet they command more attention than their numbers alone would seem to warrant since, in a situation already charged with social tension, they are readier to move from the word to the deed."

No, Blackburn is not referring to the Trotskyists of the Socialist Workers party and the Young Socialist Alliance or to any of the groups that have jointly inspired and mounted the mass mobilizations against the war in Vietnam that caused one president to drop out of active politics and that have led Nixon to say that he may end up as only a "one-term" president. Blackburn has other forces in mind:

"The F.B.I. claims that there were more than 3,000 'bombings' last year, causing many millions of dollars of damage,

though as yet little loss of life. Most of these actions are the work of small collectives, comprising a dozen or, at most, two dozen members. The only white revolutionary organization committed to such tactics is the Weathermen, formerly a faction within the S.D.S.: its membership is entirely underground and cannot number more than a few hundred.

"The urge to 'pick up the gun' in part reflects the sense of impotence of the mass radical movement, which has proved unable to stop the war in Indo-China, let alone pose a revolutionary challenge to American capitalism. Only a tiny minority has drawn the conclusion that outright civil war is the only option left."

Blackburn mentions specific cases of bombings ascribable to those who have presumably opted for outright civil war. He includes in his survey the following: "At the end of last year Hoover of the F.B.I. announced that he had discovered a collective, comprising almost entirely of priests and nuns, with a plan to kidnap a White House official to be exchanged for a bombing halt in Indo-China."

(Blackburn is referring to the Daniel and Philip Berrigan frame-up case. He fails to mention that the two pacifist priests, speaking from their prison cells in Danbury, Connecticut, where they were alleged to have masterminded the plot, branded the charges as fabrications.)

I will cite two more paragraphs to show beyond question the ideology represented by Robin Blackburn:

"Just when repression or frustration seem to have destroyed the revolutionary movement, it is sustained by the eruption of revolt in some new context. Another source of its power of survival is the new youth culture which has merged with revolutionary politics in a variety of bizarre forms. The old left formed tightly integrated political parties which provided for every aspect of its members....

"The Weatherman consciously tries to extend the links between the cultural and political underground, which is why it sprung Timothy Leary from jail, winning him over to its political line in the process. The Weatherman claims that the prevalence of the youth culture renders revolutionaries much less visible to the agents of repression. It has now been underground for over six months and none of them has been captured in spite of the fact that all their leaders are on the F.B.I.'s most-wanted list."

Bernadine Dohrn's Letter

The true situation is quite different

from Blackburn's account. Both the Black Panthers and the Weatherpeople were already deeply divided when Robin Blackburn wrote his article. The factional struggle in the Black Panther Party soon flared into a public scandal with each side "expelling" the other on charges that included the foulest personal recriminations. This internal war can appear bizarre and even incomprehensible unless you know the central political issue -- the "strategy" of armed struggle in the U.S., that is, the very developments Blackburn found so exhilarating in the American scene.

Robin Blackburn is silent about it, but surely he must have been aware of the December 6, 1970, "New Morning" statement released by the "Weather Underground" over the signature of Bernadine Dohrn, one of the leaders involved in the Manhattan townhouse explosion in which three Weatherpeople lost their lives. The letter is of great interest, for it expresses the views of a sector that is moving away from the "strategy" of guerrilla warfare after having tasted its fruits. Here are some of the points made by Dohrn:

"It has been nine months since the townhouse explosion. In that time, the future of our revolution has been changed decisively. A growing illegal organization of young women and men can live and fight and love inside Babylon. The FBI can't catch us; we've pierced their bullet-proof shield. But the townhouse forever destroyed our belief that armed struggle is the only real revolutionary struggle.

"It is time for the movement to go out into the air, to organize, to risk calling rallies and demonstrations, to convince that mass actions against the war and in support of rebellions do make a difference....

"The deaths of three friends ended our military conception of what we are doing. It took us weeks of careful talking to rediscover our roots, to remember that we had been turned-on to the possibilities of revolution by denying the schools, the jobs, the death relationships we were 'educated' for."

Weatherwoman Dohrn tells how the group opened up its bombing activities with inner qualms. "Many people in the collective did not want to be involved in the large scale, almost random bombing offensive that was planned. But they struggled day and night and eventually, everyone agreed to do their part."

"At the end," she continues, "they believed and acted as if only those who die are proved revolutionaries." They went into action without really considering what came next.

"This tendency to consider only bombings or picking up the gun as revolu-

tionary, with the glorification of the heavier the better, we've called the military error. After the explosion, we called off all armed actions until such time as we felt the causes had been understood and acted upon. We found that the alternative direction already existed among us and had been developed within other collectives. We became aware that a group of outlaws who are isolated from the youth communities do not have a sense of what is going on, cannot develop strategies that grow to include large numbers of people....

"We are so used to feeling powerless that we believe the pig propaganda about the death of the movement, or some bad politics about rallies being obsolete and bullshit....

"The demonstrations and strikes following the rape of Indochina and the murders at Jackson and Kent last May showed real power and made a strong difference. New people were reached and involved and the government was put on the defensive." (Rat, December 17, 1971.)

Bernadine Dohrn's letter made an impact among the protagonists of urban guerrilla war in the United States and Canada. Among the Black Panthers it served to detonate the growing internal frictions.

Nine of the Black Panthers on trial in New York wrote an open letter in reply to Bernadine Dohrn. The letter, published in the January 19, 1971, issue of the East Village Other, cited Che Guevara and Carlos Marighella with approval, and denounced the strategy of party building in the strongest terms.

The publication of this letter by Eldridge Cleaver's faction was answered by Huey Newton's faction with immediate expulsions, and Eldridge Cleaver responded in kind. The Black Panther party was split wide open. After that, the key issue became obscured by personal insults, charges of murder, and threats of assassination.

One final item, and the true situation -- so cavalierly ignored by Robin Blackburn -- will be outlined sufficiently well for our discussion.

According to Blackburn, Timothy Leary was won over to the Weatherman line. In January Leary was placed under house arrest in Algiers by Eldridge Cleaver. The key difference again was over armed struggle.

Leary, having become convinced he should be a revolutionary, was faithfully studying the works of Kim Il Sung. But he had not really changed his basic views. He had simply added armed struggle as a finishing touch. In his opinion, up to now revolutions have simply meant

the substitution of one set of "armed dictators" for another. "I think that if my philosophy is understood, we might find a way out of this boring, repetitious cycle of one armed group overthrowing another and becoming just as bad."

Here is how it can be done: "In order to break this cycle, I firmly believe that you must liberate people's nervous systems. Free their nervous systems and the rest follows. [Isn't it remarkable how the rest follows? -- J.H.] That is my philosophy and I can summarize it in a few sentences. Internal Liberation must precede external. And you must move from neurological liberation to the religious, to the sexual, to the cultural, to the economic, to the political, to the armed -- instead of the other way." (Quoted in Good Times, February 19, 1971.)

Eldridge Cleaver believes in the reverse order, or at least beginning with armed struggle. Hence the need to keep the good patron saint of hallucinogens under close surveillance in his quarters in Algiers.

The obligation to bring the British public up to date on the seamier side of urban guerrilla war in the United States concerns the London Times and the guest writer whom they billed as "an editor of the New Left Review in Britain."

Of primary interest to us is something more immediate -- The Red Mole bills this British Weatherman and conscious anti-Leninist as a member of its Editorial Board.

This fact helps explain the otherwise puzzling hybrid character of The Red Mole.

Entryism and the Ultrared Mole

During the period when a sector of the world Trotskyist movement was practicing "entryism sui generis," one of the ploys was to start up a paper that adopted the guise of being "left centrist." The idea was that when a sector of the organized working class ultimately began moving in a revolutionary direction it would, in its first stage, be left centrist. To be in position to head such a current, some of the Trotskyists who engaged in entryism sui generis thought they had to appear as left centrists -- even though they were really revolutionists.

A supporting circle around the "left centrist" paper made a convenient halfway house for a group of Trotskyists doing entry work and another group assigned to maintaining an "independent" group and sometimes an "independent" newspaper or magazine, often distinguished for its irregularity.

The entire tactic was dangerous, particularly if stretched out. The Stalinist or Social Democratic milieu in which the entry work was carried out was conducive to disintegration of revolutionary morale. The "independent" work tended to become downgraded in importance. Recruiting to Trotskyism, particularly the integration of new cadres, presented special difficulties that inclined the Trotskyist militants to take anything but an aggressive attitude in this field. Out of fear of not conforming to specifications, the "left centrist" paper tended to be politically sluggish and unattractive (genuinely left-centrist papers were often much more audacious in taking a stance further to the left, particularly in occasionally opening their columns to Trotskyist material labeled as such). Worst of all, among some members carrying out this tactic, the left-centrist mask, worn so long, finally tended to become the person -- the one-time Trotskyist changed into a hardened left-centrist.

The Red Mole is remindful of a sui generis "left centrist" Trotskyist paper -- but viewed in a mirror in which the former sign "keep right" reads, as it should in a reflection, "keep left."

The new schema would seem to run as follows: The milieu in which we work is the radicalizing students. In their first stage, they pass through ultraleftism. You have to be there to meet them and attract them. The best tactic in speaking with them is to adopt an ultraleft stance. Just as the old sui generis paper tried to include genuine left centrists on its editorial board, so The Red Mole tries to include genuine representatives of the "new wave of urban guerrillas," or facsimiles thereof, like British Weatherman Robin Blackburn.

It should be observed that in both instances -- both the old sui generis paper and The Red Mole -- the premises are sound enough. Revolutionists have to remain in contact with the masses, either a sector in movement or one likely to move. Currently, the Trotskyists have to remain in contact with the radicalizing youth, recruiting to the maximum from them.

What is disputable in both instances is the symmetrical tactical course, which in neither case follows from the premises. To remain in contact with sources of recruitment, and to carry out actual recruitment successfully, does not require adaptation to the mistakes, prejudices, or low level of political experience and understanding encountered among those we are seeking to win over. Their training as Trotskyists must begin in the very process of recruiting them.

To adapt to the milieu entails three immediate dangers: (1) confusion

as to where Trotskyism stands on issues of considerable substance; (2) loss of one's own militants to the milieu; (3) waste of time and missing of opportunities.

The current permissive attitude toward ultraleftism involves basically similar dangers. Moreover a new logic can be set in motion. Just as entryism fostered the belief among some of those who practiced it that left centrism is Trotskyism, so permissiveness toward ultraleftism can become converted into the conviction that ultraleftism is Trotskyism.

The outcome can thus be most deleterious to the main task facing our movement as a whole -- construction of a Leninist-type party.

"Let It Bleed"

The confusion created by The Red Mole's adaptation to ultraleftism carries a political overhead. A good example was the scandal resulting from the display given to the article on the Labour party by Editorial Board Member Robin Blackburn in the April 15, 1970, issue and the failure to answer it properly.

In "Let It Bleed," Blackburn argued that the Labour party was a "capitalist party," not essentially different from the Tory party, that its hold over the British working class had been "weakened," and therefore in the upcoming general election it should be actively fought by revolutionists.

Blackburn proposed a course of action:

"The central argument of this article is that after the recent extended experience of Labour Government it would be absolutely incorrect for us to offer any kind of support to Harold Wilson or the Party he leads. I will assume that no Marxist can believe in passively abstaining from politics, especially during an election period when the political consciousness of the masses is stimulated. I will therefore conclude that the only principled course for revolutionary socialists during the coming election will be an active campaign to discredit both of Britain's large capitalist parties. In this campaign we should certainly pull none of our punches. We should disrupt the campaigns of the bourgeois parties and their leading spokesmen using all the imaginative and direct methods which the last few years have taught us."

It is true that the editors printed a brief note stating that with Blackburn's article The Red Mole "opens a long-needed discussion on the Labour Party -- a problem which has bedevilled the revolutionary

movement since its existence. Our pages will be open to all comrades wishing to discuss the question."

However, no article of equivalent length, stating the position of the British Trotskyists, was carried in the same issue. No opposing view at all was printed in that issue. In fact, from the editorial note itself there was no way of knowing that Blackburn did not represent the view of the Editorial Board on this question. For all anyone might know, reading that issue of The Red Mole, Blackburn's analysis and conclusions might be those of the British Trotskyists.

This created a considerable problem. In other English-speaking countries in particular, the Trotskyists were suddenly confronted with the political necessity of publicly disavowing the ultraleft line carried by The Red Mole on this question.

For Blackburn, of course, it was quite a coup, a good example of what a partisan of urban guerrilla warfare can accomplish with an adroit and well-timed thrust.

Two issues later, May 14, 1970, The Red Mole published the first contribution in the discussion "open to all comrades wishing to discuss the question."

This was a letter from Pat Jordan, Secretary, International Marxist Group. After praising Blackburn on some things, Comrade Jordan ventured to say, "I think him wrong in some of his assumptions."

Then he came to the main point of his letter: "As soon as time permits I will be putting down my thoughts in full."

"In the meantime," he continued, "a few points:"

The strongest of these was that he thought Blackburn was "wrong in comparing the Labour Party with the U.S. Democratic Party."

For himself, Comrade Jordan took a pessimistic view of the pragmatic possibilities: "If all the revolutionary Marxists in the whole country went all out to persuade people to vote Labour, it is doubtful whether this would win the L.P. one seat."

However, it was necessary to indicate preferences. He would prefer Labour to win because that "would help to destroy social democracy."

As to what the revolutionary movement ought to do, Comrade Jordan proposed: "The fruitful thing revolutionaries can do in the coming General

Election campaign is to use the heightened political interest (especially among the young people) to spread revolutionary ideas and expose the bourgeois politicians of all parties."

To undo the damage caused by Blackburn's article, this letter was much too little and much too late.

The June 1, 1970, issue of The Red Mole carried the promised article by Comrade Jordan. He had little difficulty disposing of Blackburn's analysis of the nature of the Labour party; but it must be said that when he reached the point where it became necessary to project a course of action, he came down with a sudden case of stomach pains:

"For reasons given above, I am in favour of the victory of Labour in the coming election campaign. However, it would be the height of foolishness to draw from this the conclusion that revolutionaries' main activity should be that of calling upon people to vote Labour. In the first place, it is totally unrealistic to think that small revolutionary groups can influence the outcome of the election. Secondly, to make our main thrust the slogan 'Vote Labour' would be to put ourselves on the left-wing of those forces mystifying the whole electoral process. This would, in effect, be adding our weight to those processes which enable the Labour Party to divert working class aspirations. It would also hinder our endeavors to spread revolutionary ideas and our efforts to warn the working class that its main concern should be to prepare for an attack from whatever government emerges.

"To concentrate upon the slogan 'Keep the Tories Out' would be merely another way of saying 'Vote Labour,' under present circumstances.

"However, it is imperative, from a Marxist point of view, to explain very clearly to the politically aware why it would be best for Labour to win. This is an educational process, not an election-deciding exercise."

Is it too much to say that this position is ambiguous? The IMG rejects the course of running a candidate of its own. It has no independent alternative, not even a candidate for a minor post. Nevertheless the IMG refuses to back the slogan "Vote Labour." Thus the IMG opens itself to the charge of following an abstentionist policy.

Times can arise when it would be correct to call for a boycott of bourgeois elections -- an active boycott. However, as we know from Lenin, this implies a revolutionary upsurge

in which the working class is prepared to drive for power, arms in hand. That was hardly the situation in Britain in 1970. Electoral illusions still persist among the majority of the British workers however few are to be found in the head of Robin Blackburn.

Seeking a "vector" that would enable him to avoid the charge of abstentionism, Comrade Jordan said: "I am in favour of the victory of Labour...."

And what does a worker do in the voting booth? Nothing more than take off his cap and salute like a red mole?

The way Comrade Jordan muddled through in his article does not end the story. On another page of the very same issue of The Red Mole a contrasting line came out with admirable clarity.

In a cartoon strip, two political demagogues stand, each on his soap box, the one labeled "Vote Conservative Now," the other "Vote Labour!" (Underneath, the cartoonist has written, "They're all the same.") A red mole holds up his sign, "Workers and students struggle against capitalism!"

A second panel shows a crowd of moles ganging up on the two speakers, physically beating both of them, trampling them underfoot, tearing up the placard marked "Vote Labour," and joining a long line of moles triumphantly carrying the red flag. That's a bully way of dispelling the electoral illusions of the British workers and showing them what we think of free speech!

As to the relative impact of the article written by the secretary of the IMG and the accompanying cartoon there is no question as to which made the greater impression on the readers of The Red Mole. "Imaginative and direct methods" pay off! Especially when used by an editor to tip off the readers as to the paper's real line.

Within the IMG, a minority tendency voiced some telling criticisms of the orientation of the majority. I will not go into the internal differences in the IMG at this time, but refer comrades to the extensive compilation of both the minority and majority documents entitled "Key Documents Discussed by the IMG Membership in Preparation for Their March 1970 Conference." (See SWP Internal Information Bulletin, October 1970.)

Of special interest in connection with the immediate point is the article dated May 17, 1970, by Connie Harris "The Labour Party in Perspective -- In Reply to Robin Blackburn." This was submitted to The Red Mole for publication in accordance with the public announcement that "Our pages will be open to all comrades wishing to discuss the question."

Despite the promise, the article by Connie Harris was rejected.

On Guerrilla Action in Québec

How unrealistic it is for Comrade Maitan to seek to confine the discussion to Latin America was shown in a most convincing way by the attempts of two different small groups, each calling themselves "FLQ," to imitate in Montreal what some of the guerrilla groups have been doing in Uruguay, Brazil, and elsewhere. Not only that. The reaction of The Red Mole was something more than enthusiastic. Urban guerrilla warfare "right in the heart of Canada itself!"

The Canadian Trotskyist movement, which was under heavy attack in the general repression -- two of its leading members were imprisoned -- had little choice but to publicly state its differences with The Red Mole on this question.

In an article in the December 21, 1970, issue of Labor Challenge, Comrade Ross Dowson sought, first, to rectify the bad reporting of The Red Mole concerning the nature, views, and political level of the FLQ. Secondly, he maintained that the support voiced by The Red Mole for the means used by the two action groups was ultraleft.

"The Red Mole article," Comrade Dowson wrote, "commences with a lengthy quotation by Leon Trotsky where he rejects any concept that individual terror is permissible or impermissible from a 'pure morals' point of view and where he expresses his 'sympathies' with terrorists in their struggle against national and political oppression.

"But this is far from sufficient to explain Trotsky's, the revolutionary socialist, position on individual terror. To the above it is necessary to add a further statement by Trotsky: 'Individual terrorism in our eyes is inadmissible -- precisely for the reason that it lowers the masses in their own consciousness, reconciles them to impotence and directs their glances and hopes towards the great

avenger and emancipator who will some day come and accomplish this mission....

"'If a pinch of powder and a slug of lead are ample to shoot the enemy through the neck, where is the need of a class organization...what need is there for a party? What is the need of meetings, mass agitation, elections?' asks Trotsky.

"Exactly. Insofar as the handful of persons who identify themselves as FLQ have articulated any theory it is a mélange of ideas, all of which reject all of the forms under which real struggle is now unfolding in Quebec. It is the concept of guerrilla actions, undertaken by small groups, that are supposed to terrorize the bourgeoisie, render capitalist society inoperative and open the way to a change in power, or to spark the working class, already poised, into massive and decisive action -- any and every theory that is substitutist for the class and for the building of mass action.

"Needless to say the kidnappings and the murder committed in the name of the FLQ have achieved, as could be foreseen, none of the results desired by their perpetrators. Far from embarrassing the government and bringing it to the brink they have served to strengthen its hand. They have neither inspired nor mobilized the Québécois, other than the forces of conservatism behind Drapeau in the Montreal civic elections."

While the Canadian Trotskyists were trying to differentiate their own position from the ultraleft one taken by The Red Mole, they were confronted by an even worse problem -- what to do about the remarks made by Comrade Tariq Ali on a television panel filmed at Oxford by CTV, the national Canadian television network. This program was shown throughout Canada, while our comrades, like the rest of the left, were doing their best to mobilize a massive defense against the repression.

Some very provocative questions were directed at Comrade Ali. In answering, he did not appear to keep well in mind the situation in Canada and the need to help to the best of his ability in mobilizing a broad defense against the repression.

For instance, he was asked: "Do you believe, sir, that society today has reached the point where you see you have to use violence to achieve your ends?"

Comrade Ali replied: "I would

say that this is largely a tactical question, depending precisely on the degree of opposition which we encounter in our struggle for socialism. But briefly, the answer is yes. I think that to achieve the ends we believe in to the establishment of a socialist republic, I believe that a certain element of violence is absolutely necessary."

Another provocative question was: "When you were president of the Oxford Debating Union did you not invite Governor Wallace of Alabama to speak at the Oxford Union?"

Comrade Ali answered: "Yes. Do you know why? Because we would have killed him."

That did not come off so well, and Comrade Ali was soon explaining: "Of course, when I say, 'Kill him,' I don't mean it necessarily literally. It's a tactical question. If I believed we could get away with killing him we would. It is a question of if you are organized to do so. I don't think we are. I meant kill him politically. That is what we wanted to do, but that wouldn't have taken place because Wallace wouldn't have got further past Oxford Station."

The setting for broadcasting this TV program, it should be underlined, was Canada in the midst of a great police hunt for urban guerrillas charged with kidnapping and murder. It was shown on the television screens during a repression in which our own headquarters and the homes of many comrades were raided, and two of our leaders were thrown into prison.

Comrade Ali did what he could to turn the provocative questions into a high-level dialogue on the difference between "individual terror" with mass support and "individual terror" without mass support -- a distinction a bit too fine, one must suppose, for the Canadian audience to appreciate at the moment. "At times," he said, "I think that individual terror becomes necessary. I don't believe in individual terror as a principle; I am completely opposed to it. I'll give you a concrete instance. I don't believe in solving this particular argument by shooting off a few people, who are making rude noises. Nor do I that individual terror can in itself bring you any nearer to what we believe in. Of course not. I believe that individual terror is justified when you have a mass movement, when you have mass support inside a particular society, then it is justified."

Could one disapprove of the Canadian Trotskyists thinking: "Defend us from our friends; we can defend

ourselves from our enemies"?

In seeking the source of the ultrared coloration of the IMG, the personal inclinations of the majority of its leaders should not be taken as the decisive determinant. It can hardly be questioned that some of them feel more comfortable in a red T-shirt adorned with their totem than in less imaginative dress. It is understandable that in trying to recruit from the radicalizing youth they are responsive to a certain degree to the pressure of this milieu. Yet their intentions are the best. The key point to bear in mind is that they are only trying to apply the orientation adopted by the last world congress.

Indeed, from this standpoint, they are rather consistent. If urban guerrilla warfare works for the Tupamaros in a city as large as Montevideo, is it logical to exclude experimenting with it in other large cities? Robin Blackburn, a member of the Editorial Board of The Red Mole is excited over what the Weatherpeople have done in the U.S.; and other members, it seems, became similarly enthused over what was done in Montreal by the FLQ commandos.

One would think that the majority leadership of the Fourth International would recognize the truly dangerous implications flowing from the guerrilla orientation they sponsored at the last world congress.

No Scapegoats, Please

Let me turn now to a question that at first sight seems hardly worth taking up but that on further examination turns out to be of some concern.

In the article I wrote, "A Contribution to the Discussion on Revolutionary Strategy in Latin America," I included a section entitled "The Extraordinary Value of Hugo Blanco's Work." In summarizing the facts, I mentioned the name of Comrade Nahuel Moreno.

Comrade Maitan agrees by and large with what I wrote about the gains made in Peru before the imprisonment of Comrade Blanco. He objects, however, to my mentioning the name of Comrade Moreno in the way I did. In a footnote, Comrade Maitan says: "In his document Hansen presents Moreno in a very favorable light, writing: 'Our first big advance came in Peru through the work of Hugo Blanco, carried out with the active participation of Argentine comrades like Daniel Pereyra and Eduardo Creus under the leadership of Comrade Nahuel Moreno.' A stage in the life of our Peruvian movement on which the opinions of the participants are, to say the least, divided, is presented in a grossly oversimplified way. Furthermore, it is not our movement's style to use expressions like 'Under the leadership of Comrade Nahuel Moreno,' which

should be avoided even if they had any correspondence with the reality." ("Once Again on the Revolutionary Perspectives in Latin America -- Defense of an Orientation and a Method." Op. cit., p. 19.)

My comment was based on what I saw at the time during a trip in which I visited both Peru and Argentina as well as other countries. It is true that sharp tactical differences subsequently arose among the comrades. I did not go into these because the conclusions to be drawn would not have changed the overall lesson that one of the prime reasons for the defeat suffered in Peru in 1963 "was the absence of a Leninist combat party on a national scale." Despite Comrade Maitan's criticism, I am still of the opinion that what I said about Comrade Moreno's role was factually accurate.

Of course, Comrade Maitan had his own sources of information at the time I visited Peru and Argentina; that is, the Buró Latinoamericano (BLA) which operated under the leadership of J. Posadas. While I never met Posadas himself to my knowledge, I did meet various members of the BLA. My impression was that they were not to be trusted as sources of information. Nothing that has happened since has caused me to change this opinion. However, I am quite willing to consider any evidence in Comrade Maitan's possession that might lead me to reconsider.

Comrade Maitan's footnote is appended to a sharp political attack against Comrade Moreno. The basis utilized for this is a document "by Comrade Moreno at the end of 1967" that takes as a starting point in analyzing the revolutionary reality in the southern end of South America the fact that Inti Peredo and his guerrilla group still survived after the death of Che Guevara. According to the quotation, Comrade Moreno wrote that the number one task is "first to save and then to consolidate the ELN and Inti as its unchallenged leader. There is no more urgent task than this."

Comrade Maitan cites an additional paragraph in which Comrade Moreno insists on the importance of OLAS and the importance of joining "its armed detachments" or helping "to create them where they do not exist. This means loyal and disciplined recognition of the leadership of OLAS, recognition of the disciplined and centralized character which the struggle and its Latin-American organization must have, and most of all the need to maintain direct contact with the Cuban leadership, which is the unchallenged leadership of the continental civil war and

of OLAS. It also means our unconditional entry into its armed detachments...."

Comrade Maitan then says:

"This piece in unique is a mélange of mechanical formulations, opportunism, adventurism, and distortion of the objective facts. But how can it be explained that after writing this Moreno opted for the minority line and that Comrade Hansen has never had the least occasion to differentiate himself from him?" (Ibid. p. 10.)

To further understand the context of Comrade Maitan's remarks and his bringing in the quotation, it should be noted that he is responding to my raising the question of whether the Bolivian comrades in becoming engaged in Inti Peredo's guerrilla front in Bolivia were aware that he held a foquista concept and was opposed to forming a political party.

Comrade Maitan unfortunately did not provide the source of the quotation. This did not facilitate my search to find it. Thus, as yet, I have not been able to check it in the original. I do not thereby challenge its existence. There are gaps in my files owing mainly to the fact that the comrades in many countries in Latin America, including Argentina, have had to work in underground conditions for long years. Sometimes they overlook sending documents to New York. In certain instances, while they mail them, they never get through. Consequently I can make only a rough approximation of the context in which such a unique mélange, as Comrade Maitan puts it, "of mechanical formulations, opportunism, adventurism, and distortion of the objective facts" could have been written.

1. The Argentine comrades were doing their best to support the Bolivian section in the course being followed there. Thus the October 16, 1967, issue of La Verdad carried an article on the situation in Bolivia "by the well-known leader Hugo González Moscoso."

2. Fidel Castro's confirmation October 18, 1967, that Che Guevara had been killed (he was executed October 9), set off a wave of mourning among leftists everywhere in which the world Trotskyist movement participated. The date cited by Comrade Maitan for the quotation he used would indicate that it was written in this period.

3. In a document written in January 1968 and published in Estrategia No. 7 (September 1968) Comrade Moreno mentions the Peredo brothers only as belonging to the Bolivian Communist

party. Guevara made a mistake, in Comrade Moreno's opinion, in relying on this party although the fact that he did was a hopeful sign that the Cubans through OLAS were overcoming their previous backwardness on the political level and might be on the road to developing a correct political program for the revolutionary struggle in Latin America.

4. It is quite true that Comrade Moreno was strongly of the opinion at the time that OLAS was a most hopeful development and that the Trotskyists should participate in it and strive to help move it from within toward adoption of a program of democratic and transitional demands. Although I do not share some of Comrade Moreno's formulations, I think his basic political reaction was correct. As part of the process of testing out what might develop, it was necessary to assume the sincerity of the delegates in adopting the aims declared at the OLAS conference. Comrade Moreno, of course, was also a strong partisan on a continental strategy of armed struggle under the leadership of the Cubans.

Comrade Maitan wonders how it is to be explained that after writing this Moreno opted for the minority line....

I do not find this so difficult to explain. I assume he did so in the light of further consideration of the changing situation in Latin America and in the light of the discussion preparatory to the last world congress.

In any case, we can count on Comrade Moreno to speak for himself during the discussion leading up to the next world congress and to specify -- as he did at the last world congress -- where he has differences, if any, on some points with both positions.

A graver matter must be considered in connection with this.

At the last world congress, the delegates had to weigh the claims of two factions as to which represented the majority of the Argentine section. On the basis of the available evidence, it was decided that the group associated with El Combatiente had a majority. Since it was not possible to reach an agreement on unifying the two tendencies within one organization, particularly because of the adamant attitude of the newly recognized majority, the group associated with La Verdad was recognized as a sympathizing organization. Both sides agreed to refrain from attacking each other publicly and to do their best to reunite their forces as soon as possible.

It must be emphasized that the basis for recognizing the El Combatiente group as the majority was the number of members claimed to be in favor of its positions. The decision was not made on the basis of any political differences. These were far from clear.

Since the last world congress, the El Combatiente tendency has split into at least three warring groups, each of them vying publicly with the others.

In view of this fact, the question inevitably arises: What was the nature of the "majority" that was recognized at the last world congress? Was it an unprincipled combination? If not, how is its sudden division into at least three tendencies to be explained?

Comrade Maitan does not address himself to this crucial question. Instead he utilizes my passing reference to Comrade Moreno to open up a political attack against him.

Without thereby inferring that Comrade Maitan had any direct connection with them, some further items should be noted.

The May 1, 1970, issue of The Red Mole printed an extensive interview "with a leading Argentinian comrade from the revolutionary Peronist tendency which developed inside the mass Peronist movement. This tendency is now in a united front with the PRT (Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores, the Argentinian section of the Fourth International), with a section of the Communist Party, and with the Camillistas (revolutionary Catholics who call themselves after the Colombian guerrilla priest Camilo Torres)."

The Red Mole asked this "leading Argentinian comrade" if he could "tell us more about the PRT."

"The PRT," he responded, "after kicking Moreno out, with his propagandist and syndicalist positions, had most of its strength in Tucuman...."

Why did the Editorial Board of The Red Mole print this public attack against Comrade Moreno? Some, at least, of the Editorial Board members knew that three things were wrong with it: (1) It was a lie to say that Comrade Moreno had been kicked out. (2) The political characterization of his position was a distortion. (3) To print an attack of this kind was in violation of the decision reached at the last world congress.

The next item is to be found in

the center fold of the June 29, 1970, issue of Rouge -- a translation in full of the interview that was printed by The Red Mole, including the public political attack against Comrade Moreno and the lie that he had been "expelled" (exclu) from the PRT, which a footnote explains is the Argentine section of the Fourth International.

Item number three is more current. This is a statement in the form of questions and answers published in the January-February 1971 issue of the Buenos Aires magazine Cristianismo y Revolución (Christianity and Revolution) which the editors identify as having been received from the Ejército Revolucionario del Pueblo (Revolutionary Army of the People).

The first question is: "What is the ERP and when was it born?"

A long answer follows. The first paragraph reads as follows:

"The ERP was born as a consequence of a political decision of the last congress of the Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores (PRT) held last July. The fourth congress of the party, in 1968, initiated the process that culminated in the creation of the ERP by expelling the rightist faction of Nahuel Moreno. An intense stage of ideological struggle was then opened against the reformist and syndicalist tendencies of the party by those who sought to consolidate the proposal of 'organizing a combat party.'"

In the second paragraph we are informed:

"In an at times confused process, which we have defined as the 'class struggle' within the party, a battle was waged against (a) a reformist current that still exists in certain sectors of the organization, and (b) against a tendency that hid its centrism behind defense of the classical concept of a 'Bolshevik party.' During these two years the party advanced, confusedly but firmly -- incorporating the experience of the continental revolution in the decade of the seventies, incorporating and discussing the principles of 'Maoism,' and the propositions of 'Marighelism' and of the 'Tupamaros' thus indicating its permanent radicalization."

After listing a number of achievements, including "expropriations, bombings, etc.," the statement refers to the fifth congress of July 1970, where a firm decision was reached to remove the "internal contradictions" so as to reach a new level of struggle. "The congress then reaffirmed this

central thesis: 'Consolidation of a classical revolutionary party, ideologically socialist and participating actively in the proletarian internationalism of the Fourth International led by Ernest Mandel, Pierre Frank and Alain Krivine.'

(May we hope for a footnote in Comrade Maitan's next article pointing out that it is not in our movement's style to use expressions like "led by Ernest Mandel, Pierre Frank and Alain Krivine"?)

The above statement is by the grouping currently enjoying, if I am not mistaken, Comrade Maitan's support as the "majority" in Argentina.

One more item will complete the unpleasant list we have been compelled to consider. This is a lengthy document, dated November 24, 1970, and signed by "Domingo," that is circulating in South America under the title "The Crisis in the Trotskyist Movement in Argentina." The Spanish text, we trust, will be translated into other languages, including English, and submitted as part of the international discussion. I will quote merely some of the statements bearing directly on the point regarding the attack on Comrade Moreno.

"The world congress," the document states, "decided to recognize the majority tendency (El Combatiente) as the Argentinian section, granting the La Verdad tendency the status of a sympathizing organization. Since that time the La Verdad group, disregarding the responsible attitude the congress took in striving to keep the discussion on a political level and adopting a solution that permitted the dissident minority to remain within the framework of the international Trotskyist movement, has indulged in unacceptable factional maneuvers, provoking a deterioration in its relations with the International."

A footnote adduces "evidence" to back up this assertion:

"The La Verdad group held its national congress without giving advance notice to the International, without sending the documents adopted, or information on the debates. What is worse: A representative of the international minority was invited to attend the congress and in fact participated in it."

On the alleged "representative," this was a member of the Socialist Workers party in the U.S. who happened by coincidence to arrive in Argentina during the congress, which was held

in underground conditions. This "representative," among other matters, gave a full report at the September 1970 meeting of the United Secretariat on what he had observed in Argentina. No one, including Comrade Maitan, challenged his report as being factional.

The November 24 document goes into the crisis of the Argentine section in some detail. As part of the effort to justify his conclusions, the author provides a background going back to 1951, that is, a period of two decades. This covers three years before the international split in our movement and eleven years before the reunification congress of 1963. The purpose of this background material is to single out Comrade Moreno for attack as a leader of the Argentine Trotskyist movement. Everything that is currently wrong is traced back to Comrade Moreno.

The one-sidedness of this "background" can be judged from two simple facts: (1) The author says nothing at all, not a word, about the role played by J. Posadas and his backers in the vicissitudes of the Argentine Trotskyist movement. (2) The author is similarly silent about Comrade Moreno's positive association with Comrade Hugo Blanco and the other participants in the work in Peru.

An additional fact to be noted is the author's effort to drive a wedge between the La Verdad group and the American Trotskyists. For instance, referring to Comrade Moreno's essay on the Chinese revolution published in 50 Years of the World Revolution 1917-1967, the author adds a footnote: "The SWP comrades found themselves forces to explicitly dissociate themselves from the analysis in this essay."

More of the same is to be found in the document, but this should be sufficient for the time being.

What is the purpose of all this? You don't need a weatherman to know which way the wind blows. The last world congress used a numerical, not a political criterion, to decide which tendency in Argentina represented the majority. If the coming world congress reviews that decision in the light of subsequent developments, it would in all likelihood have to recognize that the La Verdad group now constitutes the majority. To block this, a new criterion would have to be found, a political criterion. What seems to be afoot is a concerted effort to find such a criterion, even if it is necessary to go back to 1951.

This would also explain why public

attacks have been launched against Comrade Moreno. It is a way of stirring up the factional fires.

II.

In Reply to Comrades Germain and Knoeller

The Aim of the Latin-American Resolution

I am not sure that before writing their article "The Strategic Orientation of the Revolutionists in Latin America" Comrade Ernest Germain and Comrade Martine Knoeller had an opportunity to read Comrade Maitan's article "Once Again on the Revolutionary Perspectives in Latin America -- Defense of an Orientation and a Method" even though Comrade Maitan dates his article more than a month earlier than theirs. Consequently I am not sure whether they thought he had written "an insufficient document" or whether they had already written their article and decided to submit it anyway even though it repeated some of Comrade Maitan's best arguments.

However that may be, Comrade Maitan holds prior claim owing to the earlier date of his article. That is one reason why I took it up first. Another is that I consider him to have established his priority as the ideological leader of the tendency in the Fourth International that has turned to guerrilla warfare as an "orientation and a method."

Although others had advocated engagement in guerrilla warfare -- perhaps in some instances as an orientation, and in others as a tactic -- no one will dispute, I suppose, that Comrade Maitan was the first in the central leadership to go on record (in his May 15, 1968, letter "An Insufficient Document") with a blunt statement on the imperative need for the Fourth International to determine "in what countries we have the best chance of a breakthrough and subordinating everything to the elementary necessity for a success in these countries, and even, if necessary, in a single country."

It was in this same letter that he stated, "...we must place everything above all on a sector of Latin America and you know very well which one."

It was in this letter, too, that he permitted himself to express himself "a little paradoxically: it is necessary to understand and to explain that at the present stage the International will be built around Bolivia."

This was the basic viewpoint

from which the "orientation and method" flowed that Comrade Maitan argued for so eloquently at the last world congress and that proved so attractive to a majority of the delegates.

Comrades Germain and Knoeller do not discuss this. Perhaps that is because they hold a different view from his on what is the best way to present the orientation and method, and to defend it from criticism.

In contrast to Comrade Maitan, whose main objective was to put the Fourth International in a practical way on the road to guerrilla action as a "strategy" that would lead to a "breakthrough" in a selected Latin-American country, Comrades Germain and Knoeller conceive that the Latin-American document at the last world congress had in the main a different intent. "Its purpose was to define the position of the Fourth International in the great ideological debate that is polarizing the revolutionary vanguard in Latin America."

Good. But then what line defines that position? And what course of action is proposed aside from engaging in the great ideological debate?

Once adopted, Comrade Maitan's orientation and method certainly determined how the position of the Fourth International would be defined in public debates; it also determined what should be done in practice in the field of action.

While I am on this point, I should like to say that Comrades Germain and Knoeller, as responsible leaders, are duty bound, it appears to me, to concern themselves with the origin of Comrade Maitan's position as voiced in his letter "An Insufficient Document" and to express their views on it, the better to clarify the framework within which they have taken their position.

Why did they fail to do this? A possible explanation is that it is but one facet of a basic contradiction running throughout their document. This is the contradiction between the real situation and their preconceptions or, perhaps better, misjudgments of it.

The Debate in the Latin-American Vanguard

A good example to begin with is the contradiction between the reality of the "great ideological debate" going on in Latin America and Comrades Germain and Knoeller's view of it.

The "real and actual debate of the Latin-American vanguard," they say,

is "for or against the strategy of armed struggle."

It is a debate between those holding to the "strategic orientation" of overthrowing the bourgeois state in Latin America and those maintaining "a neoreformist and neo-Stalinist variant of revolution by stages...."

The truth is that the debate in this simplified form came to a peak at the OLAS conference in 1967. The issue was posed as "armed struggle" versus "peaceful coexistence," with some fire being directed at those, like Rodney Arismendi, who sought to straddle the issue.

In that debate we stood with the Cuban leaders and such guerrilla fighters as Francisco Prada who charged the right-wing leadership of the Venezuelan Communist Party with betrayal. Our movement took a public position in this struggle against the Stalinists and in support of the revolutionists who had come to realize the perfidiousness of Stalinism and the fact that it was not revolutionary but just the contrary.

In reality there were three main positions: (1) The position of "peaceful coexistence" represented by the unreconstructed Stalinists, called "right-wing betrayers" at the OLAS conference. (2) The position of Francisco Prada, Fidel Castro, and others, favoring a "strategy" of armed struggle -- mainly, at the time, rural guerrilla warfare on a continental scale for a prolonged period. (3) The Trotskyist position holding to the orientation and method of building revolutionary socialist combat parties in the Leninist model.

We supported the advocates of guerrilla warfare in this specific battle with the Latin-American advocates of peaceful coexistence, but we did not fuse with them, or give up our program. We never lost sight of the fact that these revolutionists were not debating as Leninists. They were debating as protagonists of the "strategy" of armed struggle.

Even at that time they were not entirely sure of their position. At the OLAS conference, particularly in the corridors and in the private discussions, it was clear that some of the delegates -- and not unimportant ones -- were uneasy over the defeats suffered by the guerrilla movement (this was before the death of Che Guevara). They were bothered by the ineffectiveness of the strategy.

These delegates, I repeat, were

in the forefront of the struggle against the Stalinist position of a "peaceful" or "electoral" road to power in Latin America. They were not armchair strategists. Some of them were active participants in the guerrilla fronts of that time.

It was certainly justified to hope that through further experience and further discussion these revolutionists would develop toward Leninism; that is, toward an understanding of the necessity to build a revolutionary-socialist party and to bring its capacities to bear in the class struggle in Latin America.

Our role, as Trotskyists, was to do what we could to help this process along. That could be accomplished only by advancing from what we already held in common with them (rejection of the Stalinist concepts of "peaceful coexistence," "parliamentary road to power," etc.) to the key point at issue; the need for a revolutionary-socialist party.

Actually the debate had already begun and the Trotskyist influence had been registered at least four years earlier. This is clear from the testimony offered by Héctor Béjar in his book Peru 1965: Notes on a Guerrilla Experience regarding the impact of the practical revolutionary example set by the small group of Trotskyists under Hugo Blanco in 1961-63.

The debate continued even while the fighters associated with Luis de la Puente, Guillermo Lobatón, Héctor Béjar, Ricardo Gadea, and others were undergoing another tragic experience in 1965 with the "strategy" of armed struggle. The accuracy of the criticisms of the fresh experiment, leveled by the Peruvian Trotskyists at the time (see "The Guerrilla War in Peru," in World Outlook, August 6, 1965, p. 9.), can be judged by comparing them with the admissions in Béjar's book.

By way of contrast, it ought to be noted that the Latin-American resolution passed at the last world congress not only did not criticize the concept that guided Héctor Béjar and his comrades, it approved the concept: "The failure of certain guerrilla experiments (in Peru, for example) came about, in large measure, more from errors in assessing the situation, the trends, and the relationship of forces among the masses than from errors in conception." (Intercontinental Press, July 14, 1969, p. 719.) The resolution stands below the critical level reached by Béjar!

How difficult it is for activists like Béjar to draw the main lesson concerning the need for a revolutionary party is shown by the fact that in his book he polemicizes against party building. Even after the experience of such a spectacular succession of defeats as the ones suffered by Guevara and the Peredo brothers, Béjar is still biased against party building, viewing bureaucratism as inherent in the structure of a party, whatever the original intent or program of its founders might be.

Finally, we have the example in 1970, cited earlier, of a current Brazilian protagonist and practitioner of the "strategy" of armed struggle, Ladislav Dowbor, who is quite consciously anti-Leninist in the sense of believing that this "strategy" supersedes the Leninist strategy of building a revolutionary party.

Let me repeat: There are three main positions in the "great ideological debate": (1) Those like the Stalinists who believe in or argue for the feasibility of a "parliamentary road" to power. (2) The Trotskyists, who have been defending the Leninist concept of party building and who have been struggling to apply it, an outstanding instance being Hugo Blanco. (3) Those under the influence of the Cubans particularly, who advance the "strategy" of armed struggle in opposition to both the protagonists of a "parliamentary road" and the partisans of the Leninist concept.

Shifts have occurred in the course of this debate.

First of all, the school that placed precedence on guerrilla warfare has been declining. This is ascribable to the lowering of the Cuban commitment along these lines and to the fact that this "strategy" has yielded no major victories for the past decade.

Secondly, the Stalinist current has been strengthened somewhat. The Cubans lost out, by and large, in their factional struggle with the "right wing" betrayers. One of the results was a revival of popular frontism in Latin America.

Among the items enabling us to understand the underlying reasons for this are the failure of the Cubans to come to grips with Stalinism (out of disdain for the history and theory of Bolshevism and their concern for the economic and diplomatic support supplied by Moscow which was essential to Cuba's defense against U.S. imperialism), the failure of the Cubans to

appreciate that their own victory had caused U.S. imperialism to initiate countermeasures that reduced the effectiveness of guerrilla warfare, the failure of the Cubans to see how the Leninist concept of party building in Latin America could open the way to overcoming the new difficulties.

Thirdly, the Trotskyist tendency has become stronger in various ways, including the adherence of fresh forces. At the same time new differences and even divisions have occurred in our movement, as a sector responded to the arguments and "exemplary" actions of the strategists of guerrilla warfare. This influence was reflected in the "turn" adopted by the majority at the last world congress.

How could one get a picture of the reality of the debate so different from the view that Comrades Germain and Knoeller have of it?

The answer is that this is the picture that emerges from observing the debate in its development as a whole, over a sufficient period of time, paying attention to the trends, and not forgetting, above all, to observe the origin and evolution of the thinking of different currents in the Trotskyist movement itself in relation to changes in the milieu and the composition of the membership, and to such stabilizing factors as the political maturity of the cadres and the experience and continuity of the leadership.

Point of Qualitative Change

This way of analyzing the broad debate likewise leads to a view different from that presented by Comrades Germain and Knoeller on how to place the discussion that has been going on inside the world Trotskyist movement. For it follows from the above analysis that the last world congress marked a point of qualitative change and that this, in and of itself, demands explanation.

Why, for instance, did the change occur in 1969 and not in 1965, or 1963, or earlier?

Special interest attaches to why the change did not occur in 1963, the year of the reunification of the world Trotskyist movement. One of the factors that made reunification possible on a principled basis was a common appreciation of the significance of the Cuban revolution, including the role that guerrilla warfare had played in the victory.

If either of the two sides could be said to have been more influenced by the tactics used by the Cubans, it was, in my opinion, the International Committee, inasmuch as its forces in Argentina had already attracted the interest of Che Guevara, and some of them, as in Peru, had experimented with guerrilla warfare.

Out of this practical experience with guerrilla warfare, the majority of the International Committee came to definite conclusions concerning the limitations of guerrilla warfare in Latin America. In particular the lesson was drawn that while it is an advantageous tactic in certain situations, it can, unless it is properly held to an auxiliary role, prove completely disruptive to the process of party building.

Thus had anyone proposed a resolution at the Reunification Congress lifting guerrilla warfare from a tactic to a "strategy," the forces of the International Committee would have been overwhelmingly against it.

Whatever changes may have occurred in the views of individual leaders of the Fourth International in the following period, the same consensus would have prevailed in December 1965 at the second congress following reunification, particularly in view of the fresh defeats suffered in Peru by protagonists of the "strategy" of armed struggle.

Still leaving aside how certain individuals may have viewed the question, the shift that was eventually registered in the form of a qualitative change in majority opinion at the 1969 congress originated, I think, in relation to the OLAS conference in Havana in 1967.

The implications of the debates and decisions taken there were that the Cubans intended to become directly involved in guerrilla actions on the continent. This signified a considerable alteration in the situation -- the Cubans had at their disposal the resources of state power.

Some very practical questions at once confronted the Latin-American Trotskyists, especially in the areas of key interest to the Cubans. The main one, as had already become clear from reports in the press before the OLAS conference, was Bolivia. The Bolivian Trotskyists were therefore confronted with an acute tactical question. Their decision was to participate. They were excluded from Che Guevara's front but did become involved

when the struggle was reopened under Inti Peredo.

However, let us note carefully two provisos: (1) It was -- whatever the opportunities -- still regarded by our movement at that time as a tactical question. (2) It was contingent, so far as substantial resources were concerned, on the involvement of the Cubans.

In many circles the disastrous end of the guerrilla front opened by Che Guevara did not dampen enthusiasm for the "strategy" of armed struggle, although it certainly led the Cubans to pause for reflection. In fact, the disaster had an opposite effect on a not inconsiderable layer. Their enthusiasm for the "strategy" increased.

In my opinion, this was because of Guevara's martyrdom. Instead of cold analysis of the political reasons for the defeat, an emotional reaction swept the entire left, particularly the radicalizing youth. Che Guevara became enshrined as an exemplary figure in his devotion to the revolutionary cause, and the halo extended to his "strategy" of armed struggle.

Then came the May-June 1968 events in France out of which our French comrades succeeded in gaining a new levy many times the size of their group before the sudden immense upsurge. Along with this big influx of recruits came some rather sharp problems connected with Maoism, spontanéism, ultraleftism, and other characteristics of some of the radicalizing youth in various countries at the time. These could be worked out only through further experience, discussion, and debate -- all requiring time.

In the Fourth International, forces had thus accumulated that were ready to respond to an appeal on the urgency and the realizability of a "breakthrough." This ingredient was supplied by Comrade Maitan, as I have already pointed out.

It was this combination and not any "manipulation" of delegates that explains why the last congress, and not an earlier one, made the "turn" toward the "strategy" of armed struggle.

This also explains why the Fourth International came to such a position only ten years after the victory of the Cuban revolution.

And it explains the curious fact that in taking this course at such a belated date, we may pass guer-

rilla fighters moving in the opposite direction (like some of the Weather-people) as a result of conclusions reached on their own, a possibility noted by Hugo Blanco. (See "Letter from Hugo Blanco to Livio Maitan -- October 17, 1970," International Information Bulletin, No. 2, January 1971, p. 3.)

We are provided, too, with a political explanation of the fact that Comrade Maitan and others were prepared in 1969 to push ahead no matter what the objections from the bulk of the forces of the International Committee that had participated in the Reunification Congress in 1963.

By placing the article written by Comrades Germain and Knoeller in this context, which is the real one, it can be more easily understood why their arguments are so singularly wide of the mark, however attractive the verve and eloquence with which they are voiced.

The SWP -- Fiction and Reality

To illustrate the meaning of the document on Latin America adopted by the last congress, as they interpret it, Comrades Germain and Knoeller present an imaginary exchange of opinion between the Bolivian miners and a character named "Comrade Hansen" (who bears little resemblance to the real person, if I may be permitted to express an opinion on this).

The exchange makes for good theater. It includes a chorus of "thousands of miners and other vanguard Bolivian workers," who, insisting on the need to defend themselves right now by means of armed struggle, respond with fitting irony to the "nice program" for the future offered by "Comrade Hansen."

The following passage jumps out: "And if Comrade Hansen thinks that it is enough to answer them, 'Build a revolutionary party before thinking about military self defense,' they would be still more justified in replying...." ("The Strategic Orientation of the Revolutionists in Latin America," op. cit., p. 30.)

Let me repeat that the words put in my mouth exist solely in the imagination of Comrades Germain and Knoeller. They, of course, expected no one to take this as anything but hyperbole on their part.

That they could imagine it, however, and put it down as part of an argument suggests a certain estima-

tion on their part not only of my way of thinking but of that of the Socialist Workers party as a whole. The estimation is that we are quite rigid, mechanical, and even conservative -- that we agree on the necessity of armed defense only in a single category, outlined by them as the "classical" variant of armed struggle, which I will come to later.

If Comrades Germain and Knoeller really believe this, it would be much easier to eliminate any misunderstandings if they said it outright, for then we could answer it just as frankly and avoid the temptation of competing as playwrights.

In another passage, Comrades Germain and Knoeller include a comparison that would seem to indicate they see a parallel between the position I have argued for and the one held by "Healy and other sectarians." I will cite the entire paragraph:

"Likewise, in seeking to counterpose party building to the strategy of armed struggle, Comrade Hansen is leading the discussion into a blind alley. In the same way, party building could be counterposed to any strategy, for example participating in mass demonstrations. This is the error Healy and other sectarians make who have reproached the SWP for participating in the antiwar movement, the Black nationalist movement, and the women's liberation movement rather than 'building the revolutionary party.' The SWP has replied correctly to these infantile objections that there is no other way to build a revolutionary party -- as opposed to a sect or religious-type cult -- than formulating a correct strategy corresponding to the concerns and needs of the masses themselves." (Ibid., p. 29. Emphasis in original.)

I do not know if this is sufficient to prove that Comrades Germain and Knoeller hold the view that in the current discussion the SWP is arguing for a "nice" but "sectarian" program on a par with that of the Healyites and other sectarians, but their references are enough to lead me to suspect it.

In any case, their estimate of the SWP position is also a component of the discussion. For purposes of clarification, it would be advantageous to know whether they view the SWP as sectarian -- at least in this instance. And, if they do hold this opinion, it would be advantageous to know they think the SWP took this sectarian direction only recently, or whether they

would put the date further in the past. I doubt that they hold the view that the SWP was always sectarian, for they refer (on page 31) to the SWP's "revolutionary tradition" and to my own "revolutionary background."

So if they hold the view that the SWP has become conservatized, will they please tell us when this occurred? Was it during the years of battling McCarthyism, or more recently with the entrance into the party of a generation of youth who became revolutionists under the influence of the Cuban revolution and the Black liberation struggle? Or still more recently with the growth of American Trotskyism as an outcome of its efforts to mobilize the American people against the U.S. imperialist invasion of Vietnam so as to help speed the victory of the Vietnamese revolution?

On the other hand, if they do not believe that the SWP has become conservatized it would help the discussion if they would state this clearly and emphatically.

Is Armed Struggle a Mass Movement?

It may prove useful to examine in closer detail the argument advanced in the paragraph cited above.

From one angle, Comrades Germain and Knoeller appear to consider the armed-struggle movement to be a mass movement, like the antiwar movement, the Black nationalist movement, and the women's liberation movement.

Let us consider this. The SWP participated in the latter three movements precisely because they are mass movements. The SWP does this, in contrast to the Healyites and other sectarians, regardless of the current program or leaderships of these movements. In working in these mass movements, the SWP fights for transitional and democratic demands that will help pave the way for mass acceptance of the program of revolutionary socialism.

At present, however, neither in the U.S. nor in Latin America is armed struggle a mass movement. It is a strategy proposed by some as a substitute for the strategy of party building, which a few small groups are trying to put into practice in isolation from the masses. In the antiwar movement, the Black nationalist movement, and elsewhere, the SWP encounters protagonists of the strategy of armed struggle and guerrilla warfare. Some of them are conscious anti-Leninists like Ladislav Dowbor. We argue against them on a programmatic

level, pointing out that armed struggle represents, as a form or stage of the class struggle, the sharpest possible challenge to the state -- a challenge that is best not undertaken lightly.

If armed struggle existed today as a mass movement, like those mentioned, the situation would indeed be revolutionary and the entire discussion we are engaged in would be decidedly out of place.

It is precisely because armed struggle does not exist in the form of a mass movement that we find the question of how to reach the masses and how to lead them to victory at the heart of the entire dispute, not least of all in Latin America.

But Comrades Germain and Knoeller do not hold to the comparison they advanced. They suddenly switch to a different question that has nothing to do with what they have just argued. They switch to the necessity of "formulating a correct strategy corresponding to the concerns and needs of the masses themselves."

Ordinarily I would not argue against that. The phrase is so abstract that it appears to be in complete consonance with the Leninist position advanced long ago that we can formulate a correct strategy corresponding to the concerns and needs of the masses themselves by participating in their struggles, learning from them, advancing well-timed transitional and democratic demands, fighting opposing currents and building a leadership capable of following through to victory. This is the strategy of organizing a revolutionary-socialist party.

Unfortunately Comrades Germain and Knoeller have shifted to such a level of abstraction that they find it no contradiction to say in the very next sentences on the same page:

"The fact is that the strategy of preparing for [note the "preparing for" -- the ground shifts again in the argument] armed struggle, in most Latin-American countries, corresponds in precisely this way to the needs and preoccupations of the masses, to all their fighting experience over the last ten years. In these conditions, we will answer Comrade Hansen as the SWP answered Healy, that there is no way to build revolutionary parties in Latin America without adopting a correct position on one of the key strategic questions posed by the vanguard and the masses [how did "the vanguard" suddenly slip in at this point?] -- preparation for the armed

struggle."

We are back where we began, or almost back. If we have not got lost in trying to follow the ins and outs of this reasoning, "preparation" for armed struggle is equivalent to actual engagement in a real mass movement like the antiwar movement.

And what is "preparation"? It might mean only propaganda -- "public defense" of the famous "strategy" -- as we can gather from the next sentence: "Far from being mutually contradictory, party building, propaganda and agitation for transitional demands, and public defense of the strategy of armed struggle are inseparable and complementary in the present conditions in Latin America." (Emphasis added.)

Elsewhere, however (page 28), we are told that decidedly more is involved than propaganda for the strategy of armed struggle: "...and by correct position we do not mean a purely literary and propagandistic position but also a minimum of practical application...." (Emphasis added.)

A "minimum" is how much? Occasional small armed actions by a small group? Continual small armed actions by a somewhat larger group? In any case, not a mass action.

If the theory is that in carrying out a "minimum of practical application," one of the minimum acts might luckily serve as a detonator, touching off a social explosion, this amounts to adventurism of the grossest kind.

A "minimum of practical application" refers, I suppose, to "exemplary actions" not intended to detonate anything but just to serve as a source of inspiration to others to go and do likewise, mass movement or no mass movement.

The most significant feature of the admonition by Comrades Germain and Knoeller to engage in a "minimum of practical application" is its abstractness. It is linked to no specific country, to no definite time, to no particular revolutionary organization, to no concrete stage of the class struggle, to no mass movement at all. It stands in polar opposition to the concreteness demanded by Lenin in considering such questions.

And why "minimum" of practical application? If it's worth doing at all, isn't it worth doing to the maximum?

This is probably the place to

take note of an argument used by Comrade Maitan. He asks: "Has Comrade Hansen...ever thought of opposing building the party and participating in a general strike?" (Op. cit., p. 8.)

My answer is: No, I never have. But I have met revolutionists who have done just that. What for us is a tactical question is not so to them. They consider advocating and working for a general strike to be a strategy, a surefire way of winning a revolution.

Comrade Maitan's analogy is a telling one. It happens, however, to speak against elevating armed struggle into a strategy.

Politics of the "Death Wish"

Another argument advanced by Comrades Germain and Knoeller ends up rather unexpectedly upon close examination.

Seeking to counter my observations on the consequences of the succession of defeats suffered by the guerrilla fighters in Latin America for the past ten years, Comrades Germain and Knoeller say:

"He puts great stress on the heavy losses and disastrous defeats resulting from the guerrilla struggle in Latin America over the last ten years. What, then, is the mysterious reason why so many revolutionists and revolutionary groups in Latin America remain partisans of armed struggle, despite these losses? Is this out of a pure death wish or blind romanticism? Still, grave losses usually force militants to react, even those most set in their ways. Two years after the 1933 defeat in Germany neither the Communist nor the Socialist party dared repeat the policy that led to the disaster. Isn't ten years time in Latin America enough for people to draw the minimum lessons from catastrophic errors?" (Op. cit., pp. 23-24.)

Prolonged persistence in errors is explainable only by something irrational like a death wish? Isn't ten years time enough? But Comrades Germain and Knoeller imply elsewhere (page 28) that I may be guilty of a "fundamentally idealist" error. How is that to be explained? Such an error could be traced back, if one wanted to, for perhaps 2,500 years -- anyway, longer than I care to remember.

A more relevant example of the persistence of errors may be worth considering. I called attention above to the publicity given by Scanlan's

and The Black Panther to urban guerrilla warfare in the United States. On turning the pages of these publications and noting the testimonials, recommendations, and detailed information concerning guns, explosives, and sniper fire, those familiar with the history of the American socialist movement will inevitably be reminded of the lessons handed down from the eighteenth-eighties. Virtually the same errors are being repeated, not ten, but ninety years later.

For comrades who may not know this background, let me take a few paragraphs to fill them in.

On October 9, 1886, seven out of eight defendants in a Chicago court were condemned to death. In passing sentence, Judge Joseph E. Gary said that the conviction was not based on "any personal participation in the particular act" for which they had been dragged into court -- killing one policeman and wounding seventy others by throwing a bomb. They were condemned because "by speech and print" they had espoused the overthrow of the government by force and violence.

Of the seven, two were spared by the governor, one committed suicide, four were eventually hanged. These were the Haymarket martyrs.

It was proved at the time that they were victims of a most brazen frame-up. But their press in the preceding years had been filled with articles favoring force and violence, particularly the use of bombs.

These declamations did not draw much attention from the American ruling class until the Chicago "anarchists," under the leadership of Albert Parsons, began to connect up with the working class by expressing its needs and current preoccupations through such slogans as "for an eight-hour day." The headway made by Parsons and his comrades became quite palpable when, amidst a general labor upsurge, they became involved in local strike struggles.

Then the ruling class did pay attention. The speeches and writings on "dynamite" as "man's best and last friend" were utilized to frame up the authors in a bombing that was most likely provoked, if not directly organized, by the police themselves.

Worst of all, the frame-up was utilized to launch a nationwide witch-hunt that virtually decimated the socialist movement and stunned the entire labor movement. The revival began not with dynamitings or similar ways of

moving "from the word to the deed," as Robin Blackburn might put it. The revival began with political defense work for the Haymarket victims on an international scale, followed by a new rise in working-class militancy associated with economic issues.

It ought to be remembered that before going to his death on the gallows on November 11, 1887, Albert Parsons regretted the formulations he and his comrades had used in the previous period, for they had played into the hands of the police and had unnecessarily prejudiced their case.

In defense of the Haymarket martyrs, it should be explained that their undue confidence in the efficacy of dynamite, which they had expounded in speeches and writings, did not originate with them. They got it from the theoreticians of anarchism in Europe; in the final analysis, from the examples set by the Russian terrorists of that period, who, revolver and bomb in hand, thought it possible to topple Czarism by the exemplary actions of small groups and even individuals.

Let it be said further in defense of the Haymarket martyrs that they had no leaders of their own of the caliber of Plekhanov, Lenin, Trotsky, and the other Russian Marxist leaders to set them right on the question of terrorist methods.

After this excursion into the past, let us return to the repetition of the old errors in current publications like Scanlan's and The Black Panther.

Comrades Germain and Knoeller might argue that these are not errors. They might contend -- as they do in the case of Latin America -- that the current urge in some circles in the United States to engage in the "strategy" of armed struggle derives from the experiences of the revolutionists and revolutionary groups in the United States itself in the intervening years. However, they themselves exclude that argument. "There is no question," they state, "of mechanically extending this reasoning to all countries in the world, least of all the United States, Japan, Great Britain, Germany, etc." (Ibid., p. 27. Emphasis in original.)

In view of this, we have no choice -- by their reasoning -- except to explain that it is out of a "pure death wish or blind romanticism" that partisans of the "strategy" of armed struggle are to be found today in the United States. For me, a more political explanation would be preferable;

and I think one can be found.

Before taking that up, however, let me dispose of the sentence in their argument reading as follows: "Two years after the 1933 defeat in Germany neither the Communist nor the Socialist party dared repeat the policy that led to the disaster."

What had the Communist and Socialist parties learned from the disaster? What correct lessons had they drawn? I would really like to hear more from Comrades Germain and Knoeller on this, for I have been under the impression for a long time that instead of learning from the disaster in Germany, the Communist and Socialist parties if anything went from bad to worse. In fact, two years later, in 1935, they turned to the policy of the "popular front," i.e., open class collaboration.

For the Socialist parties this was not new -- their death wish had been operative in some instances since the turn of the century. For the Stalinists the death wish took a new form -- from "third-period" ultraleftism they switched to the most blatant opportunism. The new error helped ruin the Spanish revolution, helped pave the way for Hitler to advance on a European scale, and eventually facilitated the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union.

If my arithmetic is not wrong, the Stalinists (and we can, of course, include the Social Democrats) are still practicing popular frontism thirty-six years later. A very persistent death wish!

What is important to note is that the length of time in which an error is followed does not thereby suggest that it may be correct and not an error. We should also note that ending an error does not necessarily mean its replacement by a correct course. A still worse course can be followed.

One of the reasons for the persistence of certain errors is sheer inertia -- a universal problem in all organizations, including the most militant. An example in our own movement is not difficult to find.

The tactic of entryism sui generis was initiated about 1951 or so. It was first conceived as a tactic of limited duration, one of the reasons being a forecast that World War III could be expected to begin in a few years -- by 1954, according to some. The war would surely set off a new wave of radicalism, perhaps on the initiative

of sectors of the bureaucracies of the old workers organizations, particularly those tied to the Soviet Union.

The forecast was eventually discarded as erroneous, but the tactic persisted -- now justified by new reasons. Whatever validity, if any, was to be found in the tactic in the beginning vanished with time. Yet entryism sui generis was carried on for what was it -- seventeen or eighteen years? That's almost twice as long as the error of the Latin-American guerrilla fighters, if that proves anything. Anyway, it was so long that some of the most ardent advocates and practitioners of this tactic (or had it in reality been elevated into a "strategy"?) felt compelled to admit that burial was, perhaps, overdue. Entryism sui generis had come to stand glaringly in the way of progress for our movement.

How ironical that even as entryism sui generis was receiving the decent burial it was entitled to, an opposite kind of error was gestating -- the "strategy" of armed struggle. Let us hope that this orientation and method offers less proof of the tenacity of the "death wish" than did its venerable predecessor.

Why They Don't See Beyond Guerrilla War

So why have the guerrilla fighters in Latin America persisted for ten years in following the "strategy" of engaging in armed struggle instead of the strategy of concentrating on party building and of linking this up with the masses?

Comrades Germain and Knoeller argue that it is because of their practical experience. "This experience can be summed up in a few words. Whatever the different starting points of the mass movements in the various countries of Latin America, everywhere they have come to the same conclusion -- that is, all forms of struggle that revolutionists have attempted, in close liaison with the masses or in isolation from them, have culminated in armed confrontations with local or international reaction, or both at once, from the moment they began to show the slightest serious progress." (Ibid., p. 21. Emphasis in original.)

The alternative facing the revolutionists in Latin America, according to Comrades Germain and Knoeller, is as follows: "Any refusal to envisage armed confrontations in the near or relatively near future in Latin America can mean only one of two things --

either abandonment of all perspective for revolutionary transformation; or a return to the illusion that this transformation will be miraculously possible with the aid or benevolent neutrality of the bourgeois army (or a part of it)." (Ibid., p. 24.)

In arguing for this conclusion, Comrades Germain and Knoeller say many true things about the economic, social, and political pressures that have led the revolutionists to this position. But, in my opinion, their approach is simplistic. It is accurate to say that the general economic, social, and political pressures in Latin America (and elsewhere) are driving the best representatives of the oppressed onto the road of revolution, and that many of them have learned enough to conclude that the ruling class and its imperialist backers will not relinquish power peacefully. However, this does not mean that these pressures, plus the modicum of insights gained, assure freedom from errors, including sizeable ones for a prolonged period and on a continental scale.

Additional factors are operative, especially those associated with the ups and downs of developing a leadership capable of providing correct political guidance. It is remarkable that Comrades Germain and Knoeller fail to see this.

Perhaps the reality will become clearer if we list the reasons for the persistence of the erroneous view that there is no alternative to popular frontism except guerrilla warfare:

1. The breaks in the continuity of revolutionary leadership.

Many lessons, won at great cost in struggles of the past, have been lost because of this and are simply not known to the new generation of revolutionists.

To this should be added misinterpretation of the lessons of the past ascribable to leaderships that may be honest but that are one-sided, lacking in good judgment, or that are inclined to sectarianism or cultism.

2. The pernicious role played by consciously counterrevolutionary leaderships.

While the trade-union bureaucracies and the Social Democracy share responsibility, the main source of contamination since the bureaucratic caste usurped power in the Soviet Union has been Stalinism. The Kremlin and its lesser imitators have utilized

the resources available to state power to bury under a mountain of lies and slanders the truth about Trotsky and his efforts to uphold the program of Leninism.

One of the consequences has been the debasement of theory. Great acquisitions of the past -- major lessons drawn from immense experiences -- are simply not known to many young revolutionists, or they know about them only in a viciously distorted way.

The Cuban leaders, with their contempt for theory, and their polemics against its importance, are both victims and abettors of this debasement.

Among the results has been great confusion about the relationship between Leninism and Stalinism. We need not go into that here, but it should be noted that some of the arguments used by the guerrilla fighters show that they do not distinguish between Stalinism and Leninism -- or, for that matter, between Lenin's theory and practice of party building and that of the Social Democrats.

3. The victories in which guerrilla warfare loomed large.

From the long-range view of history these disclosed not so much the efficacy of guerrilla warfare per se as the extent of the decay and weakness of capitalism on a world scale.

4. The illegitimate projection of guerrilla warfare into a surefire method.

Victories such as the ones in China and Cuba gave fresh impetus to the class struggle internationally. In particular they aroused the hopes of a new generation of revolutionists. To them the secret of the successes in China and Cuba and elsewhere appeared to lie in the technique of arms ("power flows from the barrel of a gun"), and it was assumed that this had universal applicability.

The elevation of guerrilla warfare into the answer to all problems further eclipsed the example set by the Bolsheviks -- already darkened by Stalinism.

5. What the Cubans did to give further credence to this view.

The Cubans never subjected their own revolution to a searching Marxist analysis. Still less did they ever come to grips with Stalinism. Instead, they fostered simplistic conclusions

concerning their success and simplistic efforts to emulate it.

Che Guevara himself went so far as to set a personal example in this, opening up a rural "foco" in Bolivia in accordance with the "strategy" of guerrilla warfare.

6. The logic set in motion by the Cubans in relation to guerrilla warfare.

Whatever second thoughts they may finally have had on the subject (for whatever reasons), the impetus they gave to the "strategy" continued on its own. This has been shown in many forms and in many areas.

* * *

We thus end up with a rational political explanation for the persistence of the errors among the Latin-American fighters, particularly those connected with a faulty appreciation (or no appreciation at all) of priorities in the relationship between guerrilla warfare and party building.

And -- not by accident, as I think I am entitled to say -- we have won the bonus of being able to offer a rational political explanation of why it is possible to see some rather startling repetitions in the United States today of errors made in the past century. This fits in rather neatly with the admiring references to be found in the literature of the North American guerrilla fighters to the examples set by their Latin-American cothinkers, and to the efforts to emulate them in Canada and the United States.

Safety Lies in Guerrilla Warfare

Another argument is adduced by Comrades Germain and Knoeller in support of their position -- it's safer to be a guerrilla fighter.

The following two paragraphs are particularly eloquent in defending the view that safety first requires you to pick up the gun:

"Compare the losses in guerrillas with the number killed in the massacres of unarmed worker and peasant populations in countries like Peru, Bolivia, and Brazil, and you will understand why these losses do not alarm any of the revolutionists.

"We had the same experience during the Nazi occupation. When a certain level of ferocity on the part of the enemy is reached, revolutionists (including, if possible, broader groups

and masses) take up arms as a measure of self-defense, even in the physical sense of the term. There were more survivors among the Yugoslav, Polish, and Russian partisans than among the unarmed sectors of the civil population exposed to the Nazi mass arrests (and we are not including the Jews exposed to total extermination). Many more of the armed partisans in all the countries occupied by the Nazis survived than the Communist, Trotskyist, Socialist, and trade-union leaders who let themselves be deported to concentration camps. Many more of the Vietnamese Communists who have been fighting arms in hand for twenty-five years have survived than of the Indonesian Communists who refused to engage in such a struggle. This is the historic dilemma confronting the revolutionists in many Latin-American countries." (Ibid., p. 24. Emphasis in original.)

A careful analysis of this string of statements will lead us, I think, to conclude that the historic dilemma confronting the revolutionists is somewhat different from the one indicated by Comrades Germain and Knoeller.

1. It is simply not true that the revolutionists consider the casualties suffered by the guerrillas in their defeats to be inconsequential.

Of course, the dead are unable to bear witness as to the lessons of their experience, except in a mute way. Some of the survivors and new forces interested in the balance sheet view the losses not so much in the context of the murder and even massacre of unarmed workers, peasants, and other sectors of the populace as in the context of the political objectives and means used by the guerrillas. It was precisely because their course led to defeat after defeat that the revolutionists came to ask whether the lives of cadres were being wasted; i.e., not contributing to overturning capitalism any more than if they had met their death unarmed. (The thinking on this is shown quite clearly in Bernadine Dohrn's letter cited above.)

The question of how cadres can best be utilized to advance the revolution stands at the heart of the debate now going on among the revolutionists in Latin America and elsewhere.

The masses themselves seem to have indicated that they, too, have an opinion. They have shown this by their actions, particularly their refusal to follow the prescriptions and examples enjoined upon them by the guerrillas.

Thus another question came up willy-nilly in the debate: What is the correct road to the masses? Or can the capitalist state, after all, be overthrown without their participation? -- as Comrade Maitan held to be possible, at least in certain instances.

2. The experience under the Nazis is far from being conclusive.

Perhaps the most striking thing about this argument is what it tells of the difficulty faced by Comrades Germain and Knoeller in trying to observe their own stricture about keeping things confined to Latin America. Seeking items to support their case, they find themselves compelled to go to another continent -- hardly one that is colonial or semicolonial -- back in time by some three decades and under the conditions of World War II. I will return later to what this shows about the logic of their position.

If the lesson of the resistance against the Nazi occupation, as explained by them, is applicable at all to Latin America, then one can hardly avoid the conclusion that Comrades Germain and Knoeller are of the opinion that against the violence of the ruling class in Latin America no alternative exists except to engage in guerrilla struggle. But in a footnote (p. 32), they indignantly deny holding this view. So why do they refer to the experience under the Nazi occupation as a valid analogy?

Let us leave this inconsistency aside and consider their argument from another point of view. Revolutionists took up arms, they report, as a measure of self-defense, even in the physical sense of the term, and there were more survivors among the Yugoslav, Polish, and Russian partisans than among the unarmed sectors of the civil population exposed to the Nazi mass arrests.

It is true in general, one must concede, that casualties among unarmed civilians have tended to rise in comparison with those among the armed forces in war itself. The populations of Japan and Germany, among others, can testify to this, for the Allies carried out a policy of deliberately trying to destroy the civilian rear.

More recently in both Korea and Indochina, the Pentagon has provided the world with fresh examples of the casualties deliberately inflicted on unarmed civilians.

In all probability, if the holocaust of a nuclear war is visited on

humanity, the first -- if not the last -- casualties will be borne on a colossal scale by unarmed civilians. What is the political conclusion to be drawn from this? That the longer capitalism continues to survive, the higher the cost becomes in terms of sheer physical survival. But this general conclusion does not tell us much about the relationship between guerrilla war and party building.

I am willing to concede that under the Nazi occupation life was safer in the camps of the armed partisans than among the unarmed sectors of the civilian population. But I would contend that this hardly alters the conclusions about guerrilla war drawn by Lenin and Trotsky long ago -- that it should be regarded at best as an auxiliary form of struggle, and one that is not without its dangers to the resolution of the key problem of constructing a revolutionary-socialist party.

We have not yet exhausted the question of engagement in guerrilla warfare as a means of physical survival. "Many more of the armed partisans in all the countries occupied by the Nazis survived than the Communist, Trotskyist, Socialist, and trade-union leaders who let themselves be deported to concentration camps," write Comrades Germain and Knoeller.

I note the inclusion of Trotskyist leaders in this rather sweeping statement. We should not forget that in some countries the Trotskyists were liquidated by the Stalinists even under the Nazi occupation. This chain of thought leads us to something even more important.

The country where the greatest number of Trotskyist leaders "let themselves be deported to concentration camps" was the Soviet Union. There, as is well-known, they perished; sometimes being placed in droves before the firing squads of the GPU. In the light of the conclusions they draw, must not Comrades Germain and Knoeller in all consistency maintain that the Trotskyists in the Soviet Union made a fundamental mistake in not turning to the use of guerrilla warfare against Stalin's murder machine? They would have had a better chance of physical survival would they not?

These questions are not rhetorical. They arise quite logically out of the position taken by Comrades Germain and Knoeller, and they really should answer them, particularly since it can hardly be imagined that they have not thought of them.

If their answers are, yes, the Soviet Trotskyists would have been better advised to resort to guerrilla warfare and not let themselves be deported to concentration camps, than another question arises. Was not Trotsky wrong in refusing to appeal to the Red Army against Stalin and his clique when this was still possible? After all, the Red Army would surely have been able to block Stalin, even if Stalin had resorted to guerrilla warfare.

On the other hand, if we agree that Trotsky and the other oppositionist forces in the Soviet Union followed a correct course, then this must be regarded as a supreme example of the Bolshevik view that armed struggle must be subordinated to higher political considerations.

These considerations, of course, are quite material and palpable. They concern (a) the mood of the masses, and (b) the strength of the party, including the capacities of its leadership.

The leadership qualifications of the Trotskyist cadres in the Soviet Union were certainly strong enough. What was missing was the driving force of the masses. They had become demobilized, in this instance out of exhaustion. Moreover the Bolshevik party had begun to disintegrate. The primary job facing Trotsky was to save the party or rebuild it. He had to begin with a faction struggle. By refusing to call on the Red Army, or to engage in guerrilla warfare, Trotsky was simply applying a basic postulate of Bolshevism -- not to fall into the error of trying to substitute the action of small groups of cadres for what must be done by the masses themselves.

It would be excellent if Comrades Germain and Knoeller, or other comrades who went through it personally, would write more about the experiences under the Nazi occupation. In particular one wonders if the partisans, among others, ever discussed how they came to be entrapped in such a situation. Did they ever take up the role played by the Stalinists and the Social Democrats in failing to build revolutionary parties in Europe modeled on the one constructed by Lenin? Surely the Trotskyists -- those that survived the bullets of both the Nazis and the Stalinists -- raised the question.

In any case, for us today the appearance of guerrilla warfare in Europe in World War II must surely be taken in the context of the great debacle in Germany in 1933 that permitted

Hitler to come to power virtually unopposed. The main lesson to be drawn from this was the absence of a combat party.

And since the question has been raised of the virtues of guerrilla warfare under the Nazi occupation, we are compelled, I would think, to follow this unusual development further and ask what finally came of it.

In the case of Yugoslavia, guerrilla warfare, as in the Soviet Union, played an important auxiliary role in the defeat of German imperialism and helped place Tito in better position to later resist the pressure of the Kremlin. But in western Europe and in Greece? If the partisans could be said to have played an important role in preparing the conditions for a successful socialist revolution, they proved incapable of taking power except on a local scale. France, Italy, Greece, and with them various other countries, would most certainly have gone socialist in the aftermath of World War II had not the Stalinist and Social Democrat parties played a consciously counterrevolutionary role. What was needed for the partisans to play a contributing part in a socialist victory was a Leninist party. This did not exist in Europe at the end of World War II. The partisans disintegrated and permitted themselves to be disarmed.

It is important, it appears to me, for the Latin-American revolutionists and the revolutionists in other parts of the world to know the overall context in which the guerrilla struggle in Europe under the Nazi occupation must be fitted for a correct, balanced appreciation of its meaning. Certain vital lessons, obviously applicable to the current scene are well worth considering in detail.

3. The experience in Vietnam must be placed in proper focus.

"Many more of the Vietnamese Communists who have been fighting arms in hand for twenty-five years have survived than of the Indonesian Communists who refused to engage in such a struggle," Comrades Germain and Knoeller tell us.

To me it appears inappropriate to engage in a comparative body count between the Vietnamese and Indonesian Communists. First of all, if the comparison is to be made over a period of twenty-five years, it should include the time when the Indonesian Communists were fighting arms in hand: (a) when they participated in the struggle against Dutch imperialism, which bears comparison with the struggle of the Vietnamese

against French imperialism, and (b) when the Indonesian Communists, arms in hand, sought to overthrow the nationalist government in 1948.

The lessons to be drawn from the putschism of some of the leaders of the Indonesian Communist party (including the officers who engaged in the 1965 attempt) should not be left out, one would think, in assessing the "strategy" of armed struggle.

Secondly, the total body count in Indochina over the past twenty-five years may be higher than the total body count in Indonesia over the same period. Such raw facts do not shed much light on the subject we are discussing.

Thirdly, the failure of the Indonesian Communist party to prepare the masses for a showdown with the Sukarno government and to lead them, arms in hand, toward the establishment of a workers and peasants government, which would have been relatively easy at a certain point, is explainable by the Stalinist background and education of the Indonesian CP leaders. The influence of Maoism was especially pernicious. Peking's foreign policy of supporting the national bourgeoisie in countries like Indonesia and Pakistan reinforced the fatal class-collaborationist line of the Aidit leadership.

In short, the catastrophe that befell Indonesian Communism and the Indonesian masses in 1965 is ascribable precisely to the absence of a combat party constructed on the Leninist model.

Like Comrades Germain and Knoeller, I admire the determination of the Vietnamese people to win their freedom. Their will to struggle has had worldwide repercussions, not least of all in the heartland of imperialism.

The plain evidence of the depth and power of this determination ought to lead us all the more, it seems to me, to inquire into the reasons for the protracted nature of their struggle. Surely the policies followed by the leadership have had some bearing on this. In my opinion, three items stand out very prominently:

1. The liquidation of the Trotskyists, who were rather strong in Vietnam before World War II. This meant not only the elimination of capable revolutionary leaders but the repression of the Leninist tendency.

2. The welcome extended by Ho Chi Minh to the Allied imperialist forces at the end of World War II. This enabled

the French to become reestablished and facilitated the eventual involvement of U.S. imperialism.

3. The signing of the Geneva agreement after the victory at Dien Bien-phu in 1954. The agreement, carving the country in half -- presumably only temporarily -- enabled the counter-revolutionary forces to recover in the South and gave U.S. imperialism priceless time in which to prepare to intervene on a massive scale.

To this must be added, as in the case of Indonesia, the role of Stalinism.

Of course, the existence of the Chinese workers state on the border of Vietnam was a major source of inspiration to the Vietnamese people. They could hardly have maintained their long struggle without material aid from China (and from the Soviet Union); and the establishment of a workers state in North Vietnam was one of the consequences of the victory of the Chinese revolution.

On another level, however, both Peking and Moscow have blocked the free development of the Vietnamese revolution. Prime responsibility for the welcome extended by the Vietnamese to the Allied imperialist armies at the end of World War II lies with Moscow. Both Moscow and Peking played major roles in putting across the Geneva agreement in 1954.

Finally, in the period since 1965, while they have supplied material aid, enabling the Vietnamese to carry on the struggle, it has been doled out with an eyedropper, and both Peking and Moscow have carefully refrained from doing anything in other areas to substantially relieve the pressure on war-besieged Vietnam. In their routine declarations of solidarity they have not so much as breathed a word about the need to open a "second front" in behalf of an ally -- a workers state -- suffering an armed assault by the mightiest imperialist power on earth.

In fact, both Moscow and Peking, instead of considering themselves as likewise under attack -- as they are -- give the impression, each in its own way, of having assured both the Johnson and Nixon administrations that the Pentagon can proceed with its dirty work without need to fear much response from them so long as operations do not impinge too directly on their national bureaucratic interests.

The reactionary foreign policy

followed by both Peking and Moscow with respect to the Vietnamese revolution has thus heavily influenced the course of that revolution by affecting the policies of the Ho Chi Minh team. The major guilt for the extended travail of the Vietnamese people lies with the Chinese and Soviet bureaucracies. In face of this, to hail the efficacy of twenty-five years of armed struggle in and of itself, signifies disregarding the politics that has guided (and misguided) that armed struggle.

Again we confront the same lesson as before -- the preeminent importance of a Leninist-type party.

This is the true historical dilemma confronting the revolutionists, not only in many Latin-American countries but in all the Latin-American countries, and all other countries besides. As Trotsky put it in the opening sentence of the Transitional Program: "The world political situation as a whole is chiefly characterized by a historical crisis of the leadership of the proletariat."

Tactics and Strategy

At the end of my article "Assessment of the Draft Resolution on Latin America," I specified in four paragraphs what I considered to be the crucial point in the discussion on Latin America prior to the last world congress. In replying to Comrade Maitan above, I quoted all four paragraphs, so I will only refer to them here. The gist of the point is that correctly conceived, guerrilla war should be regarded merely as a specific form of armed struggle, a tactic entailed by political considerations.

Repeating this point in my article "A Contribution to the Discussion on Revolutionary Strategy in Latin America," I explained: "What is primary in revolutionary strategy, the minority maintained, is building a combat party; resorting to guerrilla warfare should be regarded as a secondary tactical question." (Op. cit., p. 6.)

Unfortunately, Comrades Germain and Knoeller disregard this plain language and use the words "tactic" and "strategy" in a different way. While this greatly facilitates their argumentation, it hardly adds to the clarity of the discussion.

I do not dispute that ordinarily the words are used rather loosely, "tactics" and "strategy" even being spoken of as equivalents. Sometimes they are used in a more precise sense: "Strategy wins wars; tactics wins

battles." Still more precisely, they can have a dialectical relationship. In the sample sentence, the strategic goal is to win the peace; war is but a tactic to achieve this aim. Thus Trotsky can say: "There are a few things in this world besides military knowledge; there is communism and the world tasks that the working class sets itself; and there is war as one of the methods employed by the working class." (Military Writings, Merit edition, p. 24.)

Comrades Germain and Knoeller use the words tactics and strategy in accordance with a rigid meaning of their own, and on this basis try to make the position taken by the minority at the last world congress look ridiculous.

"...Comrade Joe Hansen...proclaims as an absolute dogma that guerrilla warfare is not a strategy but a tactic." (P. 22.) "...if guerrilla warfare is a tactical question, how did it happen that for ten years the entire revolutionary vanguard in Latin America crystallized around debates and passionate struggles centering on the Cuban experience?" (P. 23.) "The revolutionists who let themselves be hypnotized by the question of 'foquismo' and the purely tactical aspect of guerrilla warfare did not constitute all the revolutionary movement in Latin America but only a small minority." (P. 23.) The "strategic alternative" is "which orientation to follow -- one toward taking power through armed struggle; or a reformist one toward collaborating with the 'national' bourgeoisie and its army...." (P. 23. Emphasis in original.) "It is because this question is a strategic one and not a tactical one that the debate has been so impassioned...." (P. 23.) "But unfortunately for Comrade Hansen, much more is at stake than a simple change of tactics." (P. 24.)

Leaving aside other phrases of the same kind, we come to their conclusion (made in connection with the orientation of the Cubans) supporting the "strategy" of armed struggle: "It is in this sense that our strategy of armed struggle in Latin America is an integral part of our defense of the Cuban Revolution."

To use the language indulged in by Comrades Germain and Knoeller, it is a "strange and significant" fact that not once in this section, which they entitle "The Influence of the Cuban Revolution on the Strategic Orientation of the Latin-American Revolutionists," do they consider where to place party building from the

standpoint of tactics and strategy.
Not once!

Since the beginning of the Trotskyist movement, basing ourselves on the heritage of Leninism, we have considered our main strategic goal to be the creation of a mass revolutionary-socialist party so as to ensure the victory of the revolution and the establishment of socialism. To create that party requires active participation in the class struggle, and this poses an incalculable variety of tactical problems. These nonetheless can be placed in various broad categories as was done in the Transitional Program. I repeat, it is a strange and significant fact that Comrades Germain and Knoeller do not once refer to this in their lengthy section on tactics and strategy -- which nevertheless presumes to be an answer on this very point.

Their avoidance of the subject is all the more cause for wonder in view of the fact that at least some Latin-American revolutionists have considered the question. I cited four examples above, Héctor Béjar, Ciro Bustos, Ladislav Dowbor, and the Tupamaros. (The positions of the urban guerrillas in the United States and Canada should also be borne in mind.)

Héctor Béjar is completely dubious about the role of the party in relation to armed struggle. Dowbor considers the question settled. In his view the "strategy" of armed struggle "solves the Leninist problem of how to remain in the vanguard, ahead of the masses." The Tupamaros likewise believe that they have found a shortcut. Ciro Bustos is equally convinced that something much better and much more attractive than party building has been discovered. He holds that the change introduced by the Cubans was "to carry guerrilla warfare from the level of tactics to strategy."

These revolutionists certainly find no difficulty in understanding the issue, even if they have not read any of the documents in our internal discussion. And they have the additional merit of coming directly to the point.

It would seem obvious that it is wrong of them to dismiss Lenin as superseded. It would seem just as obvious that it is one of our primary tasks to counterpose to their position our own position; that is, what Lenin and Trotsky taught on how to win a revolution through the strategy of building a combat party capable of employing the transitional method of working out tactics in all areas of the class struggle, including armed confrontations.

It is regrettable that Comrades Germain and Knoeller are not inclined to join in doing this but lean, instead, in the opposite direction.

The Drift Toward Abstractness

If we look back over the development of the polemic, one of the features that draws attention is the drift of the majority toward abstractness in explaining their reasons for orienting toward guerrilla war.

The discussion began with the draft resolution on Latin America, submitted by the majority, that projected rural guerrilla warfare for a prolonged period on a continental scale, and with Comrade Maitan's thesis on the need to get practical, throw everything into a bid for an immediate breakthrough, and to attempt this in a predetermined geographical area -- at that time it was Bolivia.

These formulations, if not the concepts behind them, were modified so that the final resolution passed by the world congress at least nodded in the direction of the opposition to the new line. According to Comrades Germain and Knoeller, "...an objective reading, without preconceptions, of the Ninth Congress document makes it possible to conclude that it by no means advocates 'a strategy of rural guerrilla warfare'...but the strategy of armed struggle, which is an entirely different thing." (P. 28.)

They continue in the next sentence: "To try to give the opposite impression, Comrade Hansen has been forced to single out a single sentence in the document adopted by the Ninth World Congress and polemicize against it instead of analyzing the document as a whole and polemicizing against its general line. The least that can be said is that this is not a very fruitful method of argument and will not advance the movement." (Emphasis in original.)

But I was not the first to single out the passage (it includes more than a single sentence). Comrade Maitan singled it out for inclusion in a public article "Cuba, Military Reformism, and Armed Struggle in Latin America." Here is precisely how he quoted it:

"The fundamental perspective, the only realistic perspective for Latin America is that of an armed struggle which may last for long years....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." (Intercontinental Press, April 20, 1970, p. 359.)

Comrade Maitan did not cite this in Quatrième Internationale (June 1970) and Intercontinental Press in order to publicly disavow it. Nothing that he has written since, either publicly or in the internal discussion in the world Trotskyist movement, would indicate that he has changed his mind.

Trying to get away from the projection of rural guerrilla warfare for a prolonged period on a continental scale, and to give the impression that it hardly exists in the final draft of the resolution passed by the last world congress -- Comrade Maitan's public stand to the contrary -- Comrades Germain and Knoeller substitute the phrase "strategy of armed struggle" which is "an entirely different thing" from "a strategy of rural guerrilla warfare."

Strategy of armed struggle...
This formulation is really winged, particularly if not too much attention is paid to the word "strategy." It lifts us to a high level of abstraction where the specific origin of the differences becomes lost to sight.

Latin America itself is left far behind, and we range across continents and over decades of time, guided only by our dependable compass "armed struggle," picking up quotations, citations, and references. All of these have something in common; namely, armed struggle. And, of course, all of them are applicable to Latin America and to the current discussion, which is one of the advantages of employing a common denominator.

For example, Comrades Germain and Knoeller quote a paragraph from Lenin's September 30, 1906, article "Guerrilla Warfare" (p. 29 of their article). Then they assert:

"This quotation admirably expresses the problem confronting our movement with regard to guerrilla warfare and armed struggle in Latin America. It ought to convince Comrade Hansen that he is on the wrong road and is leading us to an impasse by his polemic."

The quotation from Lenin coupled with the admonition from Comrades Germain and Knoeller convince me that there were guerrillas in Russia in 1906 and guerrillas in Latin America in 1970 when they wrote their article. They convince me, too, that Lenin faced a party-building problem at that time and that we face one today.

What else am I supposed to be convinced of? That the revolution in Russia was on the ebb in 1906 and that Lenin misjudged this, and that similarly in Latin America today the revolution is on the ebb and our comrades are misjudging it? Or that Lenin would have been right had the revolution been on the rise in 1906 so that his words then are applicable now in Latin America, whereas we must disregard Trotsky's conclusions concerning the correct placement of guerrilla war in a period of rise?

Or am I supposed to be convinced that just as some of the guerrillas in Latin America today have developed a new "strategy," so Lenin in 1906 developed a new strategy of guerrilla warfare superseding his previous views on the strategy of building a combat party?

Am I supposed to be convinced that our comrades should begin an active boycott of all elections in Latin America today, but a year from now run for parliament if the parliament measures up to the standards set by the Czar in 1907?

Am I, perhaps, supposed to be convinced that Trotsky was dead wrong in his estimate of Lenin's experience with guerrilla warfare and that he led our movement into an impasse by what he wrote on this in his biography of Stalin?

The same abstractness characterizes all the other examples collected by Comrades Germain and Knoeller, examples going back to the Paris Commune, not forgetting the 1927 Canton putsch, the 1934 Asturias insurrection, and the Chinese guerrilla struggle after 1928.

It is true that these, and a number of other examples, are neatly filed in four pigeonholes called "The Historical Variants of Armed Struggle." Is there a dialectical progression among these categories? Do they constitute nodal points indicating how from small beginnings, minor struggles can escalate into confrontations that logically (whatever the historical sequence) lead to a decisive showdown over who shall wield state power? Do they follow the pattern of movement indicated in

the Transitional Program? The answer is "no" to all of these questions. The classification is neither historical nor dialectical; it is lifeless. Such an abstract classification is useless so far as party-building tasks are concerned, whether in Latin America or anywhere else.

To enable us to draw instructive lessons each of the examples would have to be studied in a detailed way in the concrete situation of the given movement at the given stage of its development, precisely as Lenin advised. Moreover, to relate these lessons in a meaningful way to the problems we face, we would have to bear in mind in a detailed way the concrete situation in which our movement finds itself, including a similarly detailed concrete appreciation of the stage of its own development. In place of analysis of that kind, Comrades Germain and Knoeller abstract "armed struggle" from everything else and arrange the samples like dried flowers. The procedure and the results are hardly surprising. They result from substituting "armed struggle" for party building as the central axis of our movement.

The "Variants" of Armed Struggle

The insistence upon armed struggle being a strategy serves other useful purposes besides enabling Comrades Germain and Knoeller to elbow aside the question of the relationship between armed struggle and the strategy of party building. Above all, it permits them to elevate into the first plane the "variants" of armed struggle.

The purpose of this exercise in classification is to corner those who are of the opinion that armed struggle is a tactical question and make them say "yes" or "no" to each of the "variants," particularly the variant of guerrilla warfare.

If you hold that engagement in armed struggle is a tactical question to be decided by a revolutionary party in the light of its own strength and the possibilities or necessities of the situation it faces, the schema drawn up by Comrades Germain and Knoeller is of little interest. In tactics everything hinges on the judgement of the leadership, for the simple reason that no compilation can anticipate the precise configuration of the reality to which the party must respond. In fact, it is a mistake to attempt to work out tactics in advance.

First of all, the selected premises automatically carry their own answer. To judge how barren this procedure is,

you can start with the answers and decide what premises are required to make them applicable; then wait for those precise premises to appear in reality.

Secondly, to decide on a set of tactical variants in advance induces expectation that those variants will appear; one's eyes become set in a certain direction and corresponding anticipatory decisions are made. All this increases the chances of missing what actually occurs and what is really required until the opportune moment has passed.

Of course, Comrades Germain and Knoeller have listed their "variants" not so much in anticipation of future contingencies as to justify the stand taken by the last world congress and to help impel the Fourth International as a whole further along the course of regarding guerrilla warfare no longer as an auxiliary form of struggle but as a strategic orientation. The substance of the question is not changed, but the differences are made more acute since they involve the immediate attitude and orientation of our movement in areas going far beyond Latin America, as I tried to show earlier.

Armed Struggle Properly Classified

Let us resign ourselves to following the argumentation by Comrades Germain and Knoeller on "classical" and presumably "nonclassical" armed struggle.

1. "Classical." The mass movement after a long period of accumulating strength and experience, undergoes rapid expansion, goes over into arming the proletariat and confronts the bourgeois army at the moment of fullest flowering of the revolutionary crisis. (Ibid., p. 25 et seq.)

This includes two subvariants, they say. In one subvariant (for purposes of identification I will label it "a"), the armed confrontation occurs at the "culmination" of revolutionary crisis (Russia in 1917; Germany 1918-19). In the other subvariant (let us call it "b"), the bourgeois army remains substantially intact and is able to precipitate a showdown at the "outset" of the revolutionary crisis (Spain in 1936; Vietnam in 1945-46).

2. "Ultraleft." A revolutionary party, already strong but still in the minority, "provokes a premature confrontation between its forces, in isolation, and the enemy army" (Canton putsch of 1927; 1921 "March Action" in Germany).

3. A "variant intermediate between the first and second." (Shouldn't it be listed as No. 1½?) This is an armed confrontation with the enemy resulting from the advance and maturing of the mass struggle before the revolutionary party has won sufficient national influence to be able to defeat the bourgeois state (Paris Commune in 1871; Russia in 1905).

4. Autonomous armed detachments of the mass movement launch a struggle for any one of various reasons. This is the grab-bag category that takes care of all cases not listed under No. 1, No. 3, or No. 2. Includes guerrilla warfare.

"Why this classification?" ask Comrades Germain and Knoeller. "Because it enables us to narrow the debate."

Truth to tell, it is hard to see any other justification for it.

Now comes the squeeze play. "We will not insult Comrade Hansen by claiming that he is opposed to the first category of armed struggle."

So that's taken care of; both the majority and minority presumably agree on category No. 1.

Similarly on category No. 2. Both the majority and the minority agree on being opposed to putsches.

By the process of elimination, the "debate is thus focused on the problems of the third and fourth category of armed struggle."

But "there is no Chinese wall between armed struggles of category number 1 and categories number 3 and number 4."

In category No. 1, the most likely perspective, "save for exceptional cases," is the important subvariant "b" where the bourgeois army remains intact and is able to precipitate a showdown at the outset of the revolutionary crisis. This grades into categories No. 3 and No. 4, so that if you are for category No. 1 that makes you for the important subvariant "b," and in all consistency you should be for categories No. 3 and No. 4.

Now, according to Comrades Germain and Knoeller, they do grade into each other. This is because of the uneven development of the revolutionary process. The bourgeois army remains largely intact because it is based on the most backward sectors of the population, the last to be set in motion. The different sectors of the masses achieve revolutionary consciousness unevenly, so that

the most advanced are almost certain to initiate revolutionary action before the heavy battalions are ready for action.

Still according to Comrades Germain and Knoeller, "If the party tries to eliminate this unevenness by deliberately curbing the enthusiasm of the most revolutionary strata it risks producing the opposite result." The advanced strata can become demoralized; even worse "the essential element for convincing or neutralizing the hesitant strata may disappear, this element being less the propaganda of the party or the soviets than the resolute action of the proletariat." (Emphasis in original.)

You must therefore favor category No. 3, which includes the Paris Commune.

(While we are on this point, let us note that the Bolsheviks did attempt to restrain the enthusiasm of the most revolutionary strata in St. Petersburg in the latter part of June 1917 precisely in order to give the less advanced areas an opportunity to catch up. The Vyborg Bolsheviks complained with embarrassment to their friends, according to Trotsky: "We have to play the part of the firehose." [The History of the Russian Revolution. Vol. 2, p. 10.] Trotsky's analysis of this phase of the revolution is highly pertinent to the current polemic. See in particular Chapter 3 of Volume 2 of the History, "Could the Bolsheviks Have Seized the Power in July?," in which Trotsky places the March 1921 action in Germany under the same category as the "July Days" in Russia in distinction from the placement given it by Comrades Germain and Knoeller under category No. 2.)

Finally -- to continue with Comrades Germain and Knoeller's polemic -- "While we are resolute opponents of any isolated action incomprehensible to the masses; we are by no means advocates solely of armed actions organized by the masses themselves within the framework of their organizations." (Emphasis in original.) For example, "In the struggle against rising fascism, exemplary actions by autonomous armed detachments may be useful and indispensable to convince the masses that such a struggle is possible -- before the masses themselves enter into it." (Op. cit., p. 27.)

You must therefore favor category No. 4 which includes guerrilla warfare.

I, too, am interested in narrowing

the debate. Let me try to work through these categories, proceeding for the sake of convenience from the point we have reached and working back.

Category No. 4 is a varied assortment. A good instance, showing the variety, is the reference to forming "autonomous armed detachments" in the struggle against fascism. Woe betide such formations if they go into action by themselves rather than as cadres immersed in the task of mobilizing the masses! The danger is adventurism, putschism. No Chinese wall separates category No. 4 from category No. 2. As proof note the appearance of urban guerrilla fighters in such countries as Canada and the United States, or, if you prefer, the many "foquista" experiments in Latin America.

Thus, if you are against category No. 2, that is, against adventurism and putschism, as Comrades Germain and Knoeller are, you should be extremely wary of category No. 4, which includes guerrilla warfare.

That ought to settle that point. The method used by Comrades Germain and Knoeller -- if followed in the right direction -- yields results diametrically opposed to theirs.

In the wreckage of their argumentation, a few items are worth jotting down for the record.

Note, for instance, how the example they cited of "exemplary actions by autonomous armed detachments" suggests an approach to the struggle against fascism that differs from Trotsky's, as presented in the Transitional Program. Trotsky emphasized the mobilization of the masses by the tens of millions, starting in the plants with the formation of pickets and ending in the streets with massive confrontations -- all under the slogans of self-defense. (Compare on this Trotsky's logical outline of the process, which I quoted earlier.)

On Category No. 3 I am of the opinion that in instances where the mass struggle reaches the point of explosion before a revolutionary party has been constructed, whatever revolutionists there are have no choice but to go with their class. A defeat is not inevitable, as Comrades Germain and Knoeller admit. Besides the Paris Commune, the December 1905 insurrection in Russia (and let us add the Santo Domingo uprising of 1965), we should recall the partial victory in Bolivia in 1952. In fact, the coming period may give us some new and surprising examples to place in category No. 3.

All the more reason for us to concentrate on the crucial work of forming cadres.

As for category No. 1, which Comrades Germain and Knoeller have named the "classical" variant with an "extremely important" subvariant, this appears to me to be an abstract and arbitrary classification.

First of all, even under the worst dictatorships and not just "within an essentially bourgeois-democratic framework" (p. 31), the masses gain experience and build up strength in a molecular way. This process has been very clear in fascist Spain.

The masses can move into the arena with unforeseen explosive violence, as in the case of Santo Domingo in 1965. Had it not been for the U.S. military invasion, the mass movement in Santo Domingo would in all likelihood have smashed the bourgeois army as did the Bolivian masses in 1952.

The masses in Santo Domingo armed themselves in a period of days and won over important sectors of the army.

Similar molecular processes with highly explosive potentials are going on throughout the world, including the advanced capitalist centers, where bourgeois democracy is not exactly in full flower.

One of the main problems confronting the sections of the Fourth International is to become integrated into this molecular process through the formation of cadres rooted in the masses.

Secondly, it is rather misleading to place the Russian revolution in category No. 1, subvariant "a," without clearly specifying that Czarism must be classified more with the oligarchical, military, gorilla, and fascist dictatorships of our times than with bourgeois democracy. Perhaps it would be helpful to divide subvariant "a" into subclassifications "i," "ii," "iii," "iv," etc., according to the type of regime the revolutionists must deal with. It would also be helpful to provide for the dynamism that is reflected in the shifts made by the ruling class from one regime to another.

The Bolsheviks had to construct their party largely in the underground, with their key leaders most often in exile, whether in Siberia or abroad, and with their own forces at times reduced to very small numbers.

In view of this, the vigorous

opposition of the Bolsheviks to terroristic methods, their insistence on the primacy of party building and of linking up with the masses, are all the more instructive.

If Comrades Germain and Knoeller were consistent, they would eliminate category No. 3 by changing it to No. 1½, or, still better, to subvariant "c" of No. 1, and get rid of category No. 4 by including guerrilla warfare as subvariant "d" of category No. 1, where -- with removal of the fractional No. 1½ -- it would be easier to remove any Chinese walls and grade it into category No. 2 which everyone is against.

For good measure, consider the following: Guerrillas appeared at certain phases of both the first (1905-07) and second (1917-20) revolutions in Russia. That was how Lenin and Trotsky came to consider the phenomenon, wasn't it?

If we view both revolutions as following the classical pattern -- the proletariat, backed by the peasantry, rising in a mighty upsurge and the revolutionists staking everything on connecting up with the masses by means of a combat party -- then we must surely say that phases of guerrilla struggle are included in the classical pattern; i.e., what Comrades Germain and Knoeller call category No. 1. We can all the better appreciate Lenin's interest in guerrilla war in 1906. Likewise, the consistency of the minority view in accepting it on the tactical level but rejecting it as a strategy. In addition, we see that to place guerrilla warfare exclusively in a special category is as arbitrary as the rest of the classification proposed by Comrades Germain and Knoeller.

The most striking feature of their classification is the failure to provide for the role of revolutionary leadership; i.e., the presence or absence of a combat party. Thus they merge together in category No. 1, subvariant "a," both the Russian revolution of 1917, which succeeded because of the role played by the Bolsheviks, and the German revolution of 1918-19, which failed because of the absence of a Bolshevik-type party and because of the betrayal committed by the Social Democracy.

In category No. 3 (1½), they place both the Paris Commune of 1871, which failed because of the absence of a party owing to the inexperience of the revolutionary leadership, and the 1905 revolution in Russia, which was defeated because the party-building process was still only in its initial stage. These are important distinctions.

The classification made by Comrades Germain and Knoeller was bound to be arbitrary because it was drawn up not as an accurate reflection of the real world but as a debating device, from the narrow standpoint of the "strategy" of armed struggle, with the role of the party left out, since that is a pivotal point belonging to the minority.

The Bolshevik Strategy

As an additional item, let me call attention to a historical reference made by Comrades Germain and Knoeller which I hope they will correct at the first opportunity.

"Why were the Bolsheviks," they ask, "able to avoid (and were a thousand times right to do so) a full and deliberate armed confrontation with the bourgeois army at the time of the February Revolution?" They are referring to the outset of the revolution, which is an "extremely important distinction" in their set of categories, and they contrast the situation in Russia with those in Germany and Spain. "Was it owing exclusively or principally to the presence of the Bolshevik party in Russia and its absence in Germany and Spain?" (pp. 25-26.)

Their answer is as follows: "Frankly, we do not think so. We think so still less because in February and March 1917 the Bolshevik party was not the party of Lenin or of Lenin and Trotsky but the party of Stalin-Kamenev-Molotov, with a policy not fundamentally different from that of the German Independents in November-December 1918 to January 1919." (p. 26.)

They hold the true explanation to be that the Russian army had become so broken up by an external factor prior to the revolution -- World War I -- that it had virtually ceased to be an "adequate counterrevolutionary instrument."

Comrades Germain and Knoeller are trying something new -- viewing the course of the Russian revolution from the standpoint of the "strategy of armed struggle." From this standpoint it must be granted that it is odd that the Bolsheviks did not begin with at least "a minimum of practical application" of "armed confrontations" if only for the purpose of providing "exemplary actions." And, frankly, I would think all the more so if the army had virtually ceased to be an adequate counterrevolutionary instrument.

The reasons why the Bolsheviks did not take that course can be stated

succinctly:

1. While Lenin had succeeded in building the cadre of a revolutionary party, the process was not yet completed. He had to finish the task in the very course of the revolution. The principal requirement was a "regroupment" -- to bring in Leon Trotsky and the forces associated with him.

2. The party had to be rearmed. Lenin himself was responsible for a good part of the disorientation displayed by the Bolsheviks in February and March 1917. He had insisted on the formula "Democratic Dictatorship of the Proletariat and the Peasantry" as against Trotsky's theory of the permanent revolution. Not until the Bolshevik party had the correct theory could it go forward. Lenin, as we know, made the correction in his Theses of April 4.

At first he was in a minority of virtually one -- himself, and he was accused of having become a "Trotskyist." Because of his great prestige and political capacities he was able before long to change this minority into a majority and the Bolsheviks could then move forward. The task of building a revolutionary cadre had been completed.

3. The party had to become a mass party in a political struggle against all competing parties and tendencies, particularly in the proletariat. This took additional time.

4. While organizing for the showdown, the proletariat had to learn to trust the political judgment of the Bolsheviks. The first sharp lesson was the necessity to restrain themselves from a premature bid for power, or from provocative actions that would play into the hands of the bourgeois state. What the most advanced section of the proletariat had to wait for was the rest of the masses to catch up.

5. The key forces of the peasantry, assembled in the conscript army, had to be won over to the slogans of Bolshevism; that is, brought -- arms and all -- under the leadership of the proletariat which was in turn guided by the Bolshevik cadres.

6. The Bolsheviks had to be completely sure that a solid majority of the populace had grasped the central demands formulated by the party and was ready to battle all the opposing forces to realize them.

These six considerations are sufficient to indicate that the axis

followed by the Bolsheviks was to build the cadre of a revolutionary party, to expand it into a mass party, and to win a majority. The military side -- the armed struggle -- conformed tactically to the party-building strategy.

What the Russian victory demonstrated for the first time in history was the role that a proletarian party, armed with the program and insights of Leninism, can accomplish in a revolutionary situation, whatever the particular conditions may be.

Can this role be repeated? Yes, it can. The Fourth International was founded on this proposition.

That is why Trotsky, in analyzing the defeats in Germany and Spain emphasized the absence of parties built on the Bolshevik model and not such differences between the revolutionary situation in Russia and subsequent ones in other countries as the degree of disintegration of the armed forces before the revolutionary upsurge of the masses.

The Feedback from Practice to Theory

Practice is dialectically related to theory, as all of us know. The "orientation and method" of guerrilla warfare, adopted at the last world congress in hope of establishing the Fourth International in the field of practice, stands in contradiction to the theoretical heritage of our movement. Thus an inevitable feedback from practice was soon registered in the field of theory.

The disdain for theory exhibited by the Cubans found its parallel in the permissive attitude adopted by the architects of the majority line toward the ultraleft posture to be seen in certain sectors of our movement. The two most striking current examples of this posture are the combination of sectarianism and verbal redness displayed by the majority leadership of the IMG in Britain, and the Maoist, Marghellist, and Tupamarist deviations of what was the El Combatiente grouping at the last world congress.

The contradiction between the theoretical heritage of our movement and the practice of the new "strategy" is shown in other ways. The new practice calls for its own reflection in theory if for no other reason than to explain and justify it.

The defenders of the new "orientation and method" have sought to justify their line by appealing to the author-

ities of the past. Hence the diligent research work, going back as far as Engels. Hence, also, the peculiar selection of quotations and references, the tearing out of context, and the avoidance of references that speak against their position. Hence, to cap everything, the strange and significant fact that neither Comrade Maitan, nor Comrades Germain and Knoeller, cared to bring into consideration Trotsky's final judgment on guerrilla warfare.

The contradiction will deepen if those responsible persist in their course.

On the one hand it will lead to even worse repercussions than those already visible in our ranks, inasmuch as the permissiveness of the majority toward ultraleft errors encourages a more demanding attitude on the part of those committing them. Why should they have to put up with the "softness" of the majority leaders of the Fourth International toward carping criticisms of what they are doing in an honest effort to carry out the line of the last world congress?

On the other hand, the need to offer theoretical justification for the new course cannot help but bend its sponsors in the direction of the more consistent practitioners of the "orientation and method" of guerrilla warfare, who consider Leninism to have been superseded.

These internal and external pressures, working in combination, will tend to induce more vigorous efforts at justifying the new line -- inevitably at the expense of the "old" theory, the "old" program, and the "old" cadres.

Four Answers to Four Questions

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

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

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

bourgeois-democratic framework?"

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

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

Answer: Unfortunately, I am not good at reading tea leaves. A powerful upsurge of the mass movement -- in Latin America as elsewhere -- will find a dialectical reflection within the armed forces. The bourgeois armies will tend to become weakened, corroded, or paralyzed, even torn with internal contradictions. Some anticipations of this were recently visible in Bolivia, for instance.

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

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

process actually develops in life.

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

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

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

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

"The strategic task of the next period -- a prerevolutionary period of agitation, propaganda and organization -- consists in overcoming the contradiction between the maturity of the objective revolutionary conditions and the immaturity of the proletariat and its vanguard (the confusion and disappointment of the older generation; the inexperience of the younger generation). It is necessary to help the masses in the process of the daily struggle to find the bridge between present demands and the socialist program of the revolution. This bridge should include a system of transitional demands, stemming from today's consciousness of wide layers of the working class and unalterably leading to one final conclusion: the conquest of power by the proletariat." (Ibid., p. 18.)

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

Question: "4. Does he think that once our own organizations have accumulated a minimum of forces they must, in their turn, prepare for these confrontations or risk very heavy losses, both in physical terms (inflicted by

the class enemy) and political terms (inflicted by the other tendencies in the revolutionary movement)?"

Answer: I suspect that this is a loaded question in which the authors have in mind a "minimum of forces" for involvement in the "strategy" of armed struggle or guerrilla warfare.

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

* * *

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

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

But You've Got No Alternative Line

Comrade Maitan should perhaps be heard at this point: "The minority comrades do not have an alternative line that we could analyze and reject." Comrade Maitan may not have analyzed the minority line, but he certainly rejected it.

He explains as follows:

"At the world congress, the minority asked the delegates to reject the fundamental line of the document and proposed opening a discussion. Fourteen months later Comrade Hansen has renewed the argument, but the result is no different. The line of the majority is subjected to criticism but there is no proposal for replacing it. It is good to recall the criteria of the transitional program, warn against dangers, stress the essential role of mass work and the necessity of a revolutionary party. But Latin America is experiencing a situation of profound crisis in which, in a number of countries, the class struggle has already gone over

into armed combat. We have proposed a strategy for this stage based on the experience of our sections and taking account of the experiences and conclusions of other revolutionary currents which have already participated in the struggle. What does the minority propose? What is its conception of armed struggle for a continent at a stage when, I repeat again, armed struggle is on the order of the day. How does it think that the struggle for the overthrow of imperialism and national capitalism can take place concretely?" ("Once Again on the Revolutionary Perspectives in Latin America -- Defense of an Orientation and a Method." Op. cit., p. 10.)

I don't know the purpose of Comrade Maitan's reference to "fourteen months later." He knows very well that at the last world congress the majority rejected the proposal to continue the discussion. The needs of "security" were cited and the right of the majority to have a certain amount of time to test out their new line. I accepted the majority decision although I thought the decision was a mistake, since to continue the discussion did not involve a security question and could have helped lead to earlier clarification of the differences. Thus it was hardly my fault that a considerable delay occurred before the discussion could be renewed. It is a small matter, one indicative nevertheless of a certain attitude.

As to the challenge to develop a counterproposal, this is indeed disarming. What is our "conception of armed struggle for a continent"?

1. This presumes acceptance of the basic position of the majority -- adoption of the "strategy" of armed struggle, which Comrade Maitan (if not Comrades Germain and Knoeller) equates in Latin America with guerrilla warfare in the main, and, in the final analysis, predominantly rural guerrilla warfare for a prolonged period and on a continental scale. The challenge thus amounts to a demand that we present an alternative strategy of armed struggle or remain silent.

But the basic concept advanced by the majority is to be rejected as fallacious, since engagement in armed struggle is a tactical question when it is considered in relation to the party-building strategy. To write tactical recipes, even under the pompous title of "Counterproposals," would be a mistake, as I have already tried to explain.

2. It would be just as much a

mistake, in my opinion, to attempt -- in opposition to the new strategy adopted by the majority -- to spell out the counterstrategy, offering it under some imposing title like "57 Varieties of Party Building" with numerous quotations from Frederick Engels, Karl Marx, V.I. Lenin, Leon Trotsky, and James P. Cannon, and abundant examples selected from six continents over the past seventy years.

It would be an error to attempt something like that even if half the document were to deal with the special problems that appear when the class struggle becomes so sharp as to flare into violent confrontations, whether at the outset or culmination of an upsurge placing government power at stake.

3. By demanding that we advance an "alternative line," the comrades of the majority shirk their own duty. Theirs is the responsibility of explaining and justifying their decision to overturn the line followed up to 1969 and to replace it with a new alternative line called by them the "strategy of armed struggle."

What was wrong with the former line? What was "missing" in it? Why did it suddenly turn out to be inadequate or superseded? And precisely why at such a late date as 1969?

The comrades of the majority have as yet not answered these crucial questions. All they have given us is hints and innuendos. An example is the following by Comrade Maitan:

"We are not unaware of the fact that in a context like that of Latin America today adventurist deviations can always occur, above and beyond more or less correct formulations in documents -- we have to keep our eyes open to this danger and fight it without hesitation, if necessary. But above all at the time when we began to spell out our present conceptions on Latin America, that is, in the second half of 1967, the emphasis had to be put on the opposite danger. Despite its being founded by a leader of the October Revolution, the founder of the Red Army, and a man with an extraordinary list of honors for his participation in revolutionary struggles throughout the world, our movement might have given the impression of either being ignorant of the problems of armed struggle, or viewing them in a purely theoretical or propagandistic way to such an extent that even in our own ranks there were comrades wanting to study military problems who drew on other sources, unaware of Leon Trotsky's contribution.

This deficiency must be accounted for by the conditions in which we struggled for decades and by a legitimate concern not to encourage a suicidal adventurism, not to impose overwhelming tasks on a very small nuclei. But, with the objective situation on our side, it was vitally necessary to make a turn. The world congress document was a contribution in this direction; the documents and decisions of the Bolivian and Argentinian comrades, at bottom, have had the same significance, with the advantage of adding more concreteness to the overall conceptions." (Ibid., p. 15.)

From this it would seem clear that in the second half of 1967 -- following the OIAS conference -- one or more leaders of the Fourth International came to the conclusion that however justified the previous line had been in its time, it had become "vitally necessary to make a turn" of far-reaching scope.

It was necessary to find ways and means of altering the impression among guerrilla fighters that our movement was "ignorant of the problems of armed struggle" or viewed them "in a purely theoretical or propagandistic way."

Thus another irony was added to history -- leaders of the Fourth International pondering over what might be "missing" in the line and activities of the world Trotskyist movement, and deciding it was guerrilla warfare, precisely as some of the guerrilla fighters, pondering over what was clearly missing in the strategy of guerrilla warfare, became inclined to think it might be a revolutionary party.

We are given another hint in the previously cited document by Comrade Maitan "An Insufficient Document" where we are told that we can't surmount our present difficulties until we can demonstrate "in practice" our capacity to make a "breakthrough," specifically by engaging in guerrilla warfare at a predetermined spot on a map of the globe.

The reality thus appears to be that one or more of the leading comrades of the Fourth International became dissatisfied sometime in 1967 or earlier with the party-building strategy laid down at the founding congress of our movement. Something was "missing." Good as our movement had proved itself to be in the field of theory it had not shown itself capable anywhere of making a comparable demonstration in practice, particularly a demonstration

of know-how in acting "arms in hand." Now the objective situation had changed. The field of guerrilla warfare had opened up. It was objectively possible for even a small group to set up a front in the example set by the Cubans, provided everything else was subordinated to this "orientation and method."

That was the real rationale, it would seem from the evidence, behind the decision at the last world congress to elevate guerrilla warfare into a strategy and, with extravagant hopes, to plunge ahead in Bolivia and Argentina.

Instead of enlarging on these reasons and explaining them more fully -- and perhaps convincing us -- Comrade Maitan and Comrades Germain and Knoeller furnish us with a plethora of general arguments that have nothing to do with the alleged incapacity of our movement to prove itself practically, nothing to do with the alleged hindrance offered by the previous line, and nothing to do with the alleged imperious need for a breakthrough. In the absence of an explanation of these views, the demand that the minority provide an "alternative line" sounds like mockery.

4. While demanding that we offer a set of concrete counterproposals, the comrades of the majority do not themselves spell out concretely how their new line either opens a road to the masses or contributes to party building, although they admit that these are key questions facing our movement.

The comrades of the majority should tell us specifically how the engagement of a small group in guerrilla warfare as an "orientation and a method" solves the problem of mobilizing the masses in a struggle for power.

They should tell us specifically how this "strategy" assures building a revolutionary-socialist party.

Some specific examples would be welcome to illustrate the power and efficacy of guerrilla warfare in these two respects.

The truth is that examples abound in Latin America, as well as other areas, including examples from the experience of our own movement, pointing to just the opposite conclusions from those drawn by the majority. This is one of the reasons why the guerrilla movement in Latin America is in crisis. In the case of Peru in 1965 -- which received a stamp of approval in the majority

resolution -- Héctor Béjar's book offers extraordinarily clear testimony on how guerrilla warfare as a strategy diverts revolutionists from party building, separates them from the masses, and leads them into a blind alley.

A Step Backward

I have already discussed the damaging consequences of the majority line within the ranks of the world Trotskyist movement, where it encourages ultraleftism when what is needed is to counter it. I should like to now turn to some other damaging consequences.

1. It serves to engender false hopes among comrades that they can get substantial help from the Fourth International if they engage in the "strategy" of armed struggle.

However, our movement lacks the resources to fulfill such hopes. The Fourth International is a small cadre organization. Most of its sections are unable even to maintain a regular publication of the quality and size required by their needs. They are unable, most of them, even to maintain a modest staff of full-time professional revolutionists. Problems of this nature are, of course, greatly exacerbated where the Trotskyists must remain in the underground.

The larger sections in the advanced capitalist countries that are beginning to feel the wind in their sails still remain much too small to constitute supply bases of any consequence for guerrilla movements in the colonial and semicolonial areas. In fact, to take full advantage of the openings now appearing they must concentrate all their resources, both in cadres and finances, on the struggles in their own areas, which are of course intimately bound up with those elsewhere in the world.

In Latin America and similar regions, sections should clearly understand that engagement in guerrilla struggles is a tactical problem to be weighed in the light of their own resources without being able to count on anything requisite to their needs from abroad.

The Fourth International as a whole remains at the stage where the primary task is to gather together the first contingents of cadres to be educated and trained. It must concentrate on this and not permit itself to become diverted either by the pressure to make forced marches in hope of a "break-through" or by alluring "shortcuts" promised by new "strategies."

To deviate from this can only encourage adventures or inspire bombastic propaganda that soon reveals its emptiness.

The "strategy" of armed struggle proclaimed by the majority does not conform to the real tasks that must be carried out to improve the size, strength, and material capacities of the Fourth International.

2. Public propaganda in favor of the "strategy" of armed struggle does not help us in the discussion taking place among the Latin-American revolutionists and those elsewhere who think like them. It hinders the work of bringing those breaking from "foquism" or its variants toward Leninism. What we require is redoubled efforts on the part of the leadership of the world Trotskyist movement to defend the Leninist strategy of party building, and to produce "at least a minimum" of concrete examples to indicate in a practical way what we mean.

3. The "orientation and method" of guerrilla warfare hampers engagement in the molecular processes going on in the depths of the masses.

The immediate problem is to win more cadres. They can be won in the vanguard through polemical material in defense of the Leninist strategy of party building along with concrete proposals to engage in work among the masses in a correct way.

These proposals should be drawn up in accordance with the method outlined in the Transitional Program. But this means utilizing democratic slogans and economic demands related to life in the plants, mills, mines, and other sectors of industry, that may at first sight appear to be very modest. It includes similar work in the countryside. And among the oppressed minorities, students, and women.

The "strategy" of armed struggle, which is a strategy of direct confrontation with the state power, with little regard to the necessary correlatives -- as viewed from the standpoint of Leninism -- stands squarely in the way of such work.

4. The new line increases the difficulty of recruiting to our ranks on the basis of a clear espousal of the Leninist theory of the role of a combat party.

The opportunities for getting a fair hearing are much better than formerly. The setbacks and defeats

suffered by the guerrilla movements in a number of countries have led many of the participants and the circles sympathetic to them to begin reevaluating.

This does not mean that they will automatically come up with the right answers. They may be attracted towards Maoism, or even popular frontism. We have to contend energetically to win them to the program of Trotskyism.

The possibilities of recruitment are excellent -- provided we appear as Leninists genuinely convinced of the correctness of the strategy of party building and energetically doing everything possible to carry out this strategy.

The line of the majority hampers recruitment from these sources. The Fourth International gives the appearance of coming over to positions that they have begun to question. If these positions are correct, then the Fourth International only looks ridiculous trying to lend authority to them from the works of Lenin and Trotsky. It would be more appropriate to explain how the teachings of Lenin and Trotsky blocked the Fourth International for so many years from moving over to the "strategy" of armed struggle sooner.

Which Was the Key Document?

In the discussion prior to the last world congress, I called attention in my article "Assessment of the Draft Resolution on Latin America" (pp. 5-13) to what appeared to me to be various contradictions between the draft resolution on Latin America and the draft of the main political resolution "On the New Rise of the World Revolution." These differences were so substantial that I wrote:

"In short, the draft resolution on Latin America appears to have been drawn up on the basis of a quite different concept of the key problem facing the Fourth International and the orientation and tasks required to solve it than the concept expressed in the main resolution with its requisite orientation and tasks for the coming period. How the implicit contradiction between the two resolutions would be resolved in practice if both were adopted without either of them being substantially changed is hard to foresee."

Comrade Maitan was particularly insistent that I was wrong on this. In his view there was no contradiction between the Latin-American resolution produced by the commission which he heads and the main political resolution which Comrade Germain reported on.

In his latest document, Comrade

Maitan repeats (p. 16) that I was mistaken in my understanding of a key point in the main political resolution. The point was: "This new revolutionary rise means that essentially proletarian forces and vanguard political currents carrying on the traditions of revolutionary Marxism and workers democracy will be in the thick of the fight, that their methods of intervening, of action, and organization will draw much closer to the Leninist norm of proletarian revolutions." (Intercontinental Press, July 14, 1969, p. 669.)

According to Comrade Maitan, "It is clear that the allusion to drawing much closer to 'the Leninist norm of proletarian revolutions' refers primarily to the industrialized capitalist countries. It concerns the neo-colonial countries more indirectly."

In short, Comrade Maitan is of the opinion that it is very unlikely that the Leninist norm will be seen in the colonial world in the foreseeable future and that -- contrary to my impression -- his view is expressed in the main political resolution.

I am still of the opinion that the allusion is not that clear. In fact, it suggests the contrary to what Comrade Maitan affirms. The sentence in question follows immediately after a paragraph dealing with the colonial revolution and the perspective that imperialism may have to redistribute its financial and military strength in such a way as to reduce "the pressure on the colonial revolution on several fronts, stimulate its resumption and the winning of new victories."

Thus the forecast that the new revolutionary rise signified a trend toward the Leninist norm of proletarian revolutions was made in the context of dealing with the colonial revolution. I, for one, took the main resolution at its face value on this point.

Besides this very important question, the main political resolution, in its final section "The Construction of a New Revolutionary Leadership," paid special attention to the worldwide radicalization of the youth, the great opportunities this opened for Trotskyism, the special problems created by spontanéist and similar tendencies, and how these must be met. Considerable stress was placed on party building.

On the face of it, the main resolution was acceptable. The Latin-American resolution stood in contradiction to its general line.

The article by Comrades Germain and Knoeller adds considerably to the

force of Comrade Maitan's contention that I was mistaken. In that event, both resolutions would appear in a different light to me. The Latin-American resolution would have to be judged as the main resolution, since it set the main course to be followed by the Fourth International in the following period. The resolution presented by Comrade Germain would have to be reduced in importance. It would have to be viewed as auxiliary to the real main resolution that set the key policy for the Fourth International as a whole although this real main resolution bore only the modest title "Resolution on Latin America."

Such a judgment would not impugn the accuracy of the descriptive part of the main political resolution dealing with world developments as a whole since the previous congress. In that respect the resolution would remain valid. What is involved is the axis of activities set for the Fourth International, the axis for strengthening and expanding it as an organization. Specifically this was the adoption of the "strategy" of armed struggle. That was not in the main political resolution adopted at the last world congress.

I do not wish to give the impression that this readjustment in view on the relative weight and importance of the two documents implies any belief that a secret division of labor occurred at the last world congress. Without a doubt, Comrade Germain genuinely believed at the time that the line of action proposed for Latin America concerned only that area and nowhere else. Similarly, I think that Comrade Maitan had not thought out the full implications of what the change in line for Latin America signified for the Fourth International in the rest of the world.

The striking similarity of the two documents now before us show that both Comrade Germain and Comrade Maitan became caught up in the logic of their positions. In trying to justify what they had started, it became necessary for them to proceed further along the road.

They are still far from having reached the logical end of this course, and perhaps they will draw back.

The Correct Way to Resolve Differences

Comrades Germain and Knoeller express the fear that what I have previously said is leading our movement into an "impasse." The subheading they chose for the section in which they voiced this fear was "A Polemic Leading Nowhere."

I hope that their fears will prove to be unjustified. True, I tend to discount their fears, inasmuch as from where I stand, our movement is already in an impasse so far as this question is concerned. How do you escape from an impasse and begin getting from nowhere to somewhere, so far as the internal life of our movement is concerned, except through a polemic?

The issues are very important, in my opinion, and we should do our utmost to clarify them in preparation for the next world congress.

Already I can see some progress. When the new line was first proposed, some of us were struck by the self-contradiction of a tactic of rural guerrilla warfare projected on a continental scale for a prolonged period. We assumed that it was a tactic proposed in the traditional sense of our movement, meaning that it was conceived as an auxiliary to the strategy of party building. To us it seemed obvious that a "tactic" could not be extended on such a broad scale and for such a long time. We thus sought to make this self-contradiction apparent to everyone.

Besides this, it seemed improper to us for the Fourth International as a whole to become directly involved in tactical questions best left to the judgment of the sections.

That stage has now been passed. It turned out that what was being projected was not a tactic but a new strategy.

Thus the discussion has clearly shifted to the level of strategy. Of prime importance among the points involved in determining the validity of the new strategy is its connection with past positions of our movement, for this concerns the continuity of our theoretical heritage. That has now been taken up in the two new documents submitted by Comrade Maitan and by Comrades Germain and Knoeller, and by this reply.

The new strategy affects areas other than Latin America, despite assurances to the contrary, as I have tried to prove above. This includes both the vanguard and our own movement. In my opinion, Comrades Maitan, Germain, and Knoeller have not yet met this issue. They have instead sought to avoid it or to deny it. I have sought to present the situation in such a way as to encourage further discussion from them on the question.

One of the gains of the polemic is the clarification that has resulted as to the importance of the differences. It would have been preferable, of course,

if these had turned out to be only minor. It is now clear that underlying the opposing positions at the last world congress were deeper questions, especially concerning the axis of party-building tasks for the Fourth International. Some comrades may find this worrisome. However, the clarification is a positive development. Clearer understanding of what is involved should make it easier to resolve the differences in a principled way and to arrive at greater homogeneity in the next period.

Of course, the atmosphere can become heated, and this is not without danger. In fact, it must be said frankly that signs of undue factionalism have appeared in several areas, the attack on Comrade Moreno being one of them. The most responsible comrades of both sides (and those who have not yet made up their minds) have a common interest in doing their utmost to put a damper on such attacks, which point in the direction of unprincipled factionalism.

The main danger arises from any

sector trying to substitute organizational measures for ideological confrontation and political clarification. The repercussions of reprisals of that kind would surely be felt internationally.

Although the discussion has transcended Latin America, I hope that the Latin-American comrades will find themselves in better position -- now that the repression has eased in some countries -- to contribute to the discussion than was possible for them in the discussion prior to the last world congress. What they have to say will be listened to with the utmost attention in view of the origin of the dispute.

But the comrades in other parts of the world should also express themselves. The new line will inevitably affect their work if it has not already done so. Not even the Trotskyists in such economically advanced countries as Great Britain, Canada, and the United States have been exempt from the repercussions, as I have sought to indicate in this reply.

March 19, 1971.