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Party and Army in a Strategic Perspective of Prolonged Revolutionary War—Working Notes

By the PRT (Red Faction)

A fundamental component of our activity in the coming months will be the internal process of political consolidation and homogenization. The discussion program which has been approved by the leadership of the Red Faction is intended to stimulate and develop this process.

In this way we give continuity to what was the principal thrust of our internal struggle against the present centrist leadership of the PRT. We attempted to move forward in a political fashion by demanding the opening of the preparatory period for our Sixth Congress. The bureaucratic reaction of the leadership of the PRT led to our constituting ourselves as a faction and to our splitting in order to be able to go on defending in an effective manner the points of view that we had recently begun to develop.

We continue to defend our status as a faction of the PRT. This means that, for us, our process of political consolidation and homogenization is to be seen within the framework of the reports and discussions preparatory to the Sixth Congress.

It is important for us to proceed in this way, since otherwise our claims to continuity in relation to the PRT and its traditions would become empty phrases. The tradition and the continuity which we claim must be understood *politically*, in the sense of an *assimilation of the political experience of the PRT*, and not in the sense of remaining wedded to a series of ambiguities or errors. Any claim to continuity of the PRT and its traditions made outside the framework of a profound political understanding would be mere verbiage, or what is worse, opportunism. This political understanding entails a series of discussions which make a balance sheet of the orientation of the PRT by confronting it with the practical experience of the last three years.

An essential element in this balance sheet is obviously *the strategic and tactical line for the armed struggle adopted by the Fifth Congress* (July 1970). Comrades should go back and re-read the resolutions on revolutionary war, the party and the army, etc., published in the documents of the Fifth Congress of the PRT.

We think the armed struggle experience carried out by the PRT is *politically* one of the most advanced in Latin America. Our balance sheet must give this its proper value. A correct assimilation of this experience can lead to the consolidation of these advances as one of our major political conquests. Attitudes which lead to superficial judgments or blanket criticisms must be rejected.

The following are only the *working notes* for a study that will have to be developed in further documents. The political need to open up discussion in the faction led us to write down in a couple of days a few ideas which

would allow us to begin the debate, even though we would be unable to deepen them sufficiently.

The Political Positions of the Ex-Military Committee

As an indication of our starting point it is worth recalling briefly the positions held by the ex-MC (which acted as the leadership of our internal struggle within the PRT) as regards the question of the construction of the Revolutionary Army and the characterization of the period.

The ex-MC remained within the general framework defined by the Fifth Congress, but it raised some essential questions.

The first of them was to reject the characterization of the period as one in which the revolutionary war had already begun. The period was characterized as prerevolutionary and the strategic perspective of a prolonged revolutionary war was maintained, but not the conclusion that right now "we are at war."

This also led on to questioning the characterization of the ERP as being at this stage a mass organization, as the Fifth Congress had defined it. We felt that the ERP was at the current time an organization of vanguard fighters, in which non-party fighters were in practice sympathizers of the party.

As regards the program of the ERP, the one adopted at the Fifth Congress was questioned and the contradictions it created were pointed out. The program of the ERP was identified with that of the party.

These were the essential questions that the ex-MC had arrived at. In addition there were a series of elements concerning military practice, operational criteria, types of actions, etc., which were however less important than what we have mentioned above. Political discussion was interrupted, as we know, by the split provoked by the PRT leadership, and this prevented the necessary political consolidation and maturation.

The PRT in the Context of the Latin American Vanguard

In order to make a political balance sheet of the PRT's armed-struggle experience we have to place it within a wider and more global perspective, and not merely restrict ourselves to analyzing the PRT's performance, successes and failings or problems in the Argentinian context. Nor can we treat the line of the Fifth Congress and the concrete experience of the PRT in isolation from each other. We must compare the line of the Fifth Congress with the reality of its implementation and place them both *in the*

context of building the revolutionary vanguard on, at the least, a Latin American scale.

The objective and subjective conditions for the construction of revolutionary leaderships in Latin America underwent a decisive change after the Cuban revolution.

The Cuban revolution had an effect in Latin America comparable to that of the October 1917 revolution in Europe. The Cuban revolution arose as the culmination of a series of Latin American anti-imperialist movements. The most notable cases were those of Jacobo Arbenz in Guatemala, Paz Estenssoro in Bolivia, Perón in Argentina and the second presidential term of Getúlio Vargas in Brazil.

These Latin American anti-imperialist movements were a part of the rise of the colonial revolution which occurred after the second world war and the victory of the Chinese revolution in 1949. The Stalinist policy of peaceful coexistence and class-collaboration with the bourgeoisie practiced by the Communist parties and Social Democracy led to the stagnation of the European revolution in the postwar period. As a result, the revolutionary possibilities created by the working-class struggle against Nazism in France, Italy and Greece, to name the main examples, were thwarted. With the aid of Yankee imperialism (through the Marshall Plan) European capitalism was rebuilt. At this point the dynamic axis of world revolution shifted to the revolution in the colonial and semicolonial countries. The process began which would lead to the independence of India, Pakistan, Ceylon and Indonesia, to the beginnings of a process of revolutionary war in Indochina, to the guerrilla movement in the Philippines, to the movement which would transform the African colonies of the British and French empires into formally independent countries, etc.

A characteristic of the mass upsurge in the colonial and semicolonial countries in the postwar period was the hegemony of bourgeois and petty-bourgeois leaderships of the anti-imperialist movements. Stalinism and Social Democracy had held back the development of the revolution in the advanced capitalist countries, where the working class had more weight. In addition, their reformist politics in the colonial and semicolonial countries, where the weight of the working class was less substantial, had with few exceptions prevented the consolidation of proletarian leaderships of the anti-imperialist movement. Left to bourgeois and petty-bourgeois leaderships, the anti-imperialist movement stopped half-way, proving incapable of breaking the links which bound it to the international capitalist system. Thus one instance after another confirmed in practice, in the negative sense, the validity of the theory of permanent revolution, as the bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie demonstrated their inability to carry through to the end a real process of national and social liberation in the countries dominated by imperialism.

The Cuban revolution represented the culmination of this series of anti-imperialist movements, incorporating the experience of the earlier failures. The Castroist leadership was the first leadership produced by such a movement which broke with its class origins and gave an impulse in practice to a dynamic of permanent revolution. In Cuba the bourgeois state apparatus was destroyed, the bourgeoisie and the imperialists were expropriated, and the construction of socialism was begun. The democratic and socialist tasks of the Cuban revolution thus became

combined.

The existence of the Cuban revolution became an objective stimulus to the worker, peasant and student struggles throughout the Latin American continent. After so many frustrated revolutionary experiences, Yankee imperialism suffered a great defeat a few miles off its coast. The myth that the imperialist presence in Latin America made a revolutionary victory impossible was shattered. A radicalization of the mass movement, directly inspired by the Cuban example, came into being in almost every country. A period of intense class struggle opened up in Latin America.

The Cuban revolution would also constitute a formidable subjective stimulus to the emergence of new revolutionary forces in Latin America. The revolutionary road to liberation and the struggle against imperialism had been pointed out in practice. The actuality of the proletarian revolution in Latin America had been demonstrated likewise. The crisis of bourgeois and petty-bourgeois nationalism—until then hegemonic—was intensified. The crisis of Stalinist reformism was intensified as its traditional theses deriving from the conception of "revolution by stages" were given the lie by the first socialist revolution carried through by a leadership which did not originate within the framework of Stalinism. There began to emerge in Latin America new vanguard organizations which based themselves on the concrete example of the Cuban revolution. The internationalist orientation of the Cuban leadership aided the crystalization of these organizations into a Latin American current considering Castroism as the natural leadership of the continental revolutionary process.

The new generation of revolutionaries in Latin America had the virtues, but also the limitations, of the Castroist leadership from which it drew its example and inspiration. Having itself developed empirically, the Cuban leadership proved unable to overcome this weakness and provide an adequate strategy and tactics for the Latin American revolution. The Castroist current broke with reformism along a strategic line of demarcation—that of armed struggle—but was not able to develop a strategy and tactics adapted to Latin American conditions. A major additional influence here was the weakness of revolutionary Marxism on the continent. In spite of efforts to transcend the limits of a national or regional orientation (through OLAS and the Tricontinental) the bulk of the Castroist current succumbed to a series of deviations in orientation and in practice of armed struggle, leading to severe defeats or partial setbacks. These deviations were expressed most coherently in the works of Régis Debray and in Debray's erroneous interpretation of the Cuban revolution, which had great influence on the Latin American vanguard. Foquismo, Debrayism or militarism was to jeopardize the results of the majority of the guerrilla experiences which developed on the continent following the victory of the Cuban revolution (Guatemala, Venezuela, Peru, Brazil, Chile, Argentina, etc.).

It was in this way that, little by little, new differentiations began to take place within the Latin American vanguard. After the initial differentiation between reformism and revolution which took place on the basis of the necessity of armed struggle for the revolutionary seizure of power, new questions were included in the debate inside the revolutionary vanguard. The first failures of guerrilla experiments brought new polarizations.

The new polarizations (broadly speaking) were the product of different answers to concrete questions about how to conceive armed struggle. For some years the debate in the Latin American vanguard had revolved around a big dilemma: *how to deal with the question of armed struggle from an organizational point of view*. The two answers that determined two perceptibly different trends were: first build the revolutionary party; and first build the revolutionary army.

In the first case, defense of Leninist principles of organization led, almost without exception, to an indefinite postponement of the initiation of armed struggle, the latter being made conditional upon the prior existence of a "real mass party." This is in spite of the fact that frequent violent confrontations with the forces of repression invariably placed armed struggle on the order of the day as an immediate necessity in Latin America.

In the second case, the concern to build an organization capable of undertaking effectively the tasks of armed struggle often led to a total underestimation of the political problems posed by the building of a new vanguard. *Foquista* or militarist deviations resulted in tragic consequences.

In Argentina we found examples of both types of organizations. An example of a spontaneist organization was the Partido Comunista Revolucionario [Revolutionary Communist Party—PCR]. What really distinguished the PCR was not just its insurrectionalist view of the Argentinian revolutionary process but also its refusal to take up the armed struggle in practice in the present stage. For this option would have been open to the PCR notwithstanding its insurrectionalist view, were it not that it was trapped in a gradualist and spontaneist conception of revolution and of party building. And this whilst claiming to follow Che Guevara! Examples of *foquista*-militarist organizations were the Fuerzas Argentinas de Liberación [Argentine Liberation Forces] and the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias [Revolutionary Armed Forces].

Although the dilemma was real and not merely the product of speculations on the part of elements of the vanguard, the simplistic and non-dialectical responses that we have outlined did not overcome it. Responses of this sort not only led into blind alleys but also caused defeats. Bolivia was recently the scene of defeats caused by deviations of both types. The Teoponte ELN guerrilla group, a typically *foquista* formation, which discarded the lessons of its own experiences as well as those of the revolutionary struggle in Bolivia in general, failed lamentably, several of its members dying before they could go into action. On the other hand, the lack of preparedness for the military coup of August 21, 1971, revealed the influence in Bolivian workers' movement of tendencies and organizations whose orientation was limited to a spontaneist verbalism.

It is in this Latin American context that we have to place the experience undergone by the PRT in the three years since its Fifth Congress.

The PRT, in effect, set itself the task of overcoming this dilemma which, up till then, had produced nothing but half-solutions, deviations and defeats for the Latin American vanguard.

The strategic and tactical conceptions for armed struggle adopted by the Fifth Congress were greatly influenced by the experience of the Chinese revolution and, above all, by the Vietnamese revolution; some of the resolu-

tions of the congress read like Giap drafted in the form of motions.

At the Fifth Congress the PRT adopted as a fundamental resolution the conception of building the revolutionary party and army simultaneously from the initial stage of the struggle, as the two strategic organs of the Latin American revolutionary process.

Until then this conception had been defended in Latin America only by Douglas Bravo, who could not put it into practice owing to the period of downturn through which the Venezuelan revolutionaries in the Partido de la Revolución Venezolana and the Fuerzas Armadas de Liberación Nacional [Party of the Venezuelan Revolution—National Liberation Armed Forces (PRV-FALN)] were passing.

Armed with this conception, the PRT became the first organization to attempt in practice to adapt Leninism to the conditions of armed struggle in Latin America, following in this respect the example of the Vietnamese revolution. The principal contribution the PRT made to the long experience of the Latin American revolutionary vanguard was to put Leninism into practice, *to affirm in the revolutionary practice of an armed struggle line the validity and current application of the Leninist conception of the party* with its manifold forms of intervention on different levels, illegal clandestine work and legal work, mass struggle and armed struggle, etc.

This application of Leninism to the present was effected in the practice of the PRT *in spite of* the latter's limitations and mistakes on the form of the party, on democratic centralism, on mass work, etc., which we were the first to criticize. In the same way, when we say that the fundamental lesson that the Vietnamese revolution conveyed to the international vanguard was that of the key role of the working-class Leninist party, this does not necessarily imply a judgment as to its model of the party, its party-building methodology, etc. These questions presume a more profound level of discussion in the context of a more general acceptance of Leninism. At the level of the revolutionary vanguard, however, there remains the contribution of having demonstrated in practice the contemporary relevance of the Leninist concept of the party (however much we may argue later about their defects and deformations). On a Latin American plane and within the revolutionary vanguard which in the course of the last 14 years, in the context which we have described in *resumé*, took up armed struggle in practice, this was the PRT's principal contribution.

The Strategic Perspective of Prolonged Revolutionary War and the Necessity of Building the Revolutionary Army

The strategy of prolonged revolutionary war was based upon two considerations: on the one hand, the greatly retarded development of the subjective conditions for revolution (the consciousness and the organization of the revolutionary class and its vanguard), on the other, the impossibility of a rapid change in the military relation of forces in favor of the proletariat.

As far as the backwardness of the subjective factor is concerned, we distinguished two elements: the problem of the revolutionary vanguard, and the development of the political consciousness of the Latin American proletariat and its allies, particularly the peasantry.

By the sixties, the Latin American vanguard had been regrouped for the most part beneath the monolith of Stalinism. For more than 40 years generations of communists had been formed under the influence of the zig-zags of Stalinist politics, from its ultraleft orientations in the twenties up to the policy of peaceful coexistence and class-collaboration with the bourgeoisie after 1934. The CPs on the continent were one after the other foundering politically, each demonstrating in turn its absolute lack of a strategy for achieving power and total submission to the Soviet bureaucracy.

The Cuban revolution broke the hegemony of Stalinism — in spite of everything the only important left political current outside the nationalist movements — initiating a process of internal crisis in the old reformist parties which ended in a series of splits, mainly in the more youthful and combative sectors. This first anti-Stalinist reaction, however, did not always mean the sectors in question breaking with the "theoretical" foundations of Stalinism. Rather it centered on a question of strategy — armed struggle — without going to the roots of the question of the nature of Stalinism. Thus we saw this young vanguard reaffirming the present-day need and possibility of the socialist revolution in Latin America while, to a certain extent, still identifying Leninism with Stalinism. The ideological form of this vanguard's break with Stalinist reformism was Castroism, with its virtues and its limitations.

The proletariat and peasantry of Latin America had long known the existing bourgeois nationalist and populist movements and these affected the development of their class consciousness. Stalinism prevented the consolidation of proletarian leadership in the mass movement. Peronism had unquestionably been the strongest and most durable of all these nationalist movements and its example is by way of demonstrating the tremendous obstacle it meant to the liberation of the working class and its allies from bourgeois ideology.

The most important consideration, however, was to be found in the change which had taken place in recent years in the relation of forces on a world scale. *Interimperialist contradictions stayed on the secondary level giving first place to the antagonism between the imperialist and bourgeois class and the revolutionary forces.* More than 50 years after the establishment of the first workers state, imperialism and the local bourgeoisies experienced a series of victorious revolutions (China, Cuba, Vietnam), and they too drew lessons from this experience. Revolution brought lessons for international reaction as well as for revolutionaries. The secondary character of interimperialist contradictions of today meant that we could no longer expect to see generalized armed conflicts like the two world wars, which had been responsible for a substantial weakening of the European bourgeoisies and revolutionary situations favorable to the proletariat. On the contrary, Yankee imperialism had in practice taken on the role of the international policeman of capitalism, with repeated interventions and acts of counterrevolutionary aggression, whether directly (Korea, Santo Domingo, Vietnam) or indirectly (Guatemala, Bolivia, Brazil).

In our case, the Cuban revolution was an experience that would be difficult to repeat without imperialist intervention. In other words, imperialism would not stand idly by while an anti-imperialist movement, even a bourgeois democratic one, transformed itself into a socialist

revolution without attempting to stop it by all the means at its disposal. The experience of the continent after Cuba showed that not only was imperialism prepared to prevent any such dynamic of permanent revolution but that its policy was to cut the evil out by the root, in other words to prevent any significant radicalization or upturn in the mass movement. In some countries this tendency could be seen clearly: even struggles for the most elementary demands were immediately confronted with the repressive apparatus of the state. The distorted development of capitalism in its phase of decay could occur only at the cost of the increasing poverty and exploitation of the broadest masses. For this reason we said that the fundamental characteristic of mass struggles in Latin America was their explosive dynamic. Confronting violent repression from the outset, the struggle for a simple economic demand tended to pass rapidly through intermediate stages, spilling over immediately into a confrontation with the repressive apparatus of the state and the dictatorship of the day. The explosiveness acquired by class struggles as a result of the sharpening of the social contradiction consequently presented the vanguard with the task of preparing the masses militarily to use revolutionary violence even at the level of the struggle for their minimum demands.

There was another aspect which must be considered. After the Cuban revolution imperialism seriously dedicated itself to train, finance and equip the armed forces of the different Latin American countries. It tried to form creole versions of the Green Berets — groups which specialized in anti-guerrilla fighting. To complement the modernization of the equipment of the armed forces a new element had been introduced: the massive indoctrination of the officer corps and of the troops. In this way *the Latin American armed forces had been transformed into ideologically cohesive institutions to prepare them for the assumption of a new mission: the role of Military Party of the ruling classes.*

All these changes in the institutions of repression were aimed at immunizing them to the maximum against the dangerous "cancer" of subversion and of equipping them to effectively combat against any attempt at rebellion against the system. For revolutionaries, all this meant that it would become increasingly difficult to undertake political propaganda and agitation inside the armed forces; work designed to sow the seeds of demoralization became tremendously difficult by the traditional methods. This meant that the decomposition of the bourgeois army — an essential element in the classical insurrection — would be a long process and very different from the way it was done in the epoch of Lenin and Trotsky. In other words the demoralization, decomposition and consequent neutralization of the bourgeois army which used to render possible a *rapid* change in the relation of military forces in favor of the proletariat could no longer occur in the traditional form.

If we add to this the intervention of the imperialist army, the situation we described is complete. The example of the Yankee army in Vietnam was a case in point: the tremendous degree of demoralization reached by the American troops in Southeast Asia was not sufficient to end its potential for aggression or to endanger its structure.

It is for all these reasons taken together that we understood the strategy for the conquest of power in Latin America as being a strategy of prolonged revolutionary

war, where there would be a gradual maturation of the subjective conditions for revolution (the class consciousness of the proletariat, and its revolutionary party) and at the same time the development of the indispensable instruments for a transformation of the relation of forces in favor of the revolution: the revolutionary army and the base-organs of workers' power.

The strategy for the conquest of power which had guided the Communist International of Lenin and Trotsky was the urban *insurrection*. Insurrection is an *urban* form of armed struggle, with *rapid* military outcome and whose objective is to seize the bastions of bourgeois power: the state apparatus and the army. The destruction of the bourgeois army developed by means of intensive *political work* which sought to win over whole battalions to the revolution. The selection of the exact moment for unleashing the insurrection is essential. Because of its characteristics as a *strategy of rapid military action*, insurrection takes for granted the existence of favorable political conditions, the existence, that is, of what Lenin called a *revolutionary crisis* (the coincidence of the objective and subjective conditions for revolution). The existence of big economic crises or of world wars created propitious conditions for weakening the bourgeoisie and sharpening the class contradictions in society.

The slow ripening of the subjective conditions, in circumstances where the degree of exploitation is such as to create constant violent confrontations between the classes; the political weakness of the ruling classes and their inability to offer solutions for the problems of the masses; the capacity of the masses for rapidly recuperating from their partial defeats, a result of the explosive social contradictions; the growing political role of the armed forces and the development of the repressive apparatus of the state; the inevitability of direct or indirect intervention by imperialism—all these factors combined in Latin America to create a constant *revolutionary situation*, that is, the *objective* conditions for revolution.

It is not possible to foresee a gradual and progressive development of the mass movement and the revolutionary vanguard of the kind that could occur in countries where bourgeois democratic conditions prevail. The accumulation of forces that had to be accomplished by the masses and the vanguard posed itself as a simultaneously political and military process. The *revolutionary crisis* (objective and subjective conditions) presented itself not as the culminating moment of a gradual development but as an uneven and combined, complex and prolonged process in which the subjective conditions matured at the same time as the revolutionary struggle unfolds.

These are the fundamental elements which have led us to pose as our strategic perspective a process of prolonged revolutionary war on a continental scale and the need to build a revolutionary army capable of militarily destroying the bourgeois army and the war machine of the dominant imperialism.

The Dialectic of Mass and Party in Building the Revolutionary Army of the People

The PRT's three-year experience of armed struggle and building the ERP, together with the present political situation in the country, cannot but provoke reflection on the part of the members.

To the extent that the Military Dictatorship withdraws from the scene, the present political situation places to the very fore the political struggle inside the mass movement which, after many years, is able to act with a certain freedom without immediately finding tanks on the streets or in the factories. Of course we do not delude ourselves that this means a real reestablishment over a long period of a bourgeois-democratic regime, as we have already stated in our documents on the conjuncture. On the contrary, violent confrontations between the classes have been seen since May 25 on a much broader level than was the case with the struggle of the armed vanguards against the dictatorship: on a mass level. We had a confirmation of this in workers struggles and other mass struggles, with occupations and kidnappings of executives of the occupied factories, and also in the violence of the confrontations between the bourgeois, bureaucratic sector of Peronism and its revolutionary, radicalized sector (the José León Suárez ceremony and the massacre of Ezeiza).

These reflections cannot pass over the problem of the place and significance of violent and armed forms of mass struggle and their relation to the building of the revolutionary party and army.

The experience of three years of struggle by the PRT and the ERP leads us also to reflect upon the Fifth Congress' conception of armed struggle.

We think that the revolutionary army is an indispensable strategic instrument for the seizure of power in Latin American conditions where, according to a perspective of prolonged revolutionary war, inevitable direct or indirect intervention by imperialist forces will lead to a prolonged confrontation. In this latter stage the revolutionary army will take the form of a regular army, though it will continue to incorporate and combine irregular guerrilla war.

Further on we shall explain, on the basis of an analysis of the actual experience of the PRT, why we consider that the orientation adopted at the Fifth Congress of building the party and the army at the same time from the present stage of the struggle constitutes a correct contribution.

But *what seems to us to need questioning is the gradualist and non-dialectical conception within which, de facto, the PRT has conceived the construction and development of the ERP up to now.*

In a recent document which is part of the internal polemic in the International against the positions of the Morenoist minority, Comrade Germain of the secretariat of the Fourth International makes some interesting observations. [The page of this document ("In Defence of Leninism: In Defence of the Fourth International," Jan. 1973) which deals with the ERP is reproduced below as an appendix.] Further on we shall explain why we do not agree with Comrade Germain that it is not necessary to pose as of now the building of the ERP. At the same time however we shall indicate the conditions under which it should be built, developing a concept which differs from the one that has been defended and practiced up to now by the present leadership of the PRT.

It is true that the PRT developed a conception according to which the construction of the ERP would proceed gradually, progressively and in an almost linear fashion by means of the gradual incorporation of new combatants and of sectors of the masses into the ERP founded by the party.

It seems to us that in point of fact this conception is not able to dialectically integrate the development of forms and organs of violent or armed struggle spontaneously adopted by the masses. And this is a big contradiction in view of the definition that has correctly been given of the character that the ERP ought to have, at least at a higher stage: that of a mass organization.

The party's initiative in forming and building the ERP is correct from the point of view of a Leninist rejection of all forms of spontaneism. But it seems to us that the conception of the Fifth Congress remained too one-sided and undialectical.

The correct conception, it seems to us, is that which considers the building of the ERP as the result of the dialectical interaction of the initiative of party and the mobilization, organization and struggle of the masses.

Without the orientation and leadership provided by the intervention of the revolutionary party the masses are not capable of building a strategic instrument such as the ERP starting from the embryonic forms of self-defense and of revolutionary violence. But, at the same time, if the party is incapable of developing, integrating within its strategic framework and leading the spontaneous violent or armed confrontations of the working class and the people, it will not be able to build an ERP that is a mass army, an effective organ of popular struggle in a process of prolonged revolutionary war, and recognized as such by wider and wider sectors of the people.

The gradualist conception of the building of the ERP which the PRT has maintained up to now seems to us to flow from a superficial imitation of the Vietnamese experience. This has its source in a wrong characterization of the stage reached in Argentina as one of open civil war. Thus, the difference is not noted between our situation and that of Vietnam, where imperialist aggression created a mass social base for incorporation into the revolutionary army, sometimes even simply as a mechanism of self-defense. We will not repeat here the criticism we also make of the present PRT leadership's lack of a strategy for building the party: they forget that the Vietnamese began the armed struggle with a party which already had a large influence among the masses, not with an organization which is still a vanguard only by virtue of its self-proclamation as such. (See the reply of the Red Faction to IB No. 34 of the present leadership of the PRT.)

The Struggle for Party Leadership over the Revolutionary Army of the People

In line with the whole Leninist tradition, we think that self-proclaimed vanguards do not exist. The vanguard role, the party's role as the leadership of the working class, is won through political struggle inside the mass movement.

In accordance with the one-sided view that we are criticizing, *the Fifth Congress saw the leading role of the party in relation to the ERP almost exclusively in organizational terms.* The PRT creates the ERP, names its political commissars, fixes the proportion of non-party elements in its leading bodies at x percent, etc., etc.

We think that, over and above certain organizational mechanisms, the problem remains fundamentally a political one.

In an ERP which is built as the result of the dialectical

interaction of party initiative and mass action, the party has to win its leadership role through an extended political struggle.

The party must seek to integrate into the political and organizational framework of the ERP all those forms and organs of armed or violent struggle that the working class adopts, from self-defense committees to workers' militias, growing from self-defense pickets, armed workers' commandos, shock groups, etc. To this end the party should attempt to become the political and military leadership of these organs. It should seek to stimulate them, give them continuity and enable them to transcend occasional and sporadic confrontations with the employers, the state or the bureaucracy, showing them the need for a prolonged struggle to overthrow the bourgeois power and build socialism. In other words, it must take part in the spontaneous forms of armed struggle of the masses to show them the need for building up political and military forces, the need to build a revolutionary party and revolutionary army, and the necessity of adopting a strategic perspective of prolonged revolutionary war.

For this, simplistic organizational responses are not sufficient. The point is that a more dialectical view of building the ERP, and of its transformation into an organ that the people can recognize as their military arm, implies understanding that the integration of sectors of the masses into the ERP will necessarily occur according to the ups and downs of the mobilization, organization and struggle of the class, and not gradually, in a linear fashion. Furthermore, if we want to win political and military leadership over combative sectors of the class, we cannot proceed in a mechanical fashion, attempting to impose our organizational label on them or, at the other extreme, making participation in one ERP action conditional upon complete prior agreement and commitment.

We must prepare ourselves for having from time to time, as it were as *irregular combatants*, non-party sectors which might not perhaps sustain a continuous struggle beyond the moment of mobilization and rebellion which led to their rapid radicalization. For instance, a self-defense committee set up in a factory during a strike could form the basis of an armed workers' commando composed of combative workers who, after a certain amount of political work, might decide to operate as an ERP commando rather than as an autonomous unit, even though they still did not understand all the strategic implications of building the ERP. Rather, it could be a matter of an intuitive and empirical perception of our guerrilla organization as offering a valid tool of popular armed struggle. Clearly even if we were unable to do this in a continuous way (in the end that depends a good deal on the political work we do), it is very important to be able to integrate the violent or armed activity of a sector of this sort into the framework of the ERP.

It is obvious also that we shall not always find groups of workers who are in complete agreement with our line and devoid of certain deviations. Here is where we must give battle *politically* to win them to our positions and viewpoints. But in any case we must lend them our support and participate as far as possible in their experiences, because it is only in this way that we shall be able to win our role as real leaders, recognized by sectors of the class as vanguard militants.

Where there is agreement on a specific task to be done,

it seems to us we should never refuse to carry it out in the name of the ERP. We must refuse to carry out as an ERP action one which flows from an orientation contradictory to our own. But once again the problem remains our ability to impose our line and our viewpoint politically.

Within this framework it seems to us possible to consider the eventuality of integrating with the ERP the armed actions of groups possessing a certain political coherence. If in such a situation we wished to give rather more continuity to this activity, then we should seek to obtain prior political agreement on the basis of the current tasks of building the ERP.

Partial Insurrections, General Insurrection, Guerrillas and Army in a Process of Prolonged Revolutionary War

The *Cordobazos*, the *Rosarioazo*, the *Tucumanazo*, the *Cuyanazo*, the *Rocazo*, etc., were semi-insurrectional experiences (partial insurrections) which, together with the factory occupations of 1972, mark the highest point reached so far by working-class and popular struggles in Argentina.

In these instances the class struggle reached the level of direct confrontation with the repressive apparatus of the dominant classes. The masses went through the experience of using revolutionary violence against state repression and of testing organizational forms adapted to these circumstances.

The perspective which we have before us, if the popular and working-class upsurge continues, is that of the generalization, extension and deepening of these semi-insurrectional experiences.

We must work to carry these partial insurrections forward with the perspective of their extension and synchronization.

This does not seem to us to contradict our perspective of a prolonged revolutionary war. This perspective we deduce from a thorough evaluation of the relation of forces at the national, continental and international levels. It does not exclude the possibility of insurrectionary phases in the revolutionary process, the likelihood of which is increased by Argentina's socio-economic structure and urban concentration.

It would be wrong to lose sight of the inevitability of a confrontation with national and international reaction. It would be wrong to have a spontaneist and adventurist view of these partial insurrections. In order for these confrontations to serve to deepen the masses' experience of struggle, we must be able to guarantee a more and more effective political and military leadership in them. The urban guerrilla group must seek to intertwine itself with the autonomous detachments of the class, the workers' and popular militias, the workers' and students' commandos, etc.

In a process of prolonged war, the insurrection need not necessarily be posed as the final stage, in the form of the general insurrection. It can also be posed as a chain of processes which adds, little by little, to the experience of the masses and the influence and strength of the vanguard.

The building of the army as a mass organization presumes a degree of generalized confrontation which opens a period of civil war.

The building of the revolutionary army as a regular army presupposes the existence of civil war as a reality

and an at least partial stabilization of the duality of power, including on a geographical level. In Argentina it can be anticipated that this will involve the struggle overflowing the national frontiers and the commencement of the prolonged revolutionary war on the continental scale.

The best terrain for the accumulation of military forces necessary for the construction of a regular army is the countryside. This gives the prolonged revolutionary war the character of a combined mass armed struggle in the cities and in the country, on a continental scale.

For the Building of the PRT and the ERP from the Present Stage of Struggle

We think the PRT's proposal to begin to build the ERP at the present stage a correct contribution.

But we also think that this presupposes a whole series of corrections to the orientation decided at the Fifth Congress, and we shall begin to outline them here.

It seems to us that these corrections overcome a series of contradictions in the line of the PRT, including, for example, those pointed out by Comrade Germain.

We do not agree with Comrade Germain that it is necessary to pose the construction of the revolutionary army only after the defeat of an insurrectionary process which has been repressed and which enforces a retreat. Nor do we think that the perspective of prolonged revolutionary war necessarily implies an underestimation of partial insurrections or of the efforts that the vanguard must make to try to direct and generalize these processes of mass struggle and confrontation.

We think that although the comrade correctly reminds us of the marked urban concentration of the people and working class in Argentina, he seems to forget *the continental dimension within which we have to pose a strategy for the conquest of power in Latin America.*

The whole experience of the Latin American vanguard shows the importance of explaining to the masses from the outset the continental dimension of the struggle, its prolonged character, and the consequent necessity of building the revolutionary army. We as revolutionary and internationalist Marxists should be the last to neglect this aspect of the matter.

Properly understood, the building of the ERP does not imply an underestimation of the arming of the proletariat. Nor does it underestimate spontaneous forms of mass armed struggle nor independent actions by the vanguard in isolation from the mass movement. What it does imply is permanently keeping in mind and propagandizing about the difficult and prolonged character that the confrontation will have and the high degree of coherence and organization that will be needed by the popular forces if they are to defeat the repressive apparatus of the bourgeois states of Latin America and the war machine of imperialism.

Correctly carried out and assimilated, an analysis and balance sheet of the actual experience of the PRT points to a series of reasons to support posing the construction of the ERP as from the present stage, the ERP being understood as *a strategic instrument which at present remains embryonic in form and fundamentally propagandistic in function.*

The strategic character of the PRT's revolutionary practice of armed struggle in a perspective of prolonged revo-

lutionary war was affirmed, before the Argentinian masses and the Latin American vanguard, by its building of the ERP.

It is to the extent that they are integrated into a strategic perspective in the building of the ERP that armed actions, armed propaganda, self-defense actions, executions, big actions and small actions acquire their real political dimension, become unified and accumulate forces, posing constantly before the masses the question of the seizure of power.

Were they undertaken in the name of the party, these actions in themselves, in isolation, would amount to nothing more than tactical support for mass work on various fronts. The key question of the need for a revolutionary party and a revolutionary army and of the strategic perspective of prolonged revolutionary war would disappear—would cease to be posed constantly before the masses—if we did not have the organizational duality PRT-ERP, if armed actions (even though they were of the same type as those being developed at present) were reduced to mere acts of the party.

The actions for which the party claimed responsibility would be just one element among its other forms of activity and intervention. What then would be the decisive question, the strategy, being presented to the masses? How would the party give a material form to the perspective of prolonged revolutionary war and the building of the army?

The strategic perspective of a prolonged revolutionary war and of the need to build the revolutionary army is posed by the very name of the ERP. To give an example, the military activity of the PRT can be regarded as having three characteristics: the mass line in armed actions, the multiform intervention of the party (that is, the fact that its activities are not exclusively of a military character) and the strategic perspective of prolonged revolutionary war and of the building of the revolutionary army, posed by means of the ERP.

The duality of organizations as from the initial stage of the struggle flows from an objective necessity posed by the forms and rhythms of the radicalization of the masses and the formation of the class consciousness of the workers.

The degree of explosiveness of the social contradictions in Latin America means that broad sectors of the masses are constantly brought into the struggle. The weakness of the ruling classes and the precariousness of the resulting relations of forces brings them rapidly to violent confrontations. The radicalization of forms of struggle (a result of the explosiveness of all mass struggles) and the need for organized revolutionary violence make their appearance more quickly than political class consciousness, more quickly than consciousness of the nature of the enemy, of the objectives and dynamic of the struggle, etc.

We must organize and capitalize upon this potential for struggle, giving it coherence in spite of the low level of consciousness from which it begins. Even if these sectors do not understand the need for the revolutionary party of the proletariat and the struggle for socialism, we have to try to channel their energy for the revolution and for building the party. As Lenin said, we must lead all the small battles. But at the same time we must give them coherence and unify them. This is the task of the party. And this can be done by building the ERP simultaneously

with the party.

The unequal rhythms of the radicalization of forms of struggle on the one hand and the advance of consciousness on the other create a differentiation within the working class itself, among its advanced sectors. Thus a certain contradiction can appear between the more combative elements and the more conscious elements. If we add to this the fact that the masses develop their consciousness through their own experience and that the more combative elements are an important factor in galvanizing the hesitant by their initiative, then we cannot restrict ourselves to winning over to the party those elements of the class that are politically the most conscious. So long as we are able to raise the level of their consciousness in order to stabilize their militancy and give coherence to their activity, these more combative elements can play an important role not only in mobilizations and struggles but also in building the party. Here again the PRT-ERP duality serves as a useful tool for overcoming the contradiction between radicalization and combativity on the one hand and consciousness on the other—by involving elements of this sort in practical activity from the outset, without waiting for them to reach complete agreement with the overall orientation of the party.

It is correct to make the membership criteria of the party different from those of the ERP. Such differences in membership criteria and recruitment policy correspond to the different nature of the organizations—the army and the party—and from the above-mentioned objective differentiation between radicalization and level of consciousness. The recruitment and membership criteria for regular cells of the ERP should be acceptance of the general line of its program, acceptance of the political and military leadership of the party at all levels, willingness to fight with arms in hand, and indoctrination in the organization's norms of militancy and security.

The duality between the party and the ERP should not be merely formal (a duality of initials). It should be reflected in an effective organic separation of party and ERP, in restricting party discussions to party members, and in a combined and parallel activity of the PRT and the ERP on all fronts.

But at the same time this duality must have as its counterpart intense political work by the party among the regular and irregular ERP fighters. In particular we must ensure the existence of a program of education and discussion on the party's positions which will allow for the political development of regular ERP members.

The failure of the PRT after its Fifth Congress to respect in practice this aspect of its orientation only resulted in confusions and deviations, in spite of the understandable problems which were involved in the application of this line at first.

The ERP should be built and organized concentrically with the party—that is to say, under the guidance of the cells and political commissars of the PRT. De facto in the present stage, members of the regular cells of the ERP will be party sympathizers whose level of consciousness or political understanding does not yet allow them to be full members of the PRT.

We are building the ERP with an eye to the masses. But the ERP can become a mass organization only to the degree that the party wins a decisive influence among the masses, when sectors of the masses are prepared to

fight under its leadership.

Until then the ERP is an organization, concentrically related to the party (composed of every member of the party and of non-party fighters), whose *vanguard combat* marks out the strategic perspective of prolonged revolutionary war to the masses. The ERP is not, therefore, a mass organization at the present stage.

The mistake made by the present leadership of the PRT on this point fostered illusions among members and cadres about the stage of struggle, the tasks, recruitment criteria, etc., leading to serious errors and deviations.

The essential question which the party must be very clear about in order to avoid throwing itself into a dynamic which it can no longer control is *what are the tasks and priorities corresponding to the present stage*. This is something which was not clear in the PRT, owing in great part to the confusion introduced by the points of view that we are criticizing (characterization of the present stage, program and nature of the ERP in this stage, etc.).

Only with a solid implantation in the working class will the party be able to assume its role as vanguard and ensure the development of the armed struggle within the perspective of prolonged revolutionary war. Therefore, the military objectives of small or embryonic revolutionary organizations should be *armed propaganda in close combination with the party's penetration work in the class* or in other fundamental mass sectors such as the students and *the consolidation of the party's military front*, which is decisive for the harmonious development of the ERP itself.

How these military objectives are concretized at a given moment in terms of precise tasks and initiatives depends on an analysis of the conjuncture and the definite tactics which correspond to it (see our documents on the subject).

On the Program of the Revolutionary Army of the People

The "democratic and anti-imperialist" program formulated for the ERP by the PRT at its Fifth Congress did not pass the test of trial by practice.

If we were really to limit the ERP's struggle objectives to those posed by its official program, the present political situation would place our fighters in a dangerous position. Under the vague demands such as "social democracy" which the ERP's program puts forward as a central objective, we could include anything at all—even the socially just "Peronist fatherland" proposed by the present government. In the absence of the military dictatorship, which presented a clear enemy and tended to unify struggles, revolutionary struggle requires a much more rigorous definition of its objectives.

In its actual practice and in order not to be left behind by the radicalization of the Peronist fighters and youth, which began to raise the slogan for a "socialist fatherland," the ERP had to make a correction to its Fifth Congress resolution on program. ERP propaganda in the vast majority of its actions, including those whose repercussions and impact upon the national conjuncture were relatively great, demonstrated the necessity of calling for socialism. That is to say, *in practice the PRT went beyond the limits of the ERP's program and told the masses the objective of its struggle was a Socialist Argentina*.

Furthermore, the "democratic and anti-imperialist" pro-

gram and its political and practical implications were the origin of numerous political confusions and problems which emerged in the development of the PRT and ERP membership.

In the first place the program fails to establish clearly the relationship between the army and the party and does not show to the masses that both organizations struggle for the same objectives. This was particularly noticeable on the mass fronts and especially in the labor movement. The big difference between the ERP's program and the revolutionary program of the PRT did not help us establish the correct relationship between the two and combine with precision their respective activities. The activities and interventions of the PRT and the ERP on the same front appeared different from each other and disconnected. Comrades were obliged to engage in political and organizational juggling acts in order to link PRT interventions with those of the ERP in a way that could be understood by the masses.

In the second place, the ERP's program fixed the basis of political agreement necessary for membership of a regular cell of ERP combatants at a very elementary level. Considering the ERP as a mass organization at the present stage caused a systematic underestimation of the importance of raising the political level of its fighters. Their low political level, including even important disagreements with the PRT, was accepted as inevitable and natural. If we add that the "political commissars" never worked in a correct way, in good part because of the political weakness of the membership and the leadership of the PRT itself, we have the context in which to understand the emergence of such problems as the militarist deviations of the ex-Military Committee of the Federal Capital, which led to its splitting and forming the ERP-22 August.

Even without anyone raising the question of the ERP's program from the point of view of Leninist principles of strategy and tactics, the program adopted by the Fifth Congress stood refuted by the very structure of political forces in Argentina. The fact is that once we have understood that *the struggle of the ERP is fundamentally a political one* the democratic and anti-imperialist program of the ERP ceases to be operative. The ERP's struggle is political because the class struggle has not yet taken on a predominantly military form, but also because, even during the revolutionary civil war, *revolutionary strategy and politics take command of and preside over the military struggle*. For revolutionaries war is nothing but the continuation of politics by other means.

In Argentina, no revolutionary struggle can develop which does not start from the reality of existing political forces. Confrontations between classes are always mediated by definite political forces. The Argentinian working class cannot be thought of as politically virgin like the unpolished Russian working class of Lenin's time. Nor can we start with the assumption that in a higher phase the revolutionary civil war will take on a new character so we can open the armed struggle on the basis of a democratic and anti-imperialist program. Given the reality of Peronist hegemony in the workers' movement, the existence of Stalinist reformism, etc., we can not draw sectors of the masses into armed struggle solely by waving democratic and anti-imperialist banners.

The abstract character of the ERP's program, the fact that it does not take into account the concrete reality

of the political forces in the country, was demonstrated and overcome in practice by the ERP itself, to avoid being left behind in relation to what was being proposed by the radicalized Peronist sectors.

But in addition to this there are other reasons having more to do with Leninist strategy and tactics for questioning the program.

One is that the program is based on a false assumption. This assumption is that at a higher stage the revolutionary civil war will be transformed into a national war against imperialist aggression.

We have already said that we think it is correct for Latin American revolutionaries to regard imperialist intervention, direct or indirect, as inevitable from now on. This is one of the fundamental elements that give the revolutionary war its prolonged character which is our strategic perspective. But it is false to accept the characterization of this war along the lines of the formulations of the Chinese or of the Vietnamese NLF. The class character of the armed confrontation will continue to be fundamental and only revolutionary politics will be able to alter the relation of forces in favor of the revolution. We do not have to accept the stage concepts advanced by the Chinese or by the NLF of Vietnam, the origin of which is the education of these leaderships within the framework of Stalinism. These formulations conceal the real dynamic of permanent revolution in the revolutionary process, even when the latter takes the form of a prolonged revolutionary war against the imperialist aggressor.

Another problem is that the ERP program falls into the separation between a minimum and maximum program which typified the tactics of Social Democracy and which was surpassed by the Leninist strategy synthesized by the first four congresses of the Communist International. Stalinism subsequently abandoned these principles which were defended by the Left Opposition and by the Fourth International in the Transitional Program drafted by Trotsky.

What then should we propose as a programme for the ERP?

We think it is correct to make a distinction between party and army, between PRT and ERP, at the present stage of struggle. Thus it does not make sense for them both to have the same program. They are organizations which are distinct *by nature*.

In line with the Leninist-Bolshevik experience of the Red Army, the ERP's program should be a class program—a class program which defends the interests of the workers and peasants who will join the ERP. That is, a program which takes up, defends and applies the demands of those popular sectors which will make up its ranks during the revolution, according to the methodology of the Transitional Program.

This is the conception defended by Trotsky, for example, in the paragraph entitled "Conditions for Victory" in his "The Lessons of Spain: the last warning." (This paragraph is reproduced in its entirety as an appendix below.)

For us, as partisans of the theory of permanent revolution, a class program corresponding to the interests of the working class and its allies, the popular sectors, must pose the objective of *workers' power and socialism*. That is, a power which rests upon the grass-roots organs

of the workers in struggle, *workers' councils* at factory or neighborhood level, etc. This power will be structured democratically so as to permit the election of representative delegates, subject to recall at any moment, to an *Assembly of the People*, from which in turn it will be possible to form a *revolutionary workers' and popular government*. These organs of workers' power can only be born in the mobilization, organization and struggle of the working class and its allies. Workers' power will be guaranteed by *the people in arms*, organized in *workers and popular militias*, the backbone of which will be the *People's Revolutionary Army*.

Conceived in this way, the ERP program will include the demands and aspirations of the working class and of the people, linking these with the tasks of the construction of socialism in accordance with Leninist strategy and the Transitional Program.

Although the ERP's program will call for socialism, it will be different from the PRT program. It is the party's job to provide a rounded conception of the meaning of the dictatorship of the proletariat, proletarian internationalism, historical materialism, etc. The party must by definition possess a number of very advanced programmatic elements as is natural to a vanguard organization but which do not correspond to the revolutionary army which is a mass organization.

This does not mean that the ERP program will be contradictory with that of the PRT, or that it should be an "adaptation" or "abridgement" of the PRT's program. It is a matter of formulating a program that can be understood by the broad masses, that can be used in propaganda and agitation according to the methodology of the Transitional Program. That is, a program which, starting from the present aspirations and level of consciousness of the masses, poses demands, slogans and objectives which raise the struggles of the masses up to the revolutionary struggle for power.

It would be useful to study existing experiences of the adoption of a transitional program at the level of mass organizations, such as for example the theses of Pulacayo of the Miners' Federation of Bolivia.

The Continental and Internationalist Dimension

In view of the continental character of our struggle within the perspective of prolonged revolutionary war and consistent with our internationalist positions, we already have some responsibilities on this level.

These responsibilities must be given material form on the political level and in our activity.

We must give the ERP an internationalist line which is manifested in propaganda and actions in permanent solidarity with the international struggle of the working class. That is: solidarity with struggles in colonial and semi-colonial countries dominated by imperialism, solidarity with workers' and students' struggles in the advanced capitalist countries, and solidarity with the struggle of manual and intellectual workers against bureaucracy and for a democracy based on workers' councils in countries in transition to socialism.

To lay the foundations of a political line that will effectively serve as an alternative to militarist and spontaneist deviations, it is essential that we include the need to build the revolutionary army and the perspective of prolonged revolutionary war with the simultaneous con-

struction of the party and the ERP at the present stage of the struggle. This is a fundamental point of political clarification which we must press home within the Latin American vanguard.

The ERP's prestige on an international level and particularly within the Latin American vanguard should be capitalized upon for the building of the International. If other organizations of the Fourth International take up those undeniable advances made by the PRT, taking as a starting point the sketch we have made of the balance sheet and lessons of its experience, this will contribute not only to the progress of the idea of the Leninist combat party and the revolutionary army but also to the advance of the idea of the International as an instrument of the international working-class vanguard for the development of the world socialist revolution. We must struggle politically for the Fourth International to adopt as its orien-

tation for Latin America a line which incorporates the lessons of the PRT and ERP experience. We should defend this point of view particularly in our relations with the Latin American organizations and militants of the Fourth International, offering them the necessary practical support to press forward with this orientation. We ourselves must take the initiative, politically and practically: politically, by developing relations with our Latin American comrades and the other sections of the Fourth International and intervening actively in the debates of the next world congress; practically, by undertaking the building of the Leninist combat party, the vanguard of the working class, by building the People's Revolutionary Army and by building the Fourth International.

June 27, 1973

APPENDIX

*Conditions for victory**

The conditions for victory of the masses in a civil war against the army of exploiters are very simple in their essence.

1. The fighters of a revolutionary army must be clearly aware of the fact that they are fighting for their full social liberation and not for the reestablishment of the old ("democratic") forms of exploitation.

2. The workers and peasants in the rear of the revolutionary army as well as in the rear of the enemy must know and understand the same thing.

3. The propaganda on their own front as well as on the enemy front and in both rears must be completely permeated with the spirit of social revolution. The slogan "First victory, then reforms," is the slogan of all oppressors and exploiters from the Biblical kings down to Stalin.

4. Politics are determined by those classes and strata that participate in the struggle. The revolutionary masses must have a state apparatus that directly and immediately expresses their will. Only the soviets of workers', soldiers', and peasants' deputies can act as such an apparatus.

5. The revolutionary army must not only proclaim but also immediately realize in life the more pressing measures of social revolution in the provinces won by them: the expropriation of provisions, manufactured articles, and other stores on hand and the transfer of these to the needy; the redivision of shelter and housing in the interests of the toilers and especially of the families of the fighters; the expropriation of the land and agricultural inventory in the interests of the peasants; the establishment of workers' control and soviet power in place of the former bureaucracy.

6. Enemies of the socialist revolution, that is, exploiting elements and their agents, even if masquerading as "democrats," "republicans," "Socialists," and "Anarchists," must be mercilessly driven out of the army.

7. At the head of each military unit must be placed

commissars possessing irreproachable authority as revolutionists and soldiers.

8. In every military unit there must be a firmly welded nucleus of the most self-sacrificing fighters, recommended by the workers' organizations. The members of this nucleus have but one privilege: to be the first under fire.

9. The commanding corps necessarily includes at first many alien and unreliable elements among the personnel. Their testing, retesting, and sifting must be carried through on the basis of combat experience, recommendations of commissars, and testimonials of rank-and-file fighters. Coincident with this must proceed an intense training of commanders drawn from the ranks of revolutionary workers.

10. The strategy of civil war must combine the rules of military art with the tasks of the social revolution. Not only in propaganda but also in military operations it is necessary to take into account the social composition of the various military units of the enemy (bourgeois volunteers, mobilized peasants, or as in Franco's case, colonial slaves); and in choosing lines of operation, it is necessary to rigorously take into consideration the social structure of the corresponding territories (industrial regions, peasant regions, revolutionary or reactionary, regions of oppressed nationalities, etc.). In brief, revolutionary policy dominates strategy.

11. Both the revolutionary government and the executive committee of the workers and peasants must know how to win the complete confidence of the army and of the toiling population.

12. Foreign policy must have as its main objective the awakening of the revolutionary consciousness of the workers, the exploited peasants, and oppressed nationalities of the whole world.

*Leon Trotsky, *The Spanish Revolution (1931-39)*, Pathfinder Press, pp. 320-322.

A Contribution Toward a Program of Struggle for the Working Class

By the PRT (Red Faction)

1. Introduction

The body of demands which is presented to comrades here was handed in to a comrade of the Bureau approximately a month ago. Due to practical difficulties, the document was not able to be discussed, approved or modified. An attempt was made to present it to the assembly which was held subsequently. The order of business decided at this meeting, added to the failure of a comrade to bring the text with her, prevented its presentation, with the result that this now has to be done by way of the internal bulletin.

The body of demands was conceived as an integral part of a document on work in the working class. Lack of *political information* on and *practical experience* in the working-class movement made this document and the ideas it contains in its "present state" extremely abstract as a definition of our intervention in the workers' movement. Added to this, it must be emphasized that any discussion of our "particular" intervention in the workers' movement takes for granted *tactics for our global intervention* in this conjuncture. For us the process of deriving these tactics remains incomplete, which restricts our ability to devise an intervention in the workers' movement which genuinely bases itself on policy for the conquest of power.

Rescued from the said document, however, the body of demands seems to us to have an immediate value for the faction in its work in the working class.

The demands which we propose are totally incomplete, but from the outset we wish to indicate their "vocation," that of becoming articulated in a dynamic way so as to become a true *program of struggle* for the working class. In order to satisfy this condition, the demands must be expressed in a form which makes them understandable in the eyes of the masses and they must be interconnected dynamically so that they offer a real, practicable perspective. The one suggested by X, and even some of the slogans in the manifesto presented to the plenary meeting, do not satisfy this condition. For example in the case of the SLIDING SCALE OF HOURS OF WORK it mainly explains what its practical application would involve, which in itself presupposed a very high level of organization in the working class. Posed this way in a program it has a purely propagandistic role which it fulfills badly because many of the workers who read it will not even understand what the slogan means.

In addition to being dynamically interconnected, the slogans should be accompanied by a *plan of action* and *organization* which closely fits in with the struggle of the masses and which places the struggle for the proposed objectives immediately on the agenda for the masses. The demands will only cease to play a purely propa-

gandistic role when we learn how to *link them in action* with the mass struggle.

It is also necessary for us to say something about certain slogans which are complex in themselves and will certainly give rise to debate. One such demand is WORKERS' MANAGEMENT OF STATE-OWNED OR NATIONALIZED INDUSTRY [ADMINISTRACION OBRERA DE LA INDUSTRIA estatal o nacionalizada]. This proposal was made by Trotsky in his writings on Latin America (see page 193 of the appendix to the Coyoacán edition in Spanish of *The Permanent Revolution*) and we shall not expand upon the more general assumptions involved, leaving the comrades to go back and read the text and analyze the proposal themselves.

In the current situation in our country the problem of the control of state-owned, nationalized or national industries is complicated by the special relationship between the Peronist regime and the working class. For reasons of political necessity Peronism has opened some doors to participation in the state sector of the economy; these openings have also been tailored to the interests of the trade union bureaucracy, which has consolidated a system of bureaucratic co-management in the places where these projects have materialized (eg. SEGBA). But it is necessary in addition to emphasize one point: that, even with these deformations we find in the state sector the most favorable relationship of forces for the taking of initiatives toward working-class control and this perspective should not be neglected.

In Chile the MIR came across a similar problem. In the so-called socialized sector of the economy, which was in reality the sector of production dominated by state capital, the MIR found itself obliged to raise a slogan which went beyond workers' control, since the latter had been partially incorporated by reformists and bureaucrats. This slogan no more nor less than the call for WORKERS' MANAGEMENT made by Trotsky more than thirty years ago and posed by the MIR in the following form: "Against the state-bureaucratic management, for a WORKERS' MANAGEMENT [DIRECCION OBRERA]" This slogan was shown to be valid by experiences such as the seizure of the Yarur textile plant with the maintenance of production, leading to a situation where at present it functions under complete workers' management. We believe, therefore, that in these cases the slogan of WORKERS' CONTROL should be accompanied by propaganda and struggle in favor of WORKERS' MANAGEMENT [ADMINISTRACION OBRERA], since this is the only way to confront the workers with the struggle for total control and the only way to break with participationist schemas however subtle these may be. This does not mean that we should struggle under capitalism to

impose WORKERS' SELF-MANAGEMENT [*AUTOGESTION OBRERA*], for this is only possible following the destruction of private property in the means of production, is only possible as the consequence of a social revolution. But in turn this does not mean that where the capitalist system offers openings we should not seek to widen them in the direction of new experiences for the working class. We make this clarification because we know Mandel's position, which condemns the proposal for SELF-MANAGEMENT within the capitalist system, asserting that revolutionaries should limit themselves to calling for workers' control (see *Contrôle ouvrier, conseils ouvriers, autogestion*, Part 1, Introduction). We think this question should not be treated in a schematic way—Trotsky did not do so—and that it is possible to make proposals which take the working class *along the road toward self-management*. We are convinced that, if these are projected from a revolutionary point of view, they cannot be incorporated into the system. The possible problems and deviations which this type of activity poses for the workers are summed up perfectly by Trotsky: "In any case, in order for this new form of activity to be used in the interest of the working class and not that of the labor bureaucracy and aristocracy, only one condition is necessary: the existence of a revolutionary Marxist party which carefully studies each form of working class activity, criticizes every deviation, organizes the workers, wins influence in the trade unions and ensures revolutionary workers' representation in the nationalized industry." (Trotsky, *op. cit.*, p. 196)

Another important problem that we must deal with is that of Workers' Councils. For us the demand for workers democracy is not merely a formal question but one which has profound political possibilities which we must know how to utilize right now. Hence, a program of struggle for the working class must be very precise on this point, not only making propaganda in favor of workers' democracy but posing concrete forms to give expression to it which are closely related to the forms of organization and struggle that the mass movement has arrived at in the present phase.

We think, therefore, that the first forms of workers' councils should be defined in close relation to the forms of struggle adopted by the masses in such a way that this organizational form can become the expression of these struggles.

The proposal for "district and regional" councils made in Discussion Bulletin No. 5 shows certain confusions which need to be cleared up. In general the tasks assigned to these "councils" are those of unifying and planning partial and localized struggles against the employers and the bureaucracy. Here, it seems to us, a council is being confused with a body for coordinating trade union struggles. The problem of whether, once they had become consolidated and had acquired a broad representativeness, these coordinating bodies could, by means of the exercise of the fullest democracy and the collectivization of their functions, become the basis for a council bringing together the great majority of the workers of a given district or region is another issue altogether. The concrete point is that this proposal has no material basis at the present moment since the possibility does not even exist of creating such trade union coordinating bodies in the short term. We shall not go into the other problem which

would be posed by the "district and regional councils," that of their social composition.

We think that as an alternative to this suggestion it is possible to counterpose one which has more reality at the level of the current problems of the mass struggle. We believe that in the process of struggling against the trade union bureaucracy in each factory the workers have been brought to a growing understanding of proletarian democracy and to a growing participation in the problems of the factory from this angle. At the present time this is the transmission-belt we should use for introducing workers to the first council forms. Factory occupations provoked by economic disputes or by the struggle against the bureaucracy in the course of which the slogan of *permanent assembly* becomes a reality of the struggle, a means of discussing the decisions to be taken, of controlling the trade union leaders, etc., are the kinds of development which point *in action* to the need for the first forms of workers' council, for the FACTORY COUNCIL or FACTORY COMMITTEE, where there is the maximum socialization of decisions and functions and where direct democracy is exercised by the workers at the base.

On the point relating to the struggle against repression and to the forms of the arming of the proletariat which are appropriate at the present stage, we are in agreement with the proposals included in the Manifesto of our faction.

As regards the problem of Social Security, although of secondary importance certain suggestions in this area may be useful for work in sections of the working class and among state employees.

2. Against Trade Union Bureaucracy, for Workers Democracy

—All trade union posts subject to immediate recall.

—The salaries of full-time trade union officials not to exceed the wage of a skilled worker.

—Constant meetings in the factory.

—Workers control of trade union funds—Union finances open for inspection.

—Against the bureaucracy's rackets—Workers control of the social welfare system.

In the capitalist system, the trade union apparatus takes on a double function: it serves as an intermediary between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat in wage negotiations; and it administers a social service which has grown from the first mutual-aid associations into what is today a gigantic apparatus providing services, commercial credit, etc. Below we give an example of the activities of the bureaucracy in this field which can be used as agitational material.

The sale of pharmaceutical products: In order to have access to a union pharmacy, the worker who belongs to the plan must pay a contribution which in theory finances the discount he gets on medicines. Let us see how the union bureaucracy, and a new system of marketing based on deals with the bureaucracy, take advantage of the member. The pharmaceutical laboratories are authorized to establish retail outlets for their products if these represent a social service, as is the case with the union pharmacies. This allows the laboratories that join together for this purpose to make more on sales of their goods, because their prices are not forced up by reliance

upon middle-men or by retailers' profits. By becoming associated with a group of laboratories the bureaucracy brings a large mass of consumers into the establishments they control. At the same time, the enterprises in question receive a legal excuse for marketing their products directly, at prices below those of the retail sector. The union contribution, which theoretically would be devoted to financing these discounts, remains in the hands of the bureaucracy. To this we should add the benefits which accrue from the distribution of contracts to the laboratories, which is doubtless based on the principle of the highest bidder.

We should propose a committee for the control of social welfare, made up of workers and their relatives and concerned with investigating and denouncing the bureaucracy's rackets.

SLOGANS: We propose the adoption of a central slogan on this issue: "FIGHT THE BUREAUCRACY TO DEFEAT THE EMPLOYERS." This allows us to unite in a clear slogan two central aspects of the present struggle of the workers.

3. For a Higher Standard of Living for the Workers

—Sliding scale of wages: *Automatic adjustments every time the cost of living increases by 5 percent. Adjustments to be financed by a levy proportional to the wealth of the capitalists.*

SLOGANS: "AUTOMATIC ADJUSTMENTS . . . AND LET THE INCREASE COME OUT OF THE EMPLOYERS' POCKETS."

—*Against wage differentials. Equal pay for equal work.*

The reasons for the existence of large differentials in the wage system are well known. As we all know the mass of profits circulates unequally between different capitalists. This is due to very complex laws determined by the productivity of labor, the organic composition of capital, monopolistic control of the market, etc. One result of this is, as we have said before, that certain capitalists have a limited margin for wage concessions.

But what concerns us fundamentally is that these complex laws of the distribution of profits determine the over-all distribution of the national income, this being in the last instance the cause of the minimal remuneration received by peripheral sectors of the proletariat.

In addition to this, the over-all system of national income distribution is affected by changes in the balance of payments. The credit side of the balance of payments is composed fundamentally of agricultural exports, while the debits consist of industrial imports and outflows of foreign exchange from this sector in terms of payment for patents, royalties, etc. The implication of this for the mechanisms of national income distribution (now not only inside the industrial bourgeoisie but for the totality of segments of the bourgeoisie) is a distribution of incomes in favor of agrarian capital, which produces the exported goods, and commercial capital, which controls the mechanisms for exporting the same.

The government, by means of a system of taxes on the normal potential income from land and by means of the control of foreign trade, attempts to offset the effects of the balance of payments, channeling the revenues from this source into new forms of credit which favor the industrial sector concentrated in the CGE.

We want something quite different: a redistribution of income to the benefit of low-paid wage-earners, and for this we propose the following. *Taxation on the normal potential income from land, on the gains from foreign trade, and of the foreign and national industrial monopolies, for a graded adjustment of . . .*

SLOGANS: "WE FIGHT FOR ALL WORKERS TO RECEIVE THE SAME PAY FOR THE SAME HOURS OF WORK. A TAX ON THE LANDOWNING OLIGARCHY, ON BIG COMMERCE AND ON THE FOREIGN AND NATIONAL MONOPOLIES TO ACHIEVE A LIVING WAGE FOR ALL WORKERS, ETC."

We will also pose this slogan, especially for the state sector, in the following form: *equal pay in the state sector, an end to the millionaire salaries of the administrative bureaucracy.*

—*Worker and popular control of prices.* (see specific document)

4. Against Unemployment

—*Enterprises to be forced to work to full capacity.*

—*Workers' control of the size of the work force.*

—*The unemployed of each enterprise to be organized together with the workers who remain employed to struggle for the reincorporation of those discharged, etc.*

—*Right of veto on sackings.*

5. For the Development of the Workers Power in the Factories

—*Workers' management [Dirección obrera] of state-owned industries.*

The Technological Command of the Justicialist movement has proposed a system of co-management of state-owned industries based on participationist schemas. This form of management is not directed toward increasing the power of the workers in production but toward their incorporation into a form of management typical of state capitalism under an ideology of class collaboration. The project proposes that every state enterprise shall be managed by a collegiate body of eight members. Four shall be designated by the executive branch of the government and four by "the community of workers in the enterprise." "The representatives shall be subject to endorsement by the corresponding professional association or trade union" (source: *La Opinión*). The chairman of the management committee, who will be named by the government, shall have a deciding vote in the case of deadlock between its two parts.

We must counterpose workers' management against state-bureaucratic management. On principle we shall oppose the nomination of the bureaucracy's yes-men and we shall insist on their election in an assembly. Next we must carry out a campaign against the state functionaries pointing out the unproductive character of the manager's work.

The fundamental methods of struggle are always occupation of the enterprise with maintenance of production and permanent assembly. In the course of these occupations caused by disputes, etc., we can present as an objective to the masses the continuation of production, taking charge of production themselves.

—*Workers' control of production.*

In the case of private industry, the Technological Command has proposed "a system of participation by the per-

sonnel in the real centers of participation in the enterprise." "The representatives of the community of workers in the enterprise shall be designated at the proposal of the professional associations." (source: *La Opinión*). We must oppose co-management by means of delegates bureaucratically nominated from above. Against this we shall propose the formation of a *Vigilance Committee*, elected in an assembly and recallable by those who elected it. We counterpose to passive participation the active vigilance of the workers with respect to the following:

- Control of work conditions.
- Control of the manpower employed, in relation to factory capacity.
- Abolition of commercial secrets—Free access to the account-books of the firm.
- Control of the capitalists' profits—Determination of the rate of the tax on profits which will finance the adjustments of wages.
- *Factory Council.*

The practice of *constant meetings in the factory* and of *factory occupations* should lead us to the first forms of Workers' Council, as something which can be projected in the present situation. In the same way the exercise of workers' control and of workers' management should lead us not only to the creation of centralized committees for these specific tasks but to the full participation of the workers in the tasks of control through the broadest forms of organization, which should grow into a Factory Council.

Mass aggregate meetings, even industry by industry,

reveal their limitations when it is necessary to give participation to the totality of workers at the base in times of big mobilizations. These organizational forms—aggregates industry-unions—only bring together the activists of a given industry. The Factory Council or Committee seeks the greatest possible representation through delegates by section, and even by shifts. It seeks to express the opinion and the decisions of all the workers of the industry and to achieve the exercise of real power by the base.

The council is the only way of preventing the activist getting out of step in relation to the totality of workers at the base, permitting the integration and collectivization of experience.

This does not mean that the councils are going to replace the trade unions, which are centralized and have a specific role. The Factory Councils or Committees can only be created in the course of the broadest action by the masses; they are not for the "gray, every-day struggle" of the union.

6. For a System of Social Security

- *A general adjustable system of pensions and retirement.*
- *Against bureaucratic procedures and red tape.*
- *Workers' control, by union and by respective pension schemes, of retirement funds.*

July 27, 1973