

LETTER FROM HUGO BLANCO TO JOSEPH HANSEN - JANUARY, 1970

El Frontón
January 27, 1970

Comrade Joseph Hansen:

The object of this letter is to convey our opinion on the international debate on Latin America.

We repeat once again that we stand on the Transitional Program. That we are against the guerrillerista current.

The "Draft Resplution on Latin America" reached us at a time when our attention was concentrated on a struggle against a student syndicalist deviation that showed up among the leaders of a party filled with persons who were anything but active. It was on the eve of a Plenum that was to take a stand on this. Preparing for this, we did not have time to study the draft closely. We did not know that you had presented a document differing with it.

The contradictory aspects of the document prevented us from seeing that it was an expression of the guerrillerista current that we had fought for years.

Although I, preoccupied by a specific national question, came out in favor of the document, the Plenum did not discuss it because information that another document, yours, existed had not reached us.

Then a Peruvian comrade returned from Argentina, influenced by El Combatiente. After incorporating himself in the leadership and in all the party bodies without having been elected, he began to arbitrarily alter the line of the party. He openly declared that the line of the FIR was "obsolete," and, without previous discussion, began to alter the line against the program of the FIR that was voted on and ratified by the Plenum. He utilized the majority of a leadership that had been elected to carry out our line in order to shift the party toward a verbal guerrilla-ism. To achieve this he undertook a convenient "purge" of the leadership, threatened more purges, and in practice excluded me from it, despite the fact that the Plenum had elected me as a member of the C.C.

They did not disagree with the documents that we sent in defense of the line. (They did that after the rupture.) It was easier to say nothing about the documents and act contrary to them, expelling and disciplining those who opposed this. All this could be done because in recent years the FIR has consisted of a numerous group of petty-bourgeois elements who in general do nothing. The ratification of our line by the Plenum, the start made in applying it, signified a danger for these charlatans: either become active or get out of the party. With the arrival of the comrade holding the guerrillerista deviation, they were offered an ideal solution: neither become active nor get out -- talk about guerrillas.

In this way the process of rectifying the party, which was to have begun through engagement in activity, took another form: Those who did not want to work engaged in talking about guerrillas. They constituted a crushing majority (the factor that, as Comrade Livio told me, was decisive in recognizing El Combatiente as the official section in Argentina.)

In face of such arbitrariness from people who were inactive, who did not even permit us to work, we few activists decided to reorganize the FIR in accordance with the line laid down in the program and ratified by the Plenum. We are carrying this out with excellent results despite the difficulties that every party nucleus faces at the beginning.

In reality the importation of the guerrillerista deviation was beneficial, since it accelerated purging the activists.

Your document, which we have just read, finished clarifying the scene for us; we see that our personal stand in favor of the "Draft" was a mistake and that the guerrilleristas were completely correct in taking it as their banner. We leave it in their hands; really it is theirs, not ours, we apologize for our initial confusion.

As for us we stand on the Transition Program, on the Program of the FIR, on the document of Comrade Joseph Hansen, who once more, as many other times in the history of our movement, has shown his Trotskyist consistency, the maturity of the Socialist Workers Party.

We advocate the methodology of Chaupimayo, criticizing ourselves for our deficiency in party building. We hold that it was one more demonstration of the continued validity of the method of the Transition Program. We think that the use of guerrilla war as a tactic was correct; we think that we will use this tactic again in Peru. Probably the guerrilla charlatans will not accompany us; they did not accompany us either in Chaupimayo.

Another factor must be taken into account; "guerrilla-ism", at least in Peru, is another form of being "revolutionary" without doing anything.

The members of my guerrilla force (except an artificial element) were taken from the best in the union vanguard; it is sufficient to mention the organizational and economic secretaries of the Federación Provincial de Campesinos and the general secretaries of four unions. People who had been looked down on for occupying themselves with demanding "crumbs" while the "genuine revolutionaries" argued over how to take power. This happened and will happen again; here and elsewhere. Today we are fighting for higher wages and against unemployment, with our old Transition Program in hand. The audacious guerrilleristas call us cowards, they tell us that we don't want to make the revolution or that we are thinking of doing it in the year 2,000. We know that we will again take up arms in the city

and the countryside; we did it before they did, with forces that emerged from our people, not artificially "a suero." With this in mind we are working patiently today in organizing the peasantry and in advancing the workers' wage demands. We have confidence in Comrade Trotsky because Chaupimayo showed us that he was right.

Comrade, it would seem that we Trotskyists have been guilty of considerable complacency in the face of guerrilla-ism in order not to appear sectarian. We criticized Comrade Moreno's "Two Methods" because of its "excessive hardness in form"; but we were in agreement with the content and still are. For this reason we republished it, because it drew the line of demarcation. It seems that international Trotskyism considered this work to be "too hot" and now we are paying dearly for not having debated his thesis exhaustively. And the result is that now, when guerrilla-ism in Latin America is declining, defeated by the reality, it is reborn...within the Trotskyist movement!

Another item in which Moreno was right as against us: My defense and the defense of the happenings at Chaupimayo should not have been that of a "Trotskyist guerrilla" as was done in general, but as an example of the application of the Transition Program in opposition to guerrilla-ism. By way of contrast it stood out as an example of armed struggle that arose as a result of work among the masses.

It is understood that in identifying myself with Comrade Moreno it is in the general defense of our method; I know little about the current situation in Argentina.

There is much that must be said about guerrilla-ism, unfortunately I am pressed for time, hence the lack of order in this letter.

I am confident that you will defend our position with the necessary firmness. Up to now it appears to me that there has been too much complacency in the face of the guerrilla current.

I authorize you to use any document of ours, either in whole or in part, in the discussion within the Trotskyist movement.

Affectionately,
s/Hugo Blanco G.