



Nahuel Moreno

**Letter to
Silvia Diaz**

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January 1972

Responding to Silvia Diaz's letter

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Foreword

In April 1969 the Ninth Congress of the Fourth International (Unified Secretariat) was held. The Fourth International had been divided since 1951 and had reunified in 1963. Then the Unified Secretariat was formed, headed by Ernest Mandel, Livio Maitan and other leaders coming from the former International Secretariat (IS) and the leadership of the SWP of the United States, who had headed the former International Committee (IC), in which Nahuel Moreno and Palabra Obrera were aligned, as well as other groups from Latin America, who took a year to join the FI (Usec). They did so in 1964 in a critical manner and warning of the danger of capitulation to Castroism.

Unfortunately, that was the course followed by the unified leadership. At the Ninth Congress, a majority of the international organisation, headed by Mandel, Maitan and Pierre Frank, adopted an orientation towards rural guerrillas throughout Latin America, which was rejected by the SWP leadership, Nahuel Moreno, the Peruvian Hugo Blanco, and other Latin American groups.

Because of the application of this totally mistaken orientation, by 1971 the Bolivian section had already been decimated, and Santucho's PRT-ERP, which had been recognised in 1969 as an official section, had moved away from the ranks of Trotskyism, to the detriment of the PRT-*La Verdad* headed by Moreno.

Since the World Congress Moreno had been proposing to the SWP leadership that they begin to develop a common offensive in the ranks of the Fourth International to combat the errors and deviations of the majority leadership. One of Moreno's priorities was to strengthen the Latin American groups that had rejected the guerrilla orientation (Brazilians, Uruguayans, Peruvians and Chileans). Although meetings and visits took place, the SWP leadership did not accept Moreno's positions.

In this context, there was an exchange of letters between Moreno and Silvia Díaz, who had travelled to the United States to meet with the SWP leadership. The letter expressed nuances, differences and difficulties in Nahuel Moreno's relationship with the SWP leadership, some of them longstanding.

As the disaster in Latin America was compounded by an ultra-left vanguardist deviation of the European sections, Joseph Hansen and other SWP leaders came to accept the need for a common political battle against the Mandelist majority. For the IEC meeting in December 1972, an important document was presented: *Argentina and Bolivia — A Balance Sheet*, signed by Hugo Blanco (exiled in Sweden), Peter Camejo, Joseph Hansen, Ernesto Gonzalez and Nahuel Moreno (available at www.nahuelmoreno.org). In March 1973 the LTT (Leninist Trotskyist Tendency) was formed, which in August 1973 became a faction. In the debates of the pre-World Congress Moreno presented his polemic text against Mandel *A scandalous document* (available at www.nahuelmoreno.org as *The Party and the Revolution*), which covers their differences since the 1950s.

The Tenth World Congress was held in January 1974.

All notes are by the editors.

The editors

October 2024

Letter to Silvia Diaz

Buenos Aires, 14 January 1972

My dear Silvia:¹

Yesterday I received your letter and today I answer it on the run. There are so many points to touch on that I decided not to exchange ideas about the last part of your letter, the one that makes considerations about our party. Not to exchange ideas, of course, only in this letter, and for reasons of time and space. I will give you the answer in the form of a memorandum, to be more concrete and precise. But I move on to consider it in particular, I will tell you that your letter pleased me magnificently but not what you told me in it.

1) I consider, in general, your report to be correct because of its essential definition. I think that most of them [i.e., the leadership of the SWP], at least, honestly believe there has been no important change between the policy of the tendency with us and the current policy of strengthening. But this is precisely the problem — they have already been resolved because of class characterisation, but not in a conscious way. Regarding the strengthening of the centre, participating in the Uruguay discussion and not in the Bolivian one, opposing the Latin American Conference, etc., they have already opted for a policy that means adapting their entire policy (including relations with us) to winning over the French youth, fundamentally by showing them how correct we are and only secondarily by fighting their politics and methods, and this *already* clearly implies a class analysis of which they are not fully aware. This is very dangerous.

If we take into account that you have reached this conclusion under great pressure, in a discussion of only three hours, where the comrades of the SWP used a wrong method that does not go from the general and class characterisations to the particular but muddles everything, your merit stands out even more but it also explains some obscurities.

2) I do not agree so much with one of your tactical and practical conclusions. The factual tendency, you say, does not at all prevent joint work with French youth. Instead, it can lead to the conference, fundamentally because *we have not released the document and taken the discussion* to all the sections yet. I am not convinced there are reasons for us to suspend the conference, or rather, the reason you give does not convince me. Although it is possible that an assessment here, on the ground, will lead us to the conclusion it is tactically advisable to postpone it. If this happens, it will be for a combination of reasons other than the one you give about “working jointly with the French youth”. Some of those reasons may be guarantees from the centre or, at least, from the SWP, about the functioning of our International concerning the orthodox tendency in Latin America that *in fact* exists and that is, organically, much more solid and structured than the one that also exists at

1 **Silvia Diaz** (b. 1945) joined the PRT in 1966, when she was a student of Philosophy and Letters at the University of Buenos Aires (UBA) and was a leader of the student regional. During the 1970s, she was part of the leadership of the PST, led regionals and collaborated in international tasks. During the dictatorship, she went abroad, militated in Spain and also in Bogota, Colombia. She was part of the leadership of the MAS. In the 1983 elections, she was part of the Luis Zamora-Silvia Díaz presidential ticket. In the 1990s, she was a legislator in the province of Buenos Aires. After Moreno's death in 1987, when the deviations and crisis that led to the outbreak in 1992 began, she was part of the International Morenoist Tendency (IMT) and participated in the founding of the MST. She later distanced herself from Morenoism and Trotskyism, and joined reformist and pro-Chavez positions and was active in the CTA headed by Victor De Gennaro. Founder of the La Cacerola cooperative, which produces and sells bakery products, and vice president of the Argentine Federation of Self-Managed Workers' Cooperatives.

the international level; the opinion, for us, decisive, is the opinion of our Brazilian, Peruvian and Uruguayan comrades.

All this is within the context of our analysis of the situation of our International on a global and regional scale.

3) The problems that were discussed or that were raised with you are multiple, although without much organic relationship between them. In my opinion, there are three main ones: characterisation of the Mandel² tendency; definition of the International, which they focus on two criticisms, our lack of participation in the discussion, and our attempt to hold a Latin American conference. We will consider all these points in order, to then make some considerations on points not explicitly touched on but which are related to the issues under discussion.

4) *Characterisation of the Mandel tendency*. Because of the problems you raise, whether or not Zinoviev, Stalin, or Bukharin should have been expelled from the Bolshevik party, I realise that you have fallen victim to a political ruse: to take the axis of the discussion from a social phenomenon, as a whole, to an individual one. It is not a problem of Stalin, Zinoviev, and Bukharin, as individuals, nor of factions or circumstantial tendencies but rather historical problems, lasting a long time. The appropriate exemplars, then, are those of the Mensheviks, Stalinism, the Maurin³ faction in the POUM, and lastly, Schatmanism.⁴ In all these cases, the left centrist currents, not Bolsheviks, were the ones that reasoned in the same way as Hansen,⁵ the objective situation would surpass those historical tendencies or factions. Trotsky, in his stage prior to becoming a Bolshevik, is the one who believed that the objective situation would overtake the Mensheviks, making them revolutionaries. Later it is Preobrazhensky⁶ who believes that Stalinism is recoverable by the development of the objective situation, Deutscher⁷ being a late echo of this analysis when he criticises the founding of the Fourth

2 **Ernest Mandel** (1923–1995), born in Belgium, was one of the main leaders of Trotskyism since the post-war period, and also a Marxist economist. Together with Michel Pablo he pushed for the reorganisation of the Fourth International after Trotsky's assassination, and from the early 1950s they headed the opportunist sector that pushed for capitulation to Stalinism, social democracy and the bourgeois nationalist leaderships. They were responsible for the crisis and dispersion of Trotskyism ever since. From the 1960s until his death, he headed the so-called "Unified Secretariat" of the Fourth International. Moreno has numerous polemical works against Mandel including *Argentina and Bolivia — A Balance Sheet* and *The Party and the Revolution*, which can be found at www.nahuelmoreno.org.

3 **Joaquin Maurin** (1896–1973) was a Spanish politician, leader successively of the National Confederation of Labor (CNT), the Catalan-Balear Communist Federation, the Workers and Peasants Bloc (BOC) and the Workers' Party of Marxist Unification (POUM). He had reformist positions, of unity of the working class and the bourgeoisie, of class conciliation. In 1935 he supported the formation of the Popular Front promoted by the socialists, Stalinists and a section of the republican bourgeoisie.

4 Followers of **Max Shachtman** (1904–1972). He was a leader of the United States CP and later, along with James Cannon, was a founder of the Left Opposition with Trotsky in 1928. Shachtman was an important intellectual, who promoted the revisionist faction, "anti-defencists" of the USSR against which Trotsky polemised in 1939–1940, in his paper *In Defence of Marxism*. After his break with the SWP in 1940, Shachtman founded the Workers Party. In 1958 he joined the Socialist Party.

5 **Joseph Hansen** (1910–1979) was an American Trotskyist and a leading figure in the Socialist Workers Party. He was secretary of Leon Trotsky and was living with him in Coyoacan, Mexico City when he was assassinated by an agent of Stalin.

6 **Yevgeni Preobrazhensky** (1886–1937) was a Russian revolutionary and economist. He was a member of the Central Committee of the Bolshevik faction. He accompanied Trotsky and the Left Opposition in the struggle against Stalin from 1923. Both were expelled in 1927. In 1929 he became self-critical, supported Stalinism and returned to the party. But he fell victim to the legal farce of the "Moscow trials". Arrested in 1936, he was shot in 1937.

7 **Isaac Deutscher** (1907–1967) was a Polish Marxist writer, journalist and political activist who moved to the United Kingdom before the outbreak of the Second World War. In the 1930s he was linked to Trotsky but gradually drifted away. He disagreed with Trotsky's call for a new international in 1933 and with the founding of the Fourth International in 1938. He is best known as a biographer of Leon Trotsky and Joseph Stalin and as a commentator on Soviet affairs. His three-volume biography of Trotsky was highly influential among the left in the 1960s and 1970s. According to his conception, Stalin had no other option in the management of the USSR and Trotsky would have had to act the same way.

International, and the same was the opinion of Nin⁸ of the Maurin faction and that is why he joined it.

Peter [Camejo],⁹ and the American comrades have informed us of something very important, that in our International there was a secret Mandelist faction. A serious analysis of the situation, and without controversial ruses to win a momentary discussion, would begin by asking the following questions: This faction-tendency, since when does it exist? Is it a historical or episodic phenomenon? Or, put another way: has it existed for years or only for a few months? There is no doubt, at the very least, this faction-tendency has existed for 10, to 15 years. If so, the analysis has to be structural and not conjunctural, of class and not political.

In other words, to understand each other faster, if a solid factional-type structure emerges in one of our parties, this can only obey class pressures. Here, what is at stake is the analysis of historical factions and not of individuals. Hansen and the American comrades want us to discuss individual by individual and we demand that they apply our method not to analyse individuals but rather the whole, the faction, the historical Pabloist-Mandelist tendency. We learned this from Trotsky in *In Defense of Marxism*. When we reunited [in 1964], this method was what allowed us to foresee that the Mandel faction would capitulate to the ultra-leftists, as it had capitulated to Stalinism for an era. This is good for you to remind our comrades.

Therefore, your questions have little to do with the real problem under discussion, which apparently without realising it, the American comrades raised when informing us of the existence of the secret faction. Because it is a question of analysis that Trotsky taught us about the existence of a faction.

Either way, I will answer you. Zinoviev and Kamenev were pilloried by Lenin at the time of the seizure of power and reinstated in the party leadership after the seizure of power when they totally supported the party. It is a momentary and individual phenomenon. Neither Zinoviev nor Kamenev had ever formed a historical faction within the Bolshevik party. The same concerning Stalin, before Stalinism arose, who has only had momentary and transitory differences with the Bolshevik party. The same thing happened with Bukharin. They are individual cases with nuances that were quickly absorbed by the party.

There is a good chance that the US comrades' tactic will bear fruit. But this would be a consequence, in my opinion, of the fact that the class characterisation of this tendency is correct but with the addition that it is in decomposition. Specifically, it can be a petty-bourgeois tendency in formation, solidified and stable, or in decomposition. Like any authentic Marxist definition, it must not only be of class but also point out its dynamics. What cannot be practised is the ostrich policy, saying that there is a solid, structured faction and refusing to make its class characterisation. I would

8 **Andres Nin Perez** (1892-1937) was a Catalan teacher and journalist, a leader of the CNT and a member of the Communist Party. He travelled to Moscow in 1921 as a delegate to the Red Trade Union International. He lived in Moscow for several years and joined the opposition to Stalin led by Trotsky. He translated several of his works from Russian into Spanish, such as *My Life* and *History of the Russian Revolution*. In 1929 he was expelled from the International. He went into exile in Paris and then returned to Barcelona. For several years he corresponded extensively with Trotsky, often polemically. He founded the Spanish Communist Left (IEC) linked to the Trotskyist opposition, but with growing differences with Trotsky, particularly from 1932. Nin rejected the orientation towards entryism into the socialist parties. In September 1935, he merged the ICE with the Workers and Peasants Bloc group led by Maurin and founded the POUM (Workers Party of Marxist Unification). In January 1936, he joined the political-electoral bloc of communists, socialists and a section of the republican bourgeoisie, called the Popular Front, which was promoted by Stalin. The adoption of a political and government programme with the bourgeoisie was severely criticised by Trotsky, who called it "the betrayal of the POUM". At the beginning of the civil war, Nin joined the bourgeois government of Catalonia, headed by Companys, as Minister of Justice. In 1937, amid the fighting of the civil war, and while the influence of the Communist Party in the government of Juan Negrin and the repression of the POUM on the Republican side was growing, he was assassinated by Stalinist agents and his body was never recovered.

9 **Peter Camejo** (1939-2008). Leader of the SWP, in the early 1970s he became quite well known as a presidential candidate and leading public figure. He had driven solidarity with the Cuban Revolution and was part of the new youth leadership which along with Joseph Hansen was leading the SWP to abandon Trotskyism and become a propaganda agency of Castroism. He joined the Green Party and in 2004 he ran for US vice president accompanying Joseph Nader, of the Reform Party.

be much happier to discuss the tactics of the SWP in the International on this methodological basis and not, as is currently the case, around individual, organisational, and conjunctural (the French majority) characterisations. This raises the problem of the French majority, which you, correctly, pose as one of your oversights and which I will analyse later.

5) *Definition of the International.* Here at this point, although not discussed in-depth, only raised, there are quite a few differences. Beginning with the character of the International. We temporarily agree with our American comrades but, as a whole, we are much closer to our French comrades. Specifically, we believe that the conception of Livio Maitan¹⁰ and the French comrades of a tightly **centralised** world party, which turns to one country or another, according to the circumstances of the situation of the global class struggle, without failing to take into account the situation of our International, is correct. I have a quotation from Trotsky that is categorical in this regard if the very name he gave our International was not categorical enough — World Party of Socialist Revolution. This is the International that we aspire to achieve: a Bolshevik party on a global scale.

The problem, as always, is one of leadership. Without a moderately Bolshevik world leadership, there can be no such party. If, to top it off, the leadership is essentially petty-bourgeois, what can we say? This is why, at this moment, we agree with the anti-French criteria that the American comrades had, tending towards federalism: The International should only carry out agitational campaigns on a world scale, without getting fully involved in regional or national situations. The American comrades have taken a turn and are beginning to accept the position of the French comrades, we believe that also with a pragmatic criterion and are not very aware of the turn that it means. A turn that we applaud from a theoretical point of view, we support from a practical point of view, which is why we agree with their tactics regarding the French comrades. The dangerous thing, as it always happens in all pragmatic politics, is that one is not aware of the theoretical framework and that in reality this moderately serious, Bolshevik, proletarian leadership has not yet been achieved. We may achieve it; we have not yet achieved it and there is no guarantee that we will achieve it.

Faced with the leadership crisis of our international, we have stated that, while it is being solved, it is an extremely progressive step to tend to form regional leaderships. Tending to form does not mean imposing or educating, only advising. It is a way of forming serious Trotskyist parties and leaderships on a regional scale since they cannot be formed on a world scale.

We have long-standing differences with our American comrades on all these problems. Concerning the regional directorates, the Yankee comrades are completely against it or have been. They consider that everything must be sacrificed to the formation of the international leadership, with regional organisations and leaderships being an obstacle in this regard. They have not carried out this underlying discussion, although this may be the true fundamental reason why they are against the Latin American conference. This discussion must be raised in depth because it would be decisive or, at least, very important to do it and reach a conclusion to know whether or not it is tactically convenient to hold the conference. If the American comrades give us guarantees that it is truly for tactical reasons and that they would support a Latin American conference immediately before or after the World Congress,¹¹ which would vote documents and leadership, it would be an important theoretical and programmatic progress to take into account.

Of course, I anticipate that, if you make the discussion, they will come up with examples of the BLA (Latin American Bureau) of Posadas¹² and the SLATO [Latin American Secretariat of Orthodox

10 **Livio Maitan** (1923-2004) was the main leader of the Italian Trotskyist group, and an ally of Mandel and Pablo. In 1967, representing the Unified Secretariat, he visited Argentina to support Santucho's faction in the PRT. Together with Mandel, he was a promoter of the guerrilla deviation approved by a majority vote at the Ninth Congress in December 1969.

11 Moreno is referring to the Tenth World Congress, which took place in January 1974. As we said in the preface, the SWP leadership finally accepted the formation of the Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency (LTT) in March 1973, which was transformed into a faction in August to confront the majority Mandelism.

12 J. Posadas was the pseudonym of Homero Romulo Cristali (1912–1981), an Argentine who had been a soccer player and owned a travel agency. He joined Trotskyism in 1941. With opportunist positions, his small group (the Fourth Internationalist Group, GCI) was recognized in 1948 at the Second Congress as a section in Argentina, for its submission to Pablo's orders. He capitulated to Peronism and supported South Korea against North Korea. When in

Trotskyism]. The BLA, indeed, was a catastrophe, not as a consequence of being a Latin American, regional organisation but that for being an appendage of Pabloism, that is, a Pabloite organisation, it is part of the Pabloite degeneration as a whole. And the SLATO, which Hansen suspects was a tool for us to interfere in the lives of other Latin American sections, was just the opposite: it meant the highest level of intervention and prestige of Trotskyism in the Latin American mass movement without intervening at all in the internal life of the other sections. Without SLATO there would have been no Hugo Blanco.¹³ When he wanted to return to Buenos Aires, it was the existence of SLATO that convinced him that there was an agrarian revolution in Cuzco and he should remain there. In other words, the outline of regional leadership strengthened and enriched all its sections and militants. That is the historical experience. Just as Joe Hansen has his suspicion, we have ours: that he was influenced by the petty-bourgeois campaign of Luis Vitale¹⁴ and other petty-bourgeois of his ilk, who, unfortunately, abound in our movement. Beware that I say influenced and not convinced because Joe is too serious a comrade for the petty bourgeoisie to make a dent in him.

6) Now let's go to the two criticisms that have been made to you. Regarding the first, we believe that the attached letter to Peter is sufficiently explicit. The comrades magnify a fact and forget about a multitude of others in our favour that they don't even mention. We can be blamed for the controversy, instead of being internal, we have made it public, as Peter advised us, but never that we have not complied or polemicized. There is not just one controversial document but several. There are not a hundred controversial pages but several. That the American comrades have not accepted the tactic that Peter advised us is another problem. We hold nothing against them. We still have time to change the tactic or for them to start putting it into practice. That is the purpose of our letter to Peter. Here we are somewhat indignant when we learn that the comrades consider that we have not polemicized when for two years we have done nothing but polemicize publicly. It just so happens that a few days ago I went to Filo [Faculty of Philosophy and Letters] and I have heard several rank-and-file comrades say the following: "Did you see what a mess there is in the International? Read *Revista de America* and you will see the different positions."

Regarding the fact that we went four months without sending *La Verdad*, it seems to us a puerile argument and they use the same method to attack us, to bias, to take out of context the fact that is mentioned. Nor is the raid on our headquarters taken into account at all. Nor is there an answer to what publicity they gave our articles in the remaining eight months in which they received our publications. Nor do I want to mention what I think about the criticism that we did not send a comrade to Europe, if the American comrades themselves informed us they had taken all their comrades out of Europe since it was no use being there, given that the majority of the USec was stuck. At most, it will be a minor tactical mistake.

1953 the Fourth International split between the revisionist International Secretariat and the "orthodox" International Committee, Posadas sided with the revisionists Pablo and Mandel. He later broke with them to form his own "international", with some influence in Latin America. After his death, the "Posadists" practically disappeared.

13 **Hugo Blanco** (1934-2023) was a Peruvian peasant and Trotskyist politician. At the age of 20, in 1954, he travelled to Argentina to study at the National University of La Plata. In 1957 he became a member of Palabra Obrera [Workers Word], the organization headed by Nahuel Moreno. In 1958 he returned to Lima and joined the POR (Workers Revolutionary Party). He participated in the demonstrations against Richard Nixon's visit and had to take refuge in Cuzco to escape repression. Working as a newspaper seller he joined the Federation of Workers of Cuzco. He started linking himself to the many peasant delegates and their struggles. From Chaupimayo he promoted peasant unionization, which became massive, and led an agrarian revolution in the valleys of Cuzco and the Central Andes, with land seizures and armed militias, and a strike that lasted nine months. They achieved a series of conquests that in fact raised an agrarian reform. He was a Senator of the Republic from 1990 to 1992, Deputy in the period 1980-1985 and Deputy of the Constituent Assembly between 1978 and 1980.

14 **Luis Vitale** (1927-2010). He joined the POR, headed by Nahuel Moreno, while a student at La Plata. In 1955 he travelled to Chile to make contact with those who opposed the policies of Pablo and Mandel. In 1958, Vitale accompanied Moreno to England and both participated in the Leeds Conference. They had systematically polemised on various topics and Vitale, years later, linked to Mandelism. In 1965 he participated in the founding of the Chilean MIR and then was expelled along with other Trotskyists in 1969. When the Pinochet coup took place, he was arrested and tortured. He managed to take asylum in 1974. In his later years, he speaks of the Latin American Trotskyist movement without respecting the facts and falling into slanders against the current driven by Nahuel Moreno.

The second criticism is why we hold the conference. It is not a factional conference but clearly tendential. Therefore, logically we have invited those who we believe agree with our tendency. It is not a conference of all Latin American Trotskyism but rather of orthodox Trotskyists.

We thought Peter had understood this. We now realise that, because of the speed of his last trip, it had not been made clear. We believe that the documents of Hansen and *Revista de America*, like our documents, are a sufficiently serious and responsible political-programmatic base so that the agreement on them (the documents) justifies a tendential conference. It is not, therefore, an organisational manoeuvre. The American comrades, three or four months ago, considered the possibility of constituting a global tendency based on existing documents. Publicly, we do not know what conclusion they reached, although everything indicates they have chosen not to establish it. With the same materials, or better said, many more, all those we published, why can't we choose to hold a Latin American conference, that is, a democratic, personal, live consultation, and not by correspondence, to study the convenience or not to constitute this tendency? Why is it that when our comrades do it on a global scale and in writing, it is good, and when we do it on a regional scale, and orally, personally, that is, much better, more democratic, it is wrong? Here we find that the comrades want all the advantages of an established tendency and those of independence. To resolve the agreement with the French, not to constitute the tendency, long live independence. To object to our conference that under a different and much better form is the same thing they advocated less than four months ago, the objections of the convenience of a tendency already constituted, in fact, worldwide. In Marxist politics, there is no worse mistake than wanting to deny reality. Hugo Blanco's public statement is a tactical error (that it has been public) but it reflects a profound fact: that there are two tendencies, mainly in Latin America. The American comrades have to move in a principled and non-demagogic way with Hugo Blanco and show him outright that they disagree with his public declaration, not so much because it is public but because it is radically false since there are not two tendencies. If this is not the case, if they agree with Hugo Blanco that there are two tendencies, we must abandon legalistic arguments and frankly propose a conference of the already existing one. Tactical can be whether we do it now or in six months or a year. What we cannot do is a legal farce and say that something does not exist, although the Latin American orthodox Trotskyist tendency does exist.

Let us now turn to some issues of fundamental importance, which have been avoided.

7) *The French tendency*. I do not quite agree with you that you should not have allowed yourself to be led into a very intense controversy, centred on Mandel, to specify it in the dynamics of the French. I think the two controversies were essential since the French had just broken the secret faction with Mandelism. Then, a serious study of the reality of our International should have been done just as we did in the EC when Peter reported. First, an exhaustive analysis, class definition and dynamics of the secret faction that had just broken up (Mandel-French). Second, probable dynamics, given the class definition of each, of the Mandel faction and of the French tendency. Third, based on this analysis, adopt a policy towards the French tendency and the Mandel faction. You remember well that we insisted that the rupture of the faction was the qualitative point and that it opened a new perspective because of the probable dynamics of the French tendency. But we agreed with Peter that the ideological struggle was still decisive and the agreement with the French was tactical until the French were incorporated into the ideological tendency. And this is for reasons also of classes and dynamics. While the Mandel faction is, for us, an ossified petty-bourgeois tendency (I insist, we are talking about the faction and not about Mandel-Livio-Frank¹⁵), the French faction is also petty-bourgeois (hence the structuring of the secret faction with Mandel) but centrist, with an extremely progressive dynamic, young, not ossified, winnable in its entirety or some of its sectors for a Bolshevik policy and organisation. But to achieve this, it is necessary to defeat, and destroy, the Mandel faction, as a pole of attraction and manoeuvre over the French tendency, on the one hand, and, on the other

15 **Pierre Frank** (1905–1984) was one of the leaders of Trotskyism. In 1930 he collaborated with Trotsky in Prinkipo for the organisation of the conference of the Left Opposition; he was elected to the leadership of the *Parti Communiste Internationaliste* (1935). Pierre Frank became part of the International Secretariat of the Fourth International (1948) and promoted in 1963 the United Secretariat of the Fourth International (together with Ernest Mandel, Livio Maitan and Joseph Hansen).

hand, it is necessary to win for the orthodox Trotskyist positions, the French tendency. They are two sides of the same coin. They cannot be won over to the orthodox Trotskyist tendency if the Mandel tendency is not destroyed theoretically and politically, and subsequently organisationally.

The key to this analysis is whether or not it is going towards the structuring of three tendencies on an international scale: one, that of Mandel; another, Franco-American and a third, ours. The Franco-American tendency would be clearly centrist, with an empirical, pragmatic and very progressive method for a stage of our International, which would go from the influence and the student cadres to our definitive settlement in the Western working class. This tendency would achieve the respect of all existing tendencies and sections in the International, it would eliminate factional, dishonest, anti-democratic methods. This alone would give extraordinary dynamics and strength to the growth and development of our world party.

Faced with this hypothesis, you have two obligations. First, specify it. There are some methodological symptoms in the politics and methods of our American comrades that make me consider this hypothesis probable. From the lack of class characterisations to the organisational criterion that prevails over that of the class struggle. The Hugo Blanco case is almost symbolic. Our greatest leader of the masses on a continental and world scale is being confined to the country [Sweden] at this moment of the least class struggle on the continent and furthest removed from the class struggle in his country. Two crimes in one. In contrast, it is the best place from a double organisational point of view: for the immediate peace of mind in the organisation of Hugo's life; and the tendency or nuance represented by the American companions. Your reports and Pedro's future ones will be essential.

The second and main obligation, you have to make an effort so this does not happen. Exhaust all possibilities so that the undisputed leadership of orthodox Trotskyism in the last 20 years, the SWP, continues to be so. This would allow us to leave the French as the only centrist tendency, to very possibly win them over. But sometimes you can't fight an irrepressible objective process. You will see. But to consider the two hypotheses and to present it frankly to our American comrades is, not only a correct method but a true test.

8) From our relations with our American comrades in recent months— perhaps we are too sensitive — a certain paternalism would emerge, which we have called a tendency towards Pabloism.

Please ask for all the correspondence between me and Hansen, from the beginning, about 10 years ago. I don't have time to consult it but, lately, he consults us about the convenience of constituting the tendency, we answer him and he sends me one last letter that when I read it, I consider shameful. I asked for a photocopy of this last letter to bring it and see if it is how the comrade poses the problem with quotes from those three letters. The shameful thing is that Hansen interrupts the dialogue. He does not respond directly to us; he pretends not to hear us.

This trend to paternalism is inevitable while the International is not seriously constituted and the American comrades refuse to establish organic links, of any kind, between parties with similar positions, that is tendencies. In the free organisation that they advocate, the largest parties have all the possibilities and the smallest have none. Thanks to the conference that we are planning, Peru, Uruguay, or Brazil will have the same possibilities as we do in influencing any of our parties, including ours.

Thus, Peru or Brazil could be visited more or less regularly to mutually influence each other.

9) This apparent paternalism goes hand in hand with a dangerous conception of the construction of its international policy. My expression will be strong but take it gently. I do not attempt to attack those who have been my teachers and whom I respect the most. But I get the impression that their criteria, rather than with a perspective of class struggle, they face it with a tourist vision. They do not tend to build the International based fundamentally on the class struggle but they do it on a criterion that follows the tourist lines of the American middle class. They do not give the Latin American revolution the decisive importance that it has for their revolution and instead, they do give it in an exaggerated way to France and Europe. Beware that we do not say that they do not give it great importance. We believe their combination is not the right one and they have not yet

understood the organic relationship between their revolution and ours, inextricably linked. It is as if they gave little importance to the movement for the withdrawal of troops in Vietnam, to the black or Chicano movement, or to the women's movement, to give much greater importance to Europe. We believe that the ongoing Latin American revolution is almost as important for the American revolution as the internal movements that we have pointed out. We get the impression that the comrades do not consider it this way.

This suspicion is supported or sustained by an old written polemic with the comrades, in Leeds, 14 years ago, where they ignored the revolution in backward countries.¹⁶ We do not know if these differences have been overcome. Sometimes we get the impression that they haven't, that there are still leftovers. Specifically, we are not sure that the comrades are clear and that they consider the theoretical-programmatic problem of the organic relationship between the two revolutions and draw conclusions from that analysis in all fields, including the development and organisation of our International.

10) There is a small problem that is very interesting from a controversial point of view. Peter, as you informed us, believed we were doing the "correct" thing until we planned the conference. If that is the opinion, it follows that there has been a qualitative leap in our policy towards the International. A good Marxist cannot be satisfied with this mere statement, he has to prove it. This means looking for the causes of that change. Are we crazy? Are there deep causes that explain this change? What are they?

There may be several hypotheses against us. For example, we tremble like good provincials for the possible organisation of the International. The funny thing is that we enthusiastically support their tactic of negotiating with the French and vote with both hands that Jack [Barnes]¹⁷ dedicate himself to it. Apparently, this is not the case. We do not find another relatively viable hypothesis against us, apart from that one, which we see as very weak.

In contrast, we have a very strong hypothesis in our favour and against their arguments, not against them. They changed their strategy for the building of the International without consulting us and this new fact caused a chain reaction, added to all the previously mentioned elements that begin to rise to the surface, as in any change of stage. This hypothesis goes against their arguments that they haven't changed at all and that everything remains the same.

But this hypothesis can be combined perfectly well with another even more serious one, which goes against them and not only against their arguments — that they are turning towards centrism.

There is another hypothesis that may or may not be combined with the previous ones: that our change reflects a profound need for the objective situation of the continental class struggle and our movement. This hypothesis is supported by the fate of the three conferences or attempts at **centralised** leadership of Trotskyism in Latin America. The BLA reflected late when the retreat had already begun, the post-war rise and joined with the colossal rise of 1952. The SLATO reflected the subsequent rise. The current attempt [of conference] reflects the new rise.

This would explain the enormous importance that the situation and positions of the Brazilian comrades have had in our considerations. What do we do with the Brazilian comrades? Do we leave them to their fate with the odd circumstantial help? Or do we establish the necessary organic and political links to help them in full? This is one of those tactical problems of such great importance that, if we get it wrong, it ruins any strategy. What do they propose to us? As far as we know, nothing. The comrades may have a better solution than a conference. They should tell us. What seems unsustainable to us is that nothing is said, not even taken into account. Peter came across as a little bad to the Brazilian comrades precisely because of this: he spoke out against the conference without

16 See on www.nahuelmoreno.org the 1958 work *The Permanent Revolution in the Postwar Period*, which is a report to the SLATO meeting in which Moreno presented his criticisms and polemics against the world document that the SWP leadership presented to the Leeds Conference (UK) of orthodox Trotskyism (International Committee).

17 **Jack Barnes** (b. 1940) is the national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party of the United States since 1972. Barnes was a key proponent of the party's "turn to industry" in the 1970s, its departure from the Fourth International (Unified Secretariat) in the 1980s and its complete capitulation to Fidel Castro and the Cuban Communist Party in the 1990s which definitively alienated the SWP from the ranks of Trotskyism.

giving any other alternative option, other than the traditional “play as you want and as you know, we will observe and applaud you”. Instead, for us, the contact with our Brazilian comrades was an incentive, a source of constant concern, and finally, one of the fundamental reasons for the conference, as the only way so far, found by us, to begin to take root as orthodox Trotskyists in the main Latin American country.

Well, dear Silvia, this has been all for today. The letter came out much longer than expected. I hope you find it useful and that it arrives on time. I’m sending it to you at two addresses because Peter left us one of his addresses in illegible form. That’s why we sent it to IP [Intercontinental Press] and Peter in a sealed envelope. At the same time, we send the letter to Peter in a sealed envelope so that you can deliver it to him if you consider it convenient and if you do not consider it harsh. You will see.

Do not forget that his characterisation of our party, as provincial and at the same time of a magnificent proletarian tradition, is shared by us. This means that from the start we consider that there may be a lot of provincial closure in our analyses and conclusions. This fact combined with the other, that we consider the SWP in general and especially Comrade Hansen, our teachers, and leaders on an international scale, will make you very careful and attentive to the arguments of the comrades. With our American comrades, it is not the first time that we have discussed strongly with different luck. Sometimes they were right; others we were. It is good to remember that the analysis that Hansen made to us during the World Congress on the Latin American perspectives was much more accurate than ours, so you be more careful than ever, without diminishing one millimetre of the passionate and serious defence of our arguments. It was always like that with the American comrades; I hope it always stays that way. There are many years of agreement on the principles, the program, and the methods for one of the many strong discussions we have had to break with this tradition. Unless deep reasons of all kinds justify it. What we do not believe and do not want under any circumstances, despite the hypotheses, which for methodological reasons, we have considered in the letter.

With my most fraternal and affectionate hug, your friend forever,

Hugo