



Nahuel Moreno

**Documents
of the IWL-FI
Founding
Conference**

Nahuel Moreno

Documents of the IWL-FI Founding Conference

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Foreword

We present two texts prepared by Nahuel Moreno and collaborators, and in addenda, other documents that were part of the discussion and resolution of the Founding Conference of the IWL-FI, the International Workers League – Fourth International. This conference took place in Bogota in January 1982.

In Argentina, they were published in the magazine *Panorama Internacional* No. 20, Year VI, May 1982, published by the PST, which was banned by the dictatorship and operated underground.

Together, they historically explain the need to build a revolutionary leadership. This task, within the framework of millions of workers breaking with the traitorous leadership of Stalinism and the opportunist and revisionist leadership of sectors of Trotskyism such as Mandelism, is of crucial importance. A leadership based on democratic centralism that goes beyond the limits of a mere confederation of national leaderships.

The IWL-FI emerged after a brief experience of unity around a revolutionary program with Pierre Lambert's current. The process of programmatic discussion began with the expulsion of the Simon Bolivar Brigade in August 1979 by the bourgeois Sandinista government in Nicaragua. The BSB was formed in Bogotá, driven by Nahuel Moreno's current, and participated in the armed struggle against the Somoza dictatorship. The Fourth International (United Secretariat), led by Mandel, and the SWP in the US supported the expulsion, while Pierre Lambert's current denounced it. In December 1980, the Fourth International (International Committee), whose acronym was FI (IC), was founded, and a programmatic text called the "Draft Theses" was approved. Unity with Lambertism was thwarted when the OCI(u), a Lambertist organisation in France, began its capitulation to Mitterrand's social democratic government in mid-1981. Thus, the IWL-FI was formed to provide continuity to the international building of orthodox Trotskyism through the Morenoist movement.

After Moreno died in 1987, the leadership of the LIT-CI and its main party, the Argentine MAS, fell into increasing political and methodological errors and deviations, and collapsed in 1991. Those of us who promote the website www.nahuelmoreno.org and Editorial CEHuS reorganised into the IWU-FI, founded in 1994.

We suggest reading the text *MAS - A Historical Balance Sheet* and the book *The Simon Bolivar Brigade*, available at www.nahuelmoreno.org in the Other Authors section.

All notes are by the editors.

The editors

September 2025

IWL-FI Foundation Conference, January 1982 (Bogota)

1. Balance Sheet of Activities

Introduction

This Conference, our balance sheet of activities and our decisions for the immediate future have a clear axis: for Trotskyists, our decisive, fundamental and primary problem is that of international leadership and organisation. We, at this stage, are governed by an iron law: our successes and our failures depend first and foremost on our international leadership. As we shall see later, this only happens to the Trotskyists. With good international leadership, we can have successes or failures; this already depends on many factors, but without it, we cannot do well, we cannot make sustained progress, we cannot build parties with mass influence, and it is impossible for us to take power.

This is where the difference between Trotskyism and “national Trotskyism” begins. The latter believes that the question of international leadership is an abstract, declarative, propagandistic question, or at most an imperative for the future, when some supposedly better conditions exist. Either it has to be done in the future, or it is placed as a synonym for some national leadership.

Trotskyism says and does just the opposite. There must always be an international organisation and leadership. This is a different category, superior to any national leadership or organisation. And it is absolutely indispensable. Just as without oxygen there is no life, without effective international leadership and organisation, there is no true Trotskyism. This was the problem that ultimately lay hidden in the discussion between Trotsky and his followers as to whether the Fourth International should be founded in 1936 or not. For Trotsky, it was not a matter of the forces they were bringing together, of weakness or not, but simply that without an international organisation, it is not possible to engage in political action. In 1936, although he was defeated, with his categorical position, he set a clear precedent that one cannot be without an international organisation.

Our historical current, the Argentine PST and its predecessors, has always had this criterion. And that's why they were always a disciplined part of a centralised international organisation or fought tirelessly for it to be established. Posadism, Healyism, Lambertism, to a certain extent, the SWP, have always considered that the essential thing is the national parties and not the international organisation and leadership.

The experience of the last few years only confirms our position, both positively and negatively, through successes and failures. The results of our activity since 1976 have shown us that a small but international party, as in fact our current has been for years, solid, with our methods, with a leadership team that is maturing and expanding, becoming increasingly capable, can take advantage of incredible opportunities, in the different countries and with small, young national groups and parties, precisely because we start from the top, from where it should be, from the international point of view. And this is the only way to do politics for revolutionary Marxism because it is the only one that aligns with the reality of this increasingly international era.

It is with this approach that we have to analyse the present situation of the Trotskyist movement, our place in it and the perspectives. This means that this report has one axis and one conclusion: **we must already establish an international organisation, with a leadership, and governed by democratic centralism.** Not to do so would be to fall into national Trotskyism. Any organisation and leader who claims to be a Trotskyist cannot exist, operate, and engage in politics outside an international Bolshevik organisation. It is with this approach that we will analyse the break-up of the FI-IC, the definition of Lambertism, and all other tactical and conjunctural issues. In other words, we will solve each current problem by answering a question: what is the best way to develop and strengthen the international organisation of which we are a part or the one we are going to found today, because there is no other?

On the scale of the world Trotskyist movement, we can see today that only two international currents have existed or exist that have raised the conception and practice that Trotskyism means a centralised international organisation and leadership. The first, revisionist and liquidationist, is Pabloism-Mandelism, presently the United Secretariat (USec), heir to the 1963 reunification, which remains as an international current, even though its capitulationist revisionism is inexorably taking away space for growth but still has several national parties with weight and tradition (on the scale of the forces that claim to be Trotskyist) in various countries.

The second is us, those of us convened to this conference, the only revolutionary current and independent of the counter-revolutionary apparatuses of the mass movement, that has been slowly forming over all these years since the postwar period, with our prehistory, the activity of the Argentine party and other Latin American Trotskyists, and from 1976 onwards, the beginning of the formation of an international current and an international leadership team that, despite its immense weakness, is emerging as the only hint, so far, of the beginning of a solution leadership crisis of Trotskyism.

Some comrades may wonder why we are presenting this international panorama that does not mention Lambertism. Lambertism, as a French national phenomenon or as a very weak international current, has fifth-order importance at the level of the world Trotskyist movement. In the past, it always held national-Trotskyist positions, and despite the progress represented first by its break with Healy,¹ the formation of the Organising Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International (OCRFI) and the orientation to discuss with the United Secretariat, when it turned to the formation of the FI-IC, it was already in crisis and decline. From its capitulation to the Mitterrand² government, it showed that it had not broken even a millimetre with national Trotskyism since it brutally broke the international framework that we were building, rather than accepting to democratically discuss French politics in the FI-IC.

We have just stated, a few lines above, that we are the only independent and revolutionary current that has been forming so far on an international scale, the only hint to date of a solution to the historical crisis of the revolutionary leadership of the proletariat. However, we all know that we are immensely weak and that the attempt at unity for which we formed the FI-IC has just been thwarted. Those gathered here, according to the official figures of the FI-IC, represent about 3,500, without including the Argentine party. This is a lot for the Trotskyist movement; it is almost double the number of militants outside France who support the OCI(u),³ but it is an almost imperceptible figure in relation to the forces that the counter-revolutionary apparatuses move.

If we look back, we see that Trotsky and the Trotskyists began to postulate themselves as an alternative revolutionary leadership since 1933, almost 50 years ago, launching themselves into the building of

1 **Gerry Healy** (1913-1989). Irish. He emigrated to England and there he became a Trotskyist in 1937. Faced with the crisis and split in the Fourth International in the early 1950s, he aligned himself against Pablo and Mandel but adopting an increasingly sectarian and national-Trotskyist course. He kept an international organisation, called the International Committee, together with Pierre Lambert, which did not participate in the reunification of the Fourth International in 1963. In 1971, he distanced himself from Lambert. In the 1970s, his organisation, the WRP (Workers Revolutionary Party) underwent successive splits, although it retained an important apparatus due to its ties to the Libyan and Iraqi regimes, which financed it. In 1985, it erupted amid political arguments and accusations against Healy of sexual abuse of female WRP members. Healy used brutal bureaucratic methods and carried out personal smear campaigns against Trotskyist leaders who disagreed with him.

2 **François Mitterrand** (1916-1996) was a French politician who served as President of France from 1981 to 1995, the longest holder of that position in the history of France. He was a former Socialist Party First Secretary.

3 **Organisation Communiste Internationaliste (unifiée)** [Internationalist Communist Organisation (unified)], OCI(u), was a French national-Trotskyist political party led by Pierre Lambert.

new revolutionary parties with mass influence, and that would seize power, but they didn't succeed. So far, we haven't moved beyond the state of propaganda groups. Worse yet, it has systematically happened that Trotskyist organisations or currents have been succumbing to the pressure of the apparatuses and forces of the enemy class.

Faced with this undeniable reality, many comrades may ask themselves serious questions: Is it really true that we are the only hint of a leadership? And then, why haven't we managed to grow and organise a party with mass influence in any country? Why haven't we taken power anywhere? Is it Trotsky's fault? Are there fundamental mistakes that lead to this situation? Was the founding of a Fourth International a utopia? Is our activity today a utopia? And the fundamental question: Why haven't we achieved a *recognised* international organisation and leadership? Answering these questions and reaffirming our conviction of the need for an international organisation and leadership leads us to analyse what has happened in all these years with the international leadership of the Trotskyists.

I. The International Leadership during Trotsky's Life

As we were saying, analysing the history of Trotskyism, or explaining the reasons for our very slow progress, why we have been postulating ourselves as a revolutionary leadership for years and still have not managed to build a single party with mass influence, forces us to analyse what happened to the international Trotskyist leadership in the different stages and periods. Without repeating what has already been said in the *Theses*,⁴ we want to clarify some concepts.

In the 1930s, when it did have a great and true international leadership, Trotsky himself, Trotskyism ran into objective and subjective problems which prevented it from transforming itself into a mass current. The proletariat during those years suffered only historic defeats, which necessarily caused discouragement, preventing the emergence of a vanguard that would seek new solutions. This is an objective factor that conditioned this entire stage (which, let's remember, we said was one of absolute strengthening of these counter-revolutionary apparatuses).

In the realm of Trotskyism, we can say that at that time we had a very powerful international leadership, an immense head, with an extremely weak body, the rickety national leaderships. We did not have an integrated world party but rather on a national scale there were very serious weaknesses and problems, as a result that in the absence of a triumphant process of class struggle, there didn't emerge strong national cadres and leaderships, experienced in the workers' struggle, and the strongest organisations and leaders were the most centrifugal, precisely because they were the most pressured by the objective process.

There was great international leadership, but without national cadres and leadership. A true world party was not achieved because of the almost absolute inequality between the de facto leadership, Trotsky, and the national cadres and leaderships. The international leadership synthesised the experience of the world-class struggle throughout the century. The national cadres and leaderships were totally inexperienced, propagandist, petty-bourgeois and intellectual in character, with some exceptions, such as part of the American leadership. The historic defeats of the proletariat made it impossible to overcome this acute contradiction. With the Second World War and the assassination of Trotsky, this acute contradiction was overcome, but in a negative way because we were completely at zero, from top to bottom, without any true leadership.

Despite the defeats, as there was an intense class struggle, the history of Trotskyism in the 1930s shows how a capable international leadership always achieves positive results and progress. The fact that the national leaderships were almost non-existent (France) or centrifugal (Spain, Nin),⁵ prevented successes that could have been extraordinary, even in retreat.

4 See "Theses on the need to build an international leadership" on page 23 of this publication.

5 **Andreu 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

In the case of Spain, in 1934, for example, the leadership of the Spanish section, which systematically yielded to external pressure, which was never really part of a world organisation, refused to apply Trotsky's line of entryism in the socialist youth, who were moving to the left, who paraded by the thousands with posters of Lenin and Trotsky and followed as leader Largo Caballero,⁶ who went so far as to proclaim the need for the Fourth International. Trotsky, who defined politics as the art of seizing opportunities, who was perfectly aware of the opportunities that arose in Spain, and how they were squandered by the Spanish leaders who formed the POUM,⁷ referred years later to the tragic and criminal errors of that leadership. In France, the outcome for the League of those who followed Trotsky's advice was very positive, and allowed young and inexperienced comrades between 1934 and 1935 to begin to build up a group of several hundred militants. In the few places where systematic attempts were made to apply Trotsky's advice, progress was always made, for example, in America, where they managed to penetrate the workers' movement, lead trade unions, have magnificent publications and finances, and several thousand militants. The fact that in 1938, on the eve of the war and after all the defeats, some 5,500 militants gathered at the founding of the Fourth International is another categorical confirmation that an effective international leadership, even in such an unfavourable objective situation as that of the 1930s, always achieves positive results, we insist, if there is intense class struggle.

During Trotsky's lifetime we can say that, although the objective process of the defeats suffered by the proletariat was decisive, in the subjective realm, internal to Trotskyism, the great weakness was the absence and the impossibility of forming national leaderships capable of taking advantage of the favourable conditions that existed at the level of some countries, and, relying on Trotsky's advice and orientations, of achieving even greater progress. In any case, thanks to this international leadership, wonders were achieved, as we have already pointed out, and, on the other hand, there was always a struggle for a disciplined, centralised organisation, a world party and a world leadership.

II. The slow process of overcoming the vacuum and crisis of leadership

From the post-war period onwards, the situation changes radically both objectively and subjectively. For the mass movement, since then, with a few exceptions, they are all victories, and these victories, relatively speaking (because in the long run every victory weakens the bureaucracy and the counter-revolution), for a time, strengthened the counter-revolutionary apparatuses, in particular, in the first period, Stalinism. Let's clarify here that, given our size, this process of relative strengthening, subjective on the scale of the historical process, is for us an objective fact of reality.

For Trotskyism, a long period of extreme weakness first and of crisis and disintegration caused by revisionism later, which prevented us from taking advantage of some of the opportunities we had to become a mass party. The assassination of Trotsky destroyed our international leadership, and the Second World War, in turn, effectively destroyed the international organisation and leadership that Trotsky had managed to build in the 1930s. The postwar period would again open up great mobilisations but neither

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.

6 **Francisco Largo Caballero** (1869-1946). Leader of the Spanish Socialist Workers Party (PSOE) and the General Union of Workers (UGT), he was a minister in governments of the Second Republic and became Prime Minister in 1936, during the Civil War. He led the wing that radicalised to the left. Pierre Broué, in his book *Trotsky and the Spanish Civil War* (Jorge Alvarez Editores, Buenos Aires, 1966), recounts that young socialists marched with posters of Lenin and Trotsky and that Largo Caballero, in one of his speeches, proclaimed the need for a Fourth International.

7 **Workers Party of Marxist Unification (POUM)**. It emerged from the unity of the majority of the Spanish section, which broke with Trotsky, led by Nin, and the reformist Workers' and Peasants' Bloc, led by Maurin. The POUM supported the Popular Front that Stalinism formed. During the Civil War, it formed its own brigades, which were persecuted by the communists as the influence of the Stalinist apparatus grew under the Negrin government.

Trotsky or any effective international leadership was there to guide us correctly to take part in them, and Stalinism would be strengthened temporarily on the back of the success achieved in defeating the Nazis, the upsurge of the people's republics in Eastern Europe, the triumph of Tito⁸ in Yugoslavia and of Mao in China.

In the Fourth International, there had been a vacuum of leadership, and a process was beginning that would necessarily last for decades, during which, following the progress of the mass movement, contradictorily, through splits, unifications, crises and maturation, a new leadership would take shape. We were starting again, beginning a new stage. For Trotskyists, 1943 is a moment similar to the one that presented itself for the Marxists in 1880, when the upsurge of the workers' movement began. The Marxists were few, inexperienced, the First International had dissolved, and it was during years and years of the growing upsurge of the class struggle that the revolutionary Marxist movement, and in particular the Bolshevik party in Russia, developed. The Bolshevik party was, as we analysed in the Theses, a unique exception in history since a series of circumstances combined to form, at the level of one country, a revolutionary internationalist leadership, which succeeded in seizing power. This process of forming the Bolshevik party lasted at least 40 years, from the populists to the Marxist development, accompanying the struggles of the workers' movement.

Our epoch denies any possibility of this phenomenon being repeated. Any national leadership, no matter how internationalist it claims to be, that does not take an active and direct part (as soon as its strength allows it) in the process of building the international leadership team and organisation, is doomed to failure. At the same time, very young and inexperienced national leaderships, but with the support of a capable international leadership (as happened in some cases during Trotsky's lifetime and as we have already begun to see in recent years in our current situation), can achieve immense progress in the heat of the opportunities offered by the class struggle.

This process of building an international Trotskyist leadership was and is slow and very difficult. We have already said that our successes or failures depend first and foremost on our international leadership, and we began the 1940s without an international leadership and without experienced national leaders. However, each triumph of the mass movement, even though it also meant blows against us because of the revisionism that fed on the idea that these triumphs strengthened the counter-revolutionary apparatuses, advanced and matured the process of building a principled international leadership.

Why was power taken in Eastern Europe, Yugoslavia, and China but not by the Trotskyists?

Before delving into the different periods that took place in the formation of the new Trotskyist leadership, let's pose a question: Why can't we Trotskyists take power without an effective international leadership, while the Stalinists in Eastern Europe, Tito, Mao, and later Castro were able to do so at the same stage? Their triumph confirms what we say. They had advantages in seizing power that we never had and will never have. They had the support of Stalinism, or of sectors of imperialism and the bourgeoisie itself, as in the case of Fidel, because, being petty-bourgeois and bureaucratic currents, they have a wide spectrum of direct or indirect partners who encourage and support them.

That's why these national Stalinist or bureaucratic leaderships can triumph on a national scale, and we will never be able to do so unless we build ourselves up as sections of a world party, since our only political support will be the revolutionary mobilisation of the workers of the world and the world party. Instead, the opportunists have direct or indirect support from their bourgeois or bureaucratic camp itself.

8 **Josip Broz Tito** (1892–1980) was the main leader of the Yugoslav Communist Party and the resistance against Nazism. During the Second World War, he led the Yugoslav partisans, often considered the most effective resistance movement in German-occupied Europe. After the liberation of Yugoslavia in 1945, he served as prime minister (1945–1963) and president from January 1953 until his death in 1980. With the expropriation of the bourgeoisie, Yugoslavia was transformed into a bureaucratic workers' state.

The upsurge of 1943 and the void of leadership

The assassination of Trotsky and the Second World War divide the history of Trotskyism into two periods. We are no longer the unbalanced synthesis of the greatest revolutionary head of the century and inexperienced comrades, but rather all we have to start over are intellectual, inexperienced and propagandist comrades. From one day to the next, we were practically left without international leadership after having had a very strong, very capable one for years. When the world upsurge began in 1943, Trotskyism was totally weakened and without regular international ties; there was no effective international leadership.

Slowly, the void began to be filled, but with great weakness, failing to accurately analyse any of the new post-war phenomena or provide the correct orientations for the various national parties. It happened that even when the objective situation was changing in our favour because the mobilisations began all over the world and the Trotskyist forces were slowly strengthening in many countries, the extreme weakness and inexperience of the international leadership and the national groups and leaders first caused us to lose good opportunities to develop, and then the crisis and disintegration caused by revisionism began.

With the great upsurge of 1943, the reorganisation of Trotskyism began, first in Europe and then on a world scale, with the International Secretariat, but, lacking a minimally experienced and Bolshevik leadership, we lost immense opportunities, such as capitalising on the French socialist youth for Trotskyism. The void and crisis of leadership meant the doom of Trotskyism in England. But this wasn't limited to Europe. In Latin America the upsurge of the class struggle also began, particularly in the southern cone, and young people who approached Trotskyism had little or no support to respond to processes like the one that opened in Bolivia (where despite being few in number, the Trotskyists managed to get the workers' movement to endorse the *Theses of Pulacayo*⁹ and then the first workers' deputies). In Argentina, we were given enormous chances, just like in Peru, which we failed to take advantage of due to the weakness of the leadership.

In any case, between mistakes and successes, very slowly, a new team was beginning to mature, which allowed not only the reorganisation of a centralised international organisation but also, albeit with delay, the beginning of the definition of the process of emergence of bureaucratic workers' states.

In this initial period, the activity of Pablo¹⁰ and Mandel¹¹ was very important in achieving these advances. In the context of the nationalist and federative abstentionism of Cannon¹² and the leadership of the SWP regarding the need to rebuild the international leadership, and the extreme weakness of the leadership of the French section — the most important one outside the American section — Pablo initially played a relatively progressive role in the immediate postwar period, as he played a decisive role in the reorganisation of the Fourth International: Pablo contributed especially — though without qualitatively

9 The **Theses of Pulacayo** was an important document in the Bolivian and Latin American labour movement. It was adopted at the request of the delegation of Llallaguaga in the Congress of the Union Federation of Mining Workers of Bolivia (FSTMB), which met in November 1946 in the city of Pulacayo. The thesis is based on the Trotskyist conception of permanent revolution and the *Transitional Program* of the Fourth International.

10 **Michel Pablo** (1911-1996) was the pseudonym of Michel Raptis, a Greek Trotskyist living in France and the main leader of the Fourth International after the Second World War. Together with Ernest Mandel, they promoted a revisionist policy of capitulation to the Stalinist communist parties, social democracy and bourgeois nationalist movements such as the MNR in Bolivia. They promoted "sui generis entryism", which meant the dissolution of the Trotskyists in the Communist Parties. In the 1960s, he distanced himself from Trotskyism and was an advisor to the bourgeois government of Ben Bella in Algeria.

11 **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.

12 **James Patrick Cannon** (1890-1974). American revolutionary labour leader and founder of American Trotskyism. From the age of 18, he participated in the struggle and in the union and political organisation of the American working class. He was a founding member of the Communist Party. He travelled to Moscow and participated as a delegate to the sixth congress of the Third International in 1928. There, he learned about Trotsky's critical positions and began his militancy in the left opposition. Expelled from the Communist Party, he founded the American Socialist League and later the Socialist Workers Party in 1938.

separating himself from the general errors and weaknesses — not only in defending Trotskyist principles against the remnants of the anti-defencists but also in providing an orientation towards the workers' and mass movements, and in providing a Marxist explanation of the emergence of bureaucratic workers' states against the more sectarian — like Mandel and Cannon — who continued to consider them capitalist states.

However, almost at the same time that he played an important role in crafting the new category of “deformed workers' states”, Pablo began to capitulate to Tito's leadership following his break with Stalin.

The onset of the Korean War and Tito's blatant support for South Korea frustrated that idyll, but the revisionist course was underway. Starting in 1951, Pablo began to impose capitulation to the counter-revolutionary apparatuses, both Stalinist and bourgeois nationalist.

The emergence of bureaucratic workers' states and Trotskyist leadership

The colossal advance of the mass movement meant the triumph of Stalinism in Eastern Europe, Tito in Yugoslavia and Mao in China, which extended the expropriation of the bourgeoisie to a third of humanity, caused the very weak Trotskyist leadership that was being formed to completely lose its way and fall, headed by Pablo, into revisionism, into capitulation to Stalinism and bourgeois or petty bourgeois nationalist currents. But simultaneously, resistance to it began, which would be organised in the International Committee (IC).

The fact that not only did a revisionist current emerge but also wreak havoc in the Trotskyist ranks (even though it was numerically a minority) was based not only on our extreme weakness but also on the relative strengthening of the counter-revolutionary apparatuses. Along with that, there was another objective factor that also contributed to our inability to form a capable leadership and gain experience, which was the fact that the working class of the industrial countries, although it did not stop fighting, because of the combination of the betrayal of the counter-revolutionary apparatuses — the Communist Party and the Socialist Party — with the economic boom, which meant years of relative tranquillity, of the usufruct of some minimal gains, ceased to be the centre of the world process of the class struggle.

And this problem is decisive because Trotskyism means the industrial proletariat. There can be no Trotskyism other than the one that arises and develops in the heat of the workers' struggle, and whenever there are workers' struggles, Trotskyist positions tend to be raised and Trotskyism grows and strengthens. The strength that Trotskyism has had or has in countries such as Bolivia and Argentina is a confirmation of this, since it is intimately linked to the weight of the proletariat in both countries.

But in that period of intense class struggle worldwide, despite the relative strengthening of the counter-revolutionary apparatuses and the boom, we were presented with opportunities to grow in several countries, and the decisive factor that we could not take advantage of them was the crisis of leadership caused by revisionism. Everything that the revisionist leadership did in those years and all over the world was against the development and strengthening of Trotskyism. The climax was the betrayal of Pablo-Mandel in Bolivia, the loss of the historic opportunity we had to fight for power, or at least to make a party with mass influence.

Throughout Latin America, the revisionist leadership prevented Latin American Trotskyism from acting with a correct orientation in the process of upsurge that culminated with the triumph of Cuba in 1959. Not only in Bolivia but in other countries, it promoted capitulation to the Communist Parties or nationalist movements, as it did in Argentina. Despite and against Pablo, the orthodox Trotskyists grouped in the Latin American Secretariat of Orthodox Trotskyism (SLATO) did participate thoroughly in the upsurge. In Argentina, they had an important participation in the struggle against the gorilla¹³ coup that triumphed in 1955, and then they continued to strengthen their presence in the workers' movement in the period of the “resistance” to the military dictatorship, becoming an important wing within the process of recovery of the unions, in particular in the metalworkers' union. In Chile, they managed to gain influence

13 **Gorilla** is a term from Argentina's domestic politics, historically used to refer in a derogatory or pejorative way to those who gave a coup against Peron. Over the years, the term has been extended to a greater or lesser extent to other countries in Latin America as synonymous with “reactionary right”.

in the Single Workers Centre of Chile (CUTCh), and in Peru, the orthodox Trotskyists managed to become the leadership of the mobilisations with land occupations that took place in the early 1960s.

Also in Europe, revisionism had a criminal role since its capitulation to Stalinism from 1953 onwards was transformed into direct betrayal. They boycotted the French general strike of 1953, made against the leadership of the CP, and when the political revolution began, the Pabloist capitulation prevented Trotskyism from identifying itself in all European countries with the banners of the political revolution, broadly sympathising with the anti-bureaucratic struggles of East Berlin and then Poland and Hungary and capitalising in its favour the crisis of Stalinism. On the contrary, in 1953, revisionism actually endorsed the repression in East Berlin, and if in 1955-1956 it could no longer do anything but denounce Stalinism, with its capitulation and sui generis entryism, revisionism practically managed to make Trotskyism disappear from Europe.

Faced with the impact of the emergence of the bureaucratic workers' states, then, the revisionism of Pablo-Mandel emerged, along with the International Committee, which brought together the majority of Trotskyism but was unable to provide solutions to any of the problems raised. Instead, it simply positioned itself as a federation of critics and commentators of Pablo's mistakes, without postulating itself as an international leadership and organisation, to thoroughly participate in the class struggle and seek the destruction of revisionism. This is how it did not give any common response to the Latin American upsurge, even when it grouped forces from the region, in particular for the process that culminated with the triumph of Cuba, nor did it have a centralised intervention from the beginning of the political revolution that would allow it to capitalise to the maximum on the beginning of the crisis of Stalinism. But if these were the majority positions in the IC, supported by the SWP, and with which Healy, Lambert,¹⁴ etc. agreed, there was also a minority, headed by the Argentine party, that created the SLATO, which to the extent of its strength acted as a hint of a regional and centralised leadership that permanently fought for a world SLATO to be established, that is, a centralised leadership and organisation, to take part in the class struggle and to liquidate revisionism.

It is in this framework that we can analyse what happened in the Southern Cone and the slow emergence of a leadership in the Argentine party that was part of the International Committee, which played an important role in the beginning of the solution of a revolutionary leadership. This was the area of the world where the working class fought the most during that entire period. This magnifies the crime of Pabloism. Let's imagine what would have happened in the southern cone if we had had the support not only in Bolivia, but also in Chile, Argentina, Uruguay, Peru and even Brazil, of an international leadership, even if it were minimally capable, that would help them instead of systematically plunging them into betrayal or error. In that region, where the class struggle never ceased, where there were constantly opportunities to act and develop, the character of the international leadership was a direct hindrance, a driving force against the formation of Trotskyist parties.

The slow but steady progress of the Argentine party has as one of its explanations its permanent attitude towards the international organisation. Unlike Posadas,¹⁵ without ever proclaiming itself or considering itself the axis of an international leadership, it always had the international question as a point

14 **Pierre Lambert** (1920–2008). French Trotskyist leader. Headed the PCI (Internationalist Communist Party) since 1954. He left the Fourth International and formed the International Committee with the Irishman Gerry Healy with sectarian positions regarding the Cuban revolution. They denied the character of a workers' and socialist state in Cuba. In 1979, Lambert rejected the expulsion of the Simon Bolivar Brigade by the bourgeois unity government of Sandinismo in Nicaragua (which was supported by Mandel and the SWP of the USA). This led in 1980 to a unification with the international organisation led by Nahuel Moreno (they formed the Fourth International–International Committee, FI-IC). But they split soon after when Lambert broke with the commonly approved revolutionary program (the "Draft Theses" of the FI-IC) and turned to opportunism, supporting the bourgeois-imperialist government of the Socialist Party in France, headed by Mitterrand. From then on, Lambert's organisation entered into a pronounced decline. See *The Mitterrand Government, Its Perspectives and Our Policy* (1981), *The OCI(u)'s Betrayal* (1982), *End of Unity with Lambertism* (1982), and *Our Experience with Lambertism* (1986) at www.nahuelmoreno.org.

15 **J. Posadas** was the pseudonym of Homero Rómulo 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 recognised 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 1953 the Fourth International split between the revisionist International Secretariat and the "orthodox" International Committee, Posadas sided with the

of reference and considered itself part, a cell, of a higher international organisation. Since 1948, it was part of the Fourth International and actively accompanied all attempts to form an international leadership team, and that is why it was the only party that did not have or encourage deviations of national “Trotskyism”. Although Pablo first and Mandel later systematically fought to isolate or expel it from the Fourth International, the Argentine party always fought the national-Trotskyist conceptions, not in an abstract way but by being part, against all odds, of a world organisation and accepting its discipline. First in the Fourth International of the International Secretariat, then in the International Committee, fighting day by day against the federative conceptions of the SWP, Healyism and Lambert, demanding the establishment of a centralised organisation with an international leadership

The triumph of Cuba and the beginning of the political revolution also mean an advance for Trotskyism

Despite the revisionists and the weaknesses of the International Committee, the crisis of Stalinism caused by the beginning of the political revolution and also at first by the triumph of Castroism — a non-Stalinist petty bourgeois nationalist leadership — in Cuba, had a highly positive effect, although contradictory, in the ranks of Trotskyism. On the one hand, it provoked the breakup of the more sectarian wings, Healy and Lambert. On the other hand, there was also the breakup between Pablo and the Mandel-Maitan¹⁶ wing, which had been fighting Pablo’s ultra-revisionist positions and promoting reunification with the International Committee. This took place in 1963, and the common international framework was re-established around a very positive fact that was the defence of the Cuban revolution and the recognition of the workers’ character of the Cuban state. Its negative aspect was that the unification was based on the capitulation to the Castro leadership by Mandel, Maitan, Frank,¹⁷ and the SWP; the seeds of the guerrilla deviation that would hatch a few years later were already in it.

But on the whole, it was a positive phenomenon since 1963, a centralised world Trotskyist organisation was formed again, the United Secretariat, and the Latin American Trotskyists grouped in the SLATO joined it in a disciplined manner, clarifying from the first moment that they considered the Mandelist leadership as a petty-bourgeois and opportunist leadership that capitulated to Castroism.

The upsurge of 1968 and the LTT-LTF

Starting from the Cuban Revolution, a new vanguard emerged in Latin America, guerrilla-like, populist, which, although it could not be capitalised on by Trotskyism, was a staunch enemy of the Soviet bureaucracy, grouping itself in Castroism and Maoism, and which was deepening the crisis of Stalinism throughout the continent.

The generalised upsurge of 1968 meant a strengthening of Trotskyism in the United States (on the back of the massive rejection of military participation in the Vietnam War), in Europe and in Latin America. The Latin American upsurge gave rise to the guerrilla deviation in the disastrous Mandelist leadership, which caused the destruction of his followers in Argentina, in Bolivia and practically prevented them from participating in the Chilean process. But it also produced a fierce resistance that was reflected

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.

16 **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.

17 **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).

in the minority of the 1969 World Congress and then in the formation of the Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency – Leninist-Trotskyist Faction (LTT-LTF).¹⁸ In the “Bolshevik Tendency (BT) Statement”,¹⁹ we said:

“The LTF, a milestone

“Faced with the guerrilla orientation of the leadership of the International, a current of opinion arose that harshly criticised such deviations from the Trotskyist program and method. Finally, in March 1973, a minority of our world organisation founded the LTT, which, in light of the persistence of the ultra-left errors of the Majority, constituted itself as a Faction, months before the Tenth Congress.

“The LTF was the correct response and the reflection in our ranks, albeit very unevenly because of its extreme weakness in two of the key countries – Chile and Bolivia – of the Latin American upsurge. It meant a political alternative to the crisis of orientation of the International and accurately marked both the errors and deviations of the majority, as well as the dire consequences they entailed. For the LTF, the strategy of Trotskyism remained the construction of Leninist combat parties, supported by the *Transitional Program* and its method, and consequently oriented towards the workers’ and mass movements. It is the uncompromising application of this policy that explains the strengthening that the LTF experienced during this upsurge, which had its maximum expression in the Argentine PST, a party that, after the break with the guerrillas in 1968 and the “Cordobazo” (which opened a pre-revolutionary situation in Argentina), by correctly using legality to work on the mass movement, achieved a steady growth that was recognised by the Tenth Congress by qualifying it as the most powerful Trotskyist party in the world. If by the Ninth Congress the anti-Guerrilla current constituted a tiny minority, by the Tenth Congress the LTF encompassed nearly half of the militancy of the entire International.”

This period was very rich for the maturation process of an orthodox international leadership, since – as noted in the definition of the LTF that we made in the Bolshevik Tendency Statement – the class struggle presented us with an important upsurge, particularly in Argentina, that not only strengthened us but also deepened the contradictions of the Mandelist leadership and brought it to a crisis since it was suffering resounding failures and failed to impose its orientation in a centralised way on those who, like the Argentine Trotskyists, refused to commit suicide out of an alleged duty to comply with an incapable and at that time ultra-left international leadership but that did not abandon its incurable opportunism, this time through capitulation to the popular frontist character of all the guerrilla leaderships it followed. Between the years of the Ninth and the Tenth Congress the international framework of the United Secretariat was maintained, despite the profound differences that existed but amidst the anarchy caused by a crisis-ridden international leadership and with a constant progress of the minority.

Unfortunately, the lack of a recognised international leadership prevented our international organisation from participating positively and actively in a process that took place parallel to the emergence and strengthening of the LTF, which was Lambert’s break with Healy and his approach to the need for an international organisation that was reflected in the founding of Organising Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International (OCRFI) and that was open to re-discussing Cuba and discussing with the United Secretariat. The OCRFI, in its own way, and without signifying a break with the national-Trotskyist conceptions of the IC and Healy-Lambert, were a reflection of our progress and the progress that the United Secretariat experienced conjuncturally with the upsurge of 1968 as heir to the reunification of 1963.

18 The leaderships of the American SWP and the Argentine PST formed the LTT in March 1973, as the Tenth World Congress approached, to combat the growing deviations of the majority in the USec, led by Mandel-Maitan and Frank. In August 1973, they transformed into a faction, the LTF, with the goal of achieving a radical change in the policy and leadership of the Fourth International.

19 Due to growing political differences over the revolutionary processes in Portugal and Angola, the majority of the LTF forces withdrew in February 1976. See *Revolution and Counter-revolution in Portugal and Angola: The Black Revolution Underway* at www.nahuelmoreno.org. In August 1976, they founded the Bolshevik Tendency in Bogota. In 1978, on the eve of the Tenth World Congress, it transformed itself into the Bolshevik Faction to intensify its struggle against Mandel and the SWP leadership of the USec and its increasingly capitulating course to bourgeois democracy. See *The Revolutionary Dictatorship of the Proletariat* at www.nahuelmoreno.org.

III. The upsurge of 1974–1975 accelerates the process of maturation of the international leadership

The period that began with the Portuguese revolution, the war in Angola and the triumph of the Vietnamese masses over the US imperialist army reaffirmed the revisionist course of the Mandelist leadership and brought about a new and important advance in the process of maturation of the international leadership, which culminated in the split of the LTF in 1975, when first the Argentine PST and then the majority of the forces that made up the LTF split with the leadership of the SWP.

Practically from the moment the minority was formed at the Ninth Congress, and within the framework of the principled battle that was established against the guerrilla and ultra-left deviations of the majority, deep differences emerged between the leadership of the SWP and that of the Argentine party. The first and main one was over the very characterisation of the situation of the Fourth International, the crisis of its leadership and how to solve it. The Argentines systematically put forward that the majority was an incapable, intellectual and petty-bourgeois leadership team, not only pro-guerrilla or ultra-left at that time but essentially revisionist, and that it was essential to set the goal of changing it for a new one. In short, the aim of the minority had to be to fight for the leadership, and the organisational steps to be taken would follow from that. The Yankees refused for years to take this position, until finally, in 1973, when the majority extended its ultra-leftism to Europe, the Latin American comrades of the minority succeeded in creating first the LTT and then the LTF, which took as its objective the change of leadership.

On a different level, and mostly expressed in oral discussions that were systematically repeated at each meeting, there were differences over organisational and internal regime issues between Americans and Argentines. The latter, for example, questioned the fact that the leadership of the minority was practically monopolised by the American Political Bureau, except for some comrades of the Argentine leadership, and that the expansion and development of this leadership was not sought by giving participation and responsibilities to other comrades from organisations that accompanied the Americans and Argentines in the battle against the majority. The Latin Americans also proposed and sought for the minority to begin to have a more centralised intervention in the class struggle, at least in Latin America, since this was the best way to experiment and strengthen the new international leadership team that they wanted to establish as an alternative. The Americans were opposed to this, and this led to a very violent confrontation when they discussed the attitude to take in the face of the great upsurge that took place in Chile. There were also discussions and differences over the fact that the SWP did not prioritise work in the workers' movement or in the most exploited sectors of the proletariat (Chicanos, other Latinos and blacks), the almost ritualistic character of the National Committee of the SWP since, although it held two or three meetings a year, all the political leadership of the party rested exclusively in the hands of the secretariat.

Again, it is a breakthrough in the mass movement that brings these differences to maturity, causes the break and takes a new step forward in the formation of the leadership. The BT justifies its break with the SWP on the differences that arise essentially around the policy towards the Portuguese and Angolan revolutions.

The breakthrough that means the formation of the BT-BF is the product, on the one hand, of the great upsurge of 1974-1975, the upsurge in Central America, and on the other hand, of a great defeat in Argentina. When the defeat of 1976 took place, the provincial Argentine leadership, full of errors, that groped forward like a pilgrim, without the support of any international leadership but, as we have already said, with decades of experience of participation in the class struggle in a country with a great European culture when was forced to leave, it linked its permanent active attitude in relation to the international leadership and organisation with the 1974-1975 upsurge.

By pushing for the formation of the BT first and then the BF, the majority current of the LTF that broke with the SWP consistently continues the battle that the Argentine leadership had been waging for years against the SWP over the problem of leadership and international organisation and how to solve it, centring the political discussion around the orientation for Portugal and Angola.

The characteristics of the period of global upsurge that began in 1974-1975 have been decisive for our progress, for nourishing the training of our leaders with a multitude of opportunities to engage in the

class struggle in the various countries and which we are slowly beginning to learn to utilise. Before delving into a description of these objective conditions, let us note in passing that they are also a further reaffirmation of the incapacity of the United Secretariat as an international leadership because as the conditions for Trotskyism in the class struggle improve every day, its opportunist revisionism and its capitulation to the different variants presented to it by the counter-revolutionary apparatuses in the different countries become more and more evident. For example in Peru, where there has been a sustained rise for years since 1977, where this year there were at least a thousand strikes, where Maoism has been falling apart for a long time, where there are Ricardo Napuri,²⁰ Hugo Blanco,²¹ several Trotskyist deputies, hundreds of thousands of votes and an old Trotskyist tradition, the culprit that, against this reality, despite it, we do not have a big Trotskyist party is the United Secretariat because it capitulates to Stalinism and Maoism.

From 1974 onwards, the economic crisis of imperialism combined with the total crisis of the economies of the workers' states, which opens up a period of immense possibilities for revolutionary mobilisation, to the extent that the joint crisis of imperialism and the counter-revolutionary apparatuses prevents them from being effective lifelines for each other. At last, what Trotsky expected for the 1930s regarding the traitorous international [leaderships] and what he predicted for the second postwar period is beginning to take place in reality.

The Portuguese revolution, the war in Angola, the Vietnamese triumph, the upsurge in Central America and Poland were the outposts of this massive process of mobilisation of the proletariat and the masses against all the apparatuses. Finally, we have entered the period of crisis and decadence not only of Stalinism but also of Maoism, Castroism and the other shortcuts that have cornered us as an alternative leadership for over 30 years. Nobody believes in these apparatuses any more, nobody follows them with devotion (as used to happen in the past). And more and more, it is the "Trotskyist" program and solutions that emerge almost spontaneously from the needs and struggles of the masses themselves, in which the urban proletariat resumes its place as the vanguard.

Where this process is most stark (both in its strength and weakness) is in the development of the Polish revolution. There, the confrontation between the revolutionary masses and the Stalinist counter-revolutionary apparatuses is direct, and the only alternative for the mobilisation of the masses is the political (Trotskyist) revolution or defeat.

20 **Ricardo Napuri** (b. 1924) is a Peruvian Trotskyist leader who was a senator and constituent deputy, leader of the Peruvian POM-R and the OCRFI, the Lambertist current. He participated in the founding of the FI-IC in December 1980 when the OCRFI was unified with the international current of Morenoism. When differences arose in 1981, that would lead to the division of both forces, Napuri leaned towards the positions of Morenoism and disagreed with Lambert. Lambert began to implement an infamous public campaign of moral slander against Napuri. See more in *Our Experience with Lambertism* (1986), chapter IV, available at www.nahuelmoreno.org. In the crisis of the 1990s Napuri, based in Buenos Aires, accompanied the positions of the BT and later of the New MAS.

21 **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 organisation 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. Blanco, who spoke Quechua since he was a child, started linking himself to the many peasant delegates and their struggles. From Chaupimayo he promoted peasant unionisation, which became massive, and led an agrarian revolution in the valleys of Cuzco and the Central Andes, with the establishing of peasant unions, 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 arrested in 1964 and sentenced to death but a vigorous international campaign prevented this from happening. After years in prison, he went into exile in Chile, Argentina, and Sweden. He was part of the LTT-LTF. In 1972, together with Moreno and other leaders, he presented Argentina and Bolivia — A Balance Sheet, an assessment polemicising against the guerrillaist deviation of Mandel, Maítan, and Frank (available at www.nahuelmoreno.org). He wrote the book *Land Or Death: The Peasant Struggle in Peru*, Pathfinder Press, New York, 1972. Upon his return to Peru, he served as a deputy in the Constituent Assembly from 1978 to 1980, as a deputy in parliament from 1980 to 1985, and as a senator from 1990 to 1992. He distanced himself from the positions of the Fourth International and, from 1994 onwards, championed Zapatismo and horizontalism. Until his death, he remained linked to the struggles and the peasant federation and maintained fraternal relations with Morenoism and other Trotskyist groups. See, among other texts by Moreno, *Peru: Two Strategies* (1961-63) and *On Bengochea's Split with Palabra Obrera* (1964), at www.nahuelmoreno.org.

We have to ratify what we said in the Theses²² about the period of the imminent revolution, but adjusting the periodisation and the exact definition to its beginning in 1974-1975.

The overlap between the objectively favourable period for the growth of Trotskyism and the beginning of the formation of an international leadership team is what explains the sustained progress of our current from 1976 onwards. Before delving into the analysis of this progress, let's place it in its proper context to avoid any confusion. From the point of view of the brutal needs posed to us by the crisis of leadership of the proletariat, the immense task of defeating the bourgeoisie, imperialism and all the counter-revolutionary apparatuses throughout the world, to begin building socialism, we are terribly small and weak. To analyse us, you almost need an electron microscope. But when it comes to the Trotskyist movement, things change. There, not only are we visible to the naked eye, but we are getting increasingly ahead of the rest. And we don't achieve this solely through our merits but because, being opportunist, the rest of Trotskyism and in particular the United Secretariat has less and less room for progress. Also, if we look back at our own current, we can see a series of data that show steady progress.

On the scale of the Trotskyist movement and of ourselves, comparing in recent years how the United Secretariat fared and how we fared, there is no possible doubt that the law that the decisive factor is the international leadership is inexorably fulfilled. Let's remember once again that in the period that opened with the French May of 1968 and the Latin American upsurge, the United Secretariat destroyed its followers in Argentina and Bolivia, did nothing in Chile, and maintained or led to stagnation or crisis and disappearance of its organisations in Mexico, Colombia, Spain, and France. Now that some years have passed, we would like to know what explanation all those comrades who followed the directives of the United Secretariat have for the fact that they have not progressed, that their parties are almost insignificant or have disappeared. In Mexico, the PRT remains eternally the same as itself, without taking a single step forward. In Colombia, the "younger ruins" have been reduced to a few militants almost indistinguishable from the CP. But the worst of all is Peru, where we have already said that the United Secretariat, by systematically leading the PRT into opportunism and capitulation, has been preventing for years the existence of a Trotskyist party with mass influence. In France, not only has the LCR not progressed but has not even managed to guarantee its independent electoral presentation in the last elections and is struggling in a chronic crisis, when its success in 1968 promised a formidable development.

We are not surprised by these facts. We consider them unavoidable and give the same explanation we have given for years. Whoever follows the disastrous leadership of the United Secretariat is assured of failure. If not, there is Central America to confirm it once again, where they have completely ceased to exist, in the place where Latin America has been most agitated in recent years. Where orthodox Trotskyism does not lead, everything is doomed to stagnation, dispersion and disappearance because the political and social forces in the world allow only two ways out: either true orthodox Trotskyism forging itself tooth and nail in the frontal fight against the counter-revolutionary apparatuses and their agents, or the disappearance, in the short or long term, of the revisionists, who, by yielding to pressures alien to Trotskyism, inexorably end up abandoning Trotskyism, to become part of those anti-Trotskyist currents.

The facts show that our current did indeed progress. Why? A categorical reason explains it: we began to act internationally with a hint of a leadership team that allowed us to increasingly take advantage of the different opportunities that the class struggle opened up for us, as a small world party.

If we analyse numerically our current situation, leaving aside the Argentine party, we see immense progress since we embarked on the enterprise of building the BT-BF.

1969	65	militants between Uruguay and Peru
1974	150	militants between Uruguay, Peru, Venezuela and the Brazilian exiles
1976 BT	749	militants between LA and Europe, with whom we started the BT
1978	2256	militants
1980	2460	militants
1981	3500	militants approximately

22 It refers to the Theses written by Moreno for the unification with Lambertism. They were later published with the title *The Transitional Program Today* and are available at nahuelmoreno.org.

Between the Tenth Congress (1974) and today (eight years), we multiplied our militant strength (always leaving out the Argentine party) 20 times. If we were then a small minority within the LTF led by the American SWP, from 1976 onwards we quickly began to shape a true international current of growing weight within the world Trotskyist movement, we practically swept away the United Secretariat in several Latin American countries, we began to prepare to give battle for the majority of the Eleventh World Congress of the United Secretariat, and we had a direct participation in the Nicaraguan civil war in 1979, with the Simon Bolivar Brigade (SBB).

The Central American revolution allows a great leap: The BF acts for the first time as an international leadership

In 1979, the period opened up in 1974-1975 takes a new leap, with peaks in Iran and Nicaragua. In Iran, the little that exists of Trotskyism is driven to division, crisis and near disappearance by the disastrous leadership of Mandelism and the SWP. But the Central American process, with Nicaragua as its focal point that year, was going to have a bold, Marxist political response from a sector of Trotskyism, the BF. Faced with the civil war in Nicaragua, the BF began to act as a true international leadership because, although we had almost no followers in Nicaragua, we correctly characterised that the fall of Somoza²³ and the triumph of the FSLN were approaching, that the international context in which the civil war was taking place allowed and practically demanded the participation of the Trotskyists in the struggle, and so we did. Meanwhile, for the United Secretariat-SWP, the Central American revolution meant sectarian abstentionism first and then capitulation to a bourgeois government. The previous situation of Trotskyism was repeated, when in the face of great victories of the mass movement, there are two wings, one revisionist, capitulationist, and the other orthodox, principled. But, once again, as in 1974-1975, and even more so in this case, the more dynamic, the one which is undoubtedly progressing is the orthodox wing, and the revisionist is not only in the minority but in frank decline.

The great triumph of the BF in Nicaragua and the capitulation of the United Secretariat leads to a break because a new stage opens up, which lays bare, raising them to a higher plane, all the revisionist and petty-bourgeois tendencies of the United Secretariat, a bankrupt leadership, which lost all kinds of opportunities, at the time that the BF emerged as an international leadership.

The break with the United Secretariat came when it aligned itself with the Government of National Reconstruction (GRN) in the repression of the Simon Bolivar Brigade (SBB) and when it refused to provide a period of democratic discussion on Nicaragua for the Eleventh World Congress. The BF immediately oriented itself in the direction of forming some other international organisation superior to the BF, which would fill the void left by the defection of the United Secretariat and not leave Trotskyism without international leadership for even a minute. To take a leap in the arena of international organisation, given the total turn to opportunism of the United Secretariat, we considered seeking discussion with the traditionally sectarian sectors of the Trotskyist movement, and that is how, when we appeared as an alternative pole to the United Secretariat, we established the Parity Committee with the OCRFI.

At that time, Lambertism enthusiastically supported us in our denunciation of Mandel and the SWP on questions very similar to those now being raised regarding the Mitterrand government. Together with Lambert, we accused Mandel of capitulating to a bourgeois government (only bourgeois, not even imperialist, like Mitterrand's), of not taking it as our enemy, and as the agent of the counter-revolution. In 1979, the tremendous hopes of the Nicaraguan masses, provoked by the colossal triumph of having overthrown a bloody dictatorship of decades, who placed their trust in the FSLN and the GRN, did not prevent Lambert from raising with us the slogan: Out with the bourgeoisie from the government!

The possibility of a revolutionary unity with Lambertism presented itself when our current was marching with sails unfurled in the process of forming the international leadership team, expressed in

23 **Anastasio "Tachito" Somoza** (1925-1980) was President of Nicaragua from 1967 to 1972 and again from 1974 to 1979. He headed the dictatorship of the Somoza family dynasty (in power since 1937) between 1967 and 1979. He was overthrown by a revolution led by the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) in July 1979. The current led by Nahuel Moreno participated in the armed struggle against his dictatorship by forming the Simon Bolivar Brigade. Somoza managed to flee Nicaragua and was assassinated in 1980 while in exile in Paraguay.

the formation of the SBB. For its part, the OCRFI, which had begun the positive process we have already pointed out in 1970-1972, had entered into crisis as an international project and was in decline. This was practically inevitable since it had neither broken with its federative conceptions, nor had it provided itself with its own leadership capable of helping its various components to progress.

It was logical on our part to fully exploit the possibility that Lambertism could make a real leap and take a path of evolution towards Trotskyist positions.

It was hasty to quickly make the FI-IC. We will refer specifically to this later. But first, we want to recall and analyse a process that the BF went through in 1980, which Lambertism helped to clarify (both positively and negatively) and which we have to maintain as a great achievement in the common experience of all our national organisations.

The experiences of the Peruvian party crisis in 1980

In 1980, we had to respond to the crisis of our Peruvian party. There, we had to tackle a situation that almost led to the party's disappearance and which we synthesised with the term "movementism". We had lost all control over who was a militant, the payment of the newspaper, the regular functioning of the cells and the leadership bodies, and the regular payment of dues. Many comrades supposedly "on the payroll" lived from what they could get day to day, and in misery. Everything was a false reality of supposedly massive growth while the party was getting smaller and smaller, and of vertiginous indebtedness.

As we began to overcome this acute crisis, we were able to help attack problems that were emerging in the same direction in other groups or parties, as happened to some extent in Argentina, and it was a very welcome experience in all countries to adjust the internal regime, the finances, the life of the party bodies and the social position of all the militants.

On two of the decisive problems that were presented to us at that time, we partially agreed with the Lambertist positions and tradition, and on a third, which is part of the oldest tradition of the Argentine party, we were and are in total and absolute disagreement with them.

First: we began to attack head-on the socially marginal character of some of our groups and leaders, the classless character of the militants and leaders of some of our organisations. We said: in our parties, everyone has to work, to earn a consistent living as any normal worker does, or to study consistently if they are a student. The leader who is paid by the party has to receive regularly, every month and on the corresponding date, a wage that allows him to eat every day, to have a house or at least a room, where he can sleep and study, he has to be able to buy the bourgeois newspapers and the left press to keep himself informed, the minimum books he needs to study, and so on. And if this is not the case, the group still can't have a professional, and everyone works. We synthesised it by saying that all our militants and leaders have to be structured, be part of some social milieu, preferably the industrial proletariat, services, transport, etc. or whatever it may be, and if they are a rented one, to have the minimum life assured, but never should anyone live marginalised. In Peru, everyone went to work; in Argentina and other parties, there were similar measures. Today, the comrades in Portugal and Costa Rica are also an example of the importance of respecting these measures.

Second: We discussed and modified the relationship between the number of militants and the number of paid workers that we had been using in the BF. This organisational modification had immediate positive consequences politically (demanding more objectively a performance from the paid members in accordance with their role as leaders and their political responsibility, combating possible tendencies towards bureaucratism, petty-bourgeoisification or declassing but rather to earn a wage) and financially (cleaning up the situation of numerous groups that were living in suffocation and misery). We attached so much importance to this conclusion that we even submitted an addendum to the Theses to incorporate it programmatically.

On the two previous points, Lambertism formally has a position very similar to our conclusions, but by exaggerating it almost to the absolute, it transforms it into a danger, a perennial source of petty-bourgeoisification and bureaucratism.

The third problem, and in a certain sense the decisive one, places us at the pole opposite to the Lambertist position. Our permanent, lifelong focus of work is the industrial proletariat. Everything else is circumstantial, anecdotal, fleeting. This is the tradition of the Argentine party, and this is how it became a great party despite the ups and downs of the proletariat and the party itself. For Lambertism, this problem does not exist; it doesn't concern them.

The work in the USA is a symbol and an example in relation to this problem. The comrades have systematically oriented their work towards the most exploited sections of the proletariat, towards the blacks, the Chicanos and Latinos, and that is how we have laid good foundations, strengthened ourselves and started to work also on activists of the white proletariat.

In this arena, our orientation has been, is and will be the opposite of that of Lambertism: more and more towards the industrial proletariat, and towards the most exploited sectors of it, throughout the world. This is one of the great objectives of the world organisation that we are going to build. How to use all paths, all methods to increasingly embed ourselves, in all countries, into the industrial proletariat, into the most exploited sectors, the immigrants, the blacks, the semi-peasants recently incorporated into urban work, the working women. This is our social, political and organisational milieu, and therein lies our future, the future of the world revolution.

Just as Lambertism helped us to finish clarifying the first two problems, it reaffirmed by the negative our usual position: nothing of the Lambertist orientation towards the petty bourgeoisie, the privileged, the neighbourhoods. This is also capitulation to social democracy, but in organisational-social terms.

In 1980, the BF began to overcome that stage of marginality, of destructuring, typical of young groups, and this is an achievement that we must not only claim as one of the elements that demonstrate our progress, but also continue to apply it relentlessly.

The Polish Revolution and the French electoral victory caused the split of the FI-IC

If the FI-IC was born as a reflection of a great triumph of the mass movement (the fall of Somoza and the upsurge of the revolution in Central America), two other triumphs brought about its demise.

As Lambertism supported our general positions on Nicaragua, and of criticism of the revisionism of the United Secretariat, as well as our perspective centred around the need for a centralised international Trotskyist organisation, we saw the opportunity to form with them, whom we had characterised as sectarians, a principled pole alternative to the United Secretariat, a world organisation superior to the FB, and thus the FI-IC project was born. Its fast and furious process was also highly contradictory. On the one hand, we cannot deny that in a very few months, incredible progress was made. But again, the advances and progress of the mass movement led to a crisis and rupture, as well as to a further maturation in the formation of the international leadership and organisation. The Polish revolution was an important electoral victory, but at the heart of the Lambertist force, it exposed the opportunist politics and bureaucratic method of this current and provoked the split in the FI-IC.

During the last months of 1979 and the first months of 1980 a very fast and contradictory process took place, during which the OCRFI leadership, in particular Comrade Lambert, accepted a whole series of our proposals which demolished mistaken conceptions that the OCRFI had upheld for years (Antiimperialist United Front, trade unions, entryism, national self-determination), as part of a correct and principled general program (the Theses), presented by us and which gave us an indispensable political and theoretical armament for international organisation and leadership.

Apparently, at that moment, we all agreed on the essence of the Theses: to be the program of a centralised international organisation. No program, however perfect, can sit in a vacuum. It has to be the program of an international organisation that intends to implement it, which provides itself with a leadership to guarantee its implementation and development.

In this context of progress, we accepted unification in December 1980. Six months later, the French OCI was deploying a policy of total capitulation to the new French Popular Frontist government, a policy that it refused to discuss within the framework of the FI-IC. By the end of October, the FI-IC no longer existed.

Today, it is evident that the unification was hasty and that we underestimated, with an exaggerated optimism regarding the evolution of Lambertism towards correct positions and methods, the depth of the crisis of disintegration caused by revisionism in the Trotskyist ranks.

a) This haste was the result of the sum of several mistakes, which we have to analyse. In short, we could say that we did not comply with the old Leninist law, which says: before uniting, delimit yourself very well. In the first place, in many respects, the Lambertists and, in particular, their main organisation, the French OCI, were unknown to us, and we did not make an in-depth, systematic study of their activity and their trajectory.

Secondly, regarding their internal regime, we had great concerns, and we didn't go into depth in the discussion of these problems, although many of them were discussed with Lambert. For example, we knew that in the Lambertist organisations, contrary to what the Third International explicitly ordered, no cell organism has the right to elect its leaders, but rather that every member of the regional or cell leadership is appointed exclusively and directly from above by the CC. We also knew that in the entire history of Lambertism, neither in the French OCI nor in any other of its organisations, was there ever a democratic, tendential or factional discussion, within the framework of democratic centralism but that any opposition or difference was always resolved through expulsions and at the highest levels, after which the party was informed of the events that had taken place.

Thirdly, because we considered this a subject sufficiently clarified by previous experience, we didn't consider it necessary to write a thesis on Trotskyist policy in the face of a Popular Front government. This gap would be fatal.

b) In any case, this hasty unification was a tactical mistake, within the framework of an advance in the structuring of an independent international organisation. The Theses were an immense advance, an indispensable programmatic update, and we cannot deny they were made in the heat of that unification. Also, as soon as the *Lettre de Informations Ouvrières* [Workers Information Newsletter] No 9 and the editorial of *Informations Ouvrières*²⁴ N° 1005 appeared in June, the leaderships of the various parties simultaneously and independently began to question the revisionist capitulation of the French OCI. Contradictorily, if the absence of a previous Thesis on the popular front governments was one of the causes of the mistake of the hasty unification, this itself generated a discussion on the subject of immense richness, that allowed us to advance as we had not suspected a year or two ago in the study and definition of our policy towards this problem which Trotsky not in vain defined as the most important of our time.

Also, through this unforeseen way, we liquidated Lambertism as an unknown quantity and as an alternative within the world Trotskyist movement, while at the same time maintaining, with the resolutions of this Conference, what was the great task of the FI-IC, the achievement of an international leadership and organisation.

c) The procedure that culminated in the split was also, on the part of our forces, totally principled and defending from the beginning, not only a correct policy towards popular-frontism but also our principles in the organisational and internal democratic fields. From the various groups where criticisms and questionings of the policy of the French OCI arose, all the leaders of the former BF acted with the utmost respect for the organisms and statutes of the FI-IC, and the comrades who acted directly in the IEC did the same.

For the true Trotskyists, the break in the terms proposed by the French OCI meant a very appreciable methodological and programmatic strengthening, as we continue to advance in the solution of serious methodological and programmatic problems, such as not only that of the popular front but also the workers', anti-imperialist and revolutionary fronts, the political revolution and organisational matters.

d) The project that underpinned the construction of the FI-IC, the formation of a centralised international organisation that would be an alternative pole to the disintegrating revisionism of the United Secretariat, remains totally valid and the Trotskyists represented here are the only possible continuators, given that now Lambertism has placed itself in the same "camp" as the United Secretariat, that of critical support to a bourgeois government and nothing less than imperialist. To do so, it did not hesitate to break

24 *Informations Ouvrières* [Workers Information] was the weekly magazine of the OCI(u).

with the new international framework we were establishing and revert to national Trotskyism. With the capitulation of Lambertism, reality showed us that everything we said about the FI-IC and the progress it meant for Trotskyism is totally valid, that for now, we, those gathered here, are the only hint of an international leadership being formed in Trotskyism and the beginning of a solution to the historic crisis of the leadership of the proletariat.

A redefinition of Lambertism

Paradoxically, in our polemic against the policy pursued by the leadership of the OCI(u) since Mitterrand's rise to power, we are repeating many of the denunciations and criticisms that we made at the time — as we have already said, together with Lambert — of Mandel when he capitulated to the GRN. But in this case, Lambert's capitulation is even more serious because his opportunism is deployed before a directly imperialist government.

We have to specify a definition of the OCI and Lambertism since it placed itself in the political “camp” of Mitterrand's imperialist government.

Regarding its trajectory, Lambertism, in general, and with many contradictions, accompanied the development of social democracy. First, it had a sectarian period, during which, while defending some correct general Trotskyist principles, it made the monstrous mistake of following Healy in his refusal to recognise Cuba as a workers' state, and maintained the same national Trotskyist positions as Healy.

From 1968 onwards, when social democracy began to grow, capitalising on the opportunist side what Castroism, Maoism and the various far-left currents were doing on the left regarding the crisis of Stalinism, the French organisation was also capitalising on a Trotskyist audience for its position of criticism of the ultra-left deviations of the United Secretariat but from an absolutely wrong position on the Cuban problem. At the same time, it maintained a policy of capitulation to the Social Democracy and developed closely linked to the trade union bureaucracy of Force Ouvrière,²⁵ which led them to have bureaucratic methods and internal yellow unionism. Contradictorily, while in France it is an organisation that grows with sectarian positions and strong bureaucratic and opportunist elements, regarding the international Trotskyist movement, as we have already pointed out, it began to reflect belatedly the reunification of 1963 and the strengthening of some of the organisations of the United Secretariat, especially those that would be grouped in the LTT-LTF, broke with Healy and promoted the foundation of OCRFI. We have already pointed out that in 1979, the OCRFI was in crisis. This was a consequence of its attitude to the 1963 unification and the Cuba case.

Even though it was part of our project of building an international leadership and organisation, as soon as this international organisation had to assume its leading role over the French OCI in the discussion on French politics, Lambertism not only maintained its total capitulation to Social Democracy but did not hesitate for a moment to deny any kind of discussion and to break with the project, placing itself in a position of a transmission belt of the social democracy in our ranks.

This year, we have also become stronger

There are some comrades who are of the opinion that we have suffered a serious defeat with the crisis of the FI-IC. We have already referred to the situational position we give to the formation and division of the FI-IC but we want to dwell specifically on the overall situation of the groups and parties gathered here, which for us has been one of progress this year as well, even in the context that the formation of the FI-IC first and then its crisis weakened support for the national parties for many months. If, schematically, to place the discussion, we start from a falsehood, that we are a mere continuation of the BF, we can say that this year we have also maintained the sustained progress that we already noted we had since 1976.

1. Although the haste in unification could have disarmed or confused the leaderships of the various national parties of the former BF (and there were elements of this in some parties at first), none hesitated in defending the correct Trotskyist principles, politics and methods against the revisionism of the OCI(u).

²⁵ *Force Ouvrière* [Workers' Force] is a French trade union federation founded in 1948 in rejection of the CP's influence within the CGT.

2. In the project that brings us together at this Conference, to found a centralised international organisation, we are not only all the forces of the former BF but also leaders and groups of the former OCRFI from at least five countries.

3. Without a significant numerical growth, there has been a general consolidation in all our organisations. More leadership teams have been formed, with the emergence of new leaders. These teams in formation are beginning to be more objective, to better position themselves in the political reality of their countries, to be less triumphalist about themselves, and are slowly beginning to take into account the need for planning, to abandon pragmatism, the constant running around, the need to study our global and national reality, and the need for theoretical and political training to define our orientations and axes of intervention.

4. There was a clean-up in those organisations that had large financial deficits, which included the return to work (with a very positive social relocation) of many comrades, leaders who had been professionals for years, without this meaning a weakening of the leadership, but quite the contrary. We have already extensively developed this point.

5. If there is any place in the world where we can summarise this progress, it is in the USA. If we recall that at the February 1980 meeting in Sao Paulo we reported as a novelty that the Revolutionary Workers Front-Frente Revolucionario de los Trabajadores (RWF-FRT) had just been founded, today the progress is immense since the comrades have begun to publish newspapers in English, are already stronger than the SWP on the west coast of the country and we will begin to extend to the east. The rapprochement of the RUL comrades with politically capable comrades experienced in union work is an indication in the same direction.

6. Regarding France, if we take into account that we considered the possibility of having a revolutionary organisation of thousands of militants, the OCI(u), and this was frustrated, it is a tragedy. This is how it is, and we cannot prevent it. But if we take into account that in the conditions that the existence of a popular-frontist government opens up for the class struggle and in particular for the growth of Trotskyism, and that to face this situation in a few months we already have about 100 comrades and a list of 200 or 300, and an international organisation ready to give them all its support and help them in their orientation, genuine Trotskyism may be really taking off in France.

7. These same facts show that Lambertism, on the contrary, is the one that lost “in every way”, and we are certain that the road of capitulation to Social Democracy will inexorably lead the French OCI down the road of its centrist and opportunist predecessors (especially the POUM, which reached 30 or 40 thousand members): crisis and disappearance. For its part, the United Secretariat has not managed to raise its head in all those places where we have become strong, it has had no substantial growth anywhere, and its course is increasingly revisionist, as shown by its actions in France and Colombia and its policy regarding Poland.

In conclusion, we believe that our whole trajectory, and particularly the activity of the last five years, positions us as the only present hint of a leadership team and an international organisation. There is practically no group or party that has not experienced this directly. We are all proud of the performance of our comrades and the entire BF in the civil war in Nicaragua, which is the most remarkable experience we had, and even more so if we insist that we hardly existed there and were weak in general in the whole of Central America. But each party is witness to what the beginning of the building of an international leadership has meant in these years. First of all, the Argentine party, for which international support was decisive in these hard years of repression, has given a correct orientation to the work, to get out of a crisis at a certain moment and to be progressing day by day as it has been happening in the last year. But also in Spain, Italy, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, and now France, the orientation of the international leadership has been very important, and in some cases decisive.

Necessarily, the process of rebuilding an international leadership and building a world party that began in the early 1940s had to be slow. At that time, we were left without a leadership, with a few inexperienced comrades, with Stalinism gaining prestige, and to have a leadership, there is no other way than to make one, as Trotsky did. And every result is a culmination of a whole process of historical development and maturation, not the beginning. At the beginning, there is nothing. And we have to ask ourselves at every moment: in the conditions before us, did we advance or not? Did we advance in Central America and

everywhere with the SBB? Did we advance in these five years in Colombia? For us, without any doubt, as a whole, we have made progress everywhere.

And let us all know that every advance of the mass movement, every workers' revolution, will continue to cause breaks, divisions, crises and unions. This is how a revolutionary leadership matures. Let's remember how Trotsky laughed at the ironies of German social democracy about the Russian revolutionaries, who, according to Trotsky, were always quarrelling, arguing and splitting. The old man said, Yes, laugh it up that it was thanks to this that we Russians made the revolution. If we are always divided, if there are fewer and fewer of us, then things are going badly. But if there are also unions, like the one in 1963, which was very positive, as there was with the Lambertists, which, despite the serious tactical errors we pointed out, also had very positive aspects, if we are making progress, as is happening to us, then things are going well.

Today, in the process of forming the leadership, we have been left alone, isolated. But there will be new opportunities for unions and a multitude of opportunities that the class struggle will give us to continue progressing and to build parties with mass influence. It's a matter of not stopping for a minute in the great task of building that international leadership and organisation capable of doing so.

IV. Perspectives and tasks

Everything we have said about our progress and our position in relation to the Trotskyist movement should not encourage any false triumphalism. The gap between our present strength and the needs and tasks required for the triumph of socialism in the world is more than abysmal. Also, as a characteristic of the times, what overwhelms us today are the opportunities for action, and in this regard, we are also weak and often unable to take advantage of them. We could say that reality puts almost at our fingertips the possibility to start to get out of the situation of propaganda groups, to start to become parties with mass influence in different places, and often we either don't even see it or we respond badly to it. What there is no doubt about is our possibilities. The march of the political revolution is the ultimate expression of this.

The emergence of the French Popular Frontist government opens up immense possibilities for us, because (in a certain similarity to what happens in the workers' states), as the counter-revolutionary parties take direct responsibility for the government, with each passing day and the increase in their misery, the masses are exposing these parties as their true enemies. The present French situation and the possibility of similar situations in other countries lead us to focus our attention on these situations and to fully support the work of the French comrades, even in the perspective of promoting and strengthening the consolidation of a European leadership.

We do not doubt that this process of Maoism may be taking place in other countries. Where this is the case, we have an obligation to detect it and capitalise on it. We must study the situation of all the currents (including the Stalinists, to see whether there is a crisis), how the process of the political revolution in Poland impacts on them, how they respond or what questions they raise about the national or international political problems, to see whether we can influence them and, if that possibility exists, to launch ourselves boldly, without any sectarianism but without lowering our program, into the search for revolutionary unity with the sectors that break with the bureaucracy.

What we pointed out that is happening in Colombia is a vanguard phenomenon, but this process for Poland is one of the masses. In this regard, we have already been discussing with Lambert about the inevitability of the emergence of Trotskyist-like currents, which give us the possibility of revolutionary unions and that the process of building our party in Poland, less than anywhere, will take place as a linear process of growth of our forces.

In all countries, we have to put aside any position of passivity or abstentionism towards the various political organisations. Stalinism and other counter-revolutionary apparatuses are our enemies, and we must fight them relentlessly every day. We mustn't let a single minute go by without striking at Stalinism and its collaterals with the Polish revolution. In the face of organisations or currents that may have a revolutionary dynamic, our duty is to seek, without any sectarianism, all the means to bring to maturity the

revolutionary tendencies that may exist in them through common work with us. This is one of the decisive ways for us to overcome the character of propaganda groups.

Immediate tasks

1. To fix the *Theses*, reaffirming their principled validity as the Trotskyist program for the period opened after 1974. We need to reopen the discussion on a series of points; to modify, complete them or make them, as the case may be: definition of the period open from 1974; workers', anti-imperialist and revolutionary united front; political revolution; popular front governments; organisational and internal regime issues.

2. To constitute ourselves as an international organisation based on democratic centralism, that reaffirms and maintains our struggle to the death against the revisionism of the United Secretariat and orients and develops all our activity in the national parties and in our world battle to continue building revolutionary parties with mass influence and an alternative revolutionary leadership for the proletariat.

3. To choose an international leadership: here, we have to reaffirm some of our traditions and make a modification. This international leadership must be composed of leading comrades from the most significant sections, and it must be a non-proportional distribution of posts, not according to numerical weight. Just as an international leadership can never in our times be synonymous with a national leadership, however capable it may be, neither can it be a sum of leaders proportional to the militants of each national party. It is a distinct and superior organism. Following the tradition of the Third International and the Bolshevik party, no party, despite its strength and weight in the movement, should have a weight greater than 20 or 25% of the leadership. We have already used these two criteria in the TB-FB. They need only be reaffirmed.

Where we have to make a radical change is in the total number of members of our IEC or General Council, whatever we call it. It has to be a small body, commensurate with our strengths, so that it can meet at least once every six months regularly.

4. Within this leadership, we have to appoint a permanent secretariat which will be the one to effectively carry out the day-to-day leadership, in which it is essential that comrades from various countries join and which must be not only a leadership for all the parties and our international organisation, but also a practical school for the leaders of all the parties.

Among the various immediate tasks of this permanent secretariat (guiding the progress of the parties, prioritising our sectors of work, etc.) will be to bring out an international journal. We believe that in the coming period it must be a monthly journal in which all the theoretical and political questions which are currently being debated will be dealt with, and not an organ of a journalistic type, but rather directed outwards.

2. Thesis on the need to build an international leadership

I

With the First World War and the October Revolution, the period of crisis and agony of death began. The proletarian revolution has not yet managed to put an end to this agony. On the contrary, the sufferings it brings to the whole of humanity and in particular to its most valuable and creative part — the workers — are constantly increasing. In its agony, capitalism threatens to take humanity to the grave with it. Or, at best, plunge the vast majority of humanity into a bottomless abyss of barbarism, misery, and degradation. Without the slightest exaggeration, and making the coldest analysis of the course of events of this century, it is only possible to formulate the gloomiest prognoses if the socialist revolution does not succeed in reversing this process.

II

This means that the greatest and deepest **need** of humanity today is the **world socialist revolution**. Even the most elementary and increasingly difficult to satisfy daily needs — from having a job, food and shelter to enjoying freedoms — are summed up in it.

Our policy does not stem from a utopia or wishful thinking but from an objective, absolutely material fact: that the death agony of capitalism makes the need for world socialist revolution more pressing every day.

III

It is this objective necessity that has determined that this era of capitalism's death agony is, at the same time, an era of revolutions unlike any other in history.

These revolutionary convulsions have been the most profound that humanity has ever known. They have had as their main consequence the expropriation of capitalism in over ten countries. However, these colossal revolutionary processes have not succeeded in fulfilling the objective need for world socialist revolution. On the contrary, we have arrived at a contradictory, paradoxical situation: the greatest triumph achieved in the course of this revolutionary process — the expropriation of capitalism in one third of humanity and the establishment of more than a dozen workers' states — seems to be turning against us. As they are led by bureaucracies, the national workers' states have become obstacles on the path of the world revolution.

On the one hand, all the bureaucracies that rule the workers' states without exception — from Brezhnev²⁶ to Deng-Xiaoping,²⁷ from Fidel Castro to Kim Il Sung²⁸ — whatever their political differences, they agree on maintaining the status quo; that is, on defending the maintenance of capitalism on a world scale. They are counter-revolutionaries in every aspect and without any “double nature”. The power they have (thanks to the fact that they run states where capitalism has been expropriated), they use it to prevent capitalism from being expropriated on a global scale. If this were to happen, their privileges would collapse. On the other hand, the bureaucracies are plunging the states they rule into the bottomless swamp of the world capitalist crisis and, in general, are making them more and more dependent on imperialist capital. The bureaucratic leadership, once a relative obstacle to the development of the productive forces of the states it leads, has today become an absolute hindrance to the development of the planned economies. In this sense, the situation of all the workers' states without exception has followed, like a shadow to the body, the course of the world capitalist crisis. This situation ranges from the stagnation and paralysis of the USSR to the monumental bankruptcies of Poland, Romania, Yugoslavia, North Korea and China. The only “solutions” the bureaucracy can come up with are, on the one hand, the imposition of starvation and super-exploitation plans worse than those of the most barbaric capitalist dictatorships, and, on the other hand, the growing dependence on loans and the world capitalist market, which are on the verge of turning many bureaucratic workers' states into virtual semi-colonies of the imperialist banks.

The bureaucratic counter-revolution in Poland is currently trying to reduce the proletariat to a condition of being condemned to forced labour for life, to maintain the privileges of the bureaucracy, and, at the same time, to pay the billions it owes to the Western banks. Thus, the worker who lives in one of the greatest conquests of the world proletarian revolution — a workers' state — is paradoxically reduced to the condition of a semi-slave.

IV

This situation, more than 60 years after the world has entered the greatest revolutionary era in its history, brings us directly to the problem of problems: that of world revolutionary leadership.

The greatest material, objective need of humanity, the world socialist revolution, has its subjective correlate: a world revolutionary leadership. Without this, the former is impossible. Thus, the crisis of humanity intensifies day by day without a solution.

We assert that more than six decades of revolutions and counter-revolutions irrefutably prove that with bureaucratic leadership, without international revolutionary leadership, even the greatest triumphs of the proletariat, the greatest advances on the path of the world socialist revolution are transformed into their opposites.

The absolute objective need of the world socialist revolution is concretised, embodied in the absolute subjective need of an international revolutionary — non-bureaucratic — leadership.

V

The October Revolution of 1917 — with which the era of revolutions and counter-revolutions began — was not only the first to expropriate capitalism, it was the only one to have a revolutionary — not a bureaucratic and/or petty-bourgeois — leadership at its head. The objective of the leadership formed by Lenin and Trotsky was the world socialist revolution, of which they regarded the Russian Revolution as a mere first episode. It was therefore a fundamental question for them (even before taking power in Russia, when

26 **Leonid Brezhnev** (1906–1982) was a Soviet bureaucrat who served as General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union from 1964 until his death in 1982, and Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet (head of state) from 1960 to 1964 and again from 1977 to 1982. His 18-year term as General Secretary was second only to Joseph Stalin's in duration.

27 **Deng Xiaoping** (1904–1997) was the most powerful figure in the People's Republic of China from the late 1970s until his death in 1997. In the aftermath of Mao Zedong's death in 1976, Deng succeeded in consolidating power to lead China through a period of reform and opening up that transformed its economy into a market economy.

28 **Kim Il Sung** (1912–1994) was a North Korean politician and military leader. He founded the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, commonly known as North Korea, which he led as Supreme Leader from its establishment in 1948 until his death in 1994.

“all the internationalists of the world could fit on an armchair”) to establish an international revolutionary leadership, given the bankruptcy of the Second International. The triumph in Russia allowed Lenin and Trotsky to make on a grand scale the first attempt to establish a general staff of the world socialist revolution, the Third International.

VI

The fact that the first revolution to expropriate capitalism, the Russian Revolution, was the only one so far to have had an internationalist revolutionary leadership, was neither a casual nor sudden occurrence. It was the culmination of a long process.

During the period of “reforms” and “peaceful” expansion of imperialism that preceded the First World War, there was a formidable expansion of the Second International. This was essentially a federation of parties suitable for parliamentary and trade union competition but absolutely useless when the end of the era of “reforms” demanded parties suitable for the revolutionary struggle for power (moreover, they proved to be counter-revolutionary).

But, contradictorily, in this framework, because of the **particular** conditions in Russia (which were not reformist but revolutionary, that is, **they anticipated** nationally what would later become the **general** features of the world), a new type of party and revolutionary leadership, the Bolshevik, was developing. A revolutionary combat party and a revolutionary internationalist leadership.

The national and international process that would result in the leadership that took power in October and founded the Third International was a complex and laborious undertaking that took around half a century. It summarised a vast and long national and international experience: from the Paris Commune and the subsequent reorganisation of the European workers’ movement (Second International) to the attempts of pre-Marxist revolutionaries in Russia, such as the populists. But within all that, the decisive factor was that this leadership had gone through revolutions. It seems a truism, but it is necessary to state it because it is too often forgotten: **without revolutions, revolutionary leadership can’t be formed**. In the same way that it is impossible to form trade union leaders without major strikes and trade unions, it is impossible to form a revolutionary leadership **without decades of apprenticeship and without going through major revolutionary upheavals**. In other words, without the heroic but misguided struggle of the populists, without the building of the great socialist parties of the Second International and above all, without 1905 and February 1917, there would have been no leadership of the October Revolution and the Third International.

This is, in our opinion, one of the main conclusions to be drawn when examining the process which gave rise to the first attempt at international revolutionary leadership.

VII

This long prehistory of the process of forming a national and internationalist revolutionary leadership took a qualitative leap with the Third International. The key question of the world socialist revolution was on its way to being resolved: the constitution of its General Staff.

But the bureaucratisation of the Soviet state and party led to the liquidation of the Bolshevik leadership and consequently to the degeneration of the Third International.

As the Bolshevik party collapsed, the Third International collapsed almost simultaneously. Among its national parties, there was none capable of fulfilling the role that the Bolsheviks had fulfilled in relation to the Second International. None of the non-Russian national leaderships opposed Stalin effectively and consistently. The strongest and most “revolutionary” of them all, the German Communist Party, collapsed with the greatest crash. Its collapse due to the betrayal of its leadership in the face of Hitlerism was not only the worst defeat in the history of the world proletariat but also the death certificate of the Third International as a revolutionary organisation. Thus, in 1933, its process of degeneration culminated.

This was already irreversible: all hope of regenerating the Communist International by means of a great revolutionary triumph of one of its national parties was definitively closed, as was the possibility of

any of them taking on the task of being the pillar of a new international revolutionary leadership, breaking with the Kremlin. The Third International had been the first and strongest attempt to build an international revolutionary leadership. Since its collapse, this crucial problem has remained unresolved.

VIII

It was at that moment that Trotsky drew the conclusion that would become his greatest obsession: **a new international revolutionary leadership**. Either there is a world party or it will be impossible even for national revolutionary leaderships and big revolutionary workers' parties capable of taking power to develop. For Trotsky, the international leadership became the first step in the national-international dialectic.

IX

The Fourth International took its first steps during Trotsky's lifetime, amid the cruellest defeats of the proletariat and the world revolution, when the counter-revolutionary stage initiated after the failure of the German revolution (1918-1923) and culminating in the Second World War hit bottom. The symmetrical phenomena of Stalinism and fascism physically annihilated or corrupted and demoralised the workers' and revolutionary vanguard throughout the world. A generation of fighters was almost completely decimated.

Trotsky then began the second attempt to form an international revolutionary leadership under conditions diametrically opposed to those of the first attempt. While the Third International had been illuminated by the greatest triumph of the world revolution, the Fourth International was illuminated by its worst defeats. It was born, therefore, **extremely weak**, marching against the tide.

However, it is necessary to clarify that at that time its weakness was **relative and not absolute**, as it would be after Trotsky's death. It had a very strong, decisive element: namely, its leadership, Trotsky. The Fourth International had, in its first steps, a leadership which had undergone the most vast and complete revolutionary experience in history. The Fourth International was born with the same leadership that had headed the 1905 revolution, that had seized power in the 1917 revolution, and that had founded and led the Third International.

But this head of a giant, with which the Fourth International was born, was attached to the body of a dwarf. The sections reflected the general situation of retreat. Except for the team of Cannon in the SWP and Sneevliet²⁹ in Holland, none had cadres experienced in the workers' movement. They were very weak leaders, generally composed of marginal intellectuals, strangers to the working class.

Thus, hardly any of the fundamental orientations given by the international leadership were implemented or implemented well. Some extraordinary opportunities were thus lost. While the stage was one of generalised reaction, there were great defensive struggles which turned into revolutionary struggles, as for example in Spain and France in 1936. Especially in Spain, the opportunity that existed for the Fourth International from the Black Biennium³⁰ to the 1936 revolution was truly unique. But Nin's leadership — with its policy diametrically opposed to that advised by Trotsky — liquidated everything. France suffered the disaster of two equally incompetent leaderships.

29 **Henk Sneevliet** (1883–1942), was a Dutch communist politician who was active in both the Netherlands and the Dutch East Indies. As a functionary of the Communist International, Sneevliet guided the formation of both the Communist Party of Indonesia in 1914, and the Chinese Communist Party in 1921. In his native country, he was the founder, chairman, and only Representative for the Revolutionary Socialist (Workers') Party (RSP/RSAP). He took part in the communist resistance against the occupation of the Netherlands during the Second World War by Nazi Germany, for which he was executed by the Germans in April 1942.

30 **Black Biennium**: The second biennium of the Second Spanish Republic, known as the black biennium or the biennium of terror by the left, constitutes the period between the general elections of November 1933 and those of February 1936, during which the centre-right republican parties allied with the Catholic right-wing CEDA governed. The entry of the CEDA into the government in October 1934 triggered a workers' uprising in in Asturias for two weeks and was crushed by the intervention of the army.

In short, despite the strength of the international leadership we had inherited from the Bolshevik party and the Third International, we were still going **against the tide**, as reflected by the dreadful inexperience and marginality of the national leaderships.

X

The assassination of Trotsky in 1940 was the greatest political blow suffered by the Fourth International. It was of qualitative consequences: it lost its experienced leadership.

With Trotsky's disappearance, the only leadership that possessed the political acumen of Bolshevism and the Third International disappeared.

The decisive importance of Trotsky's assassination for the process of the formation of an international revolutionary leadership cannot be overemphasised. Stalin's desperate obsession to assassinate him was not mere revenge but a cold and exact political calculation: as long as Trotsky lived, the Bolshevik leadership would continue to live.

The setback that Trotsky's death implied for the Fourth International was qualitative: if he brought half a century of experience in the main command posts of the world revolution, his absence meant half a century of regression for the Fourth International. Since his assassination, the Fourth International started again, but almost from scratch. **Its relative weakness was transformed into absolute weakness.** From an extremely weak international organisation but with colossal leadership, the Fourth International became extremely weak at every level, from the top to the bottom.

This defeat was all the more tragic because it took place on the eve of the fact that, following the defeat of the Nazi-fascist armies in Russia, the historical trend was to be reversed: a new revolutionary stage was to begin. The tide would turn in favour, not against.

If Trotsky could have continued his leading activity for only a dozen more years, it would have meant, for example, that the Bolivian POR would have developed and taken part in the 1952 revolution under his leadership and not under that of Pablo, who squandered away the greatest revolutionary opportunity the Fourth International had in the postwar period. This fact alone, we believe, would have been enough to change the course of history and also the process of forming an international revolutionary leadership.

XI

As we have said, during the course of the Second World War, the trend was reversed: **a new revolutionary stage opened up.**

The strength of this revolutionary upsurge was so great that there were more than enough conditions to strike a deathblow to world capitalism since revolution was on the agenda in the main countries of continental Europe. But imperialism succeeded in postponing the execution of its death sentence. It made a pact with the Kremlin bureaucracy on the counter-revolutionary agreements of Yalta and Potsdam and put the brake on the revolution in Western Europe.

But this counter-revolutionary victory was not free of cost for imperialism. It managed to save the essentials, but at the cost of losses of extraordinary magnitude: Eastern Europe and China.

The first wave of the new revolutionary stage left as byproducts, then, the formation of new workers' states.

XII

The wave generated by the First World War found a strong internationalist revolutionary leadership in Russia and a weak one, practically non-existent in other countries. This is why it was only in Russia that the trail of the "February revolutions", which set almost the whole of Europe on fire, led to the "October revolution".

Put another way, in Russia, from the unconscious proletarian revolution to the conscious proletarian revolution. From the proletarian revolution that hands over its leadership and eventually the government to bureaucratic and/or petty-bourgeois leaderships, it transitioned to a proletarian revolution led by an international revolutionary leadership. Elsewhere, the “February revolutions” in Germany, Italy, Austria-Hungary, the Balkans and the former Turkish Empire led to the reconstruction or strengthening of the bourgeois state.

Instead, the revolutionary upsurge that began in the aftermath of the Second World War did not and has not yet found strong international revolutionary leadership in any country, without exception. **This is why no “October revolution” has been repeated so far.** That is, there has not been any proletarian revolution, either triumphant or defeated, led by an international revolutionary leadership such as the Bolshevik one.

In this second revolutionary stage, there have been and continue to be countless “February revolutions”, on every continent and on a scale a thousand times greater than the explosion that followed the First World War. The vast majority of these “February revolutions” or “February revolutionary processes” have followed the classic course: at a certain point, the bureaucratic and/or petty-bourgeois leadership manages to put the brakes on before the revolutionary momentum and the extreme polarisation of the class struggle break the class boundaries and lead to the expropriation of the bourgeoisie. In these cases, which are — we insist — the vast majority, the bourgeois state finally rebuilds itself or regains relative stability.

But post-World War II history was to present **a new fact** that had not happened in the previous stage, although it had been foreseen in the abstract by Trotsky: that of “February revolutions” — that is, proletarian revolutions led by bureaucratic or petty-bourgeois leaderships — that, by an exceptional combination of objective factors, cross class boundaries and **come to expropriate capitalism in the framework of their national state** and thus give rise to bureaucratic workers’ states from their inception.

We consider as such the revolutions in Yugoslavia, China, Cuba and Vietnam. We also characterise as sui generis “February revolutions” the processes which led to the expropriation of capital in the rest of Eastern Europe, due to the presence of the Red Army.

We have had to dwell on the precise definition of this question because, as we shall see, it is of paramount importance to understand the difficulties that the struggle for the formation of an international revolutionary leadership has gone through.

XIII

In short, the course of history followed an extraordinarily uneven development. We entered the greatest revolutionary upsurge — the one that followed the Second World War — without international revolutionary leadership and, also, without truly revolutionary national leaderships that were internationalist.

Contrary to Trotsky’s prediction, the reversal of the historical course — from counter-revolutionary to revolutionary — did not automatically mean that the only vestige of existing international revolutionary leadership, the Fourth International, was strengthened in equal measure.

Moreover, we must say that today, 40 years after Trotsky’s death, we have experienced an undeniable growth, but we are still light-years away from that goal. And this has been taking place in a situation in which the need for an international revolutionary leadership has not been declining, but rather **has become increasingly acute**, both because of the plethora of objective revolutionary conditions and because of the irremediable bankruptcy of the bureaucratic leaderships.

We believe there is a first explanation of an objective order. That, also contrary to Trotsky’s predictions, the entry into a new revolutionary stage **did not automatically mean the collapse of the apparatuses**. The pace of the crisis of the apparatuses has been slower than the pace of the revolutionary upsurge. This inequality was exacerbated by an event of decisive importance: the “February revolutions” which expropriated capitalism in some countries, namely the new bureaucratic workers’ states.

Let us detail this briefly: In the first years following the Second World War, the bureaucratic apparatuses dependent on the Kremlin did not weaken but strengthened (at the same time as their crisis began).

First of all, there was an objective fact that strengthened them: the world war and the way it was conducted by all imperialisms and the Russian bureaucracy brought about the physical extermination of the two strongest proletariats in Europe, the Russian and the German.

Secondly, in the other countries, millions of workers and activists who were oriented towards revolution — that is, objectively towards Trotskyism — saw the USSR as the victor over fascism, and then the expropriation of capital in Eastern Europe and the Chinese revolution. They mistakenly credited to Stalin these triumphs of the world revolution. Thus, hundreds of thousands of workers' fighters, especially in Western Europe, ended up in the sewers of the Stalinist parties.

Then the crisis of the Kremlin apparatus began, but it did not immediately clear the ground. In the 1960s, two replacement obstacles appeared: **Maoism and Castroism**. The new generations of the workers' and students' vanguard already felt repelled by the old communist parties. However, the most powerful magnet was not Trotskyism but Maoism and Castroism: the two leaderships of two "February revolutions" which seemed to raise a revolutionary banner in contrast to the discredited communist parties. A new generation of radicalised activists in America and Europe turned *en masse* to Castroist guerrillaism, Maoism or ultra-left centrism in general.

Added to these international obstacles were the bourgeois or petty-bourgeois nationalist movements that were born or flourished after the Second World War: Peronism in Argentina, the MNR³¹ in Bolivia, Nasserism³² in many Arab countries, the MNA [Algerian National Movement] and then the FLN [National Liberation Front] in Algeria, etc.

Only recently has this situation undergone a qualitative change. The political revolution and the general crisis of the apparatuses are reaching a point where we can now say that **we have an extraordinarily clear path**.

All the bureaucratic leaderships are in a dizzying process of discredit, as is the vast majority of nationalist movements. Today, Maoism is incapable of attracting any radicalised current of activists.

Except for Central America, the same is true for Castroism in the rest of the world. What happened in Poland will be fatal to it and any other current disguised as "revolutionary" and linked to the Kremlin. For their part, it is not difficult to see that Peronism, Aprism and most of the nationalist movements are not even a shadow of what they were 30 years ago.

We must be categorical because for us this is the most important feature of the present world situation: the bureaucratic barriers between Trotskyism and the masses are collapsing. The masses are increasingly losing faith in their old leadership. The new generations of workers' activists feel repelled by the apparatuses.

XIV

The great difficulties and delays in the process of forming an international revolutionary leadership also recognise profound causes of a subjective nature.

As we have already pointed out, the Fourth International was left without leadership after Trotsky's death. The reconstitution of a leadership began based on the very weak and inexperienced national leadership of the time. On the other hand, we have already seen how the history of the formation of the Bolshevik team and the Third International shows that the process of forging a revolutionary internationalist leadership is long and difficult; it requires **decades** of learning, experiences, mistakes and successes,

31 The **Revolutionary Nationalist Movement (MNR)** is a centre-right, conservative political party in Bolivia. It was the leading bourgeois force during the Bolivian Revolution of 1952.

32 Followers of **Gamal Abdel Nasser** (1918–1970), an Egyptian politician who served as the second president of Egypt from 1954 until his death in 1970. Nasser led the 1952 overthrow of the monarchy and introduced far-reaching land reforms the following year. He was elected president in June 1956. Nasser's popularity in Egypt and the Arab world skyrocketed after his nationalisation of the Suez Canal Company and his political victory in the subsequent Suez Crisis, known in Egypt as the Tripartite Aggression.

and especially of being able to fully participate in the great battles of the workers' and mass movement, in the revolutionary and counter-revolutionary processes. After all, this is the most difficult task that the world workers' movement and, one could say, humanity as a whole is confronting.

On the contrary, the more or less rapid establishment, in the short or medium term, of a strong international revolutionary leadership after the Second World War would have been a miracle. And there are no miracles in politics today; they ended with the Middle Ages.

XV

But it is necessary to delve deeper into the subjective obstacles that have turned this process of forming a revolutionary internationalist leadership into a long and difficult march.

Merely talking about "weaknesses" and "mistakes" is to limit oneself to abstract characterisations. The main "weakness" and the big "mistake" we claim has a name and a surname: it is called revisionism.

In the course of this long march, every great event in the class struggle (above all, every great revolutionary triumph of world dimensions) has motivated, in some sector of our movement, a tendency towards **adaptation** to the bureaucratic or nationalist leadership of that victory.

The struggle for the **construction** of an international revolutionary leadership (as well as national revolutionary leaderships) implies the struggle for the **destruction of all** bureaucratic or nationalist leaderships that compete with us within the masses. The process of building a revolutionary leadership means, at the same time, a "relentless war". (as the *Transitional Program* rightly puts it) against **every other** bureaucratic or petty-bourgeois current in the mass movement.

This is what revisionism does not do: the different revisionist tendencies that have existed in our movement have **a common feature**: to advocate not a "relentless war" but some kind of bloc with some bureaucratic and/or nationalist tendency because the latter supposedly fulfils a progressive and even revolutionary role.

These adaptations may vary in size, colour and shape. What does not vary is their consequences: **they are liquidationist**. We claim that they have been the main subjective obstacle in the long march towards the construction of an international revolutionary leadership.

This long march has been punctuated by splits and fusions between currents expressing revisionist or principled positions at every juncture. We are not original in this either: the process that led to the formation of the Bolshevik leadership and the Third International also went through a series of splits and regroupings.

XVI

The combination of the objective and subjective elements we have outlined allows us to briefly characterise the stages traversed in this long march.

After the Second World War, the Fourth International reconstituted an international leadership team, headed by Michel Pablo. This team was formed with elements from the very weak and inexperienced national leaderships, but its mere establishment represented an enormous step forward compared to the previous situation of dispersion. The sectors or groups that were marginalised from this international leadership simply disappeared.

Pablo's leadership had the merit of beginning to respond to original phenomena, such as the new workers' states and, above all, it tried to bring the tiny Trotskyist groups out of marginality, pushing them towards work in the workers' and mass movement.

But, as we have already pointed out, the revolutionary upsurge that followed the war did not imply the automatic collapse of the Stalinist bureaucracy. On the contrary, its apparatuses were temporarily strengthened, at the same time as its crisis began. To this formidable barrier between Trotskyism, on the one hand, and the masses and their activists, on the other, was added an obstacle: the great nationalist movements in the colonies and semi-colonies, which were developing vigorously.

But these enormous objective difficulties were combined with another subjective one: Pablo developed a revisionist adaptation to Stalinism and the nationalist movements. The Pabloist leadership team was deeply impacted by the establishment of the new workers' states — by those “February revolutions” which came to expropriate capital — and by the powerful flowering of the nationalist movements.

We claim that, without this revisionist adaptation, the Fourth International would have progressed rapidly already in the 1950s. Although in almost all countries the path to the masses was still very much blocked by the apparatuses, and in Europe and the USA the two decades of boom and social peace were also beginning, there were exceptional situations, such as Bolivia, where Trotskyism was already a current within the mass movement. Pablo's revisionism implied the betrayal of the 1952 Bolivian revolution and the loss of the greatest opportunity that had presented itself to the Fourth International. Even if the Bolivian revolution had been defeated, a principled policy and not one of adaptation to the MNR government would have made Trotskyism the revolutionary option of the entire Latin American vanguard.

Faced with the disasters of the Pabloist International Secretariat, the establishment of the International Committee (with the SWP, Healy, Lambert and orthodox Latin American Trotskyism) marked another stage with both positive and contradictory outcomes. Neither the SWP nor Healy and Lambert were in favour of building an international leadership with democratic centralism. For them, the International Committee should be no more than a federation of national parties. It was an organisational revisionism that, in the long run, would have political significance. In the immediate term, it meant that no serious battle was waged to put an end to the Pabloist revisionism that had entered into crisis.

But, contradictorily, the framework of the International Committee allowed for a new attempt at international leadership, albeit only on a Latin American scale, the Latin American Secretariat of Orthodox Trotskyism (SLATO). Let us recall just one fact: it was from the SLATO that the policy that would lead to Hugo Blanco's peasant movement was agreed. Despite the movement ending in defeat and despite all the tremendous political and organisational weaknesses of Peruvian Trotskyism, this is today **a current in the mass movement**. This advance would not have happened without the SLATO.

The existence and functioning of this modest regional international leadership are also an essential key to explain the weight of Trotskyism in Argentina: without the reference to a principled international leadership, Argentine Trotskyism and — of the entire Southern Cone — would have perished in the hands of the deranged Posadas or would have been swallowed up by the nationalist movements as happened with Abelardo Ramos³³ in Argentina and Moller³⁴ in Bolivia.

The reunification of 1963 was another contradictory breakthrough. It was carried out based on giving a principled response to the most important event of the class struggle at that time: the Cuban revolution. Against the anti-defencist position of Healy and Lambert, it correctly defined Cuba as a workers' state and posed as the central task of Trotskyism on a world scale the struggle to defend it against the attacks of US imperialism. It also concluded that the Cuban revolution meant a terrible blow to the apparatuses of the pro-Moscow communist parties. That it would generate a huge revolutionary vanguard which would break with the traditional parties.

This correct forecast was the direct cause of May 1968 and of the gains it brought to Trotskyism in France and all over the world. Taking advantage of this opportunity led to the creation of the LCR as the first Trotskyist party with more than a thousand members, as well as a remarkable growth in all countries. Instead, it was not by chance that Lambert's organisation, which did not participate in the reunification, completely missed the bus of the French May. Its final evolution — along with Healy — to the status of a national sect also seems to us to prove, by the negative, what we are saying.

But, at the same time, the reunification of 1963 was carried out in an absolutely bureaucratic manner, through an agreement from above between the SWP and the Mandel wing of the decaying Pabloism.

33 **Jorge Abelardo Ramos** (1921-1994) was an Argentinian politician, historian, and writer, founder of the political and ideological current called Izquierda Nacional (National Left), which vindicated things of Trotsky and fervently endorsed the Peronist government.

34 **Edwin Moller** was one of the main leaders of the Bolivian POR. In 1954, he broke with the POR and joined the MNR. He continued to work closely with Juan Lechin, and when the latter broke with the MNR in 1963, he followed him and participated in the founding of the PRIN (Nationalist Left Revolutionary Party).

Not the slightest assessment was made of what Pablo's revisionism had meant. Thus, the foundations were laid for a new revisionist adaptation: this time to Castroism and, secondarily, to Maoism.

As we have already pointed out, we were facing a new phenomenon: the Cuban revolution and the rupture of Maoism with the Kremlin turned them into powerful poles of attraction for an immense workers' and students' vanguard that was already repelled by the communist parties dependent on Moscow. The United Secretariat yielded to this phenomenon.

The revisionist adaptations of the United Secretariat were becoming its second nature, burying its initial successes. The capitulation to Castroism was and continues to be its main obsession. But this has not prevented it from developing **a multifaceted and versatile revisionism**, which capitulates to any shocking political phenomenon, such as the MFA [Armed Forces Movement] in the Portuguese revolution or Eurocommunism. Now, the Unified Secretariat and its French section, the LCR, shocked by the electoral victory of the French social democracy, are challenging Pierre Lambert for the role of Mitterrand's first "Trotskyist" lackey.

The pro-Castro revisionism of the Unified Secretariat has been as liquidating as Pablo's. In its guerrilla phase, it involved the disappearance of entire sections, such as the PRT-ERP of Argentina and the POR (C) of Bolivia, with the extermination of hundreds of cadres.

Mandelist revisionism was to reach new records on the occasion of the Nicaraguan revolution. Like Pablo in Bolivia, regarding the Paz Estenssoro³⁵ government, the Unified Secretariat was completely subordinated to the Government of National Reconstruction of Robelo,³⁶ Violeta Chamorro³⁷ and the FSLN. Its subordination went to the extreme of prohibiting, in Nicaragua in particular and in Central America in general, the building of Trotskyist parties. This is why it also came to applaud the governments of Nicaragua and Panama when they arrested and tortured the Trotskyists who tried to build them. This led to the outbreak of the Unified Secretariat.

However, in contrast to this process of revisionist adaptation of the United Secretariat, another process took place: the development of principled and orthodox currents. While the United Secretariat, after its gains of the 1960s, has ended up in a situation of stagnation and regression, on the contrary, the orthodox current has had a more dynamic development in the 1970s. In the final analysis, this current has been able to take the best advantage of the process of crisis of the bureaucratic apparatuses and the nationalist movements since it fights them relentlessly, while the United Secretariat only knows how to adapt to them.

The formation of the LTT-LTF between the PST and the SWP was an important first step. This meant building a strong Trotskyist party in Argentina, the second in the world to exceed 1,000 militants.

This development was not interrupted but continued after the defection of the SWP. We reckon that no other Trotskyist tendency has had an equal rate of development in only five or six years. Some examples: recruitment of the Socialist Bloc and formation of the Colombian PST. Socialist Convergence of Brazil, which began with five militants in 1975, the development in Central America, the intervention in Nicaragua with the SBB, the current growth in the USA, the Spanish PST, the reconstruction of Trotskyism in Chile, etc.

35 **Victor Paz Estenssoro** (1907–2001) was a Bolivian lawyer and politician. He was the founder of the Revolutionary Nationalist Movement (MNR) together with Hernan Siles Zuazo. He was president of the Republic in 1952–1956 and on three other occasions. His bourgeois government was supported by the Trotskyist sector led by Mandel.

36 **Alfonso Robelo** (b. 1939) is a Nicaraguan diplomat, businessman and politician. Robelo founded the Nicaraguan Democratic Movement (MDN). In 1978 Robelo founded the Nicaraguan Democratic Movement (MDN), which was driven by the anti-Somoza sector of the bourgeoisie. When the Sandinistas took power in July 1979, they formed a bourgeois government that included Robelo and Violeta Chamorro.

37 **Violeta Barrios de Chamorro** (1929–2025). Widow of Pedro Joaquin Chamorro, a leader of the Nicaraguan anti-Somoza bourgeoisie, a journalist and editor of the newspaper La Prensa, who was murdered in January 1978 by the Somoza dictatorship. After the fall of the dictatorship, the Sandinistas formed a bourgeois government of "national unity" that included sectors of the bourgeoisie, including businessman Roberto Robelo and Violeta Chamorro herself. In 1990, she headed the coalition UNO (National Opposition Union), which includes most of the parties opposed to the FSLN. After UNO's victory in the February 1990 elections, she was President of Nicaragua until the 1996 elections.

It has not been, of course, a triumphal march but a process marked by all kinds of mistakes and crises of respectable dimensions. But this cannot make us lose sight of the fact that it has been an upward march.

It was this process of the BF that determined the global realignment in the entire Trotskyist movement in 1979.

XVII

The Nicaraguan revolution, the intervention of the Simon Bolivar Brigade in it, and the total capitulation of the United Secretariat to Castroism and Sandinismo led in 1979 to its outbreak and determined a general realignment of the Trotskyist movement inside and outside the United Secretariat.

In the situation in Nicaragua, the former OCRFI aligned itself with the former BF in defence of the principles. This led to the establishment of the Parity Committee first, and of the Fourth International (IC), later.

Today, the Fourth International (IC) has disappeared, destroyed by the revisionist adaptation of the OCI leadership to the Mitterrand government and, in general, to the French social democratic apparatus.

The capitulation of the OCI leadership to Mitterrand — together with the LCR — is the greatest betrayal in the history of the Trotskyist movement. As bad or worse than Pablo's betrayal in Bolivia in 1952. This is the case because in France, Trotskyism already has a presence as a historical current of French political life. It does not start from scratch but with parties that bring together several thousand militants and a wide audience of supporters. The adaptation of the OCI and the LCR to the Popular Front government — an adaptation that is even repugnant for the extremes of infamous servility that it has managed to reach — means that they have turned their backs on the opportunity to build a revolutionary workers' party with mass influence in France. This party can only be built by developing an unrelenting struggle against the SP, the French CP and their popular front government, to attract the currents of the workers' and popular movement that break away, disappointed with those traitorous parties. On the contrary, Lambert, Mandel, and Pablo are today playing the same role as Mitterrand's "Trotskyist" lackeys.

This capitulation of the OCI also proves that the establishment of the former Fourth International (IC) was a tactical error. This is so because the merger was based on a false characterisation of the OCI leadership. We considered it principled and orthodox. We were totally wrong.

We did not see that Lambert was developing a new revisionist variant, very different from the traditional Pabloist-Mandelist one: the adaptation to social democracy, which has been on the electoral rise in recent years. Specifically, the leadership of the OCI maintains the closest political and organisational relations with the Mitterrand wing of French social democracy and with the trade union bureaucracy of Force Ouvrière, a confederation of yellow unions led by the notorious strike-breaker Andre Bergeron. Lambert is the translator of the politics of Mitterrand and Bergeron into "Trotskyism".

Both those of us who came from the former Bolshevik Faction and the former OCRFI did not doubt the principled character of the OCI leadership. Having made a mistake in this characterisation, the former Fourth International (IC) was — not because we wanted it, but in fact — **a front without principle**: The Programmatic Theses approved at the Founding Conference, we continue to claim as **principled**. But experience has shown they are incomplete. They lack, at least, a **thesis on the Popular Front** and another **on Social Democracy**, to be delimited from revisionists of any stripe, Pierre Lambert included.

At the same time, we assert that this mistake has not been strategic but tactical.

It is not the revisionist current of the OCI leadership that comes out strengthened from this unfortunate crisis. On the contrary, as an international tendency, it has been left in tatters. Its perspective is similar to what Healy has already achieved: to be a national sect with some epiphenomena in other countries.

XVIII

To summarise the balance sheet of this long march, let's say that, not to confuse ourselves and to make a materialistic assessment, it must be measured in relation to two reference points:

The first is the objective necessity of an international revolutionary leadership. Regarding this point of reference, we have to point out that, as we have already said, we are light years away from meeting, even for a group of countries, this increasingly acute need for the class struggle. We must be absolutely clear about this, leaving self-proclamation and self-promotion to sects and currents in crisis, such as that of Pierre Lambert.

But the second point of reference in relation to which we must measure the balance of this "long march" is no less important, objective, and material than the first. It's about seeing whether we have progressed or not in relation to the starting point.

And here, we also have to give an absolutely categorical answer: the advance of Trotskyism has been vast and general all over the world, despite all the mistakes made and, above all, despite the worst of its "mistakes", revisionism. Within the framework of this process, it is also a materially verifiable fact that the most dynamic current of the last 10 years, the one that has spread the most in different countries and the one that has grown the most numerically, is our orthodox current.

Today, after the split of the United Secretariat in 1979 and the crisis of the former Fourth International (IC), we have reached a situation in which there are two, and only two groups that claim to be Trotskyist with real international presence: the revisionist one of the United Secretariat and ours. We reckon that both Healy and Lambert have been reduced to the status of national sects with some satellites abroad.

XIX

To continue the struggle for an international revolutionary direction, for the construction of a Fourth International with sections that come to have mass influence, we affirm that all parties, groups and leaders who have taken a principled position against the revisionism of the United Secretariat, first, and OCI revisionism later, we should immediately establish **an international organisation democratically centralised**; or, put another way, immediately structure **an international leadership that functions with the rules of democratic centralism**.

We propose this because we are fully convinced, by the experience of this long march, that Trotsky's estimate of the absolute necessity of an international leadership to advance in the construction of national revolutionary parties has been thoroughly corroborated.

We assert that there is a dialectic in this: triumphs at the national scale provide the decisive impetus for international growth. For example, the great success of the LCR in the French May was the decisive factor for a great expansion of Trotskyism, especially in Spain and other countries of Europe and Latin America. The leap given by the Argentine PST during the revolutionary crisis of 1969–1976 was a decisive factor for the development of Trotskyism in Brazil, Colombia and other countries. In the same way, a great revolutionary triumph in some country, with a Trotskyist party at the forefront, would attract the working-class and revolutionary activism from all over the world *en masse*. The Fourth International would then begin to become a world party with mass influence, as the Third International was.

But no national triumph has been achieved or will be achieved for Trotskyism **except in relation to an international leadership**.

Trotskyism achieved the triumph of the French May thanks to the reunification of 1963 and the leadership of the United Secretariat. Instead, it was no coincidence that the national Lambertist sect remained on the sidelines of the greatest revolutionary struggle of the proletariat and the French people of this postwar period.

The leap of the Argentine PST in 1969–1976 is inconceivable without reference to its international relations: the SLATO, the entry into the 1963 reunification, and the LTT-LTF thereafter. On the contrary, as far as we know, **all** the national "Trotskyist" parties or currents that flourished contemporaneously

in Argentina — some very strong ones, such as the FIP of Jorge Abelardo Ramos — degenerated without exception.

In the same way, without the *de facto* international leadership that meant the LTT-LTF, first, and the BT-BF later, we assert, to cite just a few cases, that neither the Colombian PST, nor the Brazilian CS, nor the Spanish PST, nor the totality of Central American Trotskyism, nor the current development in the US would exist.

Neither would the Argentine PST exist today because the existence of the international leadership, as well as the support of the Colombian PST, were decisive factors in resolving the crisis through which it went three years ago.

We say that this experience has been positive. In the course of it, we have committed the greatest mistakes, but we could overcome them and, despite everything, move forward, **thanks to the fact that we had international leadership.**

We assert that the need for international leadership, for structuring an organisation with democratic centralism, will **tend to grow in the future**, not to decrease. This is so because the objective situation — the dizzying collapse and discrediting of the apparatuses — is opening up opportunities for Trotskyism such as it never had. Large currents breaking with the old apparatuses and becoming radicalised, sail objectively towards the harbour of Trotskyism. These great opportunities imply equally the greatest dangers. The revolutionary united front tactic will backfire and end up liquidating every national party that is not firmly anchored in an international organisation.

Finally, we assert that, without exception, all experiments with federalism or national Trotskyism have ended up in the dustbin of history. We want, as is our custom, to call things by their names: **federalism is synonymous with dissolution.** Federalism today leaves only the revisionist United Secretariat as the only international Trotskyist leadership. This simply means liquidation.

Likewise, let us say that nowhere in the world has Trotskyism so far known a federalist party that has not degenerated. For us, the Lambert and Healy courses are no coincidence. Nor is it coincidental that the SWP — lifelong federalists—is the party of the United Secretariat most corrupted by Castro.

In summary, both the experience of this long, difficult and delayed march to build an international revolutionary leadership, and the current global panorama of class struggle, ratify us in the need to have an international organisation, ruled by democratic centralism.

Addendum A

International Information Bulletin

We present here, for study and discussion among all comrades, the main documents of the International Consultation Meeting, recently held in Mexico,³⁸ and of the Founding Conference that followed it.

To better place these materials, we believe it is appropriate to precede them with a brief explanation of the background and development of this meeting. Although it is obvious, we want to make it explicitly clear that this presentation is not intended to be a report of it.

Background

The International Consultation Meeting was convened by the members and former members of the former Parity Committee, Executive Committee and General Council of the former FI-IC, who were against the bureaucratic and Stalinist methods wielded by Pierre Lambert. In the call that made this meeting possible and its accompanying documentation (see IB 77), the readers will be able to judge how these procedures (rupture of the Protocol signed on 17 November 1981, factional call of the former General Council, and above all the Stalinist campaign unleashed against Comrade Ricardo Napuri) brought the crisis of the former FI-IC to its culmination. With these methods, Pierre Lambert closed the perspective of preserving a common organic framework, through the Liaison Committee and the possible joint call, in the future, of a world conference. Lambert thus carried through to the end what had been his invariable orientation since his adaptation to the popular-frontist government of Mitterrand was questioned: to prevent at all costs a broad, free and democratic debate in the former FI-IC and especially in the rank and file of the OCI.

In this situation, it was urgent to provide a response that would lead to the regrouping of all sectors of the former FI-IC defending the principles of Trotskyism and, therefore, opposed to Lambert's Stalinist methods and his policy of support for Mitterrand's counter-revolutionary government.

It was necessary that, without delay, the main cadres of the former FI-IC who agreed with these positions (both those coming from the former BF and from the former OCRFI) should meet to deliberate and find a way out of the situation; otherwise, there would have been a certain danger of dispersion.

Support for the Mexico meeting

The success of the Mexico meeting proved that it was the right decision to convene it. As a conclusion to this presentation, we will take stock of it briefly. But let us advance that the first element of success was the immediate response to the meeting, which resulted in a turnout that exceeded our initial estimates.

38 We maintain the mention of Mexico as the venue for the International Consultative Meeting and the Founding World Conference of the IWL-CI, when in fact it was held in Colombia on the dates indicated. Mexico has been mentioned as the venue, both in internal and public documents, for security reasons.

The attendance at the International Consultative Meeting was as follows, except for errors or omissions:

Venezuela: Comrade Alberto Franceschi,³⁹ national deputy, founder and leader of the former OCRFI, and its most important public figure after Comrade Ricardo Napuri, attended as a delegate. He chaired the Meeting and the subsequent Conference. The Venezuelan section will formally decide its international alignment at an extraordinary congress to be held in April, but it is already foreseeable that it will practically unanimously ratify the actions of Comrade Franceschi. It should be noted that the MIR (Proletarian) (section of the former OCRFI led by comrade Franceschi and today unified with the PST) was considered the most important party of the former OCRFI in Latin America after the POMR (Peru) and the OSI (Brazil).

Peru: Two delegations attended; that of the PST and Comrade Ricardo Napuri, who is at the moment forming the POMR (unification). According to reports from the Peruvian comrades, Napuri would have a majority in the rank and file of the former OCRFI section. There is no need to dwell on the significance of Comrade Napuri's presence: together with Hugo Blanco, he is the most important public figure in Trotskyism, not only in Peru but worldwide. Napuri attended the Meeting as a full member and the Conference as an observer since he had no mandate and had been unable to consult his sector of the POMR. According to what was stated at length at the meeting, Napuri is pursuing the unification with the PST in Peru.

Mexico: A delegation from the POS attended. The LOM, a small group of the former OCRFI, stayed with Lambert.

Central America: Delegations from Panama and Costa Rica attended. The rest of the sections that could not attend sent messages of support.

Ecuador: The section of the former FI-IC attended.

Colombia: The section of the FI-IC attended. In addition, in order to have a broadly democratic debate, Comrade Camilo, separated from the section, was specially invited.

Brazil: Convergencia Socialista attended. The OSI, a section of the former OCRFI, stayed with Lambert.

Bolivia: The whole section came.

Chile: The whole interior section stayed with us and sent delegates. The present section has recently unified with another Trotskyist organisation, the LOB, which does not come from the former OCRFI or the former BF. Of the Chilean comrades who are in Europe, all of them stayed with us, except for three of them.

United States: Besides the FRT (section of the former FI-IC), there was a delegation from the RUL (Revolutionary Unity League), an organisation that does not come from the former BF or the former OCRFI. It is an organisation based especially on the West Coast and led by a unionist of the Los Angeles municipal workers.

Regarding Europe, the outlook was as follows:

Italy: The entire section stayed with us and sent a delegation.

Spain: PST delegation came. POSI, the former OCRFI group, stayed with Lambert. It is a very small minority compared to the PST. The meeting also received a letter from a comrade of the POSI Central Committee, in which she announces her break and informs that the leadership has just expelled three entire regional branches from the party.

39 **Alberto Franceschi** (b. 1947) was a leader of the Revolutionary Left Movement (MIR) in Venezuela and joined the Trotskyist movement with Pierre Lambert's current. When the unity between Moreno and Lambert's factions failed between 1979 and 1981, he abandoned Lambertism and joined the Morenoist faction. He was a founding member of the Venezuelan Socialist Workers Party (PST), of which he was secretary general in the 1980s. After the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the Soviet Union, he distanced himself from Trotskyism. In 1996, he returned to political activity, but this time promoting the anti-Chavez, pro-US right-wing bourgeois organisation Proyecto Venezuela. In 1998, he was elected as a constituent deputy. In December 2013, he went into exile in the United States. He currently leads a political movement called REPUBLICOS that supports Donald Trump. From Miami, he writes for several digital newspapers and is very active on social media.

Portugal: The former FI-IC section is split into almost equal parts. A delegation from one of the parties came.

Sweden: The whole section, except for two comrades, stayed with us. They sent a delegate.

France: A delegate came from the GST (Socialist Workers Group), recently formed by comrades expelled from the OCI. They have already opened premises in Paris and started to publish a newspaper, part of which is published in Arabic.

Two organisations from Greece have sent endorsements without being able to attend. A minority of the German section also remained with us. In Belgium, there was a split in which part of the former OCRFI, including a member of the Executive Committee of the Belgian party, spoke out against Lambert (we do not know how the balance of power has turned out there). Turkey also remained with us.

To fully appreciate this important first aspect of the Mexico meeting, it is good to make a comparison with the sectors that have remained on Lambert's side. Based on an objective element that is undisputed on both sides — the list of contributions from the former FI-IC on the eve of the split — we have that, setting aside the two main parties, the rest of the sections have pronounced themselves by a large majority in our favour. Outside France, the most important party left with Lambert is the OSI (Brazil). It has lost the two most important public leaders it had (Napuri and Franceschi) and also two of the three main sections that the former OCRFI had outside France: those in Venezuela and Peru. In Europe, the strongest group left with the OCI is the Spanish POSI, which, according to the list mentioned above, has around a hundred militants. In the rest of Europe, the organisations left with Lambert are extremely small. We do not know for sure the position taken by Baluka.⁴⁰ We only know that on the eve of the split, he had big differences with Lambert, but in relation to the line for Poland. However, it is possible that he remained aligned with the OCI.

To conclude this comparison, let us say that the contrast between the International Consultation Meeting and the factional meeting of the former General Council convened by Lambert before our conference is obvious. Of the full and alternate members that the former OCRFI had in the General Council, three of the most important ones were missing: Napuri, Franceschi and Nemo, who had retired from political activity.

In conclusion, we do not believe that it is an exaggerated but rather an absolutely objective judgment to conclude that Lambert is practically liquidated as an international current.

The International Consultation Meeting: Campaign to demand a workers' tribunal to judge Comrade Napuri

As we have pointed out, the Mexico Meeting had two parts. The first, the International Consultation Meeting, dealt with two points: the campaign to demand that Pierre Lambert comply with the Protocol and the campaign in defence of Comrade Ricardo Napuri. The latter was, of course, the most important issue. Moreover, Lambert — forced by the unfavourable international balance of power — was giving up his first attempts to keep the acronym and representation of the former FI-IC.

The matter of Comrade Napuri was, then, at the centre of the debate at the International Consultative Meeting. It is impossible to reflect it here properly, in all its richness. Let us try to sum them up in a few sentences: it belongs to the best tradition of the workers' movement since its origins, the defence of the honour of its militants and leaders, and the most absolute rejection of the methods of slander and false moral accusations to settle political disputes. These despicable methods were introduced into the workers' movement by Stalinism, which thus contaminated it morally and politically for decades. Trotskyism was born, among other reasons, to fight relentlessly against these methods. It is, therefore, doubly intolerable that Comrade Pierre Lambert should seek to introduce them into the Trotskyist movement.

If Pierre Lambert has any proof that Ricardo Napuri, a workers' senator, with 35 years of morally unimpeachable revolutionary activity, has suddenly become a thief and an agent of the Peruvian government, he must present that evidence before a workers' tribunal. We demand that Lambert, like all organisations

40 **Edmund Baluka** (1934-2015), chairman of the strike committee in the Szczecin shipyards during the workers' riots of 1970.

claiming to be Trotskyist, agree to appoint a workers' tribunal to judge comrade Napuri. The campaign for a workers' tribunal to judge Napuri was voted as one of the two main international campaigns this year.

The Conference is established

Having exhausted the preceding points and in view of the consensus among the delegations, the International Consultation Meeting decided, by unanimous vote of the full members as well as of those invited, to establish itself as a Conference to discuss and decide on the foundation of a new international organisation.

Thus established, the Conference discussed the following agenda:

- 1) Theses on the need to build an international leadership and Balance Sheet of the former FI-IC.
- 2) France.
- 3) Draft amendments to the programmatic Theses of the former FI-IC presented by the delegation of the RUL (Revolutionary Unity League) (USA).
- 4) Poland.
- 5) Statutes and provisional clause.
- 6) Name of the international organisation.
- 7) Election of the leadership.

Below, the comrades will find the main materials related to these points. Although these speak for themselves, it is worth noting that the axis of the debate was the first point, that is, the question of whether or not to immediately establish a democratically centralised international leadership. Linked to this question was also a lively discussion on the balance sheet of the former FI-IC. Particularly important were the speeches of the leaders of the former OCRFI, Napuri and Franceschi, since they brought a living experience of the attempt to build an international leadership from a very different side from the one from which most of the delegates came, the former BF and the USec.

In summary, to attempt a poor synthesis of a very rich discussion that debated countless political and historical questions, we can say the following:

Regardless of the different nuances to which the Balance Sheet debate gave rise, those present agreed on the fundamental point of principle: that the immediate constitution of an international organisation with democratic centralism regrouping all the principled sectors of Trotskyism was necessary. In other words, to move forward, it was essential to establish a democratically centralised international leadership.

This, in our view, is the essential question. There were, of course, differences on certain points in the Balance Sheet, most of which were clarified in the course of the debate. Thus, for example, one comrade argued that the unification with Lambert was not a tactical error but rather an opportunist one. Two or three comrades argued, for their part, that we had been too defensive in our policy towards Lambert. The problem of the characterisation of the OCI was also a subject of debate. But, as we said, this extensive discussion on very important points did nothing more than underline the practically unanimous agreement on the key question: that the way out was to close ranks, regroup and form an international leadership.

Comrade Camilo opposed this conclusion. Throughout the Conference, he orally defended a diametrically opposed position, which we can summarise as follows: It is sectarian to set up an international organisation with democratic centralism. The comrade proposes, on the other hand, a federation with all the tendencies and organisations which claim to be Trotskyist. That is to say, concretely, to make a federation with the United Secretariat and what remains of Lambertism.

The rest of those present at the Conference, both delegates and guests, understood that Comrade Camilo's approach was, to say the least, preposterous and contrary to principles.

Preposterous because currently there is not the slightest basis of political agreement between us, on the one hand, and the United Secretariat and Lambert, on the other. Suffice it to recall that on the two central questions facing Trotskyism today (France and Poland), we have differences of 180 degrees.

Contrary to principles, because the essence of Trotskyism is the struggle to build an international party, not a federation of national parties. National-Trotskyism has always led to degeneration, as the cases of Healy, Lambert and the SWP, and Abelardo Ramos in Argentina prove.

France: an open debate

Although the discussion we have just commented on was the core of the conference and also coloured, in fact, the rest of the points, the debate on France witnessed some contributions that opened up a whole international discussion. It is, of course, already out of the question for all delegates to characterise the OCI's policy towards Mitterrand as one of the greatest betrayals in the history of Trotskyism. But the political issues raised by the popular-frontist experience of Mitterrand go far beyond this regrettable capitulation. It raises a rethinking of fundamental questions of Leninism-Trotskyism, such as, for example, the tactics of the United Workers' Front, the workers' and peasants' government, etc. On these issues, a draft document by comrade Capa⁴¹ was presented, which will become a document of the next world conference.

A contribution from the American comrades

On the third point, the RUL comrades presented three criticisms of the points of the programmatic theses of the former FI-IC. After a debate in which there was a report and a counter-report, it was decided to publish both positions so that, after an international debate in all sections, they could be voted on at the world conference.

Poland: Our main political campaign

The limited preparation time for the Conference prevented the submission of a paper on Poland. Despite this, an extensive debate took place on the characteristics of the coup d'état, the characterisation of the Jaruzelski⁴² government, etc.

The political conclusion is that Poland becomes the main international political campaign for all sections. The characteristics of this campaign are analysed in the corresponding resolution.

Statutes and transitional clause

The debate on the Statutes resumed, now embodied in what we might call the "constitutional text" of the new international organisation, the discussion of the first point. Once again, there was a practically unanimous vote, with the sole exception of Comrade Camilo, who, at this point, declared that he was not going to join the new organisation and that he was stepping outside, declaring himself an "observer".

An important point was the vote on the so-called "transitional clause": given the extraordinary and urgent nature with which this Founding Conference was convened, without the rank and file of the sections having been able to discuss beforehand, it was decided to open immediately a period of international pre-congress, from today until the First Conference takes place at the end of the year. The first point of this First Conference will be the debate and the ratification or rectification of what was voted at the Founding Conference.

The International Workers League (Fourth International) was born

The Founding Conference also voted to call us by that name. There was consensus not to make the mistake of proclaiming ourselves the Fourth International since we do not have an overwhelming majority of the forces that claim to be Trotskyist.

41 **Miguel Capa** was a pseudonym used by Moreno when he wrote documents for the International.

42 **Wojciech Witold Jaruzelski** (1923-2014), born into Polish nobility, was a Polish general, politician and dictator of the Polish People's Republic from 1981 to 1989. In December 1981 he imposed martial law and a series of repressive measures to crush the rise of the workers and the powerful Solidarity trade union.

A brief balance sheet

Finally, to close this presentation, we can offer a summary assessment of the Conference, which we believe to be successful.

1) We put an end to the process of the international crisis that had been generated by the split in the former FI-IC.

2) Not only did we avoid any possible centrifugal danger, but with the Conference, it was objectively demonstrated that we are in a centripetal process. From there, not even a continuation of the former BF emerged, but a new organisation that integrates fundamental cadres of the former OCRFI and other groups.

3) On the contrary, and this also seems to be the opinion of the USec, it is Comrade Lambert who has lost out. He is reduced to a strong party in France with some epiphenomena in various countries. This situation further deepens the national-Trotskyist character of Lambertism, leading it into a situation similar to Healy's sect.

4) There remain, on the global stage, two truly international organisations: the revisionist United Secretariat — led by the Mandel-SWP coalition — and the League. The USec remains our fundamental enemy in the international arena. Lambertism is only a significant adversary in two countries, France and Brazil.

5) The sectors that, like Comrade Camilo, expressed centrifugal or national-Trotskyist tendencies in our ranks were reduced to nothing.

6) A new international leadership team emerged from the Conference, with cadres from the former FB and the former OCRFI, which is beginning to address the urgent problems of the sections. It also started the publication of an international magazine.

7) The Conference also gave answers — or, at least, began to raise — fundamental political questions at this time, among them, those of the workers' united front, the revolutionary united front, etc., as well as giving the political and organisational bases for what must be the central campaign of Trotskyism: Poland.

Clarification Note: At the Conference, some additions were approved which are not present in the documents we submitted, as well as some corrections of form which will be made for the definitive ones, which do not affect the content of the documents published here.

Addendum B

Transitional clause

1) The crisis of the Fourth International–International Committee (FI–IC), a product of revisionism and the bureaucratic methods of the OCI(u) leadership, demands an immediate response from the forces of orthodox Trotskyism.

2) To the extent that an orthodox Trotskyist current and program exists as a reality, the response to the demands of the class struggle and to revisionism must materialise in an organisation.

3) This organisation must be based on democratic centralism as the only way to respond to the disintegration that the crisis of the FI–IC opens up in the ranks of Trotskyism, but above all as the only way to continue the struggle for the construction of the national parties and the Fourth International, within the class struggle.

4) The international consultation meeting was transformed from the third item on the agenda and by unanimous decision of its members into the Extraordinary Founding Conference of the International Workers League–Fourth International (IWL–FI).

5) This conference is conscious that to advance in the struggle against revisionism and for the construction of the International, the incorporation and full participation of the entire militancy is necessary, as well as to recover all the authentic Trotskyists who remain in the organisational framework of revisionism. The principled and programmatic resolutions of this conference constitute the basis of action of the IWL–FI and the sections and are mandatory until the First World Conference is held, which will be convened within a period of 9 to 12 months, and at the same time, the basis of the preparatory discussion for the First Conference.

6) The Extraordinary Founding Conference of the IWL–FI resolves to constitute itself as a world Trotskyist organisation based on:

- a) The political bases indicated in Article 2 of the Statutes;
- b) A democratically elected leadership which assumes the functions indicated in the Statutes until the First Conference;
- c) Statutes based on democratic centralism;
- d) Its own finances;
- e) An international magazine.

7) The First World Conference, as a first point, will submit for ratification, rectification or change the resolutions of the Extraordinary Founding Conference of the IWL–FI.

8) In this period, the Conferences and Congresses of the sections will be held, based on the documents and resolutions of the Extraordinary Founding Conference of the International Workers League–Fourth International and the documents and contributions of the sections, leaderships and militants. Delegates to the First World Conference will be elected at the Conferences and Congresses.

9) Aware of the special conditions of the Conference (due to the political and organisational crisis of the FI-IC), with no material possibility of holding discussions in the sections, the Extraordinary Founding Conference of the IWL-FI declares open from today, for all sections, the discussion on the resolutions of the Conference, which will be organised by the International Executive Committee and must be promoted by the leaderships of the sections.

10) The leadership emerging from the Extraordinary Founding Conference of the IWL-FI assumes the fulfilment of these resolutions and specifically and imperatively the organisation, preparation and regulation of the First Conference within the set deadlines. The resolution of new problems concerning the First Conference (specific party situations, material conditions of realisation, development of the discussion) can be carried out by the leadership, without altering the basic content of this transitional clause, with the affirmative vote of three-quarters of its members.

Addendum C

Statutes of the IWL-FI

Approved at the Extraordinary Foundation Conference (5–11 January 1982)

Article 1:

The International Workers League–Fourth International (IWL–FI) has as its fundamental purpose the resolution of the leadership crisis of the Fourth International as the only way to solve the crisis of revolutionary leadership of the proletariat. Only when this is achieved will the present revolutionary mobilisation of the working class and the workers of the world against imperialism and the bourgeoisie lead to its destruction, and the socialist revolution can triumph with the establishment of the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat. This struggle is inextricably linked to the mobilisation of the masses against the counter-revolutionary Stalinist, social-democratic and trade union bureaucratic apparatuses, and to the struggle against the revisionism which claims to be the Trotskyist movement.

Article 2:

The IWL–FI assumes as its own the *Transitional Program*, the founding basis of the Fourth International, the *Programmatic Theses* which gave birth to the Fourth International (International Committee) and the *Theses* on the basis of which our international organisation has been founded at the present World Conference. The IWL–FI concentrates the experience of the revolutionary Marxist movement, in particular those resulting from the conquests of the October Revolution of 1917, vindicating the first four congresses of the Third International, and draws on all the progressive social experiences of humanity leading to the expropriation of the capitalist class and the definitive suppression of classes.

Article 3:

The IWL–FI is made up of affiliated national organisations. Only as an exception, the affiliation of individual militants will be accepted in those countries where there are no national sections.

Article 4:

In each country, the militants of the IWL–FI meet in national organisations, parties, groups and leagues, considered national sections affiliated to the IWL–FI and oriented on the constitutional foundations of the Extraordinary Founding Conference. Each of these sections contributes regularly to the functioning of the international bodies, in proportion to the number of its members.

Article 5:

The structure and internal regime of the IWL–FI and of all its sections is determined by the principles and practice of democratic centralism, which means the broadest internal democracy and at the same time the strictest discipline in action: the subordination of the minority to the majority, of the lower bodies to the higher ones, and of each member to the party; at the same time the free discussion among all members of the most important questions, the control of the party over its leading bodies and the election of the leading and responsible bodies from the bottom up. For these purposes, there shall be a single discipline and a single centralised international leadership.

Article 6:

In each country, there can be only one organisation *recognised* as a national section affiliated to the IWL–FI. The procedure and practical arrangements for the formation or recognition of new national sections in countries where they do not exist shall be determined on a case-by-case basis by the International Executive Committee and subject to subsequent ratification by the World Conference. Mergers of organisations into a national section shall be decided by the International Secretariat and subject to subsequent ratification by the International Executive Committee.

Transitional clause:

In Peru, in the case of the POMR (unified party), and in other countries, in the case of organisations that belong or have belonged to other international bodies that claim to be Trotskyist (former OCRFI, USec, etc.), the criterion of dual international affiliation in the unified party is accepted. This is an expression of a principled and non-factionalist conception of the struggle for the reconstruction of the Fourth International, World Party of the Socialist Revolution.

Article 7:

By common agreement between the International Executive Committee and the corresponding national section, those organisations which agree with the programme and are willing to abide by the discipline shall be *recognised* as sympathisers, with the same rights and obligations as the national sections, particularly with the right to be represented at the World Conference with consultative vote.

Article 8:

The supreme body of the IWL–FI is the World Conference, which determines the policy of the International Organisation and its sections on all important political questions, adopts resolutions and ultimately resolves organisational questions and internal conflicts. The World Conference is composed of delegates from all national sections elected by national Conferences and Congresses, in proportions established by the International Executive Committee, plus one member with voice and vote elected by the IEC itself. Its decisions, as in all lower bodies, are taken by simple majority and are immediately binding on all other national and international bodies.

Article 9:

The World Conference shall meet ordinarily every two years and extraordinarily when convened by the International Executive Committee or by one third of its national sections, a request which must be complied with by the IEC, which shall proceed to convene it. The period before the ordinary World Conference must cover a minimum of six months; the absolute right to form tendencies or factions during this prior period means that this right cannot be questioned, and none of the leaders or members of tendencies or factions can be transferred by their national and/or international leadership from their places of

militancy until the World Conference. National parties and national sections should tend to observe this rule for their national congresses.

Article 10:

The World Conference elects an International Executive Committee (IEC), the supreme organ of the international organisation, during the period between conferences. The IEC is responsible for defining the main orientations of the international organisation and implementing its resolutions, and is responsible for their implementation by all national sections. When the IEC convenes the World Conference, it must ensure that the sum of delegates representing the two strongest parties does not exceed one-third of the total composition of the World Conference. The members of the IEC are subject to the discipline of their bodies.

Article 11:

The International Executive Committee consists of 15 members, nominally elected by the World Conference and belonging to the most important sections; no national party may have more than three members on the IEC. The World Conference may elect one member to the IEC from the outgoing former leadership body. Sections not represented may be invited to IEC meetings with a consultative vote. The IEC meets ordinarily every six months and extraordinarily when convened by the Secretariat or by one-third of the IEC members. A national section may propose the revocation or replacement of one of its members belonging to the IEC; such action must be approved by a majority of the International Executive Committee.

Article 12:

Without setting a precedent and valid only for a stage until the international leadership is tested in the class struggle and established in parties with mass influence, the relations between the International Executive Committee and the national sections shall abide by the following rules:

- a) Any militant or leader of a national section shall be assigned to international tasks only if this decision of the IEC has the approval of the respective national leadership.
- b) No militant or leader may be assigned to tasks outside his country for more than two years, except with the acceptance and will of the comrade involved.
- c) The IEC may not intervene in any official or sympathising section, nor force it to implement a national political or organisational tactic or line.
- d) The separation or expulsion of a national section or party must have the vote of at least three-quarters of the members of the IEC.

Article 13:

The International Executive Committee elects from among its members an International Secretariat (IS) of five members, which constitutes the permanent leadership team of the international organisation and is politically responsible for it, its Central Press Organ and its regular Internal Bulletin. The International Secretariat ensures the liaison between the sections, promotes the international political discussion and takes all necessary measures to this end. The IEC establishes the headquarters of the international organisation, which becomes the permanent seat of the International Secretariat and to which the respective national section assumes the main responsibility and the main work.

Paragraph: To ensure better links and a greater political and organisational cohesion between countries on continents distant from the IS headquarters, provision is made for the formation of sub-secretariats, charged with the same duties as the IS but under the jurisdiction of the IS. The formation of such sub-secretariats is decided in specific cases by decision of the World Conference or, when the World Conference is not in session, by the IEC.

Article 14:

Fundamental divergences with the program exposed in public activities, violation of the national and international statutes, actions incompatible with proletarian and revolutionary morality or endangering the organisation and its members, shall be subject to sanctions by national and international bodies, sanctions ranging from internal warnings and temporary separation to definitive expulsion. Sanctions shall be immediately applicable, although they may be appealed to the competent bodies immediately above, up to the World Conference.

Article 15:

The World Conference elects an International Control Commission of three members, each belonging to different sections and enjoying a wide reputation for objectivity. This Commission, elected by at least three-quarters of the delegates, has the irrevocable and unappealable function of examining cases concerning actions incompatible with proletarian and revolutionary morality, and of deciding on them in good conscience. The International Control Commission is answerable only to the World Conference, and all other international and national bodies of the international organisation are obliged to cooperate with it in matters which it examines and deems pertinent. The charges it examines are taken by the International Control Commission at the request of the IEC, the International Secretariat, or on its own initiative.