



**Nahuel Moreno**

**Perspectives and  
Revolutionary Politics  
after the Victory  
of the Nicaraguan  
Revolution**

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## Perspectives and Revolutionary Politics after the Victory of the Nicaraguan Revolution

Report by Nahuel Moreno to the Central Committee of the *Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores* of Colombia (PST-C), August 1979

**English translation:** Daniel Iglesias

**Cover and interior design:** Daniel Iglesias

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# Perspectives and revolutionary politics after the victory of the Nicaraguan Revolution<sup>1</sup>

Report by Nahuel Moreno to the Central Committee of the *Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores* of Colombia —PST(C), held on 4 and 5 August 1979. In attendance were Kemel, from the leadership of the PST(C) and the Simon Bolívar Brigade (SBB), Javier Munera from the CC of the PST(C), who was wounded in combat in Nicaragua and other comrades who were in the front. Kemel and the other comrades also attended the Concentration for Victory, a rally for Nicaragua that took place in Bogota. Two or three days after the CC meeting, Kemel returned to Managua. And on the 16th of the same month, the SBB was expelled from Nicaragua.

Comrades,

Yesterday we lived a day of euphoria. The comrades who came from Nicaragua to attend this meeting made us almost feel the events. The anecdotes of the combatants transferred us for a few hours to the scenario in which the popular insurrection ended with Somoza. We also went through moments of sadness when we remember our dead and see one of the wounded, our dear comrade Javier. Today has to be a different day, a day of reflection.

We now need a high level of coldness in the analysis because we have entered a new stage, whose tasks we have not yet specified. The previous stage was one of fighting the National Guard and now the National Guard no longer exists. We went from the government of Somoza to one in which the ministers address the workers and peasants from a platform they share with our comrades. What we have to start deciding is what to do from now on. For this, as always, we will have to agree, first, on the characteristics of the new stage opened from the defeat of Somoza.

According to Marxism, when the stage changes everything changes: strategy, tactics and even organisational forms. Therefore, it is clear that I can't or even pretend to give a comprehensive report, much less to detail the tasks to the millimetre. I only want my speech to serve as a basis for us to start developing our program among Nicaraguan comrades and ourselves, knowing that — in any case — it can only be finished off by the comrades who are there, along with the other Nicaraguan comrades, who know that reality much better than us.

In order to divide the points well for the subsequent discussion, I have allowed myself to give them a number and a title.

## 1. Why did the FSLN win?

The victory of the Sandinista National Liberation Front, that is, the relatively sudden fall of a dictatorial regime older than 40 years, is, at first glance, inexplicable. In the first place, no one could say that the FSLN is the best-organised guerrilla we have ever seen. There were great political leaders at the head of much better-organised guerrillas who failed completely. As examples, it would

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<sup>1</sup> This title and all notes by the editors, unless otherwise stated.

be enough to mention De La Puente Uceda<sup>2</sup> in Peru or Bengochea<sup>3</sup> in Argentina. The Brazilian guerrilla, which was not very strong but was led by people of extraordinary talent (an old politician like Marighella<sup>4</sup> and a high-ranking military man), disappeared. The Montoneros<sup>5</sup> in Argentina, who even had the plastic bomb, failed, and the People's Revolutionary Army,<sup>6</sup> which although it did not reach that level, revealed in many actions a high level of technical development. And the Tupamaros,<sup>7</sup> that rare mixture of European culture and wit with a wonderful organisation, were also annihilated.

Next to them was a very young group that won. They had lost their most capable leaders in the struggle, with a rather improvised leadership whose only exception is perhaps Comrade Borge, and who two years ago did not have much more than 200 members between militants and combatants.

What did happen? First of all, according to an old Marxist law, we know that this, like any revolutionary victory, has taken place due to a combination of several favourable factors that came together at a given moment. The combination and the moment are unique, and in this lies the exceptionality of each revolution. To this most general law, we can add another: all the guerrilla victories of this postwar period have been a particularly intense refraction of serious contradictions in international politics; they have been — using a term made fashionable by Althusser<sup>8</sup>— overdetermined by international politics. Without the enormous weight of these external factors, no guerrilla would have won. Although in order to succeed, they always have had to combine with a mass movement within their own country.<sup>9</sup>

Let us look at the Yugoslav case, which Mosha Pijade<sup>10</sup> discussed so much against Stalinism and which may seem an exception to what we have been saying. Here, indeed, there was never any help from abroad. The Russians not only did not give it but manoeuvred to make Tito fail because he was independent and they had committed to imperialism to leave the government to the monarchy and the bourgeoisie. In that polemic, Mosha Pijade shows exhaustively how the Soviet aid was a fable because it never arrived. But the German army had it not been at war with the Russians, the English, and the Americans would have inflicted severe defeats on Tito. The imperialist war prevented Hitler from allocating the necessary troops to destroy Tito (and also Markos in Greece), although he attempted it several times. In this case, the external element that made possible the revolutionary triumph was the imperialist war.

2 **Luis de la Puente Uceda** (1926–1965) was a Peruvian activist, politician, land reformer, and guerrilla leader who protested against the political coexistence and coalition between his party, American Popular Revolutionary Alliance (APRA), and the conservative forces who supported the second government of Manuel Prado Ugarteche.

3 **Angel “Vasco” Bengochea** (b. ? – 1964) was one of the top leaders, along with Moreno, of the Argentine party. Later, after he travelled to Cuba looking for help to Hugo Blanco, who was heading the peasants struggles in Peru, he was won to Castroism, and broke away to launch a guerrilla group. He died in July 1964 after the explosion in an apartment in Posadas St, Buenos Aires.

4 **Carlos Marighella** (1911–1969) was a Brazilian politician and guerrilla, one of the main organisers of the armed struggle against the military regime installed in 1964. His most significant work is the controversial *Mini Manual of the Urban Guerrilla*.

5 **Montoneros** was the main Peronist guerrilla organisation in Argentina. It was born encouraged by Peron himself. It pursued guerrilla warfare between 1970 and 1979. It was primarily composed of young men and women of the middle class.

6 The **People's Revolutionary Army** (ERP) was the military branch of the *Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores — El Combatiente* (PRT-EC) led by Mario Roberto Santucho in Argentina, and supported by the United Secretariat, during the 1970s.

7 **Tupamaros** was a left-wing urban guerrilla group in Uruguay in the 1960s and 1970s.

8 **Louis Althusser** (1918–1990) was one of the most influential Marxist philosophers of the 20th Century. The proposals he advanced in the 1960s about Marxist philosophy were discussed and debated worldwide.

9 Several classical workers' revolutions were also highly conditioned by external circumstances. The Russian revolution cannot be explained without the imperialist war, which was annihilating the tsarist army. The same thing happened in Germany: the defeat of the army in the war of 1914 was what made possible the rise of the workers' councils and that the socialist revolution matured to within millimetres of triumph. But always, in the classical revolutions, the decisive and determining factor has been the internal, the mobilisation of the masses. (NM)

10 **Mosha Pijade** (1890–1957), was a prominent Serbian and Yugoslav communist theoretician, a close collaborator of Marshal Josip Broz Tito.

Let's look at other examples of this postwar period. China had a little assistance from the USSR. But when Mao Tse-tung was practically destroyed, Japan invaded and Chiang Kai-shek had to use a large part of his army to fend off that invasion, abandoning the pursuit of Mao. This is how the small Chinese Communist Party that was making guerrilla warfare, when it was almost destroyed by the Long March, met the Chinese committees that wanted to resist the Japanese invasion. Later on came the Japanese war with the United States, which helped Mao even further. And it helped in relation to the mass movement. Once again, we see how external factors helped enormously.

In Algeria, the same thing happened. It had borders with countries that helped the guerrillas (Morocco, Libya, and Egypt) and had significant amounts of money from the Arab countries.

And finally, I would like to refer to Cuba. The Cuban revolution cannot be understood without its external support. You would know that there was a Masonic lodge in the Caribbean, a secret lodge, which supported Fidel. The whole bourgeoisie of that region was in it: the two Lleras,<sup>11</sup> Venezuelan democrats like Romulo Betancourt, Panamanians, Costa Ricans, Puerto Ricans and also Cubans. Fidel had another help — a sector of American imperialism. The Masonry of this country — which was so strong that to become president one needed to be a Mason — also helped him, in addition to the Kennedy family and the entire American diplomacy in Cuba, except for the ambassador. Castro had in his favour the campaign of the *New York Times*, according to which Fidel was an extraordinary man, who called Raul [Castro] to order when he began to propose the agrarian reform. US aid is explained by the fact that the old sugar oligarchy was being displaced by Batista and they had a close connection with the financial oligarchy established in New York (the Morgans, etc.) since the last century. And finally, it is explained by Fidel himself. Fidel was a great leader of masses; he was a candidate to deputy by Havana; he was centrist, anti-leftist; he fought left-wing students when he was a student leader. And he was an orator educated by and linked to the Jesuits. This is why the Church also supported him to the hilt. Fidel had priests in the guerrilla, chaplains given by the Church. *Granma*, I think, he got it from a great bourgeois politician who got the money in the US. He was financed by all those foreign and Cuban bourgeois sectors. That's the truth.

This formidable external support, decisive, was had by all the guerrilla movements that won. Later on, when the revolution comes, they try to conceal this fact.

The victory of the FSLN is no exception; on the contrary, it confirms the decisive importance of the external factor. Panama, Costa Rica and Venezuela provided the most important aid in the last two years. The Swedish Socialist Party says in its official report that it gave the FSLN 1.5 million dollars. What may have the German Socialist Party given! What may have the Second International as a whole given!

Torrijos,<sup>12</sup> we do not know very well why, also bet on the victory of the FSLN. As this is very rare, we have been studying it and we hypothesised that it was due to a play of interests around the Panama Canal. For decades, the United States has threatened, in negotiations with Panama, to open a new canal through Nicaragua or to make its deepest ships go through Tierra del Fuego — fundamental because they are the ones carrying the oil — saying that the Panama Canal no longer serves their purposes. They may insist on this as a way of responding to Torrijos' requests for greater participation. It is possible that Torrijos has helped the FSLN with everything, as he did, to pull down the imperialist plans, for which it was essential that in Nicaragua the Somoza family be ruling. It may not be so, but so far it is the only explanation we could find to this phenomenon.

Of course, we could do something simpler — to be satisfied, as the Socialist Workers Party of the United States does, with schemas that, although they are useless to understand reality, safeguard the analyses of the young leadership of the SWP, with which they attempt to save their

11 Moreno refers to **Alberto Lleras Camargo** (1906 –1990), President of Colombia between 1958 and 1962, and his cousin **Carlos Alberto Lleras Restrepo** (1908 –1994), President of Colombia from 1966 to 1970.

12 **Omar Torrijos** (1929 –1981), was the Commander of the Panamanian and National Guard and the de facto dictator of Panama from 1968 to 1981.

battered prestige. The SWP publishes a statement in which it ponders “the formidable role of Cuba, which supported in every way the FSLN”, thereby denying the first principle of Marxist analysis, which is to describe the facts as they are. Next to what the other countries did, Cuba did nothing. But as [the SWP leaders] characterised that Torrijos was an agent of Yankee imperialism, now they cannot say that he has helped Nicaragua. The contradiction is eliminated, simply, by ignoring it. Another schema — Perez and the Costa Rican government were also direct agents of Yankee imperialism. So the SWP does not even mention the help they provided. What could the SWP say? That they helped to achieve the victory over American imperialism? No, because thus they would be anti-imperialist. Then, as good petty-bourgeois taking care of their prestige, the facts that did not fit in their previous analyses, they discard them. What they say has nothing to do with reality, but in this way, they eliminate all contradictions. There is no need to give complicated explanations. It is a crime because with this method they disarm their party. But regrettably, it seems that this does not matter to them.

Continuing with our analysis, we have also tried to find an explanation that justifies Costa Rica’s help. We think that it is due to the economic crisis of 1974-75 and that the Central American market is closing, which is essential to Costa Rica because it has had a very important industrial development.

The case of Venezuela is explained, perhaps, by its systematic policy of penetration in Central America. The fall of Somoza opens the possibility of penetrating markets that are essential to the new Venezuelan industry.

The concrete thing is that several circumstances were combined so that these countries decided to overturn Somoza by any means. And they were joined by sectors of the Nicaraguan bourgeoisie, the Second International, European imperialist countries, and the Carter Plan.

Without Panamanian and Venezuelan weapons, and without the support of Costa Rica, without the money of the Second International, without the pressure on Honduras, without the imperialist need for more stable bourgeois democracies, although counter-revolutionary, without all these external factors, the FSLN would not have won; as the Argentines say, “not even disguised as a monkey”. None of this should make us forget for a single minute the formidable revolutionary rise that allowed this united front to win. Without internal conditions, there is no guerrilla that wins. But the FSLN alone, supported by the rise, would not have succeeded.

## 2. Why did we take part?

Although we have discussed it extensively, now that the criticisms of those who did not take part begin, we must clarify some points on which there may be doubts. We took part because in Nicaragua began to take place the fundamental conditions of victory, which are the ones I listed above. More than two years ago we argued that it was very likely that in the short or medium term the FSLN would become the undisputed vanguard of the mass struggle against Somoza and when the other conditions began to emerge, we saw the assurance of victory.

We, the anti-guerrillas since the beginning of Castroism, who were the first to denounce the error of considering the guerrilla as a continental strategy, who later led the fight — together with the SWP — against the guerrilla deviation within our International, we said: “In this case, the guerrilla is valid”. With this, we have only put into practice a political line of years. The Argentine PST was a fanatic of the Colombian guerrilla in the time of *La Violencia*<sup>13</sup> since we never discard it as a tactic for certain moments and places. But the truth is that, in the eyes of the entire militancy of our International, we have always been, first and foremost, anti-guerrilla. And now many of our most prominent militants and leaders come from fighting with arms in the FSLN guerrilla, in the popular insurrection led by that organisation. For them, who return from seeing the joy of the Nicaraguan people, the matter is very clear. They do not doubt the correctness of our line and the

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<sup>13</sup> *La Violencia* (The Violence) was a ten-year civil war in Colombia from 1948 to 1958, between the Colombian Conservative Party and the Colombian Liberal Party, fought mainly in the countryside.

tactical importance we give to the guerrilla struggle. And they understand, better than ever, why we are anti-guerrillas in Argentina, for example.

But there is another reason for our intervention in this struggle: To take positions in the revolutionary rise of masses in order to combat the dreadful policy of class collaboration of the FSLN and the bourgeois governments that supported it and called for sending volunteers to Nicaragua. It was necessary to address the FSLN's pro-bourgeois policy, and the only way was to earn the respect of the Nicaraguan masses by fighting at their side.

### 3. The current stage

None of the people present here believes that in Nicaragua the revolutionary process has finished. You all feel, and so you have expressed it, that it is only just beginning. We have the victory of a great bourgeois-democratic revolution, the result of the victory of a popular insurrection led by the FSLN, supported by a united front of which Cuba and social democracy have been part, as well as Latin American bourgeois governments such as those of Costa Rica, Panama and Venezuela, and sectors of the Nicaraguan bourgeoisie itself. But this revolution carries a contradiction in its belly — the guerrilla method of destroying the National Guard is not a bourgeois method; it is a method of socialist revolution. In Nicaragua, the armed forces have been destroyed, at the same time as a massive insurrectional mobilisation was developed. As a bourgeois, Tacho [Somoza] was quite right when he asked for guarantees that the National Guard would not be destroyed, because that was the basis of support for the Nicaraguan bourgeois state.

This is why our comrades do not want to return; they want to stay in Nicaragua. Because, although the FSLN leadership may not know it, although Torrijos may have intended something else, we do know that we are already facing a combined revolution. To sum up, the FSLN was forced, in order to succeed, to destroy the repressive apparatus of the regime, the base of support of the bourgeois state, and at the same time, it made pacts with the national and international bourgeoisie. This gives the Sandinista victory an extremely contradictory character — of socialist revolution by its method; of defence of the bourgeois regime by its politics. From now on, this process can acquire an extremely dynamic and contradictory character due to the existence of these two antagonistic elements.

If we were phenomenologists, what would be so ridiculous at this time, we would say that yesterday we described what happened and that today we must go to the essence.

But, as we are Marxists, that is not our method; we do not need to make a phenomenological reduction, because — among other things — the essence of what happens in Nicaragua is captured as soon as you look. There can be no doubt about what is being seen when, instead of the National Guard, we see the FSLN fighters and militias in the streets; when we learn that the workers sent a factory manager to prison and chose another one themselves. When yesterday the comrades told anecdotes, they were describing the essence of the situation. It is obvious to anyone that we are facing a triumphant bourgeois-democratic revolution with methods of socialist revolution.

The ultimate expression of the revolutionary victory, of the overthrow of Somoza, has been the destruction of the repressive apparatus of the regime. But what is in its place? An armed vanguard, chaotic for the time being. And right now we are anarchists; we say “keep the chaos!” Because this disorganised militia reflects the mood of the masses. The government is firmly trying to form a regular army, and the FSLN tries, by all means possible, to transform itself into that army. The trend is clear — to build a bourgeois army, with ranks and discipline, and to leave the militias as its paramilitary body, of assistants, of rearguard, of reserve. But for now, there is none of that; there are only two armed sectors — the FSLN and the militias.

All this that the comrades have described so well — destruction of the regime's repressive apparatus; mobilisation and armament of combatants and militiamen; the absence of a regular army — is what makes us define the current stage as revolutionary. It may close in the short term

and take us back to a different stage. But now there is an acute dual power: on the one hand, the National Reconstruction Government (GRN) with its bourgeois ministers and with the support of the FSLN with its policy of class collaboration; on the other side, this armed vanguard that makes us keep this definition. The existing irregular armed forces are not a guarantee for the bourgeoisie or for imperialism; they are the workers' and people's power.

Once again, as we did when we talked about external factors, we must specify the characteristics of Nicaragua; now for its revolutionary stage. What distinguishes the Nicaraguan from all other revolutions is the lack of organisations that shape and politically mobilise the mass movement. The FSLN is not a mass organism, nor does it have individual leaders of the masses. It was a small guerrilla group, putschist, classic Castroist. Now it finds itself with a sudden revolutionary victory of masses in its hands, but without mass organisations led or structured by them. Eden Pastora was the only outstanding figure and now we learn that he is reduced a position of secondary importance.

The same thing has happened with the bourgeoisie. It was so well, so safe, that it did not bother to create mediations, that is, organisms between state institutions and the people. In this, it resembles the Portuguese bourgeoisie, which after 20 or 30 years without these institutions ended up believing that its regime was eternal. The difference is that in Portugal there were no such mediators, but there were great European-educated traitorous leaders, such as Cunhal and Soares, and an army representing a bourgeoisie of centuries. But in Nicaragua, there is none of that. Somoza fell, the National Guard fell, and everything disappeared. They did not have large unions or leaders, that the people would respect, listen and accept, as in other countries. No great workers' parties were created, or of the petty bourgeoisie, or of the bourgeoisie, or a legal ultra-left party — nothing.

In Bolivia, instead, when the Military Junta falls there is the Mining Trade Union Federation with Lechin, who is an idol; there is the Nationalist Revolutionary Movement (MNR), which directs most of the mass movement. Unfortunately, there is the Trotskyist *Partido Obrero Revolucionario* (POR — Revolutionary Workers Party), which also has great influence and which, being led by the hand by Pablo and Mandel, is going to critically support the bourgeois government. No worker would do anything that Siles Zuazo,<sup>14</sup> Paz Estenssoro,<sup>15</sup> Lechin<sup>16</sup> and the Trotskyists — Lora, Ayala Mercado or others — did not tell him. From 1942 to 1952 there had been parliamentary and class struggles, in the streets, which had been shaped by capable parties and leaders.

The same thing happened in Spain — for 15 years the bourgeoisie was arming the CP, the SP, the trade union centres, the UCD, and we can see how useful they were. We also see for what Khomeini is useful to the Iranian bourgeoisie. What would be of Iran without the Shiite church! It is the only Muslim current that does not depend directly on the power and has fulfilled a bourgeois party-church function for centuries, which it completed now to perfection.

In Argentina, the bourgeoisie has been preparing these mediators. I'm going to digress a little so we can understand the role of these mediators, describing to you what was Dickman, an old leader of the Socialist Party, now deceased. He was one of the leaders of the Second International, known to Trotsky, Lenin and Kautsky. I had a lot to do with him for a while, and I will never forget the passion he put in when he explained how he acts to stifle the mass movement. Dickman was born a reformist and had to act when the great anarchist-led strikes began at the turn of the century. First, he listened; he let the most radical anarchists speak, some of whom said, for example, that the whole city of Buenos Aires had to be burned. Then he would stand up and start shouting: "So you say we have to burn all Buenos Aires? And why only Buenos Aires? You are reformists! Why only Buenos Aires? Let's burn Uruguay, Brazil too! Let's burn it all! Let's not listen

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14 **Hernan Siles Zuazo** (1914-1996), was a Bolivian politician, founder with Victor Paz Estenssoro of the Nationalist Revolutionary Movement (MNR). Served as the temporary President of Bolivia in 1952.

15 **Victor Paz Estenssoro** (1907-2001) was a Bolivian lawyer and politician; four times President of Bolivia for the bourgeois *Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario* (MNR – Nationalist Revolutionary Movement).

16 **Juan Lechin** (1914-2001) was a trade-union bureaucrat, head of the Federation of Bolivian Mine Workers (FSTMB) from 1944 to 1987 and the Bolivian Workers' Union (COB) from 1952 to 1987. He also served as Vice President of Bolivia between 1960 and 1964.

to these opportunists!” And then, to implement this policy of burning everything, he added: “Let’s negotiate with the government!” He gave me advice like this: “A great politician leaves all doors and windows open because you never know who you are going to negotiate with.” He explained to me, for example, how he managed the formulas to deal with the bourgeoisie, a skill for which his disciples considered him a great politician. I remember one, of which you are going to laugh. In our country, when someone goes to the president of the Republic to ask for something, he must say “You, who have the power, the glory, and the fortune”. He had adapted this formula to address Peron when he had to go and request the release of some political prisoners. He told him “You who have the power and the glory”, eliminating “the fortune” so that Peron would not believe that he was alluding to the true fact and very commented on at the time, that he had stolen half the country. This fact was commented on as an example of great skill (laughs). Yes, you laugh; maybe you think I’m saying it for mocking a reformist or having fun for a while, but it’s not like that. Dickman played a first rate role for the bourgeoisie, which invested many years in his education. Characters like him are those who go to Parliament for years; they try to have a lot of contact with the masses, as much as they can. Then, when they are ready, they are indispensable. They can stifle movements, channel them. That is not learned from one day to the next. Among other things, it is necessary to enjoy prestige among the workers.

In Nicaragua, I repeat, none of this exists. On one side are the masses; on the other, in the superstructure, a vacuum. The FSLN begins to fill it in some way, begins to fulfil this role of mediator, but only by half. Its own leaders do not know how. And I very much doubt that some of them know how a union is made, how to speak in a workers’ meeting. The explanation is that, until now, the main problems the FSLN faced were military problems. It also faced some political problems, but these were always subordinate to the military issues. And they find that in everything they now need to be strong, they are weak.

That is the severe contradiction of this stage; a stage of transition that will close quickly because politics does not admit a vacuum. We are entering a period in which those bodies and leaders that do not exist today have to begin to take shape. And the same thing happens — of course — for the counter-revolution. The reaction needs to achieve bourgeois-democratic institutions. It does not know which ones — whether Constituent, Chamber of Deputies, or what — but it will immediately begin to attempt to institutionalise what they can.

This stage of transition shows us the possibility and urgent need to organise a revolutionary party with mass influence. Now, when the superstructure-mass movement relationship has not yet been defined, it is when subjective initiatives have a huge weight. And avoiding mistakes is decisive for the future because it is only when the dough is fresh that we can shape the bread. In two or three months, when the FSLN is already a massive institution, the mass unions and the [union] confederations are in place, reverting that process will be much slower and more painful.

#### **4. The character of the National Reconstruction Government**

The change of stage also means a change in the character of the government. What has changed in Nicaragua is evident at first glance. Before, Somoza was repressing the whole population; now there is the National Reconstruction Government (GRN), which makes huge concessions to the mass movement. The whole situation seems to have changed.

What they have in common (and here the principles begin) is that both governments are bourgeois. We could say that Somoza grabbed with his right and pinkie raised; the GRN grabs the mass movement with the left, trying to prevent their revolutionary mobilisation. Or we could say that both grab, but one with the opposition of the whole country and the other, the GRN, trying to win over the mass movement that made it succeed to respect private property. But, essentially, the two grab — or attempt to do so — the mass movement. This definition is fundamental because from it will emerge our policy.

All bourgeois governments are not the same. This we know perfectly well. At first, we defined the new regime as Kerenskyist. I'm not really sure it's like this; possibly it is the first phase of Kerenskyism or a pre-Kerenskyism, which is the typical stage of the great popular-national revolutions. This means that it is a government of national unity. Nicaragua lives the moment when everyone, except the Somozists, is mad with joy, they feel very united; they believe that, soon enough, the bourgeoisie and the workers will earn more and the peasants will happily accept the reforms. The whole people have made a great revolution, they have triumphed, and this is the dominant sentiment. This feeling can continue if the FSLN — due to the rise — has to take over the government.

It is the stage of *La Marseillaise*. Then will come the time when they will be divided between those who sing *La Marseillaise* and *The Internationale*; then it is possible that some sing *The Internationale* and others *Giovinezza*.<sup>17</sup> But what is important is that this “unity” will disappear soon.

## 5. This government is our enemy

This is, without a doubt, a government sustained by US imperialism. It is also sustained by the support of a united front formed by the existing national bourgeoisie, Japanese and European imperialism, and the Stalinist bureaucracy. If anyone has doubts about the character of Cuban support, let's see what Fidel said in his speech of 26 July:

“But it must be said that in our opinion the decision, the result of that meeting, was a great victory for the peoples of our America and contributed to the development of this spirit of solidarity with Nicaragua; and in the position held at the OAS should be highlighted the role of Panama, Costa Rica, Venezuela and other Andean Pact countries (applause), of Mexico, Jamaica, Grenada and others (applause). In the creation of this democratic anti-interventionist front that has been created, we must mention not only names of countries, but also of people: the names of Torrijos (applause), Carazo (applause), Lopez Portillo (applause), Manley (applause), Bishop<sup>18</sup> (applause). And it is also fair to remember the name of whom, even though he is no longer president of his country, helped a lot in the development of this solidarity in the Sandinista struggle: the former president of Venezuela, Carlos Andrés Pérez (applause) (...).

“There is a lot of hunger in the country. I think Nicaragua needs the help of the entire world. In the previous weeks, a large number of country leaders expressed their willingness to help Nicaragua. We think it's fair. Governments of all shades, of diverse ideologies, of diverse political systems, have expressed their willingness to give a great help to the people of Nicaragua. And Nicaragua needs it.

“Even the United States has expressed its willingness to send food and implement different forms of aid. We rejoice, we rejoice. They said they were going to make an airlift and send 300 tons of food a day. We think it is the right thing. (...) And I repeat... we are prepared to carry out an emulation with the United States. (...) We invite the United States, all Latin American countries, those of Europe, those of the Third World, our brothers the socialist countries, we invite all to an emulation to help Nicaragua.”

In short, there is no bourgeois national or international sector, or any government or bureaucratic and reformist sector, which does not support the National Reconstruction Government; all of them collaborate with the FSLN and the GRN to halt the revolutionary process. Once again, I think it is clear why this government is our enemy. We are in a frontal opposition to

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<sup>17</sup> *Giovinezza* (Italian for youth) was the official anthem of Benito Mussolini's National Fascist Party.

<sup>18</sup> **Rodrigo Carazo Odio** (1926—2009) was President of Costa Rica from 1978 to 1982. **Jose Guillermo Lopez Portillo** (1920—2004) was President of Mexico from 1976 to 1982. **Michael Norman Manley** (1924—1997) was Prime Minister of Jamaica from 1972 to 1980. **Maurice Rupert Bishop** (1944—1983) was Prime Minister of Grenada from 1979 to 1983.

that imperialist-bureaucratic-bourgeois front that supports the government and, therefore, we are confronted with that bourgeois government.

What will the government do immediately? I believe it does not have a very well defined plan yet. But, in general terms, it will attempt to ensure that this process leads to a stable bourgeois-democratic regime. This is a plan that in Portugal, Spain and Greece had very good results. And the bourgeoisie — the national and even more the international one — showing a great instinct of class, has chosen it for Nicaragua.

The counter-revolutionary plan, still without definitive form, nevertheless has two clearly defined stages: first, main and most urgent, to disarm the militias; second, to institutionalise bourgeois democracy. There is no possibility of forming stable bourgeois institutions if the arms are not in the hands of the government and its new henchmen. And the weapons must be not for anyone, but for a well-set, regular, bourgeois army and police. That's why they talk about a three-year plan; that is the deadline for the reconstruction of the armed forces. Only then can the institutions of power of bourgeois democracy be institutionalised.

Of course, this is the ideal plan; because the reaction is not alone; it is necessary to see what the fundamental interlocutor, which is the mass movement, will say.

Summing up: Today our main enemy is the National Reconstruction Government. Let us not be fooled by any nationalisation while the enemy is thinking about the problem of armament. This is an alert that during the 24 hours of the day should be repeated to the mass movement so that it is not surprised. The government will make concessions, but to the extent that they serve to disarm the masses, the militias, they will be useful to the counter-revolutionary plan.

## 6. The role of the FSLN

The foregoing leads us to another conclusion, very sad. Within the mass movement, we have no greater enemy than the FSLN. Why? Because the current government is the materialisation of the FSLN's policy and program.

The FSLN is a petty-bourgeois movement, extremely progressive in the time of Somoza, but which has always been inclined to a government of class collaboration, and the collaborationist petty-bourgeois always become agents of the bourgeois government and the bourgeois-democratic counter-revolution.

One of the biggest problems we face is that this political movement that is the FSLN is being transformed into the majority mass party as a result of its prestige. And not only this but, already foreseeing the possible struggles and ruptures within, it is attempting to make a great hegemonic party that guarantees its policy. For now, if we are guided by objective facts and not by speeches, they are the maximum guarantee of the bourgeois regime and the main support to establish a counter-revolutionary bourgeois democracy at a not very long term. This possibility is based on the FSLN's influence on the mass movement. Just as we are going to denounce the GRN as the frontal enemy across the country, we have to denounce to the FSLN, every day, hour by hour, within the mass movement.

But the FSLN is a much more complex phenomenon than the current government. These are extraordinary heroes of the class struggle and the Latin American revolution. We are going to say this in a loud voice, even if it scares our entire International. We are going to vindicate them using the words Trotsky used referring to Victor Raul Haya de la Torre: "A good Democrat is better than a bad socialist".

By principles, we will be the greatest defenders of their extraordinary role and their courage. We are going to apply the same criterion of Marx when he said, referring to the great figures of the bourgeois-democratic revolution in Europe, especially the French: "They were anything but limited bourgeois". And if he were alive today now, he would say the same thing about Borge and Fonseca Amador: "They are anything but limited petty-bourgeois". We will stand before them; we will set

them as an example before all the democratic and anti-imperialist fighters of Latin America; we will refer to them systematically as those who gave their lives for that struggle.

But this does not mean that we will ignore their policy. The problem is to find the combination of this now historic claim and their role in the current and future situations. We will say, for example, that they are coming down from their pedestal. Against the sectarians we will say that they are the greatest democratic fighters of recent times in Latin America, combining it with the denunciation that they are now supporting a bourgeois government. We will say that they are the ones who risked their lives to remove Somoza. But we will vindicate them as Fonseca Amador did with Sandino, telling them that we are going to go further, inviting them permanently to move forwards.

It cannot be otherwise; they are already part of history; to deny them is to deny history. The streets of a future socialist Nicaragua are going to take, the names, placed by us, of Fonseca Amador, Borge and many others. We are going to consider them at the same level as we do Bolivar.

But the fact that they lead the mass movement is very serious and demands from us to act with a lot of tact. They lead it because of the past, by tradition, by inertia, not for what they are doing now or for what they plan. We will use the enormous weight of that past to advance against their current dismal policy of supporting a bourgeois government, to go against them. What does this mean? That their weight and influence do not come from the current political plan but from being a movement that fought against the dictatorship with the support of the whole people. And that, therefore, there will appear in its midst an infinity of currents, tendencies and personalities that are going to go forwards, that is to say towards the workers' revolution against the GRN and the FSLN that supports it. That is why we say that we will rely on their past to fight to death their present policy. We will say "forwards, forwards", and this will go against the reactionary plan, without needing to say "Down with the FSLN".

But "forwards" has to be towards a pole that appears sharply outlined. It must be clear that it is now about power again, which will remain bourgeois or will be workers'. Only then will the time come to clear the typical confusion of the petty bourgeoisie. We know that, like any petty-bourgeois movement, it cannot stay there, which will inevitably lead to the workers' revolution or the counter-revolution. The only way for this to be understood by increasingly broader sectors of the masses is to offer a permanent revolutionary alternative, and this can only be done by a revolutionary, Marxist and Trotskyist party, a party that gives absolute clarity and knows how to dialogue with the masses.

Summarising this point, we can say that our greatest enemy in the mass movement is the FSLN, although — contradictorily— from there will come our most important allies and perhaps the figures that will make the socialist revolution in Nicaragua.

## **7. The danger of revolutionary drunkenness**

The revolution provokes a real drunkenness. And just as every drunkard considers a brother anyone he encounters on the street and embraces him, and fights instead with the true brother, the militants we are often wrong when we see a revolution. We begin by embracing ourselves among all those who took part in it and it may happen that we turn our backs on the true brother.

The great danger of any revolutionary triumph is that it blurs the deep, sharp, antagonistic political and class differences between the opportunist parties and the revolutionary party, between the bourgeoisie, the petty bourgeoisie, and the revolutionary proletariat. And why is this so? We have to see what a revolution is. We come from living compressed in bourgeois society, where we can do nothing; we want to make a little rally and we have to ask for permission; if they give it to us, we must "disperse in order"; if we come from dictatorial countries, that is not even allowed. And suddenly, we get a ton of oxygen. If we want to make a factory committee we do; if we want to expropriate, we expropriate. We can even take arms and form a militia. Everything seems easy, every day we make one more militia, one more union. The government, apparently, gives us everything

we demand. This is when we believe that the revolution is on rails and that the only enemy we have is the one gone, that everything unites us with the opportunist comrade and his party, that we are all revolutionaries, and that it is okay to unite with the opportunist party — since we made the revolution together we can unite to continue advancing until the socialist revolution. We think: we must not be sectarian and keep artificial divisions with the opportunists who made the revolution. This is typical of the euphoria of the first weeks after every great revolution. Trotsky wrote much to warn of this danger; he said, for example, that every revolution inevitably divides the revolutionary party, no matter how great its leadership, between those who want to join with the opportunists and those whom the revolution makes more intransigent than ever against bourgeois governments and opportunist parties.

The most serious error is to believe that in those moments it is only a question of pushing together, opportunists and revolutionists. By pushing alone there is nothing to be gained. And in the revolutionary stage is when this way of thinking is most dangerous. It is the moment when, as Trotsky said, the weight of a feather can tip the scales to one side or the other. It is when nothing has definitive form yet and, therefore, any initiative can be taken and prosper. But, for this very reason, you have to think very well. In the previous stage, if we miss the characterisation thinking that we are not going to get permission for the rally and we do not ask for it, we will have done one less rally; it is a mistake but does not change the relationship of forces. But in a revolutionary situation, an error can mean losing the possibility of making a factory committee, gaining influence in a union or worse things, such as those that happened in Bolivia, to which I will refer.

It is the moment when the subjective factor, the party, weighs more than ever. It is for that moment that we build it; to act in such situations is that we study so much, that we theorise, compare programs, study economics, philosophy; we discuss documents. And only in those moments, it has decisive importance; because the role of the party is decisive when the situation is revolutionary when it is necessary to carry out a mortal struggle against opportunist parties, agents of the bourgeoisie and imperialism within the revolutionary movement. But, I repeat, when this moment arrives, the drunkenness of victory makes us forget all this we have been analysing for years and we believe that the thing is easy, very easy, that we only have to push, let ourselves be carried away by the revolutionary tide.

However, it is the most difficult time. It is when we have to do more theory, more policy and program than ever before because we have the bourgeoisie and opportunist parties on the prowl to push back the revolution; they, who have reflexes of centuries to warn when their destiny is at stake. For them, thinking about what to do to crush us is not secondary. They do not think of “pushing”, but of deploying cunning and counter-revolutionary politics. They constantly think of where they are going, with what program and tactics [they act] to stop the revolution.

And for us, it is also the moment to clearly distinguish ourselves from other political currents, from opportunism, which leads the workers’ movement to confusion, to a policy of class collaboration. It is when it is more difficult because it seems to us that all are pushing together (socialists, Stalinists or, in the case of Nicaragua, the FSLN).

The revolutionary masses must distinguish with total clarity the party’s uncompromisingly revolutionary politics, a Trotskyist party that educates them in all aspects and is the only one that can make the workers’ revolution against exploiters and opportunist parties. And not a workers’ revolution led by the bureaucracy, but based on revolutionary democracy.

## **8. Several historical examples**

Many historical examples prove what I have been telling you. The first and foremost was the Bolshevik Party. The leadership of the Bolshevik Party was categorically divided after the February revolution; most of the provincial leadership and cadres argued for not systematically denouncing the bourgeois government that had emerged from the revolution and for the unification into a single large socialist party with the Mensheviks. Lenin was the leader of the other wing, which demanded

a permanent denunciation of the government and the opportunist parties — Mensheviks and Socialist Revolutionaries. But let us continue with other examples.

Trotsky harshly criticised Nin for being a victim of this drunkenness. I think we should stop and remember what happened in Spain. In Barcelona the workers' movement had won, it had defeated Franco, and there were many, many possibilities of extending this to all Spain. The whole of Catalonia was left in the hands of the workers' movement; all factories were expropriated. The anarchists, having all the economy in their hands, went to see Companys,<sup>19</sup> the highest figure of the Catalan bourgeoisie, to tell him to take power, and he did not want it; he said to them, "But if it is yours". Finally, Companys accepted, leaving in the hands of the anarchists and Poumists the conduction of the economy.

How did the Poumists and the anarchists think? They said: "When we learned that Nin and Diego Abad de Santillán<sup>20</sup> were in charge of the whole economy, that all factories were ours, we breathed easy". Of course, two great economists, an anarchist and a Marxist, did wonder united — they produced more than under the bourgeois stage; they introduced workers' control; they had fabulous plans. That was true, but it was also true that the counter-revolution was not finished; that from Companys' government it continued to arm itself. Neither the anarchists nor the Poumists thought about this since Companys owed them the government and had no strength.

In Aragon, it was more serious. There the drunkenness produced madness. Argentine journalist José Gabriel says that when he came with his car to an agricultural province and went to pay for petrol, he was told: "No comrade; here is the Durruti column;<sup>21</sup> nothing is paid here; if you want to eat, go to the restaurant, it is free". Not only had they eliminated money, but every day they executed bourgeois, nuns, priests and landholders. It was a perfect communist society. But in the meantime, what were the Republicans and Companys doing with their bourgeois government? A regular army; they were preparing the first part of their plan to crush the workers' movement.

Stalin sent weapons, but only for the CP. That is to say, only the current that thought the bourgeoisie had to rule was armed. The CP and Companys began to pose that there had to be a single command, a single army. A worldwide campaign began saying that Durruti was wayward, that all the anarchists were undisciplined and that for that reason the war was going to be lost. Thus came May 1937; the great workers' massacre of Barcelona. Anarchist Aragon was finished, everything was finished, private capitalists returned; the counter-revolution triumphed. And it triumphed first in the military field; an "aspect" about which the revolutionaries had not thought, carried by the hand by those weak republican governments, whose only strength seemed to be given to them by the workers' leaders.

Nin had become popular-frontist with the argument: "What interests me is that all factories belong to the workers and me, who am a revolutionary, direct them; what does it matter if I support this bourgeois government. For what do I want to be in government if in Catalonia we make soviets every day; if we find out that there is a landowner or a capitalist we wipe him out." This was the other side of the counter-revolution. This was why Trotsky hit him so hard; because while he thought so, in Madrid they were planning what day and how to kill him. It is the tragic experience that ended Nin's life. He got dizzy, got drunk and gave no importance to the deadly struggle against the bourgeois government of the day and the opportunist parties that supported it. He gave no importance to the fierce and uncompromising struggle of the revolutionary party against the reformist parties within the workers' movement.

The other great tragedy took place in Bolivia. In Spain, the POUM was strong only in Catalonia. But in Bolivia, Trotskyism was a national power. The COB Congress — with Lechin at the front —

19 **Lluís Companys i Jover** (1882 –1940) was a lawyer and leader of the Republican Left of Catalonia (ERC) political party, President of Catalonia (Spain), from 1934 and during the Spanish Civil War.

20 **Diego Abad de Santillán** (1897–1983), pseudonym of Sinesio Vaudilio García Fernández, was an author, economist and leading figure in the Spanish and Argentine anarchist movements.

21 **Buenaventura Durruti** (1896 –1936) was an anarcho-syndicalist militant during the period leading up to and including the Spanish Civil War. Durruti played an influential role during the Spanish Revolution; he led a militia known as Durruti column. He is remembered as a hero in the Anarchist movement.

voted that the theory and program of the Bolivian revolution and the COB was that of Trotsky's permanent revolution. He greeted the Trotskyists as the masters of the Bolivian revolution and gave them the COB newspaper to write. The Trotskyists wrote, ah! How they wrote! And Lechin said to them: "Write more, more!" We became his advisers and "scribes" as Vargas Llosa would say; we went everywhere with him.

The proletariat was armed; the army was destroyed and, as in Nicaragua, a situation of dual power was opened. Then, Paz Estenssoro and American imperialism realised what was going to happen and, unlike in Cuba, they prepared themselves. They said: "This counter-revolution has to be done with a lot of time and care". And they resolved that the defeat of the proletariat passed through the calibre of the bullets. American imperialism prepared for a counter-revolution in the next 10 or 15 years. It allowed everybody to remain armed, the mines to be expropriated, the land distributed to the peasantry. The miners began to earn good wages and to pay these extraordinary salaries, imperialism gave credit after credit and — as the other face of its plan — it began to organise a new regular army. It educated this army in Panama and provided it with more sophisticated and modern weapons than the proletariat had. Along with this, it advised not to wear uniforms down the street. Their calculation was that in five or six years, because of the rate at which they used to shoot and because of its disorganisation, the militias would spend all their bullets, in other words, they would be unarmed. The militias used them in factional fights, in attacking landowners, and imperialism told them to "shoot many, many shots by the workers' militiamen". Meanwhile, so that Paz Estenssoro had no economic problems, they continued to provide him with the necessary help.

And our comrades, what were they doing in the meantime? They were still drunk. Paz Estenssoro went to a printing workers' meeting and the leader, who was from the left, treated him as representative of the ambiguous petty-bourgeoisie, a coward, and imperialist agent. And Paz Estenssoro laughed and everyone voted that the President of the Republic was as useless as they come. This made our comrades think there was no need to confront and destroy such a weak government. Nor did they consider him an enemy; they thought he did not exist, that they dominated everything.

Moller's<sup>22</sup> Trotskyists came to this option and even began to say: "Would it not be convenient for us to claim to be part of the MNR?", as it could happen today in Nicaragua with the FSLN. There was a wing that made entryism, that of Moller and dissolved in the MNR. The other wing gave critical support to the MNR. By order of Pablo and Mandel, they did everything, except the fundamental delimitation: "The government is bourgeois; therefore it is counter-revolutionary and our mortal enemy; we have to make a revolution against it". How did this entire Trotskyist policy of supporting the MNR end? It ended up with Banzer.<sup>23</sup> Yes, comrades; Banzer is the continuation of Paz Estenssoro; the logical culmination of the plan of Yankee imperialism. It ended up, like all revolutions that do not succeed, that do not wipe out the "weak bourgeois government", in a counter-revolution.

Trotskyism should have made a simple reasoning. "The government of Paz Estenssoro is our mortal enemy; let us kill it before it advances or it will kill us; let's put an end to it and take power."

We have to do the same thing in Nicaragua today. Let us not be deceived by the concessions of the GRN, by the manners of Violeta Chamorro. She is very nice, very chic, educated in Paris, but for that very reason more counter-revolutionary. When it comes to repressing, she will be a monster. Let us repress her before she represses us. Let us fulfil the role of the revolutionary, Trotskyist party, which is to see the perspectives, and to alert the mass movement, and win it to overthrow the bourgeois government. And if it is weak, much better, we overturn it with less effort.

<sup>22</sup> Edwin Moller was, after Lora, one of the main leaders of the POR and a former Secretary General.

<sup>23</sup> Hugo Banzer Suarez (1926 –2002) was a Bolivian military general who became dictator of Bolivia after a coup d'état in 1971.

## 9. An honest scheme that leads us to... opportunism

Nicaragua will not be different from Bolivia unless a revolutionary party emerges. The current government and the FSLN are committed with imperialism, Stalinism, social democracy, and the national bourgeoisie to make the bourgeois-democratic counter-revolution.

Some comrades think in a different way. They believe the FSLN will not betray the masses and that the GRN is not dangerous, that it is not the centre of the counter-revolution. Because in politics nothing can be done without building an ideology to justify it, it always begins by constructing an ingenious hypothetical structure. In the case of Nicaragua, it is the following: “There is a great rise; the mass movement pushes; the leaders of the FSLN are good people and revolutionaries, but they are confused; they want a workers’ and socialist revolution, but they believe they can achieve it by conciliation with the bourgeoisie and imperialism [as did the left of the Bolivian MNR and the Catalan anarchists and Poumists]. We have to be the ones who push the most so that their confusion becomes clear and they form the workers’ and peasants’ government. For that, we do not have to delimit ourselves from the FSLN; we must push together, loyally, with the heroic leadership of the FSLN, and thus we will clear the way and we will reach to the victory of the socialist revolution. It is almost certain that the government and the FSLN will lead to a workers’ and peasants’ government; there have already been many revolutions where it happened like this — petty bourgeois currents have been increasingly forced to go left and take power. These FSLN people, whether they know it or not, go on a bus that says ‘End of the journey: workers’ power and revolution’. Let’s not be silly and, instead of staying on the sidewalk criticising the bus, let us go on it. It will take many turns, but the trip ends there.”

We disagree with this ideological construction for several reasons. First, we must distinguish between what is theoretically possible and the current, concrete policy. We do not rule out the theoretical possibility that the FSLN go towards a workers’ and peasants’ government. We do not rule out, for example, that there be a Constituent Assembly; that the FSLN win the elections; that then we can push hard, they get in a shootout with the bourgeois opposition, take power, break with the bourgeoisie and make a workers’ revolution. But if today we base all our politics on a Constituent Assembly being held, on the FSLN winning the elections, seizing power and inaugurating a workers’ and peasants’ government, we would be a strange mixture of opportunists and suicidal idiots.

There have been many cases of workers’ and peasants’ governments, but with them has happened something similar to what happened with the guerrillas. All the victories were in these cases due to international factors, as we have already seen. They always had imperialism opposing it, forcing them to go to the left. On the other hand, a revolution more advanced than any other, which had almost come to be working class, like the Bolivian revolution, went back because American imperialism did not face it and negotiated by appealing to the petty-bourgeois and bureaucratic leaderships of the workers’ movement.

In Nicaragua there is no frontal opposition of imperialism to the FSLN; on the contrary, it supports it. There is no immediate prospect of confrontation. We do not rule out this can happen, but the immediate possibility is the united front to stop the revolution. Of course, this does not mean that I consider it necessary or that I would be glad that imperialism now threatened Nicaragua. I am only pointing out an objective fact — the role of enemy threats, criticisms, dangers, and obstacles. If they do not exist, it will be plainer sailing for the FSLN; its contradictions will be less obvious to the masses, which will allow it to more easily apply its counter-revolutionary program. Hence, only we can lead the revolution. We must attack the FSLN and mobilise the masses against the GRN. In this way, the FSLN is likely to be divided and many of its militants will come towards our positions. If this happens, it surely will not mean that we are superior, that we can handle everything alone. We must not make the sectarian error of believing that our party will occupy the place of the FSLN in the consciousness of the masses in a few months. This is why we have to tell the FSLN, while we attack it for its policy of class collaboration, that it has to break with the bourgeoisie and rule only to develop the socialist revolution.

But this can only be achieved if we do not act holding the theoretical hypothesis that the FSLN will take power and will make the workers' revolution. We need to act politically only taking into account the current reality — the FSLN is the mainstay of the government and the capitalist system in Nicaragua. Only an intense mobilisation of the masses against the bourgeoisie and its government can cause the FSLN to break with the capitalists. That is to say, even to achieve this theoretical rather than hypothetical variation it is essential not to have it as a political possibility, because it can turn around on us, making us it end up serving a popular-frontist government, of class collaboration. And all this, for supporting an avowed and professed reformist party.

This hypothesis held by some comrades is global, theoretical-political, and pro FSLN. They say: "If the objective process goes increasingly to the left, if it is carrying the FSLN to a workers' and peasants' government and later to a workers' revolution, we can leave aside the propagandistic and ideological issues; let's not say that we are Trotskyists, so we can move forwards with them until the workers' revolution." And they put it into practice saying, for example: "We should not publish a newspaper. Why do we need to put forwards a political line if the FSLN is going to give a better and better line if we are active next to them?" This is the beginning of the collaboration with the FSLN, which in turn collaborates with imperialism and the bourgeoisie. By transitive relation, these comrades are collaborating with imperialism and the bourgeoisie. Why? Because if an occupation of land took place, we should say to the peasants: "This occupation was achieved thanks to our mobilisation; we were not given the land by the government, which is bourgeois, but we wrenched it from them." And this is essential — mobilisation to educate is not enough. Our number one obligation is to put in the head of each worker that "the National Reconstruction Government is the main enemy, we need to overturn it and nothing is achieved without mobilisation". If we do not do this campaign, we play into the FSLN's game of institutionalising the bourgeois government, we are doing populism; we are in fact in the same popular-frontist tribune of the FSLN. If we do not say that each conquest is a product of the mobilisation, we are holding the FSLN's lie that the bourgeois government is the one that grants the conquests.

Therefore, it is indispensable for a revolutionary party to denounce the FSLN and its bourgeois government, to educate the masses about the need to face them and to mobilise without pause to overthrow the GRN and seize power.

## 10. What program do we offer?

In Colombia, we are the champions of making the most of the least possibilities that open up to us. Ours is an almost miraculous party. There is very little of class struggle; there is almost no workers' rise and we are making a strong party.

In Nicaragua, we sin for the opposite. We are beset by opportunities; but instead of us grabbing them, opportunities grab us, we let ourselves be carried away by them. The bourgeois are afraid we will burn their houses and they deliver them preventively; we can build dozens of unions; there are real possibilities to arm ourselves; to arm militias, and so on. In short, everything that is abnormal here, it is normal there. But that is the danger — being carried away by opportunities or going crazy with them. Then the question is where we begin; we have to make a difficult choice.

Firstly, it is necessary to acknowledge that, if we want to take advantage of all the possibilities at the same time, we are going to a disaster. We cannot do work everywhere: the militia, the army, the workers' movement, the peasantry, the neighbourhood, or the FSLN. More than ever at this moment, Lenin's famous phrase about the first link in the chain must be remembered. That is, with what axis and slogans we go out tomorrow and what organisations we try to develop to carry out that policy.

We Trotskyists are the champions of the struggle for the fulfilment of the immediate, minimal needs of the masses. Any of our newspapers reflect this week by week — increase in wages, no to the price hikes, demands to the bosses to ensure safety. In Nicaragua, we also have to start there. Lest we forget that, because there are possibilities for creating organisations that dispute power

with the bourgeoisie, the workers have to eat and have a roof. We are facing millions who lost almost two months of wages while risking their lives without a flinch. The first slogan that we are going to agitate from today is, then, “payment of lost wages”. To this must be added all others that immediately guarantee housing, food and free medical care for all workers. This batch of demands is in Nicaragua a more burning problem than in our countries because the government will try to carry out the “reconstruction”, in this case, capitalist, fall, as always, on the backs of the workers. It cannot be accepted; what we ask is the minimum that has to be guaranteed for the population and without working more hours or things like that but from the word go.

Now let’s look at the problem of organisations. We said that we are in a very dynamic, transitional stage of formation of the organisations of the mass movement. This is the great opportunity we have to use in full. Our task is to take part fully in that process, but grabbing from it the first link. Which one? I believe that it is the grassroots workers’ and peasants’ organisations and, above all, those of the industrial and agricultural proletariat. Mainly we must make workers’ and peasants’ committees, but also trade unions.

And we have to give great importance to the militias of these workers’ and peasants’ organisations. That is, we have to build workers’ committees as part of them. We make an agrarian union, with its militia. The process needs to be reversed — no FSLN militias but militias of the organisations of the workers’ and peasants’ movement. In this path, if we can, to make even soviets, although they may be called something else. Let democratic grassroots committees flourish throughout Nicaragua. Let us develop the free initiative of the mass movement, organised in committees that reflect that revolutionary will. We need to achieve workers’ and peasants’ unions, as well as agricultural proletariat unions, throughout Nicaragua. But this task is only one side of the coin.

The other side, its complement, is to centralise these grassroots committees and trade unions in large confederations. The Sandinista revolution reopens the organisation of the mass movement on new bases — those of the victory over Somoza. Then, they have to be class organisms that claim as their own, of the working class, this great bourgeois-democratic victory. Thanks to this great democratic revolutionary victory, it is possible to make massive and large unions, union confederations that may possibly be revolutionary. A new process is open that we claim to be a part of. We want new unions, new leaderships to prompt them to become revolutionary unions; that is, we are against the old unions and union confederations, we are for new ones.

But all this does not mean that we are in favour of state intervention or of the single confederation in an absolute way, as the FSLN wants, which tries to control the organisations of the workers’ and peasants’ movement through the State. Beware of this, because we are in a bourgeois state. Let us not give tools to the FSLN that they later can use against us. Let continue to exist all the union confederations that the workers want to build, even if we push for this or that one. Let’s be very careful not to fall into the line of a single Sandinista union confederation protected by the State, because while it can serve us for a while, we are setting a precedent that will always, ultimately, go against us, which is the state control of the workers’ and trade union movement. We do not want any recognition other than the one we conquer before the mass movement. We will see who has the most strength; we will hold elections; we will call for a single confederation; we will fight in it for the methods of proletarian democracy and not for those of state intervention. This task is paramount for us — they are the institutions we want to see imposed in the new Nicaragua, in post-Somoza Nicaragua. We want very powerful grassroots organisations; we want a revolutionary confederation and revolutionary unions. And we want them to have militias; that the weapons belong to them. But first of all, we want them to be independent of the FSLN and the bourgeois state supported by this organisation.

This is where the development of workers’ and people’s power and its institutionalisation takes place. This point can be summarised by saying that the first link in the chain is to develop and massify the grassroots workers’ and peasants’ organisations and militia; for revolutionary workers’ and peasants’ confederations; for a democratically elected central command of the militias.

## 11. Against the National Reconstruction Government. Power to the workers' and peasants' organisations

If we stay at the previous point, we stay half way there. We say “Against the National Reconstruction Government”, but this is a negative formula. We lack the positive, the one that summarises what we want; another formula of government. Without a formula of government in a revolutionary stage, there is no strategy, no program, and no truly Trotskyist agitation system. We believe that we have a clear proposition or principle to oppose this National Reconstruction Government: “Power to the National Congress of Organisations and Workers’ and Peasants’ Militias”.

We say this is our strategy: Fighting the GRN to the hilt and fighting for the government of the workers’ and peasants’ organisations. But, beware! This does not mean a hidden line, which we will not agitate, which will only be expressed through tactics. On the contrary, these slogans are the most agitating we have. They are strategic — we cannot raise them now, right away, to put them into practice. But as propaganda to educate the masses they are agitative — we have to put them forth every day, introduce them to the workers’ movement, although sometimes they seem abstract. And they are the axis, which means that everything must be linked to them, that we propose all the slogans to end always with these two.

It is also necessary to develop a permanent campaign of patriotism towards the workers’ and peasants’ organisations to overcome and confront the FSLN.

It means opposing to the FSLN the organisms that the workers build, as the greatest success they have had. Class patriotism towards one’s own organism, the pride of saying “I am of such a union”, though it may not seem so, is fundamental. It is necessary they begin saying that before “I am Sandinista” or “I am of the FSLN”. We need to have a whole tactic to develop this. This is a policy that leads to power. If we do not develop in the workers this deep love for their organisations, they will not give their lives to get power for them and, therefore, neither will they take power, nor will they make the insurrection, nor will they repudiate the FSLN. Therefore, whatever develops that sentiment will be a way of preventing the FSLN from becoming the dominant organism of the mass movement. Instead, we want the organisms of the workers’ and peasants’ movement itself.

That is to say, we have to leave this Central Committee with a revolutionary Trotskyist, Marxist formula of power for Nicaragua. That formula is: “For a government of the workers’ and peasants’ confederations and of the command of the militia. For a National Congress of workers’ and peasants’ organisations to take power and remove the National Reconstruction Government.”

## 12. Let’s build a revolutionary party in Nicaragua

Developing grassroots organisations and making union confederations we are half way. The same happens if we give the formula of power but we do not point out that the immediate task, within 8, 10 or 20 days, the decisive qualitative phenomenon that is woven with the other two tasks, is to build in Nicaragua a revolutionary party that does not exist.

Every Trotskyist or Trotskyist-like party must be based, for its construction, on the Simon Bolívar Brigade. That party must contest with the FSLN for the leadership of the mass movement, to bring it to the insurrection and to the workers’ revolution against the GRN. Because we must be aware that there will have to be an insurrection against this or the next bourgeois government and that there must be a party to prepare and execute it. What is raised in Nicaragua to continue the revolution is nothing less than this.

This party has to be something other than the Bolshevik Faction, a fundamental part of it, but with its own identity and tasks. Its strategic aim is to ensure the victory of the workers’ revolution. It has to have this fixed idea; else, it is not revolutionary, as Angel Bengochea used to say. When Bengochea broke with us in a plenary, he vindicated many of us who were against him — who

had turned over to the guerrilla line — making a good observation. He said that he respected us because, having lived many years at our side, now that he had become a guerrilla, he realised that we had always been revolutionaries. “Do you know why?” he said. “Do you know why I leave as your brother? Because I remember that always, even when we were a little group of 10 or 20, we discussed how to make the insurrection and take power. We were not declamatory Trotskyites; we had always raised the problem of power. How do we arm the masses, with what slogans, in what way? We always were and have remained conscious that this was the decisive problem.” And when he said it, we realised that, indeed, the other Trotskyist currents were always discussing tactics, they were never obsessed with how they took power at the head of the mass movement. They didn’t consider this possibility; when they did it was always a literary commentary and referred to other countries, never to the country in which they were active.

Trotskyism exists to make insurrections, workers’ revolutions and seize power; not as a refuge for intellectuals who write treatises on economics. And whoever is not convinced of this, do not be active or found the party in Nicaragua, because in Nicaragua is raised the problem of revolution and insurrection against the government. This does not mean it is raised for this year or the next; we refer to the task of this revolutionary stage. And if the revolution does not succeed, the counter-revolution will. We have to prepare for it.

As I said before, this does not mean insulting the FSLN. We need to take into account the level of consciousness and the fact that they are the ones who made the democratic revolution. Nor does it mean to make a party directly Trotskyist. Building a party on the basis of a Trotskyist program, yes. A clear program on the current situation, which proposes to overturn the government, to contest the mass movement to the FSLN, to prepare for an insurrection and to lead the organs of power until the taking of the government. These points need to be clearly stated in the program.

But as we are in a revolutionary stage, in which the process is very fast, then nothing of normal methods; nothing of doing common actions and a discussion newsletter for six months or a year to see whether we join with other revolutionary currents. Revolutionary situations demand quick and categorical solutions. Therefore, we make the Nicaraguan Revolutionary Party, where everybody can enter, with the only requirement that they agree on these points. We need to make the workers’ revolution; we need to develop the workers’ organs; we need to overthrow the National Reconstruction Government; the FSLN must be fought to the hilt in the mass movement as a pillar of that government. There can be no confusion about this because otherwise, it will not be a revolutionary party. Time will tell whether we accept their theory or they accept ours and our program. What is important is that this party is for making the workers’ revolution at this stage. All who are with the essential basis of this program may enter. This is why I say “make” a revolutionary party in general, to achieve a revolutionary mass party in the shortest time. This is possible in a revolutionary era because strong currents emerge and also great leaders who quickly assimilate the teachings of the stage.

What is important is that this organisation has a majority of Nicaraguan members in the leadership. We must begin to test Nicaraguan comrades; neither the extreme position that there be no foreigners (which is the chauvinist proposal of the SWP), nor the position that foreigners be the majority. In all the great revolutions there have participated countless foreigners; it has always been this way since the Paris Commune. The proletariat has never had this prejudice of asking the one who helps it from which country he comes; it makes a place for everyone who wants to fight. But proportions have to be kept.

The other major problem is that they have to publish a newspaper. It is not possible to lend yourself to the manoeuvre that for this purpose we can use the FSLN newspaper or its television spaces. That’s tactical; you may use it to put forwards some political line. But the FSLN is not going to publish a newspaper and allow us to fulfil our obligation number one; that is, that it has a page dedicated to demonstrating that “the worst thing that can happen is that the masses continue to support the FSLN”. I have seen surrealistic follies, but this one, I think I will die without seeing it. How could we harmonise in that publication our propaganda that the GRN is our enemy with

the FSLN's line that there is no better policy than the policy of support for that government, the popular-frontist line?

Obviously, we have to publish a newspaper to educate, to teach, to make cadres. If we do not give it theoretical, programmatic and tactical soundness and, at the same time, we do not achieve a categorical pole, the workers will not follow us because they cannot follow an abstract party. They follow such a leader or such a party of flesh and blood, not theoretical lines.

And the only tool, or the main tool, to achieve this is the newspaper. This means that, given the need to form a party quickly, we will do our best not to clash head-on with the FSLN and the government. Instead of directly coming with a party with a new name, we can make a union current and a newspaper of its own, for the formation of a unitary workers' confederation, for example. But in this trade union-political current there can be no one who is not disciplined in an iron way. It is our current; let the world individualise it; no centrism even if it appears as a union. It has to be like a party in our style, like the Colombian, the Argentine, or the Bolshevik Faction itself, in which there is no one who is not strictly disciplined.

Keep in mind that there will be many pressures that will go against this. They can come from FSLN militants, very good, very close friends of us, of the left. They are going to say "moderate your program" and, at the same time, "make statements in our favour". We must not give in to these pressures. Tactical concessions are something else. We can build a trade union current, as we have already explained, with military discipline; the newspaper, when it comes out, can be of any current. We can form a Committee for the Organisation of a Sandinista Workers and Revolutionary Party. I see this a bit difficult because as soon as we use the term "Sandinista" they are going to say that we must be under the discipline of Sandinism. On the other hand, the Sandinista Front will be losing prestige in the mass movement and we will have to face it; therefore, it is best not to confuse acronyms. We can name it a study centre; edit a magazine. There are a thousand possible variations; that is something to discuss in Nicaragua. What is not under discussion is that it is necessary to publish an organ that educates the masses and the vanguard and makes them cadres of a future revolutionary party with real influence.

I think we cannot and should not accept the call to a Sandinista party of any kind, since this has a major drawback — that we play their game of forming a single party, with discipline, to stifle the process. We have to know that Sandinism, in raising a single party, does so to avoid having factional struggles between them. We have already seen in the newspapers they have dissolved the different tendencies; they have unified, trying to make a party that avoids criticism and control the mass movement. Because their plan is going to be to get us inside that single party, even to deceive us into making entryism, as was done in Bolivia. In Bolivia, the MNR made a great reception to welcome the Trotskyists in their midst. Paz Estenssoro, all the leadership and the government received them like great ones, saying that now the revolution was guaranteed because the Trotskyists entered the MNR. Let's not fall again into that trap, even if we make entryism. We can have a small sector enter Sandinism, but always having our organisation and our publication to systematically attack them outside the FSLN.

There is a principle that we have to defend: We are against the single party. This is a bourgeois-democratic revolution; we want, therefore, all kinds of political freedoms. We are going to fight for the Maoists, the CP, and the socialists of the Second International to have them. Every working-class political current has to have the right to make its own party.

But, where is the party oriented and at what speed? I do not know whether, after having talked about so many tasks, it is clear that we have to do them quickly because that is the case. We have to start today. And with a clear, categorical program, despite all the variations we have discussed. These are the cards we have on the table; it is about choosing quickly; they are not to hold a discussion. For example, from the outlined orientation, obvious tasks already emerge. I believe that all militants and leaders of the party, with well-studied exceptions, must go to work in factories and in haciendas. All must become great leaders of the rank and file and of the workers' organisations. That is the immediate place, which must be achieved by all militants. The work in the

Army is finished; the work in the Front is finished. To form all the grassroots bodies we have talked about, in practice means sleeping, eating, and living where they are being formed. Nothing of speculation about jobs in the secret service. When we have two or three thousand workers behind us, hundreds of these other jobs will open. The mass movement opens all the doors. Let us fight for the privilege of organising the mass movement and leading it. Let us cast all comrades there. Everything else is painted cardboard; it is useless.

### 13. “Educate Patiently”

Raising the great slogan of “All power to the FSLN to expropriate the capitalists, landholders and imperialism”, we must try to “educate patiently”. At the present stage of the Nicaraguan revolution, this slogan of Lenin is more necessary than ever. The need to educate is aggravated by the fact that we are a tiny minority. To apply it means to patiently teach the masses that this is not their government; that the FSLN is not the party that is going to lead the workers’ revolution, but that it is reformist and of class collaboration, and, therefore, it is our main enemy.

We have to rack our brains thinking how we establish a dialogue with those backwards workers, who are sympathetic with the Front and do not know us or barely know us. We have to establish bridges between the slogans that reflect our great historical goals and the consciousness of the mass movement. To build these bridges means to find the way that allows us to link each great slogan to the immediate needs of the masses in each moment. But to link them for the masses to understand them; so the masses come to understand they are ultimately the only solution to the problems that concern them now.

This is not as easy as it sounds. An intellectual may not think so, but I would like to see him explaining to a Nicaraguan peasant who wants the land for himself, what that has to do with “Against the National Reconstruction Government” that we must agitate day and night. To educate patiently means finding the vocabulary for the whole proletariat and peasantry to understand us. For this, we must first understand them; listen very carefully, trying to discover all the positive aspects that, no matter how backwards their conscience may be, there is in their own actions, and from there to develop them in the sense of our political course, our principles and our fundamental slogans.

And in this, the issue of our policy towards the FSLN is fundamental. We cannot talk about mass consciousness without talking about the FSLN. For the masses, in a relatively justified way, the FSLN is today its revolutionary party. It destroyed Somoza and carried out a great bourgeois-democratic revolution. It embodies the revolution. This is true to some extent if we look at the past. It was the party that heroically faced Somoza. But it is not so in the present, let alone in the future. We know that the FSLN does not want to make the workers’ revolution. But for the consciousness of the masses, the past, the present and the future are the same — they believe in their party.

How do we solve this contradiction? Very simply, I think. The way to educate patiently will be based strategically on the proposal of “Out the bourgeois of the National Reconstruction Government! The government of the Sandinista National Liberation Front to carry out an anti-imperialist, anti-capitalist and anti-landowner program!” Without a single minute of rest, we must press, invite the FSLN to take the government and expel the bourgeois. This slogan has two edges. We will say that the FSLN take power. The FSLN will say no. Then we will explain that it does not do it because today it is in favour of the bourgeois government. It allows us to unmask the FSLN and dialogue with the masses, taking into account what they want. This is a cutting edge.

The other edge is that it allows us to further the revolution and the discussion about our program. Because we will say that the FSLN take power, but to give the land to the peasants without payment. Not only that it takes power, but for that. This also unmasks the FSLN, besides it can cause a left wing to appear within it, which can be a fundamental ally for the insurrection. There is always a left wing in petty bourgeois parties. The stronger we hit, the more possibilities will open for some to begin to wonder — “And why don’t we take the power to do that program?”

As this slogan may resemble somewhat the slogan launched by Ricardo Sanchez and the PSR,<sup>24</sup> surely it frightens the comrades. I must sound a warning. We should not be alarmed because, with a love that does not dare to say its name, they are expressing this slogan, when they say “Out with Violeta Chamorro”. One has to ask, “And then what?” It is a negative slogan; they are making a mechanical application of the Russian revolution’s slogan of “Out with the bourgeois ministers”. This slogan of the PSR and Ricardo Sanchez in his last speech conceals something fundamental. When he says “Out with the bourgeois ministers”, he means that among the five there are some who are not bourgeois. In this, as in every negative formula, there is another implied, in the affirmative. Who is or who are these ministers that Ricardo Sanchez wants in the government and of whom he does not dare to say their name? We suspect it is the FSLN. This is, in turn, the concrete application of the slogan of Workers’ and Peasants’ Government.

Here lies a historical problem. Now that the FSLN is in a bourgeois government, now that it is not playing any progressive role, I am in favour of this slogan. It is okay to say “out with the bourgeois representatives” and that the FSLN stay. But I would like to point out the inconsistency of the PSR. When the FSLN was more progressive, when it was militarily fighting against Somoza and we raised that we had to support this military struggle and demand they take the government without the bourgeoisie after the fall of Somoza to make a socialist revolution, they said this was a bourgeois slogan, because the FSLN was for a popular-frontist government and we did not have to support it in any sense. Now that the FSLN is not programmatically, as before, for a popular-frontist government, but are within it, they do; that is to say, now the PSR and Ricardo Sanchez say that it is necessary to support it, even saying “Government of the FSLN”. Conclusion: either the PSR and Ricardo Sanchez were traitors or idiots before or they are now.

That is, they have been condemned, by the intervention of nature and the historical process at some stage of their political development, to be idiots. Because, either “FSLN government” was before — as we were told — a traitorous slogan and now, when they say it, it also is, or it never was. It cannot be that when we said it was bourgeois and when they say it — in worse circumstances — is not. This is one of the greatest theoretical and political crimes committed by our International and the PSR, regarding the slogan of “Workers’ and Peasants’ Government”. For, what is the workers’ and peasants’ government? Let’s read again the *Transitional Program*.

The formula of “workers’ and peasants’ government” is a tactic towards opportunist mass parties that have a popular-frontist policy. It is of principles. It consists of asking those parties to break with the bourgeoisie and take power. We believe that we applied it very well in this case; not so Ricardo Sánchez, the PSR and the SWP. They said: “You do not have to ask them to take power because they are popular-frontist”. We made the following reasoning: The FSLN is being transformed into a mass movement; it is fighting with bullets and, because it is popular-frontist, it must be asked to take power breaking with imperialism and the bourgeoisie. This is why I said that we cannot be guided by the fact that now the PSR accepts this slogan. It is a great victory for our party and we have to keep raising it more than ever. We raised it yesterday, when the FSLN fought against Somoza, we must raise it today more than ever when the FSLN is already part of the government with the bourgeoisie.

I believe the problem regarding the government is clear. Let’s see how we educate in other areas. The Sandinistas say, for example, that their great line is to fight to make a workers’ government. Let’s support them. Let’s say: “Yes, workers’ government, as the FSLN says. Very good! And how do we enforce it? Very simple: All the power for the workers’ and peasants’ confederations. What more worker than the workers and peasants?” That is, we have given our line, starting from theirs, developing it, and not opposing it. Then they can say “Government of the workers of the FSLN”. Then we will polemise: “What? The government of the FSLN will be more government of the workers than the government of the workers’ confederations?” We can go further and say that “this means that the factories will be given to the workers and the land to the peasants, and they

24 In 1977 Ricardo Sanchez and his group were expelled from the PST (C) for factionalism. In late 1978 they joined the Mandelist group in Colombia la *Liga Comunista Revolucionaria* (LCR), to form the *Partido Socialista Revolucionario* (PSR).

will rule”. If they say no and we polemise, we are educating patiently. We are making our line and the traitorous line of the FSLN understood. If they say that they do not want a government of the workers’ confederations, we will not say “Ah, that’s Sandinism”, but “What a poor Sandinista you are; you are betraying your movement! What a pity that Eden Pastora, such a good person, who has been fighting for a workers’ government for so many years, has now clearly said that even if there is a congress of all the workers’ and peasants’ grassroots organisations that want to take power, the FSLN will not relinquish it! It is becoming counter-revolutionary, anti-Sandinista!” We will conclude by saying that we are consistent Sandinistas and they are enemies of the greatest experience of Sandinism. We are not going to give them that banner. We will take their ambiguous formulas and fill them with content. That is to educate patiently.

## **14. Against the disarmament of the workers**

We have to fight like wild beasts against the disarmament of the workers. Whatever they call it, we are against a regular army and police. They are the nodal point of the counter-revolution. We will fight for the development of workers’, peasants’, and neighbourhoods’ militias; they are the key to dual power. We will denounce every step towards the constitution of regular armed forces, in any line whatsoever, as the essential point of the counter-revolutionary program in its first phase. What is the government doing? Putting the Sandinista fighters into the barracks and disarming the militias. And they are again delivering the weapons according to the criteria of the Sandinista front. We are against these procedures because for us the weapons belong to the people and their organisations; everything belongs to the people. Each worker’s or agrarian committee, and each union must have their militia and their arms.

Now we want militias and a specific organisation to centralise them. Tomorrow, we will want an army, but controlled by the workers’ movement and its organisations. That is why the great task is to create armed militias and centralise them, but as a consequence of the development of the organisation of the mass movement and not as an independent superstructural creation.

## **15. The agrarian revolution**

This is a problem inherited from the bourgeois-democratic stage, which has not been solved. It is fundamental because Nicaragua is an agrarian country. We have to study it seriously; see whether it is true that the relations of capitalist production prevail in the countryside; whether the agricultural proletariat is as numerous as some comrades say. If this were the case, the revolutionary process would acquire extraordinary dynamics. Based on this analysis, I proposed that the militants go to work on the haciendas.

But that is just one measure we should take to learn. Land tenure gives rise to confusing problems, very great difficulties for the theory, the program, and revolutionary politics, such as what line to have towards the workers who want to become petty bourgeois owners of their plots. For years we Marxists have been debating the agrarian problem.

But there is a slogan that unifies the agricultural proletariat and the peasantry: “Occupy and expropriate, without waiting for the government, all the lands of Nicaragua”. The slogan has to be “Ahead with land occupations”. To this, we must incorporate those slogans of urban reform: “Ahead with occupations of the houses of the rich so that everyone has a home. Abode for everyone.” That is, to make an urban revolution as well.

And, regarding the peasants and their unions, no more petty-bourgeois Maoist ideology about the small peasant. We must organise the agricultural workers towards the socialist revolution; we must separate them from the petty bourgeoisie, so that we strike together against the landowner, to see whether this sector, together with the industrial proletariat, heads the socialist revolution.

## 16. The reconstruction

With this issue, the bourgeoisie and imperialism are carrying out an extraordinary swindle. I do not mean to say that Nicaragua was not destroyed by the civil war and previously by the earthquake. What happens is that they have transformed this into a scarecrow. They say they need US\$2.5 billion for the reconstruction; that only with the aid of imperialism and the workers' states — but fundamentally the first — they will get what they need. "Beware; let's not be afraid of imperialism or the bureaucratic states. Otherwise, they do not send us the dollars and in Nicaragua, we starve; we do not rebuild anything", is that proposal in a nutshell.

The problem exists, but with working class methods it is solved. And this is two-pronged: within and without the country. The great Durruti has already said it in a celebrated speech. When Stalinism said "it is not possible at the same time to wage war against France and to make the workers' revolution in Spain, because we are going to destroy everything", Durruti replied more or less like this: "I am told not to make the revolution and build socialism in Spain because we have to defend another country that has already done it and besides, and this is the most serious, we are told that if the revolution is made, all of Spain is destroyed. And I respond in the name of the proletariat that everything in Spain was done by us. And it was not for us; it was for them. Let everything be ours and those who tell us from abroad that we must defend a socialist homeland and not build it here, I say to them: let's do it, we will rebuild it much better. We are going to build a Spain ten times superior, bigger and better, as long as we make the socialist revolution."

This is also true for Nicaragua. Capitalist reconstruction is indeed difficult; where there is no capital, nothing is built that yields profits; capitalist factories cannot be built. But a Nicaragua for the workers, what problem can they have in doing it again, if they have done it before and it was not for them?

We believe that none. We believe that there is every possibility of a reconstruction of Nicaragua and of all the countries that the workers' revolution destroys. Vietnam was destroyed and rebuilt without a single imperialist dollar. Vietnam had its ecological system destroyed; when the Yankees left it looked like a moonscape.

On the other hand, it is very good that there is a help. The proletariat lives helping itself. The Colombian unions are helping the Simon Bolívar Brigade and the FSLN, and we must continue to appeal to that class solidarity. We can do a campaign on governments, but this has fifth-order importance. What is essential is the mobilisation of all the peoples of Latin America and the world, so that the workers through their own struggle can force their governments to do what they can. And this call is also for that assistance to be made through grassroots organisations. I am ashamed that our International, through the Socialist Workers Party, is asking for aid from the United States government. We must demand that the Soviet trade unions give millions of dollars and that they go and deliver them to the Nicaraguan unions. What does it mean that the mediation be done through governments? The Socialist Workers Party should be campaigning to urge trade unions to break with the government if it does not give the Nicaraguan union confederation one billion dollars, and without strings attached. We do not give the bourgeois governments any task. We snatch conquests from the bourgeoisie. What does the SWP policy mean? We still do not know well. But there is still time to rectify it, for the benefit of the International and the Nicaraguan workers.

## 17. For an immediate Constituent Assembly to give the land to the peasants without compensation to expropriated landowners. For the broadest political and information rights

In the conversations I have had with some comrades, I have noticed that this slogan is the one they feel the worst about. However, I consider it a very important slogan. Let's see why. The

comrades say: “Why should we raise another organisation, which is bourgeois and that competes with the workers’ organisations? If we do this, it’s as if we’re spitting our faces ourselves”.

However, the matter is not so. Let’s bring down to earth “to educate patiently”. Why do we call for a Constituent Assembly to distribute the land, giving it a precise goal from now on? Because the peasantry is the majority of the population, the slogan is democratic, populist. We are a party that has not yet organised the industrial working class; we do not yet lead it. And from the peasantry, we are light years away. We have not reached their villages or their haciendas. And if we said that dialogue with the workers is hard, it is much harder with the peasants, because of their greater backwardness, their decentralisation and our weakness. The Constituent Assembly allows us to reach all of them even under these conditions. This slogan has to do with the majority of the population, especially those with peasant mentality.

First, we have the problem of the land; a big problem that the peasants want to solve. They are not interested in the program, in international solidarity, or the construction of their own permanent organisation. What interests them is their plot. And the peasant that works in a big hacienda, he wants to be owner, half-owner or owner in cooperative of that property. That is the mentality of the peasant.

The second problem is the number. By staying in the aforementioned position, individualistic, the peasant feels strong due to their number. That was the basis of the strength of the Peruvian APRA, of the Bolivian MNR, in short, of all petty bourgeois currents. The peasant, moreover, is passionate about voting. They say “we are going to bust them with votes”, and they are right. They always bust the working class when it comes to a vote. They win by majority. They think “we are the number, the people, and the country”. All these words, like “country”, “number”, “nationality”, “people”, move the peasant. We are moved by the workers’ struggle, the organisation. This matter about the number has to do with his own structure, his separation; it has to do with his plot. They are passionate about what unites them; that is why they are fanatics of elections and Bonapartist governments; because they see themselves reflected in them. The best example is the classic Bonapartist government, the French, based in the small peasant owner of his plot.

The third problem the slogan of Constituent Assembly seeks to address is that of the political discussion. How do we convince the peasant that the seizure of power by the workers’ organisations solves his problems? How do we overcome his most negative prejudices?

Let us then go to the specific situations. What does the bourgeoisie tell the peasants? What does the petty-bourgeois party, that do not want to share the land, tell them? “Calm down, calm down, the voting will come and with it the land. Do not take it yet because it is not legal, it is unlawful. On X-Day there is a ballot, you fill the ballot boxes for us and there will be land for everybody. But for this, it is necessary that you do not make a fuss. If you do, there comes a government like the one of Somoza; the elections are suspended and we continue for decades without land.” They will never tell them that they do not want to give them land or a Constituent Assembly.

In front of us, then, is how to educate them to convince them that we are the most democratic, those who want to solve their problems. Do you believe that this can be achieved by telling them that we do not want elections or constituent; telling them to support the workers’ organisations? No way; their prejudices will be reinforced by the bourgeoisie, who will say: “Don’t you see that it is people from the city who want to crush us? It is people like Somoza, dictatorial; they even speak of the dictatorship of the proletariat. They are workers, arrogant, always strike, and make organisations. If you do not get the spare parts for your machines, it is because the workers of the cities strike.” There is also the Church saying to them: “Look, they are communists. They share everything; they will even share your women.” These and worst arguments are used by the bourgeoisie and the Church. This is the reality of the class struggle.

How do we then overcome those prejudices, beginning with the fact that they start listening to us? We do with the Constituent Assembly. The Trotskyist denounced by the reaction as an enemy of the peasantry and the people, has the opportunity to say: “Free and sovereign Constituent Assembly, with freedom for all parties. Let everyone talk on television on equal terms. Constituent

Assembly within three months, and of course, the Trotskyists will go to that Constituent Assembly to say that it vote first for free land for all peasants. We want the Constituent Assembly more than anyone, and we want it fundamentally for one thing; for the first law to be voted to be ‘The land for those who work it’. But look how they slander us. They want the state to make the distribution of land. No! Let’s stop it! Immediate Constituent to decide that each peasant owns the land on which he is working at this time. And that we pay nothing to the landholder.”

A very serious problem for the bourgeoisie. What can they do? They may say: “Well, yes, we will discuss the problem of the land, but with some care. Not as the Trotskyists say, in a hurry. Let us bear in mind that there are people who inherited the land but who are not rich; they inherited it because of the father, who was poor, worked it for years. The whole family worked hard.” They are going to look for a white fly, a poor peasant who says on TV: “Yes, I saw my father work like a beast; there are people who like him, own the land but because they have been working since Grandpa bought a little plot. They did not take it from anyone. Now they have thousands of hectares, but it is because they have been adding plot by plot.”

You laugh again, but it is so. I almost fell on my back when I saw Belisario Betancur<sup>25</sup> talking on Colombian television. He told how his father and mother had been working for years. His description was so impressive that the mother of one of our comrades phoned headquarters to say that she was going to vote for us, but that now she had decided to do it for the Conservative Party.

There, in their ground, without Constituent Assembly, they will convince much more than us. If there were a ballot they would beat us. But then, let’s have the Constituent Assembly. There we stand and say: “Let’s vote now, land for the peasants”. And all those who came with the argument of the little lot, shout, “No! Under no circumstances! Let’s discuss it!” We will say: “No; we want the land for the peasant today.”

And the peasant, who is hard, slow, will listen to us every day saying the same thing at the beginning of the session; he will see us loudly yelling, always the same phrases: “We want to vote now the land for the peasants without payment to the landholders!” And the others, who will say no, do not vote right away. We will end up wrangling with each other; and there will come a time when a peasant, then two, ten, thousand, five thousand, will begin to say: “The church says that they are our enemies; the government says they are ultra-left, but these revolutionaries say that the land is for the one who works it, for me, without paying the landholders anything. As bad as they were portrayed to me, they are not. They even look like our friends.”

This is why the Constituent Assembly is one of the most brilliant applications of the principle of educating patiently. With it, we snatch from the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois parties the peasantry’s conscience. It is not our fundamental slogan; the fundamental one is “Power to the workers’ and peasants’ committees” and, to patiently educate, “All government to the FSLN”, “out the bourgeois ministers from the government”. But within the strategy of power to the committees, it is an extraordinary weapon. We accuse them that they do not want a Constituent, do not recognise the majority and do not want to share the land. If they do not answer or if they do, we open the possibility of establishing a dialogue with multitudes: specifically, not with the workers’ movement, but with all the people. It is a fundamental democratic weapon.

## 18. For a Federation of Central American Socialist Republics

We cannot fail to raise this slogan. Central America is an irrationality. It is a region united by a myriad of ties; it is necessary to wipe out the borders and unite all those countries in a Federation of Socialist Republics. And the first step is the immediate Federation with Cuba, of any country that frees itself from imperialism.

We must popularise this slogan; develop the concept of a Central American nationality. It is fundamental, and the proletariat little by little is going to make it their own. In the development

<sup>25</sup> **Belisario Betancur** (b. 1923) is a politician and was President of Colombia from 1982 to 1986 for the Colombian Conservative Party.

of this consciousness, the first thing to do is to understand that there is a socialist revolution in the future of Panama, Costa Rica and Nicaragua, countries in which either the socialist revolution or the counter-revolution triumphs. And in Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala, bourgeois-democratic revolutions are on the agenda, such as the one that has just taken place in Nicaragua.

Therefore, we are facing two types of revolution, which will be combined from country to country. It is a very complex combination. The Bolshevik Faction and the Nicaraguan party and the Central American parties have to see how they do it. Under the slogan of the Federation of Latin American Soviet Socialist Republics, two types of revolutions are then sheltered. We must study all this, which is already in the pipeline, in order to elaborate our continental strategy.

## **19. The impact on the Fourth International**

We do not know what is going to happen, but there's going to be a terrible mess. It's like when you do not know what kind of fight there will be, but you do know there will be a fight. Nicaragua has given rise to major debates. In a few days, we will know a little more when the SWP convention ends.

The differences are going to get red hot; it is quite possible that the Fourth will split; it is quite possible that the Congress will be violent; it is even possible that they will expel us beforehand. It is a critical situation provoked by momentous events of the class struggle. Let's keep an eye out. We will have to hold a meeting, adjust our tactics to this fact that is very important for the life of our International. But more important today is the Nicaraguan revolution.

This will solve many problems in the Fourth International. Let us not lose ourselves in the accidents and let us know that if the Latin American and Nicaraguan revolution continues to develop, the Fourth International, seen as a world Trotskyist movement and not as the opportunists of the USec, will be fixed regardless of how many divisions and splits. If this revolution stalls, no matter how little we quarrel, the Fourth is in disarray.

Nothing else, comrades. \$